



A STUDY OF  
**EPHESIANS**

**Copyright © 2023 WORLD VIDEO BIBLE SCHOOL®**

25 Lantana Lane, Maxwell, Texas 78656

Email: [biblestudy@wvbs.org](mailto:biblestudy@wvbs.org) Phone: (512) 398-5211

Web: [www.wvbs.org](http://www.wvbs.org) School: [school.wvbs.org](http://school.wvbs.org)

# Copyright Guidelines

Copyright © WORLD VIDEO BIBLE SCHOOL®

## **WARNING: SINGLE USER product**

Use of this material is limited to the registered user,  
according to the following conditions.

**Print distribution:** Any number of printed copies can be made by printing or photocopying, and used for Bible classes, seminars or teaching settings. Copies of a course or multiple courses can be printed. Printed copies cannot be used for resale purposes or mass distribution.

**Electronic distribution:** No electronic distribution is allowed, either transmitted or hyperlinked, in part or whole. The electronic version of the course notes is limited to the registered user.

**Course Notes on USB:** The USB version of the Course Notes is limited to the registered user, and may be copied to any device within the registered user's ownership. If the Course Notes are registered to a congregation, then the electronic files may be installed on any computer located on the congregation's property, and be used by any of its members as a resource to study (either in electronic or printed form) while on their premises. However, the copyright does not include making the files available to others through the Internet or other web services.

For any copyright questions, feel free to contact us so we can help.

25 Lantana Lane, Maxwell, Texas 78656

Email: [biblestudy@wvbs.org](mailto:biblestudy@wvbs.org) Phone: (512) 398-5211

Website: [www.wvbs.org](http://www.wvbs.org)

<b>INSTRUCTOR BIOGRAPHY</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>BACKGROUND FROM HISTORY</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>BACKGROUND FROM THE BIBLE</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>OUTLINE</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>EXPOSITION</b> .....	<b>12</b>
CHAPTER 1 .....	12
CHAPTER 2 .....	35
CHAPTER 3 .....	50
CHAPTER 4 .....	62
CHAPTER 5 .....	84
CHAPTER 6 .....	105
<b>APPENDICES</b> .....	<b>120</b>
THE FIVE POINTS OF CALVINISM .....	121
ARE MEN UNCONDITIONALLY ELECTED?.....	125
ARE INFANTS “BY NATURE” CHILDREN OF WRATH? .....	128
CHRIST’S DOMINION.....	130
FAITH AND WORKS.....	134
MIRACLES – LAYING ON OF AN APOSTLE’S HANDS .....	137
THE HOLY SPIRIT WORKS THROUGH THE WORD .....	139
SCRIPTURES CONDEMNING THE USE OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES.....	142
ARGUMENTS USED FOR SOCIAL DRINKING.....	145
DID PAUL ENDORSE SLAVERY? .....	150

## INSTRUCTOR BIOGRAPHY

**Instructor:** Russell Haffner

**Biography:**

Russell Haffner currently serves as the director of the WVBS Online Bible School. He graduated from the Southwest School of Bible Studies in 1993. He is also an alumnus of Texas A&M University where he majored in Architecture. He has served as a minister of the gospel for over 30 years. He has spoken on various lectureships and has held several gospel meetings. He has also published articles in numerous lectureship books.

Russell and his wife Dee are blessed with three children - Ross, John and Kati. Ross and John are both graduates of the Southwest School of Bible Studies and currently serve as ministers in the Lord's church. Kati is married to Tony Lopez who is also currently serving as a minister in the Lord's church.

These Course Notes were developed from the original WVBS Course Notes.

## **BACKGROUND FROM SECULAR HISTORY**

The city of Ephesus was the commercial, political and religious center of Western Asia. It was located in the area where the Cayester and Meander rivers entered the Aegean Sea.

It was the capital of the Roman province of Asia, located in the district of Ionia. The port of the city was called Panormus. Many roads connected this great city to the interior of Asia. The main roads lead to the Phrygian table lands, Smyrna and Miletus.

As one sailed into the port of Ephesus one would see the great temple of the Grecian goddess of fertility, Artemis (called Diana by the Romans). The magnificence of this sanctuary was known throughout the civilized world. The building, and rebuilding, of her temple took 220 years. The historian, Pliny, reported that the temple had 120 columns that were 60 feet high. It was proclaimed as one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. The city of Ephesus was devoted to the goddess Diana (Acts 19:35). The silversmiths of the city had a prosperous business selling small silver shrines of Diana to visitors who had come to see the temple. As Christianity advanced, the worship of Diana declined. In A.D. 262 her temple was eventually plundered and burned by the Goths.

