

W_88_Ephesians.mp3

[00:00:01] This is a recording of a Bible study given at the Chapel of the Open Book. Under the covering title of the Pleroma or the fullness, we are at this moment, considering the references to the word fullness in the New Testament and have arrived at the Epistle to the Ephesians. It is our custom in this meeting to read a portion of scripture together and those of you who are using this recording, if you care to join us, will you switch off just for a minute or two and read with us Ephesians chapter two and three? Our subject covering subject is the word *plēroō*. The word translated fullness. We have given the Old Testament passages that refer to it some consideration. But realizing what a tremendous subject it was, we felt the time had come to come over into the New Testament to get our teaching balanced and the structure of the arrangements of the word fullness, which you see in front of you, will give you a little idea where we have got and where we have yet to go. The first reference is in John's Gospel, where there is a strong contrast between the law that was given by Moses and the real grace, the true thing that came by Jesus Christ, and that he said to be out of his fullness. And then the next note that was struck was Galatians Chapter four, when we were told that in the fullness of time, Christ came as a big insistence upon the question of time in relation to the outworking of the purpose of God.

[00:01:58] In our last study, we were looking at the testimony in Romans, where we have, as you see, four references. We didn't look at the whole four of them individually, but there they are as a group. And you will see that the word *provoque* unto jealousy is an important thing because the word is repeated in one Corinthians chapter ten, where we again have fullness. And the thought is this that when Paul was ministering to the Gentiles, as he was during the Acts of the Apostles and in the epistle to the Romans, he was reminding the Gentiles that they were being called a little bit before their true time. Their true time had not yet come. They were being called to provoke Israel to jealousy, to see whether Israel would say to themselves, Look at the Gentiles. They are receiving the gifts of the spirit. They are being blessed. What's happening? We are losing our place. And you may remember I drew your attention to the figure of the olive tree, which is so often misinterpreted. The wild olive graft into the olive tree was that actual process to waken up a flagging olive tree, provoke it to emulation and make it start fruit bearing all over again. God says That's what I'm doing. I'm provoking you to jealousy by a people of stammering lips and other tongues.

[00:03:23] But Israel were not. They went out into their blindness. And that leads us to our present study, Ephesians. Now this series of studies is being recorded. And consequently, I have to remember that. And we already have a long list of recording tapes that have given an exposition of the epistle to the Ephesians. Had that not been so, I should have said to you this evening, Well, now. We will not merely concentrate our attention upon the four references to fulness that come in Ephesians, but we will give the whole Epistle a survey and an exposition. But I'm going to say the same thing with regard to the next epistle with this subject. This evening, we bring another set of these recordings to a close. And when we meet together, God willing, next Thursday, we shall come to the Epistle, to the Colossians. And then instead of going straight away to the words in chapter 1 or 2, where the word fulness comes, we are going to stop and we're going to consider the whole of the epistle to the Colossians as well as the word fulness in it. And that will provide an exposition of another mighty epistle and also be very, very useful in our ministry on the recording tape. So you remember that we're. Now we come to Ephesians and the four references to fullness, which you see there. Should we just look at them so that we've got them under our eye? Ephesians 110 that in the dispensation of the fullness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth even in Him.

[00:05:11] That's the first reference. The second is at the end of the same chapter. Verse 22. Hath put all things under his feet and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body. The fullness of him that filleth all in all. The third reference is the concluding portion of the great prayer of chapter three, verse 19, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God. And the last reference is in chapter 413. The goal of the Ministry. 13 till we all come in. The unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature, of the fullness of the Christ. You will see that there is no strictly doctrinal use of the word. It either impinges upon the purpose of the ages or it belongs to the way in which the members of the Body of Christ are associated and respond to this great teaching. Now let's come back, shall we, to chapter one. It is that in the dispensation of the fulness of times. First of all, you will see that on the structure of the usage of it naturally, this as a sort of reference.

