

In this letter Paul has been defending his apostolic authority by contrasting his message and way of life with that of the false teachers. The letter seems to take an abrupt thematic change at this point, but perhaps it really is not. If Paul is still addressing the false teachers whom he has called “peddlers of God’s Word” (2:17ⁱ), and by contrast implied they teach the letter that kills (3:6ⁱⁱ), use cunning, underhanded means, and tamper with God’s Word (4:2ⁱⁱⁱ), and who boast in outward appearances and not what is in the heart (5:12^{iv}), I believe he is referring to the false teachers as unbelievers.

The passage preceding this one is another condemnation by contrast. Paul and his team suffered for the sake of the gospel. Where was the self-denial of the false teachers? Paul gave much more than he received from the Corinthians, but the false teachers were there to receive. Paul taught the liberating spirit of grace, while the false teachers taught the bondage of the Law (Acts 15:24^v).

The core of the gospel is the love and grace of God expressed in the cross. If the false teachers have not accepted that and still rely on the works of the flesh, they are unbelievers. Thus, Paul may very well be continuing to address the false teachers and asking the Corinthians to sever their yoke with them. The language he used means it as a universal principle applying to all who are not believers.

To be yoked is to carry the collar that directs your efforts. The word for unequally yoked is used only here in the New Testament but is used in the Greek version (LXX) of the Old Testament in Leviticus 19:19^{vi} forbidding different kinds of animals to be yoked together. (See also Deuteronomy 22:10^{vii}.)

Jews often said they were yoked to the Law. In other words, the Law directed them. Jesus asks us to take His yoke upon ourselves and learn of Him, because His yoke is easy, and His burden is light (Matthew 11:29.30^{viii}). The false teachers wanted the church to be yoked to the Law, while Paul wanted them to be yoked to Jesus.

To be yoked together means to have a double collar so that another is connected with you so that you are working together. This is often interpreted as marriage. But as we see in Jesus’ invitation, it has a much deeper implication. Marriage is certainly one application, but there are many others.

Yoked is described with five other words in this passage: partnership, fellowship, accord, portion, and agreement. That is Paul’s expanded meaning of this introductory statement, ^{14a} *Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers*. Each description is followed with the reason for not yoking oneself to an unbeliever. It is a theme in the Old Testament laws which foreshadowed our separation from the world unto Christ. Jews had numerous things that were not to be mixed. They were forbidden to marry outside their culture (Deuteronomy 7:3^{ix}). Nor were they to mix items such as certain foods (Exodus 23:19^x) or clothing materials (Leviticus 19:19^{xi}). The theme goes all the way back to creation. God separated the light from the darkness (Genesis 1:4^{xii}). He separated the waters from the land (Genesis 1:6,7^{xiii}). He separated people groups by language in Genesis 11:9^{xiv}. Separation is a major biblical theme.

The first reason for not yoking oneself with unbelievers is ^{14b} *For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness?* If we apply this to the false teachers one might say, “Hold on! They were teaching the Law and the Word brings light.” And yet, the term law can include the entire Old Testament (Tanakh). When you take the entire

message of the Old Testament as revealed to Paul, it pointed to the fact that we are hopelessly sinful and therefore a new covenant is coming that will be initiated by the Messiah who will bear our sins (Jeremiah 31:31-33^{xv}). The Old Testament declares repeatedly that our righteousness is of God, not our own (Jeremiah 23:6^{xvi}). In fact, the prophet Jeremiah said *all* our righteousness is filthy rags (Jeremiah 64:6^{xvii}). Once the Messiah came and took our sins and offered us His righteousness, to then teach that we live the rules given to the Jews to be righteous is unbiblical, which in biblical terms is lawlessness. We could say **what partnership has faith in Christ to do with self-righteous rule keeping?** When we look at it in that light, we see how it denounced the false teachers, and yet also gives us a guideline for relationships in our day with all kinds of religions.

Every religion other than Christianity, excluding materialism, is based on rule keeping. Even some faiths that call themselves Christian are based on rule keeping. True faith in Christ is complete trust in what Jesus did for us which changes our heart and our behavior. The indwelling Holy Spirit guides us. Of course, we do not intentionally violate the moral laws of the Old Testament. The Spirit of God would not lead us to do that. But the cultural laws God gave for the Jewish nation do not apply to us. Jesus fulfilled them all for us. We still check what we believe the Spirit of God is leading us to do with the principles of Scripture and the nature of God revealed in His Word, as well as the typical behavior of those in Christ taught in the New Testament, but we do not see conformity to those instructions as a means of becoming righteous. That was done for us on the cross. As Paul wrote at the end of the preceding chapter, *²¹ For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.* 2 Corinthians 5:21 The only way God can see man as righteous is when we are in Jesus. Therefore, to reject Christ puts us in the lawless group, trying to make ourselves righteous, which is a prideful rejection of God's provision.