Ephesus was also infamous for its magical arts and amulets of parchment with inscribed incantations (Ephesia grammata). The theater of the city, into which the mob had brought Paul (Acts 19:29), was capable of holding over 25,000 people. It was the largest theater ever built by the Greeks.

Ephesus was a prominent city of Paul's ministry and also the location of one of the seven churches of Asia addressed in the book of Revelation (Revelation 1:11; 2:1). Paul's companions, Trophimus and Tychicus were possibly natives of Ephesus (Acts 20:4; 21:29; 2 Timothy 4:12). Onesiphorus may have also been from Ephesus (2 Timothy 1:16-18; 2 Timothy 4:19).

Today, the whole area is desolate (except for a small Turkish village). The ruins of the once great city are still visible and available to visit and study today. No city has been so thoroughly excavated as Ephesus.

## BACKGROUND FROM THE BIBLE

- I. In Acts 18:19-21, Paul first came to Ephesus on his second missionary journey.
  - A. He left Aquila and Priscilla in Ephesus as he continued on his journey.
  - B. While there he entered the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews.
    1. They wanted Paul to stay, but he had to depart for Jerusalem.
    2. Paul promised to return, "God willing."
- II. In Acts 18:24-28, Apollos met Aquila and Priscilla when he came to Ephesus.
  - A. Apollos was an Alexandrian.
    1. He was an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures.
      - a. He had been instructed in the way of the Lord.
      - b. He was fervent in the spirit and he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord.
      - c. However, he only knew the baptism of John.
  - B. Aquila and Priscilla took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.
  - C. Apollos received the correction and greatly helped those who had believed for he vigorously refuted the Jews publicly, showing from the Scriptures Jesus as the Christ.
- III. In Acts 19:1-41, Paul returned to Ephesus on his third missionary journey.
  - A. He found some disciples (about twelve) who had only received John's baptism. They also knew nothing about the Holy Spirit.
    1. When Paul heard this, he taught them concerning Christ and he baptized them in the name of the Lord Jesus.
    2. He also laid hands on them so they received the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit.
    3. This gave them the ability to speak in tongues and prophesy.

- B. Paul went into the synagogue at Ephesus and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading the Jews concerning the things of the kingdom of God.
1. Some were hardened and did not believe, but spoke evil of the way of Christianity before the people.
  2. Paul departed from them.
    - a. He withdrew the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus.
    - b. This continued for about two years, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.
  3. Many major incidents took place in Ephesus.
    - a. God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul.
    - b. Jewish exorcists tried to use the power of Jesus to cast out evil spirits and were punished for their foolishness.
    - c. Many who had believed came confessing and telling their evil deeds.
      - 1) Those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all.
      - 2) They counted up the value of them, and it totaled 50,000 pieces of silver.
    - d. A certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of the goddess Diana stirred up the city's idol makers against Paul.
      - 1) The whole city was filled with confusion. The mob seized Paul's companions, Gaius and Aristarchus, and rushed into the theater.
      - 2) The city clerk warned the mob and quieted the crowd.
      - 3) After the uproar had ceased, Paul departed to go to Macedonia.

- IV. In Acts 20:17-38, near the end of his third missionary Paul sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church to meet him in Miletus.
  - A. Paul reminded them of his conduct in Ephesus.
  - B. He reminded them of the preaching he had done.
    - 1. How he had kept back nothing that was profitable for them.
    - 2. How he had not shunned to declare to them the whole counsel of God.
  - C. Paul warned them that after his departure "savage wolves" (false teachers), would come in among them not sparing the flock.
    - 1. Also, from among themselves men would rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples.
    - 2. He told them to watch, and remember that for three years he did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.
- V. In Revelation 2:1-7, we have the letter of Jesus to the Christians at Ephesus.
  - A. Jesus had many positive things to say about the brethren.
    - 1. They had patiently worked and labored for Christ's sake.
    - 2. They would not bear (put up with) those who were evil.
    - 3. They tested false apostles and found them to be liars.
    - 4. They hated the deeds of the evil Nicolaitans.
  - B. Jesus only had one negative thing to say about the brethren.
    - 1. They had left their first love.
    - 2. Therefore, they were called to repent.

## INTRODUCTION

### WRITER

We want to make it clear that God is the author of this book, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:20-21). The writer whom God used to reveal this epistle was the apostle Paul (Ephesians 1:1). Paul being the writer has never been seriously questioned.

### LANGUAGE

This letter was originally written in Koiné Greek. The word "Koiné" means "common." This is a fitting name because it was the common language used by the people in that day. God's word is not reserved for theologians and scholars.