[00:06:45] To the earlier passage that we had in Chapter four. Now that doesn't quite fit in, but it's there in the mind in in chapter four of Galatians. It was the fullness of time. And in Ephesians one, it's the fullness of times. Now, what is the difference? We had this out before, but I'll just mention it again. In Galatians four, it is the word *chronos*, just time, the passing of time, the measure of duration, the something you can measure by the tick of a clock. What is the word *times* in Ephesians? It's not something you can measure by the tick of the clock. It's something which has to do with appropriate time or in other words, a season like seed time and harvest. So in the fullness of time, Christ was born. And just exactly at the right time, something here is going to take place. It's exactly the right time that we have to keep in mind. Please. Perhaps we might acquaint ourselves with the way in which this word *season* is used in Ephesians because it will help us. In chapter. To. Verse two, we have these words. 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 and in verse. 12 and 13 that at that time ye were without Christ being aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

[00:08:34] But now. You see, those passages are still using the word *season*. The next season. You were crestless and hopeless and godless. But now. Can't you see how this fits? There is a time and a season for every purpose under heaven. Now, it would not have been seasonable while the kingdom was still being proclaimed, while Israel was still top, and first while there was still the hope that Christ would come and reign over the Gentiles. That wasn't the right season for God to reveal the secret purpose that He had for the Gentiles independently of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob New Covenants promises fathers because it would have been rather confusing. But what a moment it was when Israel failed. When there was a gap, apparently, I say apparently in the purpose of God, when the chosen vessel had to be set aside, when they were called in the language of Old Testament prophecy *lo ami*, not my people. And God added, and I will not be your God, hence you. What a blank that must be. The chosen people, not his people, God himself, who had called himself the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob withdrawing it. That was the season. That was the appropriate moment when to a man in prison, a man put there by the opposition of the devil to shut him up and stop his mouth.

[00:10:10] God in the prison gave that man a greater and more wonderful vision than he'd ever received. There is a bare possibility. There's a prophetic anticipation in the words that we have in the Epistle to the Romans. Chapter 50, He says, When I come, I know that I shall come in the fullness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ. What he may have not quite known all that was going that was going to be. He began to see that Israel were going out. He began to see that the Gentile was coming in and he knew that Christ was going to return to him in a vision and give him a second commission. He knew it. And so he said, When I come, I'm coming in the fullness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ. He did. And when this epistle was indicted, he had already made known that which had been entrusted to him the dispensation of the mystery and the calling of the Gentile into a relationship with Christ which had never been made known before. This is in that season. You were without Christ in that season. You were aliens in that season. You were strangers in that season. No covenants and promises or fathers belong to you. But now. So we have this emphasis upon the season. Now, the only other occurrence where the word season comes is in a very practical context and you may not spot it in the original verse, chapter six, verse 18, Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit.

[00:11:56] Praying Always in all seasons. While there is a season to be quiet and a season to speak and a season for God to reveal something and a season to be kept back, the Apostle slips in this bit. He says. But so far as you're concerned, prayer is always in season. Just as the preaching of the gospel will always be in season and always be out of season according to which way you look at it. So there are the references and the ones we are concerned about particularly are the is the first, because the first one contains a reference to the word fulness. Now let's come back again then. This when it says that in the dispensation of the fulness of times or seasons, the word in is used to translate the preposition ice eyes and usually eyes means into or unto. The word in occurs over and over again. In this first chapter, all the way down, you get the words that we are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places. But if we stop there, we've left out the most important. You see, we're arguing the point as to whether heavenly places means places or not. And let us not forget that when we've done and we don't go any further, it's all vague words. It's in Christ.

