

## THE MISSION, 10 pgs

The historical narrative of the Bible is not merely a succession of events from which we draw moral lessons or a convenient cache out of which we extract principles or illustrations of the Christian life. **Biblical history provides a frame of reference to understand the purpose and nature of reality itself, both the material and the spiritual aspects.** The Bible presents itself as a disclosure of the unfolding process of God's dealings with mankind and of his self-disclosure to Man. This revelation is progressive and the NT finally clarifies OT typology and transforms OT imagery by the Gospel of Jesus Christ [see my article THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST IS OUR ROSETTA STONE]. The OT progression of revelation toward fulfillment in the New means that the whole Bible can only be properly understood in the light of the Christ of the Gospel. We who believe in Christ are soldiers of the cross, and this is our mission.

### Christ's Mission

In some ways this is a prequel to my article, PROGRESSIVE FULFILLMENT OF THE PROMISES IN SALVATION HISTORY. Here is just a smattering of passages to breach the subject. These verses give us a glimpse of the relationship between the members of the Trinity and the plans God made before the material universe was brought into existence. They tell us something of the work that Christ undertook and completed, as well as the mission he has for us. We can see that Christ was involved in many aspects of God's plans. **His coming into the world to seek and save the lost was a mission with many goals.**

The Bible presents A PERSONAL BEGINNING to the material universe as opposed to a self-generation through random interaction of impersonal matter, energies, and forces (magnetism; gravity). God is an eternal personal being (someone, not something) having the knowledge, wisdom, and power to design, create, and integrate all things and conditions in nature. The story of creation is replete with God's determination - his planning, purpose, and the significance of the creation. The sheer magnificence of the created order bears telling witness to the glory of its Maker (**Ps.19**). **The universe with all its wonder and integrated complexity came into being by the will of God, and for this, God is incessantly worshiped (Rev.4:11).**

**Jn.1:** is the NT parallel to **Gen.1:1** *<sup>1</sup>In the beginning [already - sense of the Greek imperfect tense] was the Word [metaphor for Jesus], and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup>He was [already] in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup>All things were made [lit. became, or were brought into being, aorist tense, is contrasted with the eternity of God himself] through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made (Jn.1:)* Put philosophically **this means If anything really exists, then God must necessarily exist.**

**In all the world and throughout all of history there has been one person publicly on display who exhibited the authority and power to raise the dead and forgive sins. ONE!** One who laid down his life for everyone who comes to him in faith, Jesus Christ THE RIGHTEOUS ONE. This is the good news and Christ's mission. *<sup>16</sup>So, because Jesus was doing these things [healing and other things] on the Sabbath, the Jewish leaders began to persecute him [how is unstated]. <sup>17</sup>In his defense Jesus said to them, My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working.*

<sup>18</sup>For this reason they tried all the more to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God. (Jn.5:)

**God has spoken.** <sup>1</sup> Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our forefathers by the prophets, <sup>2</sup> but [big contrast] in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son [not only through what he said, but by what he did], **whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.** <sup>3</sup> He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power (see Col.1:16-17). After making purification for sins, he sat down [redemption mission accomplished] at the right hand of the Majesty on high (Heb.1:)

**Jesus preparing for his crucifixion speaks of it as a completed mission** <sup>4</sup> I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. <sup>5</sup> And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed (Jn.17:) [see Jn.19:28-30]

<sup>16</sup> the Father ... will give you another Helper [or companion] to be with you forever, <sup>17</sup> even **the Spirit of truth**, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you. <sup>18</sup> I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. (Jn.14:) **Jesus promises to accompany us on our mission.** Unlike God's presence among but apart from his people under the old covenant Christ promises to live together with and even within his people ... forever, the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the Lord's people. To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of **this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory, Col.1:26-27.**

**Jesus in praying to the father for his apostles and disciples said:** <sup>8</sup> For I have given them the words ... and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. <sup>9</sup> I am praying for them ... those whom you have given me for they are yours ... <sup>14</sup> I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. <sup>15</sup> I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one ... <sup>17</sup> Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. <sup>18</sup> As you sent me into the world [on my mission], so I have sent them into the world [on their mission] ... <sup>20</sup> **I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word [ad infinitum] (Jn.17:)**