### DATE AND PLACE OF WRITING

The apostle Paul wrote this letter to the churches, in Ephesus and the surrounding region, while imprisoned in Rome (A.D. 62). During his imprisonment he also wrote his letters to the Colossians and Philemon. All three letters were sent by the hands of Tychicus and Onesimus who served as Paul's messengers.

### TO WHOM WAS THIS EPISTLE WRITTEN?

The letter is addressed to the church in Ephesus. Since the name Ephesus is not found in every early manuscript, some scholars believe the letter was intended to be circulated and read among all the congregations in Asia Minor and was simply sent first to the Christians in Ephesus.

### KEY VERSES

Ephesians 1:3; 2:8-10; 4:4-6; 5:11; 6:13-18

### KEY WORDS

The key words or phrases in this epistle include "in Christ" (12 times), "grace" (12 times), "love" (10 Times), "body" (8 times) and "walk" (8 times).

### KEY PASSAGE

Ephesians 4:4-6, "There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

### MAIN THEMES OF THIS EPISTLE

- A. To instill an appreciation for God's system of redemption.
- B. To make Christians aware of the great blessings that are found only in Jesus Christ.
- C. To emphasize the impartiality of the gospel (no distinctions - Jew, Greek, slave, free, male, female).
- D. To exhort Christians to live in a way that brings honor to the gospel of Christ.

#### MAIN EMPHASIS OF THIS EPISTLE

- A. The Church of Christ.
- B. The book has been described as a "syllabus" of the New Testament church.

#### SECTIONS OF THE CONTENT

- A. This book can be divided into two great sections of three chapters each.
- B. Examples of three ways the divisions have been classified:
  - 1. Chapter 1-3            Doctrinal
  - 2. Chapters 4-6        Practical
  
  - 1. Chapter 1-3            Christian Truth
  - 2. Chapters 4-6        Christian Life
  
  - 1. Chapter 1-3            Grace of God
  - 2. Chapters 4-6        Exhortation to the Recipients of Grace
- C. These divisions can be helpful, but we should realize that they are obvious oversimplifications of the material.

## EPHESIANS OUTLINE

Salutation (Greeting) .....	1:1-2
I. All Spiritual Blessings are in Christ.....	1:3-14
II. Paul Tells the Ephesians His Prayer for Them.....	1:15-23
III. Salvation by Grace Through Faith.....	2:1-10
IV. Jews and Gentiles in Christ.....	2:11-22
V. The Mystery Revealed .....	3:1-13
VI. Again, Paul Tells the Ephesians His Prayer for Them.....	3:14-21
VII. The Worthy Walk.....	4:1-16
VIII. The Worldly Walk .....	4:17-32
IX. The Loving Walk .....	5:1-14
X. The Wise Walk .....	5:15-6:9
XI. The Whole Armor of God .....	6:10-20
Conclusion .....	6:21-24

# EPHESIANS EXPOSITION

## CHAPTER ONE

### Salutation (Greeting)..... 1:1-2

1:1 *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus:*

Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God - Paul was an apostle of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 1:1; 2 Corinthians 1:1; Galatians 1:1). Even though he did not walk with Jesus during the Lord's ministry (1 Corinthians 15:8), Paul was a true apostle - equal with the twelve in power and authority (2 Corinthians 11:5).

- A. The word "apostle" comes from the Greek word (APOSTOLOS) that means, "one sent from or forth, a messenger, delegate." The word is used in two different senses in the New Testament. It can simply refer to an individual who is sent by others to accomplish a particular mission. However, in its "official sense" the term apostle refers to an individual who was officially and divinely selected to serve as Jesus' representative or ambassador (2 Corinthians 5:20). Jesus handpicked His apostles. Notice Paul was "an apostle **of** Jesus Christ." He did not take this role upon himself.
1. Those who claim to be apostles today do so without Bible authority. The Apostles we read about in the New Testament were men sent to be witnesses of Jesus Christ.
  2. The word "apostle" literally means one sent as a messenger. This is not mere testimony, but the ability to give an eye-witness account (Acts 1:21-22; 10:39-41; 1 John 1:1-3). These men were not self-appointed witnesses. They were sent by Jesus Himself, hence the name apostle (Acts 1:8).
  3. Today, sometimes people will claim they are witnessing for Christ. However, they cannot actually be witnesses. They were not present when Christ walked this earth. They did not see Jesus die and they did not witness His resurrection. The apostles offered personal testimony concerning the things they saw and experienced. Those who claim to be apostles or witnesses today do not have the requirements necessary to make such a claim.