[00:13:25] That's more important, first of all, to get that in its right place. And then it says. According as he hath chosen us before the foundation of the world. Have I left

anything out, Friends? Did you notice it? According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world that could he possibly choose us. And what good would it be if Christ isn't there? The mediator right from the beginning. So we go down all the way down, having predestinated us by Jesus Christ and in whom we have redemption. So here, this is not a word in. This is the word. And. And in many instances, it can be freely translated with a view to a goal in front of it that God had in front of him, a dispensation. Now the word dispensation is particularly connected with the Apostle's ministry. He was a steward of the mysteries of God, and we have used it to speak of Dispensational truth dividing one colleague from another. But he is right. He is a dispensation that God himself had in view. He calls it the dispensation of the fulness of the seasons. Now if you go back over the past. Any one of God's dealings with any section of his people is a wonder. Will you come to think of the way in which he reminds Israel that he didn't choose them because they were a great people? And when you come to read their history, which is recorded in their own books, you wonder how ever God put up with them.

[00:15:06] All the long suffering of God with that disobedient and gainsaying people. But he is a dispensation. A dispensation which is marked with the word fulness. For there is no other calling in the whole Word of God which has such a completeness about it. When we come to the epistle to the Colossians, which will discover that it even completes the Word of God, that if the epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians are misunderstood and neglected, those people have not got a complete Bible. They've got so far, but they haven't got far enough. It's a dispensation of fullness now. It's characterized. The parish state. In the dispensation of the fullness of the seasons. He's going to gather together in one all things in Christ. Now, that of itself is wonderful. But if you want all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth. So that makes this very, very complete. Now, the next thing is this. The words gathered together in one are a free translation of this Greek word. Anna Kessel. Now, if you know the Greek, you've spotted it once. If you don't, it's just a funny sound. Now Anna means up. Cephalē means head. And he so translated and it means to head up. It was a figure used in oratory. A recapitulation. Anyone here ever heard anybody say, We'll have a recap.

[00:16:49] Yes, right. A recapitulation to resume to head up. God is heading up in Christ. All things in heaven and earth. One day in its fullest extent. Being comes the

eighth, when he should have delivered up the kingdom to the father. Well, you should have put all enemies under his feet. But the last enemy to be destroyed is death. When he should have dreamed that all these things. Then shall the son himself be subject unto him, to put all things unto him that God may be all in all. That's what's coming in the glorious future. This is the anticipation of it. Because when we come to the Epistle, to the Colossians, we shall learn that we belong to a company where Christ is. All in all. Christ is all in all now. Now even in this world with its turmoil and its worries. But it's limited. So when we come to the next reference of the fullness, we'll anticipate ourselves Chapter one, verse 23, and gave him to be the head over all things. That isn't what it says quite plainly. He gave him to be the head over all things to the church, and he will give him head over all things in the unlimited sense later. But to the church now. So we are a little recapitulation, a little heading up, a little anticipation of what it will be when the purpose of God is completely and ultimately reached. So we've got a wonderful destiny, haven't we? Not only to enjoy for ourselves, but those principalities and powers that are learning through the church, the manifold wisdom of God.

[00:18:40] They've already said that this relationship, Christ, the head, the church, the members, is an anticipation of what God is aiming at right through the ages. So now we've got then a dispensation of fullness is in view. A dispensation when there shall be gathered together. All things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on Earth. Now, if you will just turn to Colossians chapter one, you'll see those things which are in heaven. It says in chapter one, verse 16, for by him were all things created that are in heaven and that are on earth. Ephesians isn't looking back to the creation, it's looking forward to the new creation. But here he says, he is the creator of all things in heaven and in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions or principalities or powers, all things were created by him. Now, there's not a single reference there to material objects. It doesn't say, man, an animal and tree or sun or moon or star. That's not in view. These are the things in heaven. Now beams across the chapter two of Colossians. In verse 19, we have Christ referred to as the head of the body and not holding the head from which all the body by joints and bends. That's the head of the church, the body.