**Jesus can be seen working out his mission:** <sup>9</sup> And Jesus said to him, Today salvation has come to this house, since even he [Zacchaeus, a rich despised Jewish chief tax collector cooperating with the Roman government] is a son of Abraham. <sup>10</sup> For the Son of Man came [his mission was] to seek and to save the lost [here referring to the Hebrew nation] (Lk.19:)

### **Jesus heals a Gentile's demon afflicted child**

<sup>22</sup> And behold, a Canaanite woman from that region [Decapolis, a predominately Gentile area, Mk.7:3 ] came out and was crying, Have mercy on me, **O Lord, Son of David** [Jesus came as the Messiah and heir to the throne of David]; my daughter is severely oppressed by a demon ... <sup>24</sup> He answered, I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. <sup>25</sup> But she came and knelt before him, saying, Lord help me. <sup>26</sup> And he answered, It is not right to take the children's bread

[what was given to the Hebrews] and throw it to the dogs [non-Jews: prior to the resurrection the "wall of hostility" still stood between the Jews and Gentiles, **Eph.2:11-22** ] . <sup>27</sup> She said, Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table [she pleads an exception with no presumption of deserving the blessing promised to Israel]. <sup>28</sup> Then Jesus answered her, O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire. And her daughter was healed instantly. (Mt.15:)

John the Baptist and then Jesus called for repentance in order to enter the kingdom of heaven [Mt.3:2; 4:17]. The good news about the kingdom was designated for the Jews, God's covenant people. These twelve [apostles] Jesus sent out, instructing them, Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel [primary mission goal under the old covenant]. (Mt.10:5) **Gentiles** were foreigners to God's covenant with Israel but Jesus did not prohibit preaching the nearness of the kingdom to them, he just did not at this point send the disciples into Gentile areas. The **Samaritans** were a mixed blood race resulting from the intermarriage of Israelites left behind when the people of the northern kingdom were exiled and Gentiles brought into the land by the Assyrians. After Jesus had risen from the dead, the **new covenant** in his blood made people from every nation equally acceptable to be born into God's family. Consequently the Gospel is then preached to people of all nations. (Mt.28:19)

For God so loved the world [not just the Jews] that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that [with the mission goal that] the world might be saved through him, **Jn.3:16**

### Before the world came into existence

<sup>5</sup> ... Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed ... <sup>24</sup> you loved me before the foundation of the world (**Jn.17:**)

<sup>18</sup> Knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers ... <sup>19</sup> with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot [reference to OT animal sacrifice that prefigured the perfect sacrifice God would provide; **see Jn.1:29**] <sup>20</sup> He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for your sake who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God (**1 Pt.1:**)

<sup>1</sup> Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the sake of the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth, which accords with godliness, <sup>2</sup> in hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies promised before the ages began (**Tit.1:**)

God ... <sup>9</sup> who saved us and called us to a holy calling [separated us unto himself from the rest of humanity and gifted us to unashamedly testify of the Lord (**v.7-8**) and suffer for the sake of the Gospel] ... for [according to] his own purpose, and grace which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began<sup>10</sup> and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel (**2 Tim.1:**)

<sup>3</sup> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, <sup>4</sup> even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world ... (Eph.1:)

### Our Mission

... The Son of God appeared to destroy the works of the devil [mission goal] (1 Jn.3:8). And the God of peace [intends to continue that goal through us by] crushing Satan under our feet.

(Rom.16:20)

Everything in Christ's life and death is imbued with God's determinations, purposes, and goals. Many Scriptures show how God has woven together the elements of his plan into a wondrous tapestry of this reality in which we live in anticipation of Christ's return.

The night came when Jesus was betrayed, arrested, falsely accused, tried, mocked and abused, and finally crucified. From noon [the time of his crucifixion] there was darkness over the land. About 3pm, Jesus cried out with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit. Jn.19:30 records that he said, It is finished, and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. Mt.27 records <sup>50</sup> Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. <sup>51</sup> And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom [indicating the way into God's holy presence was now open to all nations]. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split. <sup>52</sup> The tombs also were opened. And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep [euphemism for died] were raised [lived again], <sup>53</sup> and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many. That evening, his body was sealed in a tomb with a large stone and after 3 days he rose from the grave. After showing himself to and speaking with numerous groups of people over many days, Jesus gave a final mission statement to his followers and ascended into heaven, you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth (Acts 1:8).