The second contrast is in ^{14c} *Or what fellowship has light with darkness.* God separated the two as one of the first acts of creation. Remember that Hebrews see all created things as a picture of spiritual realities. Light represents righteousness, conformity to God's purity while darkness is an absence of light. Light dispels darkness; therefore, darkness can only exist in the absence of light. This is profoundly meaningful. It implies that those who reject Jesus and what He has done for them do so intentionally. John said Jesus is the light that lights every man who comes into the world (John 1:9^{xviii}). Everyone ever born has the light shine upon them, which is the truth of the Spirit that shows us that we need God's mercy. We let the light do its work or we avoid the light and remain in darkness. It is a daily experience, and it is a whole life experience.

Vines dictionary of Greek words defines fellowship as (*koinonia*) denoting (*a*) *the share which one has in anything, a participation, fellowship recognized and enjoyed; thus it is used of the common experiences and interests of Christian men, Acts 2:42^{xix}; Galatians 2:9^{xx} of participation in the knowledge of the Son of God, 1 Corinthians 1:9^{xxi}; of sharing the realization of the effects of the Blood (i.e., the Death) of Christ and the Body of Christ, as set forth by the emblems in the Lord's Supper, 1 Corinthians 10:16^{xxii}; of participation in what is derived from the Holy Spirit, 13:14^{xxiii} (RV, "communion"); Philippians 2:1^{xxiv}; of participation in the sufferings of Christ, Philippians 3:10^{xxv}; of sharing in the resurrection life possessed in Christ, and so of fellowship with the Father and the Son, 1 John 1:3^{xxvi xxvii}*

Paul's third contrast is in ^{15a}. *What accord has Christ with Belial?* Belial according to Vine's dictionary: In the New Testament, only found in this verse, *is set in contrast to Christ and represents a personification of the system of impure worship connected especially with the cult of Aphrodite.*^{xxviii} In other words Christians do not worship God with sexual acts or pagan rituals. They are antithetical! The union of man and woman in Scripture is sacred and represents Christ and the church (Ephesians 5:32^{xxix}). Pagan orgies then in Hebrew representation would be polytheism and be abhorrent to believers.

The word "accord" is the Greek word from which we get our English word symphony. In other word there is no harmony between Christ and pagan worship. Do not try to blend religions. They are not in agreement about fundamentals. Many people try to practice Christianity with means they learned in their previous faith. Many people have a cafeteria style belief, a little Buddhism, a little animism, with prayers to a few saints. Oh, and don't forget to add the magic words, "In Jesus' name." It is syncretism. It dilutes the faith. The fundamentals are so different that there cannot be harmony. Our faith is based upon the Bible being the revealed Word of God. If you have serious doubts about that, allow me to show you the evidence to encourage your faith.

^{15b} *Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever.* 1 Corinthians 6:15b A portion in Scripture was an allotment of food. Those who served a king would receive a portion from the king's table. Psalm 119:57^{xxx} and Lamentations 3:24^{xxxi} declare *the Lord is my portion*. God has given Himself to His children. (See also Psalm 16:5^{xxxii}.) It is reminiscent of Jesus telling the multitude to eat His flesh and drink His blood (John 6:53^{xxxiii}). Our King did not just share a something from His table; He gave Himself to us. God so loved the world that He gave His only Son (John 3:16^{xxxiv}). Unto us a Son is given (Isaiah 9:6^{xxxv}). But the unbeliever will not receive Him. A shared meal was a time a fellowship, and light has no fellowship with darkness.

The final contrast is the first sentence of verse 16. ^{16a} *What agreement has the temple of God with idols?* 2 Corinthians 6:16 The Greek word for "agreement" means to be well-minded toward something. How can the temple of God be well-minded toward idolatry? The Jews had to cleanse the temple and sanctify it after Antiochus Epiphanes defiled the temple with an idol. That cleansing is celebrated as Hanukkah. Idolatry is the reason the Jewish nation went into captivity. It is a violation of the command that "you shall not make for yourself a carved image" (Exodus 20:4^{xxxvi}).