[00:20:19] But look at chapter two. Verse. K and G are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power. C Christ is not only the head of the members of the body. He is head of Principality and power. So already now, now there has been

reunited. The things in heaven and the things which are on earth. We are the things on earth at the moment, friends. Although we have a heavenly destiny. It's already taken place. What will it be like when it is fully realized? Why? No other word that we could utter, nor any revelation that God can give us at this present moment could justify, as we read Eye hath not seen nor ear heard. Neither hath it entered the heart of man. Or as the Queen of Sheba tells us, when she had a limited view of what God could do, she said, Behold, the half was not told me. So here we have then. One of the first things that we must remember about our glorious colleague that we are an anticipation of the gold of the ages with Christ as head and all things in heaven and earth ranged under him as though he were the head of this worthy body. Although the church, which is the body, is an exclusive title to this particular calling. What else we just noticed. Another phase we have. In. The next reference, a sort of an echo of this passage.

[00:22:04] As we've said in verse ten, we have fullness in verse 23, we have fullness, the fullness of him that filleth all in all. In verse ten, we have carefully in the verb to head up in verse 22. We have carefully. The noun itself, the head. And then we have in verse ten, all things and. Adverse. 22 is the head over all things. So you see, you can't avoid the idea that this is an expansion of it. He says, first of all, there's a dispensation of the fullness of the seasons when he's going to gather together under one head, all things in Christ, whether in heaven or on earth. Then he specializes at the end of the chapter, not with regard to the heavenly powers and the principalities. He waits for Colossians to deal with that, but he stressing now the church, which is the one body. So shall we give this a consideration? Chapter one now verse 22 and 23 must not be read just like that. They must go back a little bit. In verse 20, he has spoken about where Christ has been raised and seated. The power which He wrought in Christ when He raised him from the dead and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places. Now, there are some folks who are objecting strongly to the use of the word heavenly places. They tell us it ought to be translated among heavenly beings.

[00:23:47] Well, now is that so? Christ is at the right hand of God among the heavenly beings. And yet the very next statement says He's far above all principality power might dominion every name that's named in this age of wonders come. What happened to be among heavenly beings, and yet so far above them that it's almost impossible to think of the height of glory that belongs to his position. You are difficult. And then it's followed by the words. And I've put all things under his feet. And if you'll look what the Apostle Paul

himself has said about that in one Corinthians 15 and in Hebrews two, he expands it. It says when he says all things are under his feet, it is manifest that he is accepted, that he put all. You see what he says. He says there's only one exception. Everything is under the feet of Christ except God himself. And then you want to tell me he's seated among heavenly beings. Say language is being emptied of its meaning. And then when you come to Colossians, you have the word there where where is a preposition of place where Christ is? Set your affection. I think you ought to be watchful that you don't allow somebody to come along and just rob you of your inheritance. It's where Christ sits at. The right hand of God is the goal of our hope as it is of our faith.

[00:25:19] And we are told in Chapter two that this company has already potentially seated together in heavenly places, seated there where Christ is at the right hand of God. Well, now, flowing out of that, it says he has been given head over all things to the church. That church is his body. And now comes a very extraordinary use of the word fullness. The fullness. The church, not Christ. The church is the fullness of him. And he could understand, of course, in our small degree and measure that Christ is the fullness. While we are glorying in that we can see how wonderfully true it is that it was well pleasing that in him all fullness should dwell. But that isn't what it says here. It says the church is the fullness. What does this mean? I just read a word to show you that others have thought of this as well. They draw attention that the the word here, the fullness of him that filleth all in all. When it's translated literally. Each, the one who is being fulfilled. Christ is being fulfilled. He said, How can that be? He can never be completed because he is himself complete. All friends. We are not talking about him in his own person. We are still remembering. We are dealing with a figure of speech, the head and the body. Don't you see that if Christ is the head, he must have the body to make himself complete? How could he function without a body? Of course, we know full well a body can't function without the head.

[00:27:13] That goes without saying. That is to say, the church is absolutely hopeless if Christ is not supreme. But then he goes the other way round. If Christ is the head and the body has all gone to pieces. Well then Christ hasn't been fulfilled. You see what I'm getting at? We're not robbing him of his glory. We're only facing the fact that when God used this expression to head in the body, he made something. Now, a very old one of the Christian fathers so called Chrysostom, right back in about the year 300 and something he was called Chrysostom because the word means a golden mouth. He

was a very wonderful speaker, apparently in his day. And this is what he wrote. As though this were not enough to show the relation and close connection. What is he? The fullness, he says of Christ is the church for the fullness of the head is the body. And the fullness of the body is the head. The fullness is that is just as the head is filled or fulfilled by the body. For the body is constituted of all its parts and has need of each one. For if it be not many and one a hand and another foot and another some other part, then the whole body is not fulfilled by means of them all.