- B. Paul's main work sent him to the Gentiles, though not exclusively. He was chosen by the Lord to declare the name of Jesus to the "Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel."

Acts 9:15-16, "But the Lord said to him, 'Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake.'"

Acts 22:21, "Then He said to me, 'Depart, for I will send you far from here to the Gentiles.'"

- C. Paul did great work for the Lord. It has been said that over one-half of the New Testament deals with Paul's labor, love, zeal and devotion as an apostle of Christ.

To the saints who are in Ephesus - All Christians are "saints." In the New Testament the faithful are actually called "saints" more than they are called "Christians." "Saints" is defined as those who are "sanctified, holy, consecrated, set apart." Christians are separated from sin and sanctified to God.

1 Peter 2:9-10, "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy."

and faithful in Christ Jesus - This is not a different group of people from the saints, but rather another descriptive term. There are two ways the term "faithful" can be used.

- A. It can be used of those who are trusting or trustworthy (1 Corinthians 10:13; 2 Corinthians 1:18; 2 Thessalonians 3:3; 1 Timothy 1:15; 3:1).
- B. It can also be used of those who are obedient to God having a working faith serving Jesus Christ.

James 2:14-16, "What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,' but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit?"

C. We will deal more with "in Christ" when we get to verse three.

1:2 *Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Grace to you and peace - This is a combination of the usual Greek and Hebrew greetings.

- A. "Grace" is translated from the Greek word (CHARIS) meaning, "that which affords joy, pleasure, delight, sweetness, charm, loveliness" (Romans 6:23; 2 Corinthians 8:9). Grace is the unmerited favor we receive from God (Romans 5:8).
- B. "Peace" comes from the Greek word (EIRENE) meaning, "harmony, security, safety, prosperity."
  - 1. This is the word that was used to translate the Hebrew word "SHALOM" when the Old Testament was translated into Greek.
  - 2. There is a greater significance to the meaning here of "peace" than just "the absence of war." SHALOM considered the "wholeness" or "soundness" of man. It is a term of prosperity, especially in the spiritual realm (Colossians 1:2).
  - 3. "Peace" with God, only comes when we are cleansed from our sins in the blood of Christ (Isaiah 59:1-2; 1 Peter 1:18-19; Romans 6:3-4).

from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ - The source of grace and peace is Deity.

- A. God the Father is described as, the "God of all grace" (1 Peter 5:10) and the "God of peace" (Hebrews 13:20).
- B. The Scriptures also teach that grace and truth come from Christ (John 1:17). He is our peace (Ephesians 2:13-14).
- C. Where grace abounds, peace will follow.

**I. All Spiritual Blessings are in Christ..... 1:3-14**

## Spiritual Blessings in Christ

From verses 3-14 we will see some of the grandest and most challenging words in the vocabulary of Christianity.

Adoption	Sealed
Inheritance	Foreordained
Redemption	Salvation

The general sense is that these blessings were bestowed upon Christians in accordance with an eternal purpose, NOT haphazardly. It was a result of intention and design by God. This fact enhances the blessings, "exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think" to borrow Paul's words in Ephesians 3:20.

---

1:3 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,*

Blessed be - "Blessed" comes from the Greek word (EULOGETOS) from which we get our word "eulogy"; it means "to speak well of; to praise." This Greek word (EULOGETOS) is used exclusively of God in the New Testament. Therefore, the meaning is, "Let God be well spoken of."

the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ - Notice how "the God and Father" is connected with "our Lord Jesus Christ." There is only one essence of God (Deity), but there are three Persons within that essence. The Godhead means three distinct Persons - Father, Son and Holy Spirit in one distinct God.

- A. We must not view the Father, Son and Holy Spirit as "attributes" of God, for each of these three Persons in the Godhead "are called God." So, you see the three Persons in the Godhead are not attributes of God, but they each have all the attributes of God. The Bible tells us there is only one God, and yet there is distinctly God the Father, God the Son and God the Spirit. There is only one God (Deity), but there are three Persons within that essence.
- B. The three Persons in the Godhead each have their own role. Jesus is distinctly filling the role as the Son.

John 5:17-18, "But Jesus answered them, 'My Father has been working until now, and I have been working.' Therefore, the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not

only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God."

C. There are **not** three Gods, there is only one infinite Spirit Being. Within that one Spirit Being there are three personal distinctions.

1. Each of these personal distinctions:

- a) May be addressed as, and is called, God.
- b) Is capable of loving and being loved by others.
- c) Has a distinct, but not separate, role to play in:
  - 1) The creation of the universe,
  - 2) The creation of man and
  - 3) The salvation of man.

who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing - The faithful have been blessed with every spiritual blessing.

