

to reflect the very mind and heart of the Messiah. When applied to the *ekklesia*, Paul wants us to view the community of faith as growing to express the very person of Messiah, that is, as eventually attaining Messiah's full height.

**14–15 As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Messiah,**

Having clearly given the path that those who form the *ekklesia* must take, i.e., maturing in the faith and growing in spiritual strength in order to show forth the very glories of Yeshua, he shows how important such growth is in order for the *ekklesia* not to remain immature and thus ineffective for the very mission to which we have been called. The Greek makes this clear by the initial *ἵνα* (*hina*) which the NASB translates "As a result."

Here we see that though the maturity of the body of Messiah is to be encouraged by those leaders God has given to the assembly, an obligation for each individual in the body is likewise evident. For Paul addresses all within the community when he writes "we are no longer to be children." Each individual believer is to grow in his or her faith so as to gain maturity in living out the ways of the Lord and no longer living as spiritual infants and each one is to help the other in this path of becoming mature in the faith.

Now that Paul has described what the *ekklesia* should be, he goes on to contrast this positive picture with the negative aspects which result from spiritual immaturity. The use of "children" (*νήπιος*, *nēpios*) is in stark contrast to the "mature man" in the previous verse and offers the characteristics of naivety and ignorance. Since the "unity of the faith" and obtaining "the knowledge of the Son of God" requires being able to discern between what is true and what is false, if the *ekklesia* is to mature as God intends, those given to the *ekklesia* whose duty it is to teach the truth must do their work carefully and well, and the community must be ready to receive their teaching and grow in the knowledge and application of the truth in all aspects of life. As Klein put it:

Infants cannot be unified; they are individualistic to a fault. It would be sad indeed if the church never grew beyond infancy. A spiritually infantile church will be prone to instability

and will fall prey to heresy and false teachers who scheme to waylay the immature.<sup>1</sup>

Once again, the true teaching or doctrine to which Paul points us is that which is revealed to us in the Scriptures and not the creative inventions of unfruitful minds.

...*tossed here and there by waves* – Paul now turns to a maritime picture to describe those who fail to mature in their faith or who only pretend to have faith, and who therefore fall prey to false teachings foisted upon the *ekklesia* by untrained and untaught teachers. Those given to the *ekklesia* by God to fulfill the role of “pastors who are teachers” must recognize that it is the word of God, properly understood, taught and applied, that is the spiritual nourishment necessary for the people of God to mature in their faith. And only such spiritual growth allows them to fulfill their calling to serve one another and to be witnesses of God’s grace and glory to the world around them.

The picture Paul uses is of a small boat that is at the mercy of the waves and the wind, taking it in a random course by which it could never reach the desired destination. The first thing to be noted in Paul’s use of this metaphor is that he does not envision the *ekklesia* to be “sailing” on calm seas. Rather, the people of God, gathered together as the body of Messiah, must reckon with the fact that even as the ungodly world hates our Messiah Yeshua, so it aligns with the enemy of our souls who will do all in his power to defeat the mission of the *ekklesia*. His goal is to take it on a path that results in wandering about in the sea of confusion in hopes that it would be smashed upon the rocky shoals and never reach the harbor of its appointed destination.

Now such treachery against the *ekklesia* does not necessary show itself by local communities faltering and collapsing in utter disrepair. On the contrary, the schemes of the devil often make those he has influenced to think they are having greater success than ever. The teachings of men which are not based upon the Scriptures are poised to boost the ego and “success” of those they teach, appealing to the flesh, which attracts even more people to join, hoping to share in the prosperity being promised. There are many “churches” in our day which teach heresy but attract many people into their errant doctrines.

... *and carried about by every wind of doctrine* – The word here translated as “doctrine” is διδασκαλία (*didaskalia*) which has “teaching” as its basic sense. Paul often uses this word when he has in mind sound biblical

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1 Klein, *Ephesians*, pp. 120–21.

instruction.<sup>1</sup> But here Paul uses the term to identify errant and perverted teaching, that which detracts from the truth as it is in Yeshua, and promotes the plans of the enemy. He uses the word *didaskalia* in 1Tim 4:1 in the same negative sense as he does in our text.