Jesus had given his disciples [and by extension us] ONE clear unambiguous mission, ONE. As we spread out into the world, we are tasked with disseminating the Gospel of Jesus Christ to those we meet along the way. Jesus knew persecution would soon follow on the heels of the mass conversions of people forcing them to scatter everywhere. <sup>16</sup> Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And ... they worshiped him ... <sup>17</sup> And Jesus said to them, All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>18</sup> Go therefore [participle, in your going or as you spread across the land and travel from place to place] and make disciples of [verb describes the action the participles modify] all nations, baptizing them [participle] in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>12</sup> teaching them [participle] to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the consummation of the age (Mt.28:).

### The cost of discipleship

Before he entered Jerusalem for the last time, Jesus had asked about the people's perception of him and warned them about what was going to happen to him. Then he asked <sup>29</sup> who do you [apostles] say that I am? Peter answered him, You are the Christ ... (Mk.8:) <sup>31</sup> And [Jesus] began



to teach them that the Son of Man [3<sup>rd</sup> person reference to himself] must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes [Jewish leadership] and be killed, and after three days rise again. <sup>32</sup> And he said this plainly. Now **Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him**. <sup>33</sup> But turning and seeing his disciples, Jesus rebuked Peter and said, Get behind me, Satan! For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man [ **You are looking at the mission in a selfish way. But God intends to bring salvation in an unselfish way.** The only way for Jesus to accomplish **his mission goals** was to offer his own life in substitution for those who believe in him.]

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| 1. Man of Sorrows! what a name<br>Ruined sinners to reclaim.           | For the Son of God, who came<br>Hallelujah! What a Savior!        |
| 2. Bearing shame and scoffing rude<br>Sealed my pardon with His blood. | In my place condemned He stood;<br>Hallelujah! What a Savior!     |
| 3. Guilty, vile, and helpless we<br>Full atonement! can it be?         | Spotless Lamb of God was He;<br>Hallelujah! What a Savior!        |
| 4. Lifted up was He to die;<br>Now in Heav'n exalted high.             | <b>It is finished! was His cry;</b><br>Hallelujah! What a Savior! |
| 5. When He comes, our glorious King<br>Then anew His song we'll sing:  | All His ransomed home to bring,<br>Hallelujah! What a Savior!     |

<sup>34</sup> And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, if anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me [a painful renunciation of self-interest and a wholehearted turn to Jesus' interests]. <sup>35</sup> For whoever would save his life will lose it [infallible rule of the kingdom – self-focus issues in death], but whoever loses his life for my sake and the Gospel's will save it ... [for some this commitment will entail loss of physical life; for all of us discipleship to Jesus implies death to self] <sup>38</sup> For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words [does not gladly confess Jesus and take a principled stand in support of him and his words] in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels. (Mk.8:)

It seems that by trying to save our lives, we will necessarily go off-mission and take our families with us. My own life since coming to Christ has not been consistent. I have not often taken my children with me as I witnessed about Jesus. I have been aware of the mission from the beginning, but have vacillated on and off mission. As a result, my children. have not been consistent and focused on mission either.<sup>a</sup>

How did the disciples describe the mission? <sup>10</sup> For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ ... <sup>11</sup> Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others ... <sup>17</sup> Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. <sup>18</sup> All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; <sup>19</sup> that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

<sup>20</sup> Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup> For our sake he made him who knew no sin to be sin so that we might become the righteousness of God in him (**2 Cor.5:**)

Renewing our focus is a necessary step in our return to the mission. This coupled with breaking out of our conditioning or molding by the world; untangling, unencumbering, separating ourselves from the world is absolutely necessary if our new identity in Christ is to be reasserted.

<sup>1</sup> I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present **your bodies** as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. <sup>2</sup> Do not be [or continue to be] conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. <sup>3</sup> For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment ... (**Rom.12:**) There are all kinds of Christian responses and activities that compliment and support the mission by making the Gospel attractive. Christians are a blessing to the world.