[00:28:42] His body is fulfilled. And so he goes on all for some length with regard to this question of the head and the body. But the point is the construction of the verb does not mean, as it stands in our version, that he fills all, but he is fulfilled by these all giving us a rather different attitude towards this teaching. Now, this could be dangerous if we think that there is any deficiency in Christ. If we think there is anything we can contribute. Oh no. We are only keeping to the figure that God is used. And if it is true that in the body one member cannot say of another, I have no need of you. Well, then, of course, it must also be true. That the head cannot say to the members of the body, I have no need of you. For the very fact that they work together makes them a body and makes them live. Otherwise it would be impossible. So that's why we belong to a dispensation of the fullness of the seasons in which Christ is going to be the head over all things. And we, the Church, are the complement of him, who in his turn fills all things. I'm stumped for words aren't offerings. I think I'm glad. I don't know where the Golden mouth preacher got over it, but I don't seem to be able to say words that would express even what I can see.

[00:30:15] And that's not very far. So I think that you better let it work. Okay. Let it remain with us to realize what a calling we have. If in the working after the purpose of God and his joining us together with his son, he says, and my son will never be complete in his office, in his personal yes, he is independent of us, but in his office and the working out of his purpose. He wants you. He wants me. Overwhelming thought, isn't it? But it makes us feel something of the wonder of our calling. Well, now, should we just move on? To the next reference, and that is in the great prayer of chapter three. Now this prayer. Get the second half of chapter three, starting with verse 14. For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father. Is linked on to chapter two. Like this in Chapter two, he has referred to the building of a temple. Let's look at the last three verses. And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being

the chief cornerstone in whom all the building. Slickly frame together grows unto an holy temple in the Lord, in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. The Vatican manuscript, which is very, very reliable in many of these references, reads the habitation of Christ in spirit. When I say the Vatican, don't go off the deep end and say potpourri within the Vatican is merely the library in which that precious document is found.

[00:32:11] It doesn't matter who's got it. It still says the same thing. And it's found to be very, very trustworthy in many of its corrections. So it reads according to that a habitation, a habitation or a dwelling place of Christ in spirit. Now, he says, for this cause, what? Oh, because I've told you of a dwelling place for Christ in spirit. For this cause. Verse 14. I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that he stopped himself like I have to stop myself. He said, Oh, wait a minute. I've got to say something else, because he just went on enough. He said, I've got to go a bit further for this, cause I didn't. He doesn't say, bow my knees as I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles or he said, Now I've got to go further. I've already said something. You say, Well, what do you mean, Paul? You are the prisoner of Jesus Christ for us all. We said, I hope you've heard of the dispensation, of the grace of God. And then he goes on all about the mystery. Well, he says now, having finished that for this cause, because the church has been likened to a temple and a dwelling place for Christ for this cause, I pray that it may be not merely a doctrine written in Scripture, but in some measure experienced by you.

[00:33:34] You know, we could hold out over that fence. We could have the doctrine in our heads and even in our hearts so much that there isn't room to sit down and work it out or have any experience of it. You know that I've been working on this alphabetical analysis. I did volume one and volume two and three, four and five, and then I sat back and breathed a it and thought, Oh, what a pity. I haven't been able to deal with the doctrine in it. So for five, six, seven, eight, then all this bother and controversy arose about prophetic things. So once more unto the breach. Dear friends, there's another two. Then I thought, Well, now, surely. After all, if it's all dispensational truth and all doctrinal truth and all prophetic truth and at the end of it. Also now feel there's a gap still. So there's another one. Just be prepared on the experimental side. The practical outworking of it. Surely that must be so. So he says. Hearing this prayer. Chapter three. Let's go on then shall be for this. Cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord

Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his spirit in the inner man. That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.