But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons.... (1Tim 4:1)

Once again, the English word “doctrines” could just as well be translated as “teachings.” Such errant teachings are like the wind that blow a small boat this way and that, or even causes it to capsize. Such doctrines, whether the one teaching them is fully aware or not, go contrary to the clear teaching of the Scriptures. As such, they are the invention and product of teachers who promote their own thoughts and ideas and do not consider it essential to base their instruction upon the clear and consistent teaching of the Scriptures. As Calvin notes:

By a beautiful metaphor, all the doctrines of men, by which we are drawn away from the simplicity of the gospel, are called winds. God gave us his word, by which we might have placed ourselves beyond the possibility of being moved; but, giving way to the contrivances of men, we are carried about in all directions.<sup>2</sup>

... *by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming*; – Paul now speaks to the motives of false teachers who are motivated by self-advancement and the desire for personal praise. He uses three terms: (1) “trickery,” *κυβεία*, *kubeia*, (2) “craftiness,” *πανουργία*, *panourgia*, (3) “deceitful” *πλάνη*, *planē*. The first word, *kubeia*, “trickery,” is used only here in the Apostolic Scriptures and is not used in the Lxx, but in Greek literature means “dice-playing.”<sup>3</sup> Paul is using it here to denote “slight of hand,” akin to our English phrase “loaded dice,” thus the NASB translation “trickery of men. The second word, *panourgia*, “craftiness” is found four other times in the Apostolic Scriptures<sup>4</sup> and in 2Cor 4:2

1 Cf. Rom 12:7; 15:4; 1Ti 4:6, 13, 16; 5:17; 6:1, 3; 2Tim 3:16; 4:3; Tit 1:9; 2:1, 7, 10.

2 Calvin, *Ephesians*, p. 285.

3 *BDAG*, “*κυβεία*,” p. 573. It is found as a loanword (קוביא) in the Bavli, b.*Shabbat* 149b.

4 Lk 20:23; 1Cor. 3:19; 2Cor. 4:2; 11:3.

Paul uses this word in connection with the phrase “adulterating the word of God.” What this word describes is that those who lead people astray with their errant teachings have a skill for getting people to follow them for they are able to make their own teachings appear to be filled with deep intrigue and the promise of success. The third word, *planē*, “deceiful” is found three other times in the Pauline epistles<sup>1</sup> and carries the sense of “wandering off the path of truth” or “to be led in the wrong direction.”

The word in the phrase translated “scheming” (*μεθοδεία*, *methodia*) adds emphasis to the obvious fact more often than not, that those who are leading people astray from the straight path of the Scriptures not only intend to do so but have a “method” or a “scheme” they have found useful for achieving their desired goal, namely, drawing the masses to follow them, making themselves the center of attention and praise. In contrast, Paul’s clear admonition is that Yeshua Himself should be the One to whom the people of the *ekklesia* are directed and the One Who should receive all the praise and honor.

...but speaking the truth in love, – The phrase “speaking the truth” translates a single word in the Greek, ἀληθεύω (*alētheuō*) “to tell the truth,” to “be truthful.”<sup>2</sup> It is clear that both aspects of the verb are attested for the verb in the Lxx. Thus, some commentators opt for translating this phrase as: “but, adhering to the truth in love...” In the only other time Paul uses this verb (Gal 4:16), it seems most likely that it should be translated as “speaking the truth.”

So have I become your enemy by telling you the truth?

Whether the word should be translated as “speaking the truth” or “adhering to the truth” makes little difference, since one who “adheres to the truth” will inevitably “speak the truth.” In our context, however, it seems clearly to denote “speaking the truth” since Paul puts this as the opposite of those he characterizes as speaking deceitfully, leading people astray with their cunning and craftiness.