All of these contrasting expressions are illustrations of why we are not to be yoked together with false teachers or any unbeliever. It is true of marriage, for how can two walk together unless they agree (Amos 3:3^{xxxvii}). That was the downfall of Solomon (1 Kings 11:4^{xxxviii}). I believe this applies to business partnerships as well (2 Kings 9:27^{xxxix}). If the hearts involved do not agree on the goal, how can the partnership prosper? The heart of a child of God is to glorify the Lord. The heart of an unbeliever is to serve self. There will be an inevitable clash and separation. If a believer binds himself or herself to an unbeliever, it will end in separation or compromise.

The reason that is so is given in the next sentence. ^{16b} *For we are the temple of the living God;* 2 Corinthians 16b In the Old Testament, God directed Moses to build a tent in which people could bring offerings to God and priests could minister to the Lord. David made plans for a permanent structure, though God told him that no house could contain Him. David's son Solomon built that temple, and there was a manifestation of God as a ball of light (*Shakina*) over the Ark of the Covenant in the Holiest place. A

curtain separated it from the daily activities and once a year the High Priest entered to make atonement for the people. When Jesus died that curtain was torn from top to bottom symbolizing that we have access to God (Matthew 27:51^{xl}). Jesus had said, ²³ ... *“If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.”* John 14:23 He predicted that the day was coming when we would be in Him and He in us (John 14:20^{xli}). It is as God had told David that a temple could not contain Him (1 Kings 8:27^{xlii}). That is because God’s plan was to dwell in the hearts of those who love Him and accept what He has done for them.

The wonder that God could dwell in us is now present. But we still have the freedom to yield or resist. His presence in us is what makes us priceless like the temple of old. The building was beautiful, but without the presence it was just a building. So it is with us. Revelation 21:2^{xliii} tells us that together we make up the city adorned as a bride in which God will dwell forever. The presence of the Holy Spirit in us now is just a foretaste of the bliss that is to come (Revelation 21:3^{xliiv}). Paul is declaring that those who are in Christ are: righteous, light, in Christ, believers, the temple of God! How glorious! Thus, they should not be joined to the unrighteous who are in darkness.

^{16c} *as God said, “I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”* 2 Corinthians 6:16c Paul is citing Leviticus 26:12 to make his point.^{xlv} That is because he has faith in the Scriptures. May God help us make our points in conversation by referring to the inerrant Word of God. It shows where our faith is placed. Leviticus 26 is blessings for obedience. Jesus’ obedience is credited to us when we accept His forgiveness. Since Paul could see that no one can be fully obedient (Psalm 14:3^{xlvi}), he interpreted the verse as being fulfilled in all who are in Christ. The end of the passage declares that the yoke of Egypt would be broken off their necks. Egypt represented the fallen world. The whole passage about being unequally yoked is based on Leviticus 26:11-13^{xlvii}. (See also Isaiah 61:1^{xlviii}.)

If God has taken the yoke of worldliness from our necks, that slavery to sin that we could not free ourselves of (John 8:34^{xlix}), then why would we take a yoke that is joined to someone still under that yoke, whether it be marriage or partnership of any kind. It is like a prisoner being freed and asking to go back into confinement. We do this when we willingly give-in to the flesh nature and compromise our convictions. A few examples are ungodly entertainment such as pornography or any entertainment that stir the flesh nature, business that may seem profitable but harms people or has an ungodly effect on them, partnering with people you know are ungodly, or worship of God combined with pagan practices. Why go back under that yoke of bondage when Christ has set you free? Paul tells us that trying to please God by obeying the Old Testament law is also bondage. He wrote, ¹ *For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.* Galatians 5:1

What a blessing it is for God to call us His own people! We could not ask for a better God. Some people do not like His righteousness and justice, but would we really want it any other way? We complain about injustice in the world or in others, but then we balk at God’s perfect justice. Our God is perfect in all His attributes, has our best interests in His heart, and has all the power to see us perfected when we stand in His presence. There is none like Him (2 Samuel 7:22¹)!