[00:35:06] See, that's what he was making all the time, he said. It's one thing to belong to a temple and you are a poor little insignificant bit of stone somewhere tucked out of the way to make a dwelling place for Christ. But it's another thing to know that each and every individual that he loved and gave himself for can, in his own small measure, be a little sanctuary in which Christ may dwell. So he said, I pray that that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith. Then he goes on from it that ye being rooted and grounded in love may be able to comprehend with all saints. Now it says in our version, what is the breadth? And that makes you think the breadth of something and the length and something. But strictly speaking, it isn't. To comprehend what is breadth and length and depth and height. You know. You see, you can't quite. How far is the east from the west, Friends? Well, you said the least. Of what? Ah, yes, but how far is the east from the west so far? I put your transgressions from you. This is almost infinity. Now, I don't profess to understand what is called the fourth dimension. It's big enough problem for me to understand three dimensions. I can just get my mind around that length breadth of thickness. But this man's right in the middle of infinity. He says, What is the breadth and length and depth and height? Do you notice that in the three callings we have in Scripture, there is that advance? When Abraham was told God was going to give him a territory on Earth, he said, Walk through the length of it and the breadth of it.

[00:36:54] That's all two dimensions flat. When you come to the second calling, the heavenly Jerusalem, the breadth and the length and the height are equal. Three The nations that as far as we can go in this life, then the philosophers talk about the fourth dimension. They say that if I understood the fourth dimension, I could walk right quite through the brick wall without any bother, like the risen Christ did. That baffles me. I'll leave that for that day. I won't try it. But here. Here we have the the highest calling has got breadth, length, depth, height. Now suppose, is we've got to know all that. He says It's all right. It's all right. Look. And to know something else. That battleship to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge. Oh, he said, Don't you give up. Because there are some things in God's creation or some things in His Word that's beyond your comprehension, because you'll give most of it up if that's the case. The things that we think most simple or baffle you with their richness and their fullness, with their height

and with their depth, he says you're not going to give up contemplating the love of Christ because it's a shoreless sea, are you? You're not going to say to yourself, all you've got is one of your hymns.

[00:38:17] The love of Christ is without beginning or without end. Now that which has no beginning can't exist today. Where are we? Who is it? That of course we are reasoning like the philosopher who only bases it upon our limited experience. No, no, he says. The love of Christ will completely happening not only in this life, but perhaps when fullness of knowledge is given to us, it still be a vast field of research. But, he says, to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge he ever come into the fullness, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God. Now, that of itself is a little bit strange. How can we be filled with all the fullness of God? In the epistle to the Colossians. It was well-pleasing that in Christ should all the fullness dwell. We could understand that whatever the word fullness may mean there. But when you look at the original, you find the word width is the same word we are looking at in chapter one ice and two with a view to. That we might be filled with a view to all the fullness of God. While we are back on the other one, each one of us. Making up this complete hole. So, friends, if you are not fueled up to your measure.

[00:39:40] They you're stopping the completion of the purpose of God. Of course he won't allow you to stop it. The day will come when you will be brimming over. But it's a thing that we can contemplate even now, that as we contemplate the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, so we may be filled right up to the fullness of God. In chapter four, he says, verse seven, But unto every I'm going to translate that. But I do. Each one of us is given grace according to the nature of the gift of Christ. You see, we're not all the same measure. One of us is a small measure. One of us may be a larger measure. And the concern for us is not that we're looking at one another and envying one another or trying to do the impossible, but each one of us see to it that whatever measure we are, at least we won't be content to be half full. Filled up to all the fullness of God. So we have in chapter 123 Christ himself as head being fulfilled by the fact that all his members. Are now contemplated as complete. And then those members looking up to him. Are seeking that they too may, in their measure, be filled right up to the very brim. He works it out a little bit in chapter 416. From whom? The whole body that is from Christ the head fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplies according to the effectual working in the measure of every part.