### A Dangerous Place

The world is a dangerous place for followers of Christ. How dare we send our children forth as missionaries? There is only one answer. They must be personally convinced that Jesus is LORD and surrounded by a support group of like-minded believers. The strength of our [their parent's] convictions is not enough. **Nominal Christianity cannot sustain us or our children in this fight.** It has to be their own convictions that drive them just as it has to be yours that move you.

<sup>16</sup> Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. <sup>17</sup> Beware of men, for they will deliver you over to courts and flog you in their synagogues, <sup>18</sup> and you will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them and the Gentiles. <sup>19</sup> When they deliver you over, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour. <sup>20</sup> For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. <sup>21</sup> Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death and <sup>22</sup> you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. <sup>23</sup> When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next ...

<sup>25</sup> It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household. <sup>26</sup> So have no fear of them, for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known [You will be vindicated!]. <sup>27</sup> What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops. <sup>28</sup> And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell ... <sup>32</sup> So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, <sup>33</sup> but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.

Our association, our standing with and for Christ is of paramount importance to God. Our mission is harder and greater than behaving as Christians in a corrupt world. It involves this, but requires that

we actually speak the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and reason with people who have been raised in and are part of idolatrous, non-Christian, and anti-Christian cultures. **The mission is to be a prophet and an apologist - to persuade people to repent in order to escape the judgment of God.**

<sup>34</sup> Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. <sup>35</sup> For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. <sup>36</sup> And a person's enemies will be those of his own household. <sup>37</sup> Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. <sup>38</sup> And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. <sup>39</sup> Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. (**Mt.10:**)

<sup>25</sup> Now great crowds accompanied him, and he turned and said to them, <sup>26</sup> If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. <sup>27</sup> Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple ... <sup>33</sup> So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple. (**Lk.14:**)

### Perspectives on the battle

**Rev.12** consists of 2 complementary visions that provide symbolic commentary on the same battle and its sequel. The **1<sup>st</sup> vision (v.1-4)** describes the protagonists and preparation for the battle. The dragon is the woman's ancient enemy identified in **v.9** as the one who deceived her (**Gen.3:13**). He is shown in symbols signaling his cunning wisdom (seven heads); great power (ten horns); and authority to influence others (seven diadems). **Then the battle viewed from an earthly perspective flashes past in the blink of an eye encapsulating the life, suffering, and exaltation of Jesus (v.5), then its sequel** – the woman's flight to the wilderness for protection (**v.6**). The dragon's plot is foiled with split-second speed.

The time period symbolizes the church's ongoing experience of suffering and safety, bold testimony and bitter trial, alienation in the desert but nourishment from God, from the time of Jesus' ascension until the trauma that precedes his return.

**[The 2<sup>nd</sup> vision opens with a heavenly perspective on the battle, v.7-9]** <sup>7</sup> Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, <sup>8</sup> but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. <sup>9</sup> And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. <sup>10</sup> And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. <sup>11</sup> And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death. <sup>12</sup> Therefore, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them! **[celebration of the coming of God's kingdom and of his Christ's authority (v.10) precedes the final victory]** But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that

his time is short. (**Rev.12:**) [a heavenly commentary on its significance (**v.10-12**) and then the same sequel - the woman's flight to the wilderness, **v.13-17**].

And the people of God have defeated the Devil by the blood of the Lamb and by their testimony [ie, they constantly proclaimed the Gospel of Jesus Christ] . And they did not love their lives so much that they were afraid to die (**Rev.12:1**) [An opponent who is not only willing to die, but for whom death means winning, cannot be defeated (**Phil.1:21**)] .

Stay focused on the mission; avoid the encumbrance of sin and entanglement of the cares of the world and its distractions. Endure God's discipline and be trained by it. Do good and remain unsullied by the world. This does not mean that Christians are not allowed to engage in enjoyable activities, fun things, hobbies, sports, personal interests, etc. No! We continue our mission to those we encounter who enjoy the same things. We don't abandon the mission, we expand it to include new territory and communicate the Gospel through our work (art, literature, etc) and word to our new associates. The mission keeps us focused on what is of real significance while we enjoy all areas of human endeavor [see note a below].