Next, Paul quotes Isaiah 52:11^{li}, another Messianic passage that begins by commanding the people to take the off the bonds on their necks (Isaiah 52:1,2^{lii}) ¹⁷

Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you, 2 Corinthians 6:17 Separated for God's purposes is the definition of holiness. In Isaiah God was asking the people of Israel, and because it is a Messianic passage, all those who are in Christ, to separate ourselves from all that would defile us and drag us back into the flesh. We are surrounded by pagan and worldly influences. Some of it is blatant and obvious and others are subtle and would bring unnoticed compromise. The question we must ask ourselves is **do we really want to be God's and God's alone for His glory**? It sounds threatening, as if we would lose our autonomy, but God does not do that. For better or worse we find our freewill is always with us. And once we begin to surrender fully to God, we find new pleasures, the pleasure of doing God's will and cooperating with what He is doing. We experience a deeper love than we ever knew before. But to experience that we must be separated unto God, the light from the darkness, godliness from the evil around us, submitted rather than compromising.

It is not that we leave the world or never associate with the lost. Jesus was a friend of sinners. He was slandered because he ate with tax collectors and enjoyed the wine and food (Matthew 11:19^{liii}). The difference is that His heart stayed separated unto His Father. He was there to rescue them. Jesus' high priestly prayer demonstrates the difference. *¹⁵ I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one.* John 17:15 We are in the world but not of the world. We avoid touching the unclean things and find that God welcomes us into fellowship with Him.

¹⁸ and I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty." 2 Corinthians 6:18 What more could we ask than to be welcomed into the family of God. But remember, we are welcomed into that family when we choose Him over the world and are willing to come out and separate ourselves. Our old nature wants to fit in and be accepted by all. That is a great temptation. But as we experience the wonder of God as our Father it is easier, for we realize how much better it is to have the praise of God than the acceptance of men (John 12:43^{liv}).

These verses are yet one more way to express the gospel, the good news that there is more than this world offers, there is forgiveness and reconciliation with God our Creator. None of it is possible without the righteousness that is ours in Christ. The false teachers had missed the point that we are saved by God's merciful grace.

Be in Christ by accepting His forgiveness. Come out of the yoke of the world, do not touch what is unclean, and you will become a son or daughter of the Almighty God, who is the King of the universe, and Lord of all (Romans 11:36^{lv}).

Questions:

- 1 How might this be regarding the false teachers?
- 2 What are Old Testament examples of separation?
- 3 How can we be righteous?
- 4 Review Vine's definitions for fellowship.
- 5 What does Belial represent?
- 6 What are the relational words?
- 7 What are the contrasting conditions?
- 8 What is Paul's proof text and why is it applicable?
- 9 What is the main message? 10 How can we live it out?

ⁱ **2 Corinthians 2:17 (ESV)**

¹⁷ For we are not, like so many, peddlers of God's word, but as men of sincerity, as commissioned by God, in the sight of God we speak in Christ.

ⁱⁱ **2 Corinthians 3:6 (ESV)**

⁶ who has made us sufficient to be ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

ⁱⁱⁱ **2 Corinthians 4:2 (ESV)**

² But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God.

^{iv} **2 Corinthians 5:12 (ESV)**

¹² We are not commending ourselves to you again but giving you cause to boast about us, so that you may be able to answer those who boast about outward appearance and not about what is in the heart.

^v **Acts 15:24 (KJV)**

²⁴ Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, *Ye must* be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no *such* commandment:

^{vi} The Hebrew version upon which our English is based translates this to not interbreed animals while the Greek version commands that different animals not be yoked together.

^{vii} **Deuteronomy 22:10 (ESV)**

You shall not plow with an ox and a donkey together^{vii}

^{viii} **Matthew 11:29-30 (KJV)**

²⁹ Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

³⁰ For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light.

^{ix} **Deuteronomy 7:3 (KJV)**

³ Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son.

^x **Exodus 23:19 (ESV)**

¹⁹ "The best of the firstfruits of your ground you shall bring into the house of the LORD your God. "You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk.

^{xi} **Leviticus 19:19 (ESV)**

¹⁹ "You shall keep my statutes. You shall not let your cattle breed with a different kind. You shall not sow your field with two kinds of seed, nor shall you wear a garment of cloth made of two kinds of material.

^{xii} **Genesis 1:4 (ESV)**

⁴ And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness.

^{xiii} **Genesis 1:6-7 (ESV)**

⁶ And God said, "Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." ⁷ And God made the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse. And it was so.

^{xiv} **Genesis 11:9 (ESV)**

⁹ Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth. And from there the LORD dispersed them over the face of all the earth.

^{xv} **Jeremiah 31:31-33 (ESV)**

³¹ "Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, ³² not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. ³³ For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

^{xvi} **Jeremiah 23:6 (ESV)**

⁶ In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: 'The LORD is our righteousness.'