[00:41:24] The measure of every part. Notice the three measures in Chapter four. The first one we've already noticed in verse seven. But until each one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. The third one is in verse 16, the effectual working in the measure of each one part, and the central one is in verse 13, which contains our last reference to the fullness, the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ. So shall we come to that one? Now this one is associated with a ministry till we all come joined on the verse 12 for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying or building up of the body of Christ till we all come. But this ministry is a special one. It says in verse 11, he gave some apostles and then it speaks about. Ascending and descending. Where we going to start? Well, let's go back, then. Verse seven. But unto each one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. There he goes back to an Old Testament psalm to illustrate his point. In these Psalm 68, it says he ascended on high. He led captivity captive. He gave gifts unto men. Well, he says that's what I'm telling you.

[00:42:53] There is a ministry which is related to the Ascended Christ. Well, you say isn't all ministry? Oh, yes. But when you speak about calling apostles. It wasn't the Ascended Christ that called Peter or James or John or Matthew. When Christ called them, he was walking along the seashore or walking through the street on Earth. And he called 12 and one of them was rejected and Matthias filled his place. Been there all the time, it says, from the baptism of John. Now should the Apostle. The Ascended Christ chose some apostles, not merely one himself. Others. So let's read these words. Wherefore he saith. When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men. Now he gave some apostles, but in between. Now that he ascended, what is it? But as he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth. Now just where they are. It may not be perfectly clear. It is possible that the lower parts of the earth are in relation to him. That is to say, the top of Mount Everest is the lower parts. The Earth. Is he so far as the earth is concerned in relation to heaven, any part of it is lower. But on the other hand, we don't know quite just all that it means when he descended into hell and so on. I'm going to leave it. When it speaks about that every knee shall bow of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth.

[00:44:35] Who are the things under the earth? Don't we worry about things, friends? I don't know. But there they are. And whoever they are, they're going to recognize him.

That's good enough. So we'll leave it. I think the meaning is this. Verse ten, He that descended. Wherever he went to is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens that he might fill all things. And he gave look out of this word fitting all things comes the gift of the Apostle Paul and was with it. This is a new company. This is a ministry for a special company. This is belonging to the present dispensation. This is the choice of an apostle and a prophet and an evangelist and a teacher for this work. There were others chosen for other works. No others were chosen by the Ascended Christ. Peter and James and John were already apostles before Christ ascended. So now he gave some apostles and some are prophets. Geppetto says. They were a foundation and they've done their work and they're not repeated. Oh, I know you can keep on hearing every now and again about somebody who's called an apostle. And it doesn't matter. People will follow these people. So no proof either way. And then you'll get every amount of times people have prophets. Prophesying all sorts of things. I was having a look at old boy, but he doesn't seem to know anything about Suez Canal or the dreadful weather we've had.

[00:46:06] You know, all these prophets, they know how to put it. Just, you know, And you know, you can buy different editions of Old Boy if you don't like that one, you can have this one. You see, they put on the outside. This is the original editions. But he gave some prophets the real thing. He put these words into their mouth. But then he gave some evangelists. Now that's where we come in. And I'm inspired ministry. Second, Timothy do the work of an evangelist that was a successor to an apostle. And you appoint those who shall be able to teach others also. That's a successor to the prophet. I suppose I am a teacher. But I not inspired. All I can do is to tell you what's in the book. But if I were a prophet, I could shut the book and do without it. Hey. God, we can't. We have to keep it open. So we have now these ministries. And what are they for? Have a word perfectly is not the ordinary word to go on unto perfection. It's the word which we find when Christ was walking along the seashore and he saw two men. Mending their nets. That's the word perfecting. Mending or it is the word in Galatians six where he said he was your spiritual restore such an one. It means resetting a fractured limb.