James 1:17, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning."

in heavenly places - The inspired apostle uses this expression 5 times in this epistle (Ephesians 1:3, 20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12). It is found nowhere else in the Bible.

A. What is the emphasis?

Ephesians 1:20, "Which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places."

Ephesians 2:6, "And raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

B. What is meant by the phrase "heavenly places"?

- 1. Christ is exalted to the heavenly realm, and therefore, those who are "in Him" also belong to the heavenly realm. It is the dwelling place of Christ.

Philippians 3:20, "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ."

2. Paul is saying to these Ephesian brethren that all spiritual blessings is to be found exclusively "in Christ," who is in heaven (where, in a sense) you are because you make up the body of Christ.

in Christ - How do we get into Christ?

- A. Scriptural Baptism

Galatians 3:27, "For as many of you as were baptized **into** Christ have put on Christ."

- B. It is a great blessing to be "in" Christ.

Romans 8:1, "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are **in** Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit."

1 John 5:11, "And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is **in** His Son."

- C. The eternal reward of heaven only comes to those who are in Christ.

Revelation 14:13, "Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, 'Write: "Blessed are the dead who die **in** the Lord from now on."' 'Yes,' says the Spirit, 'that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them.'"

1:4 *just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,*

just as He chose us in Him - "Chose" comes from the Greek word (EKLEGOMAI) that means, "to pick out, to single out, to choose." This is used in this verse to describe those whom God has chosen. [For additional information concerning this issue please see the appendices - THE FIVE POINTS OF CALVINISM and UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION.]

- A. Notice what we do NOT see in this verse.

1. We do not see unconditional choosing.

2. We do not see choosing individuals.

B. The choosing or choice is always of character, not of an arbitrary selection (Luke 8:9-15). God the Father has chosen a type of individual to be saved (those who are obedient). God does not arbitrarily choose some to be saved and other to be lost.

1. God has given mankind freedom of choice. People can choose today whether or not they will serve God (Revelation 22:17).

2. God is impartial - "shows no partiality" (Acts 10:34-35; Romans 2:11; 1 Peter 1:17). God does not randomly condemn some to be lost forever, while favoring others to be saved. If God were to do that He would violate His own nature for He is impartial and just (Psalm 89:14).

before the foundation of the world - God chose before the creation of the world that He would save those who obey Him. The salvation of the obedient ones has always been planned by our God. The sacrifice of Jesus to bring to man the opportunity for salvation was not some afterthought (Ephesians 3:9).

that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love - How will this be accomplished?

1 Peter 1:22-25, "Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, because 'All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, and its flower falls away, but the word of the Lord endures forever.' Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you."

1:5 *having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,*

having predestinated us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself - "Predestined" comes from the Greek word (PROORIZŌ) that means, "to mark out before, decide before, predetermine."

A. Some teach that from the foundation of the world God has randomly chosen some individuals to be saved and others to be lost without regard to their obedience.

- B. However, The Bible teaches:
1. God has given mankind the freedom of choice to obey or disobey Him (Genesis 2:16-17; Deuteronomy 11:26-28).
  2. God is impartial and is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34-35; Romans 2:11).
  3. God desires that all men be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9).
  4. Man's salvation is not dependent on God alone.
- C. God has provided the means for salvation by grace through His Son's sacrifice on the cross for the sins of the world.
- D. However, man must meet the conditions to be saved by that grace through faith and obedience (Ephesians 2:4-10; Matthew 7:21; James 2:17-26).
- E. If it were true that God has randomly chosen some individuals to be saved and others to be lost without regard to their obedience, then several things would be true.
1. God would be just as responsible for the lost as those who were saved. Those who were lost could blame God for their spiritual condition.
 

2 Peter 3:9, "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."
  2. If God did randomly choose some to be saved and some to be lost regardless of their obedience Jesus did not know it.
 

Matthew 11:28, "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Mark 16:15-16, "And He said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.'"

3. If God did randomly choose some to be saved and some to be lost regardless of their obedience why would we:
  - a) Preach the gospel? (Romans 1:16)
  - b) Preach repentance? (2 Peter 3:9; Acts 17:30; Luke 13:3)
  - c) Teach that God's word saves? (James 1:21)
  - d) Even need God's word? (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
4. If there is nothing we can do, why would we do anything at all? (Acts 9:6; Hebrews 5:8-9)

F. God foreknew and foreordained the plan of salvation for man. He planned before, the conditions of His whole plan of redemption.