^{xvii} **Isaiah 64:6 (KJV)**

⁶ But we are all as an unclean *thing*, and all our righteousnesses *are* as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.

xviii **John 1:9 (ESV)**

⁹The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.

xix **Acts 2:42 (ESV)**

⁴²And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

xx **Galatians 2:9 (ESV)**

⁹and when James and Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given to me, they gave the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas and me, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.

xxi **1 Corinthians 1:9 (ESV)**

⁹God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

xxii **1 Corinthians 10:16 (ESV)**

¹⁶The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?

xxiii **2 Corinthians 13:14 (ESV)**

¹⁴The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

xxiv **Philippians 2:1 (ESV)**

¹So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, (ESV participation)

xxv **Philippians 3:10 (ESV)**

¹⁰that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, (ESV share)

xxvi **1 John 1:3 (ESV)**

³that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.

xxvii Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament and New Testament Words.

xxviii Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament and New Testament Words.

xxix **Ephesians 5:32 (ESV)**

³²This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.

xxx **Psalms 119:57 (ESV)**

⁵⁷The LORD is my portion; I promise to keep your words.

xxxi **Lamentations 3:24 (ESV)**

²⁴"The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him."

xxxii **Psalms 16:5 (ESV)**

⁵The LORD is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot.

xxxiii **John 6:53 (ESV)**

⁵³So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.

xxxiv **John 3:16 (ESV)**

¹⁶"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

xxxv **Isaiah 9:6 (ESV)**

⁶For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

xxxvi **Exodus 20:4 (ESV)**

⁴"You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.

xxxvii **Amos 3:3 (ESV)**

³"Do two walk together, unless they have agreed to meet?"

xxxviii **1 Kings 11:4 (ESV)**

⁴For when Solomon was old his wives turned away his heart after other gods, and his heart was not wholly true to the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father.

xxxix **2 Kings 9:27 (ESV)**

²⁷When Ahaziah the king of Judah saw this, he fled in the direction of Beth-haggan. And Jehu pursued him and said, "Shoot him also." And they shot him in the chariot at the ascent of Gur, which is by Ibleam. And he fled to Megiddo and died there.

^{xi} **Matthew 27:51 (ESV)**

⁵¹ And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split.

^{xlii} **John 14:20 (ESV)**

²⁰ In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.

^{xliii} **1 Kings 8:27 (ESV)**

²⁷ “But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you; how much less this house that I have built!

^{xliv} **Revelation 21:2 (ESV)**

² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

^{xlv} **Revelation 21:3 (ESV)**

³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.

^{xlv} “Almost without exception, the six generally agreed upon Old Testament references refer in their respective contexts to God’s promise to restore exiled Israel to their land.” Further, he demonstrates that while Paul would allow that this restoration began its fulfillment with the nation’s return from Babylon, the escalated fulfillment occurred at Christ’s death and resurrection. The point is: The Corinthians were full beneficiaries of the new covenant’s deliverance and restoration. And as such, they should pursue separation and holiness. Dr. Greg Beale in a 1989 article published in *New Testament Studies*

^{xlvi} **Psalm 14:3 (ESV)**

³ They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, not even one.

^{xlvii} **Leviticus 26:11-13 (ESV)**

¹¹ I will make my dwelling among you, and my soul shall not abhor you. ¹² And I will walk among you and will be your God, and you shall be my people. ¹³ I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, that you should not be their slaves. And I have broken the bars of your yoke and made you walk erect.

^{xlviii} **Isaiah 61:1 (ESV)**

¹ The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound;

^{xlix} **John 8:34 (ESV)**

³⁴ Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin.

^l **2 Samuel 7:22 (ESV)**

²² Therefore you are great, O LORD God. For there is none like you, and there is no God besides you, according to all that we have heard with our ears.

^{li} **Isaiah 52:11 (ESV)**

¹¹ Depart, depart, go out from there; touch no unclean thing; go out from the midst of her; purify yourselves, you who bear the vessels of the LORD.

^{lii} **Isaiah 52:1-2 (ESV)**

¹ Awake, awake, put on your strength, O Zion; put on your beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city; for there shall no more come into you the uncircumcised and the unclean. ² Shake yourself from the dust and arise; be seated, O Jerusalem; loose the bonds from your neck, O captive daughter of Zion.

^{liii} **Matthew 11:19 (ESV)**

¹⁹ The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ Yet wisdom is justified by her deeds.”

^{liv} **John 12:43 (KJV)**

⁴³ For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

^{lv} **Romans 11:36 (ESV)**

³⁶ For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.