### BE TRAINED BY THE LORD'S DISCIPLINE

<sup>1</sup> Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses [who have gone before us and whose lives speak to us, **Heb.11**], let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, <sup>2</sup> looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith ... <sup>3</sup> Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. <sup>4</sup> In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. <sup>5</sup> And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? My son do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. <sup>6</sup> For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.

<sup>7</sup> It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons <sup>10</sup> ... he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. <sup>11</sup> For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. <sup>12</sup> Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, <sup>13</sup> and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed. <sup>14</sup> Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. (**Heb.12:**)

### Pure & undefiled religion

<sup>12</sup> be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves ... <sup>26</sup> If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless. <sup>27</sup> Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world. (**Jas.1:**)

### PAUL'S REQUEST

After Paul metaphorically admonishes his brothers in the faith to prepare for battle by equipping themselves <sup>11</sup>... to withstand the schemes of the devil <sup>12</sup> because our struggle is not against blood



and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places, he asks for prayer for himself <sup>19</sup> ... Ask God to give me the right words so I can boldly explain God's mysterious plan that the Good News is for Jews and Gentiles alike. <sup>20</sup> I am in chains now, still preaching this message as God's ambassador. So pray that I will keep on speaking boldly for him, as I should. (**Eph.6:**) as every one who calls upon the name of Jesus ought to. This is our mission, our calling. Paul's concern was to finish his course well. <sup>23</sup> ... the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me. <sup>24</sup> But none of these things deter me. Nor do I count my life of value to myself, so that I may joyfully finish my course and the ministry I have received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God. (**Acts 20:**)

### Paul's Discipline

<sup>24</sup> Do you not know that all those who run in a race run, but one receives the prize? So run, that you may obtain it. <sup>25</sup> Everyone who strives for the prize exercises self-control in all things. ... <sup>26</sup> So, therefore, I run, not with uncertainty. So I fight, not as one who beats the air. <sup>27</sup> But I bring and keep my body under subjection, lest when preaching to others I myself should be disqualified. (**1 Cor.9:**)

### Paul's charge to Timothy

<sup>1</sup> I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: <sup>2</sup> Preach the word, be ready in season and out of season, reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with all patience and teaching. <sup>3</sup> For the time will come when people will not endure sound doctrine ... <sup>4</sup> and they will turn their ears away from the truth and turn to myths. <sup>5</sup> But be self-controlled in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, and prove your ministry [**stay on mission**].

<sup>6</sup> For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. <sup>7</sup> I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, and I have kept the faith. <sup>8</sup> From now on a crown of righteousness is laid up for me, which **the Lord the righteous Judge will give me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved His appearing.** (**2 Tim.4:**)

### Fight the good fight; Take hold of eternal life

<sup>6</sup> But godliness with contentment is great gain ... <sup>9</sup> But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare and into many foolish and harmful lusts, which drown men in ruin and destruction. <sup>10</sup> For the love of money is the root of all evil. While coveting after money, some have strayed from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

<sup>11</sup> But you, O man of God, escape these things, and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, and gentleness. <sup>12</sup> **Fight the good fight of faith. Lay hold on eternal life,** to which you are called and have professed a good profession before many witnesses. <sup>13</sup> I command you, in the sight of God ... <sup>14</sup> to keep this commandment without blemish, blameless until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ ...

<sup>17</sup> Command those who are rich in this world that they not be conceited, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who richly gives us all things to enjoy. <sup>18</sup> Command that they do good,

*that they be rich in good works, generous, willing to share, <sup>19</sup> and laying up in store for themselves a good foundation for the coming age, **so that they may take hold of eternal life.** (1 Tim.6:)*

### **End Notes**

<sup>a</sup> Getting off mission entails risk, puts us in a certain jeopardy with respect to temptations. It represents losing focus on the most important thing we have to orient our lives around. It is easy to get off track and wonder from the path that keeps us centered on Jesus. We need people around us to journey with us and keep us straight. We face a world of sin and distraction from our mission. You know people who have lost their way and become entangled in the affairs of this world, whose lives are full of the consequences of such departure (1 Tim.1:18-20). The end of that path is always regret and often leaves one hopeless and in unbelief.