1. However, each person is left free to choose as to whether he will accept or reject God's plan.
2. God wants salvation for every soul, but the final decision is left with each person; God holds us responsible for that decision.

according to the good pleasure of His will - It was not that man had any control over God to create the redemption plan, nor was man consulted by God concerning His plan.

1:6 *to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.*

to the praise of the glory of His grace - God's plan to adopt the faithful into His family brings glory to His grace by showing His great benevolence. Receiving mankind as members of His family is an amazing blessing. The fact that God has established a means or plan by which man can taste the riches of His blessings most naturally should excite thanksgiving in man.

by which He made us accepted in the Beloved - Who is the "beloved"? It is the Son of God (Matthew 17:1-8). Jesus is the "beloved" of God the Father.

Matthew 17:5, "While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!'"

1:7 *In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace*

In Him we have redemption through His blood - Let us notice three points of redemption:

A. Something once possessed is lost.

Isaiah 59:1-2, "Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear."

B. A price is paid to purchase the lost thing back (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

1 Peter 1:18-19, "Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."

C. In redemption a power is broken.

Colossians 1:13-14, "He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins."

D. Notice that the price of redemption is the blood of God's Son.

Matthew 26:28, "For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."

Romans 5:8-9, "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him."

the forgiveness of sins - Man is condemned by his sins.

Romans 3:23, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

Romans 6:23, "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

When God forgives, He no longer holds our sins against us. When we obey God's plan of salvation our sins are washed away in the blood of Christ. God wants to forgive us (2 Peter 3:9). He sent His only begotten Son to die for us (Acts 5:30-31). It is only through His blood that we receive forgiveness. However, God's forgiveness is conditional on our obedience.

Matthew 7:21, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who **does the will** of My Father in heaven."

according to the riches of His grace - The word "riches" describes that which abounds. That which even exceeds man's hopes, wants and desires. God's grace will not fall short. The fact that our redemption had such an expensive price (the blood of Jesus) shows us clearly the magnitude of God's grace.

1:8 *which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence,*

which He made to abound toward us - The pronoun "us" refers to the apostles, who were chosen by God's grace to make known the gospel to the world.

in all wisdom and prudence - God has demonstrated to us His great wisdom in His plan of salvation. He provided a perfect system designed to provide man's salvation. While wisdom is the insight into the true nature of things, prudence is the ability to discern modes of action with a view to their results. Wisdom is theoretical, prudence is practical. So, in essence what is meant is that God had the insight and the understanding wisdom of the situation and was thus able to follow through and obtain the desired result. Prudence is wisdom applied.

1:9 *having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself,*

having made known to us the mystery of His will - Once again the pronoun "us" refers to the apostles. The word "mystery" here simply means something which is not fully known. It is not referring to something mysterious. This is that which cannot be known without divine revelation. It is made known, manifested, or revealed, in a time appointed by God for man to understand. The terms usually associated with the New Testament's use of the word "mystery" are "make known, manifested, revealed, preached and understood." The "mystery" referred to here is best defined by the Scriptures.

Ephesians 3:3-6, "How that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), which in other

ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: **that** the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel."

The divine plan included the inclusion of the Jews and the Gentiles as one in the church (Galatians 3:27-29). The church was not the mystery - but it was included in the mystery as the location for salvation for all mankind, Jew and Gentile alike. This mystery was revealed to the apostles who in turn had the responsibility of proclaiming this message to the world.

according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself - This mystery was made known on God's terms (2 Timothy 1:9-10). The manifestation of this mystery imparts a wisdom that surpasses all the wisdom of former ages (Ephesians 3:4-5; 1 Corinthians 2:6-9; Colossians 2:2-3).

1:10 *that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him.*

that in the dispensation - The Greek word (OIKONOMIA) translated as "dispensation" actually refers to the management or oversight of a household (OIKOS = house, NOMOS = law). So, this refers to God's management or oversight of the fulness of the times when His plan would be fulfilled.

of the fullness of the times - The "fulness of the times" is often used to refer to Christ's coming. However, it can be used to indicate another significance (John 2:4; 7:6; 12:20-23; 17:1; Romans 5:6; Galatians 4:2,4; Hebrews 1:12; 9:10; 1 Peter 1:20). The point is that God has scheduled events of time and history to fulfill His plan.

He might gather together in one all things in Christ - God's plan was to bring together all men into one body, the church.

- A. People had lived under the Patriarchal system and the Mosaical system, but now all would be under the Christian system.
- B. God's Diving plan was to discontinue the law of the Patriarchs and the law of Moses and place all men under the law of Christ (1 Corinthians 9:21; Galatians 6:2).
- C. The new system of salvation was formed in Christ.

both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him - Christ has authority over all (Matthew 28:18).