[00:47:29] More fracturing taking place. Oh, goodness me. Don't you understand? Acts 28 has taken place. One of the biggest fractures you can imagine that the chosen people were sent out into their blindness and an apparent end had come to all the

purpose of God. And he said the ascended Christ laid hold upon these men, and they had a work of readjusting, perfecting, resetting, mending, putting you into a new position, something that had never been made known before for the readjusting mending of the Saints. For the work of the ministry. For the building up of the Body of Christ being built up. Not complete yet. Never has been complete yet so far. Is only a few members alive today, and those who were members hundreds of years ago are dead. But a day will come when it will be complete and the works going on. And we are told in Chapter 16 that we're all having a share in each one doing its part, identifying itself in love. Nelly. Till we all come. So there's a gold in front of this ministry. When we all come. This is what it's going to be till we all come. In the unity of the faith. And of the knowledge of the Son of God. I don't know. I wonder sometimes whether we ought to translate that word, the acknowledgment of the Son of God. Possibly the both thoughts are there. We can't acknowledge that, which we don't know, but we can spoil what we do know by not acknowledging it.

[00:49:05] And so, as it is in the practical section, let's have it both till we all come in. The unity of the faith. What we believe now unified and of the knowledge and the acknowledgment of the supremacy of the Son of God. Unto a perfect man. This is the other word. Perfect. The ordinary word perfect. A perfect man. Now that word, man. Is translated in chapter five. Let's look at one of the verses. Verse 32. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands. That's the word, man. And of course, if you have any Scotch friends, you know that it's quite usual among them to speak of my name. In a special sense. This word occurs about 50 odd times in the New Testament. It always means a man and never means a woman or a child. There's another word for that altogether. This is the word that means a husband. Airframes. If this company is the bride of the lamb and their goal is to be the perfect husband. What a mess it's going to be. What a happy state of affairs that's going to be, isn't it? Don't you see, Freddie? There are some people who so insist that the church is the bride. If they were true, when paradise is restored, Eve would be there and she'd be looking about. And they forgot to bring Adam. But God is working both.

[00:50:44] There is a company called a Bride which are not here. God is at this moment preparing the perfect husband. And then when the goal is reached, it will be as it was at the beginning of the sin of one man and one woman, one great company, and another with Christ as the head of both. No confusion. So we have then to take the words as

they stand a perfect husband. And the major. Is there such a thing as a perfect husband, Fred? Well, we won't talk about ourselves because that wouldn't be modest, would it? But here, listen to this. Verse 25, Chapter five Husbands love your wives. Well, that wouldn't be too bad if that was true. But wait a minute. What do you mean by that? As Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it. Oh, goodness me. That would be a perfect husband, wouldn't it? And goes on that he might sanctify and cleanse it and so on. No spot. Not even a wrinkle. Some husbands have made some wrinkles come, haven't they? But there will be one day things. There will be one. Of course. I know the boot might be on the other foot. There's never been a bride like the bride of the man will be. So we won't call one another names, will we? We'll see how we live. And how we stagger. But what a blessed thought. The thing is, every one of these figures which are used in Scripture are going at last to have their full realization.

[00:52:20] There will be a home that will be worth the name. There will be a father with his family such as Never has been. There will be a husband. There will be a bride and all. What a blessed thing that all be headed up wherever they might be. Things in heaven, all things on earth, all be headed up and recognized him. And perhaps that's the secret of a life. So back to chapter four. Unto the perfect man, unto the measure of the stature. Now that means full age, not merely so many feet and inches, but having become full age past 21 on your own responsibility, a full age of the fullness of the Christ and that word Christ possibly includes both head and body. Well, there. I think we must leave it once more. These passages will always have more in them. That we can dig out of the. But they are not written to tantalize us. It's like the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge. There's always something ahead of us. Always something waiting for us. So when you remember when we meet together next time, God willing, we shall pass on to the epistle, to the Colossians. But instead of focusing our attention straight away on the references to the fullness, we'll give the whole of the Epistle a survey so that we may include that exposition of Colossians among our recordings, which are being used by our brethren both in this land and overseas.