While in the context “speaking the truth in love” applies first to those who are given to the *ekklesia* as “pastors who are teachers,” the plural “we” once again encompasses all who are part of the believing community. No one is to remain a “child” in his or her faith but all are

1 Rom 1:27; 1Thess 2:3; 2Thess 2:11.

2 In the Apostolic Scriptures, this verb is found only one other time, Gal 4:16.

to become spiritual adults in the Lord. Such spiritual maturity is evidenced by valuing the truth and not being persuaded by falsehood and the cunning words of those who speak falsehood.

What does it mean to “speak the truth in love? The first thing that is obvious is that to “speak” means to be in community. The importance of community is clearly highlighted throughout the Scriptures and taught as a necessity for carrying out what God intends for all who are His and have therefore been joined together in the body of Messiah. Here in Ephesians, as we will see, everyone is seen to be important within the body of Messiah even as every part of the human body is important and contributes to the health and proper functioning of the body. Whether comprised of few or many, to be committed to and participating in a believing community is essential to one’s personal growth in the Lord. Moreover, “speaking” indicates an action, thus an active role within the community. This may be one-to-one or one-to-many, but encouraging each other in the faith and to continue growing in the faith is the happy responsibility of each member in the body of Messiah.

Next, while it is the truth that should characterize our speaking to one another, it is to be motivated by love. Speaking the truth in love means that we commit ourselves to loving others by telling them the truth and being motivated to do so by a desire to see them grow in their love and service to the Lord, and thus to experience in their own lives the joy of abiding in the presence and blessing of the Lord. Clearly when we speak the truth we must do so with wisdom, for truth and wisdom are bound together, since God is ultimately the source of both. Godly wisdom allows us to know when, how, and in what manner speaking the truth will have its greatest value to the those to whom we are communicating. Clearly, in our verse, speaking the truth in love is a means by which spiritual growth is enhanced.

*... we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Messiah*

Yeshua our Messiah is the measure or standard of righteousness by which we measure what is righteous and what is unrighteous. We are to “walk in His footsteps” which means we must seek to know Him and to know His thoughts and ways and then to align ourselves with Him in our thoughts, our words, and our actions. This is because He is the “head” of the body, that is, He governs every aspect of the body, and apart from Him, the body would be none existent. Note Col 1:18.

He is also head of the body, the *ekklesia*; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will

come to have first place in everything. (Col. 1:18)

We see a glimpse of this in Acts 4:13 where Luke records the perspective of the rulers, elders, and scribes who questioned Peter and John as by what power they were able to heal the lame man.

Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed, and began to recognize them as having been with Yeshua. (Acts 4:13)

What brings this reference to mind is that the leaders recognized the power displayed by Peter and John to heal the lame man was the very power given to them by Yeshua. In like manner, when we seek, by the power of the Ruach, to align our lives with that which pleases Yeshua, we will be making Him known to others in life to life aspects. This is the goal of becoming more and more like Him.

Lest anyone should think that Paul is equating leaders in the *ekklesia* with the authority of Yeshua Himself, he adds Χριστός (*Xristos*), “Messiah,” thus giving the emphasis, “even Messiah.” He is forever the head of the body which is the *ekklesia*, and all who are in the body bow to His ultimate and eternal authority. It is the duty of leaders within each local community of believers to constantly point the people to Yeshua as the One Who must be given “first place in everything.” (Col. 1:18)

This in turn is reminiscent of the use of the term *οικοδομή* [“building up”] in 4:12 to speak of the purpose for which the victorious Christ has given gifts to all his people. He has done so for the “building up” of his body. These connections help us to understand what Paul means when he says that when believers speak the truth in love, they grow “up to” (εἰς) Christ with respect to all things: they are moving closer to the full union with Christ that is the church’s eventual destiny.<sup>1</sup>

**16 from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.**

Once again, while Paul surely holds to a universal aspect of the *ekklesia*, that is, that all believers, from all eras, comprise the final and

<sup>1</sup> Thielman, *Ephesians*, pp. 285-86.

complete “body of Messiah,” it is clear that in our context he views the local communities of believers as being the expression of the whole body in their respective locations. For it is the inner working—the life-to-life relationships that he pictures when he speaks of the “whole body” in our verse.