Philippians 2:9-11, "Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

1:11 *In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will,*

In Him also we have obtained an inheritance - The pronoun "we" refers to the apostles, but would include all who obey God's plan of salvation and follow His commands as they did. Jesus told Paul that the message he was to preach included a glorious inheritance among those who are sanctified.

Acts 26:15-18, "So I said, 'Who are You, Lord?' And He said, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you. I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.'"

In the Old Testament the nation of Israel was considered to be the Lord's inheritance (Deuteronomy 32:9; Psalm 33:12). In the New Testament the Lord's church is given that privilege (Colossians 1:12).

Galatians 3:26-29, "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things - God chose before the creation of the world (predestined) that He would save those who obey Him. God has predetermined to save the obedient ones and punish the disobedient. There are spiritual laws in force that are just as certain as any physical law. The salvation of the obedient ones has always been planned by God. [For additional information concerning this issue please see the notes on Ephesians 1:4-5 and the appendices - THE FIVE POINTS OF CALVINISM and UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION.]

according to the counsel of His will - Basically this means that whatever God decides, in His wisdom, He puts into effect.

1:12 *that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.*

that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory - The pronoun "we" can either refer to the apostles only, or perhaps the apostles and the first Jewish converts to distinguish them from the Gentile converts. This would fit the next verse and the context (Ephesians 1:9-10) that talks about Jews and Gentiles being one in Christ.

1:13 *In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,*

In Him you also trusted - The pronoun "you" seems to refer to the Gentile Christians. They now trusted in Christ just like the first Jewish converts. The point should be clear. There is no second-class Christians. All stand on equal ground at the foot of the cross.

Romans 1:16, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek."

Romans 2:11, "For there is no partiality with God."

Romans 10:12-13, "For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. For 'whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'"

Acts 22:16, "And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation - Notice in this verse the necessity of God's word for salvation (John 6:63, 68; 20:30-31; Acts 20:32; Romans 10:17; James 1:21-22; 1 Peter 1:23). Notice also how the word of truth and the gospel are tied together and spoken of as one.

- A. The gospel is God's power to save (Romans 1:16), and the engrafted word is able to save our souls (James 1:21).
- B. In 2 John 1:9 we read, "Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son."

- C. There is something we must do and it is revealed in "the word of truth, the gospel."

in whom also, having believed - The phrase "in whom" refers back to "Him" (Christ). The Bible always ties faith and obedience together for salvation. Obedient faith is saving faith.

- A. Notice those who were faithful mentioned in Hebrews 11.

Hebrews 11:4, "**By faith Abel offered** to God a more excellent sacrifice..."

Hebrews 11:7, "**By faith Noah**, ...**moved** with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household..."

Hebrews 11:8, "**By faith Abraham obeyed**..."

Hebrews 11:20, "**By faith Isaac blessed** Jacob and Esau..."

Hebrews 11:24, "**By faith Moses**, ...**refused** to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter."

Hebrews 11:31, "**By faith the harlot Rahab**...**received** the spies with peace."

- B. Their faith was always combined with action.

- C. James 2 also makes clear concerning the importance of an obedient faith.

James 2:17, "Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead."

James 2:20, "But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?"

James 2:21-22, "Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect?"

James 2:24, "You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only."

James 2:26, "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."

you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise - In this phrase Paul could be referring to one of two things, or perhaps both.

- A. It could be he is referring to when these Ephesians received the gift of the Spirit by the laying on of his hands and were able to speak in tongues and prophecy (Acts 19:1-7).
  - 1. Since the ability to impart miraculous gifts was only given to the apostles (Acts 8:18), it follows that after the apostles died no one ever received these miraculous gifts again.
  - 2. Therefore, when the last apostle died and the last person they laid their hands on died, there was no one on earth who could perform miracles. [For additional information concerning this issue please see the appendices - MIRACLES - LAYING ON OF AN APOSTLE'S HANDS.]
- B. Or it could refer to the non-miraculous indwelling of the Spirit that all Christians receive when they obey God's plan of salvation.
- C. In some sense, he may be referring to both.

1:14 *who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.*

who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory - "Guarantee" comes from the Greek word (ARRHABŌN) meaning, "an earnest, money which in purchases is given as a pledge or down payment that the full amount will subsequently be paid." Paul is using a well-known business practice as an illustration. In this example one party makes a "down payment" as evidence of the guarantee to pay in full. It binds the parties to the contract until the time when full payment is made and the contract is completed.

- A. God has made a promise of eternal life to all who enter into this covenant with Him.
- B. The completion of the contract will take place on the day of judgment.
  - 1. This, of course, is conditional.

- 2. Both parties must keep all the terms of the agreement until the final time comes.
  - 3. When the time arrives, God delivers the crown of eternal life to all who have faithfully kept the terms of the covenant.
- C. We should not think the word "guarantee" means that once we are saved we are always saved.
- 1. If a down-payment or earnest is not backed up with continued payments it is lost and so is the desired merchandise.
  - 2. Earnest is also the word used for an engagement ring. We should take note that engagements are broken every day.

1 Corinthians 9:27, "But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified."

1 Corinthians 10:12, "Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall."

2 Peter 2:20-22, "For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: 'A dog returns to his own vomit,' and, 'a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire.'"

- 3. The following passages are just a few that prove a Christian can fall from grace (Matthew 13:48-50; Acts 9:27; 2 Corinthians 12:21; 13:5; Galatians 5:4; 1 Timothy 1:19-20; 4:1-3; 6:10; 2 Timothy 4:10; Hebrews 4:1-2; 10:38-39; James 5:19-20; John 8:21; 1 Peter 5:8-9; 2 Peter 1:4-11; 3:17; 2 John 1:8; Jude 1:21; Revelation 2:1-5; 3:1-5).

**II. Paul's Prayer for the Ephesians ..... 1:15-23**

1:15 *Therefore, I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints,*

Therefore, I also after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus - Their faith is mentioned in the very first verse of this letter (Ephesians 1:1). Paul was not referring to their initial faith that led to their obedience to God's plan of salvation, but rather to the faith they exercised in daily living for the Lord.

Romans 1:17, "For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, 'The just shall live by faith.'"

1 Thessalonians 1:2-3, "We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father."

and your love for all the saints - All Christians are "saints." In the New Testament the faithful are actually called "saints" more than they are called "Christians." "Saints" is defined as those who are "sanctified, holy, consecrated, set apart." Christians are separated from sin and sanctified to God. The Scriptures highlight the importance of love for God the Father, His Son, His word and His people - Christians (John 15:12-13; 1 Corinthians 16:14; Galatians 5:22; 1 Thessalonians 1:3; 1 Peter 2:17). How was this faith and love known? By their actions (1 John 3:18).

1:16 *do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers:*

do not cease to give thanks for you - Paul knew how to rejoice in the faithfulness of others. When a Christian hears about the faithfulness of other Christians it always brings encouragement and joy. Notice the words of John:

2 John 1:4, "I rejoiced greatly that I have found some of your children walking in truth, as we received commandment from the Father."

3 John 1:3, "For I rejoiced greatly when brethren came and testified of the truth that is in you, just as you walk in the truth."

making mention of you in my prayers - Paul's anxious concern for the congregations was eased by his prayers to the Father (Philippians 4:6; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; 1 Timothy 2:1).

1:17 *that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him,*

that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory - Paul always prayed to the Father, never to Jesus (Ephesians 3:14; 5:20). A Christian must recognize and respect the divine roles among the members of the Godhead. It is the Father's role, and His alone, to be addressed in prayer (Matthew 6:9-13). This was a prayer of intercession on behalf of the Ephesians.

Also, notice in this verse that the Father is described as the "God of our Lord Jesus Christ." This proves that it would be wrong to say that the Father and the Son are the same person. It would not make sense to say anyone could be His own god. There is only one essence of God (Deity), but there are three Persons within that essence. The Godhead means three distinct Persons - Father, Son and Holy Spirit in one distinct God.

may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him - We must remember that Paul was writing this in the days of spiritual gifts (cf. Ephesians 4:7-11). The miraculous gifts of the first century included the gift of wisdom (1 Corinthians 12:8) and the gift of revelation (1 Corinthians 14:26). In this verse, Paul says that he was praying that the Ephesians would receive these gifts to increase their knowledge of God. Paul made a similar plea for the Colossians (Colossians 1:9).

- A. It is interesting that Paul not only prays that they would know God's will, but that they would be "filled" with the knowledge of His will (James 1:21-22; Ecclesiastes 12:13).
- B. Today, we are filled with knowledge when we study and meditate upon God's word (Psalm 1:1-2; Acts 17:10-11; 2 Timothy 2:15; 2 Peter 3:18).
- C. There are no miraculous gifts today (1 Corinthians 13:8-13).
- D. [For additional information concerning this issue please see the appendices - MIRACLES - LAYING ON OF AN APOSTLE'S HANDS.]

1:18 *the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,*

the eyes of your understanding being enlightened - "Enlightened" comes from the Greek word (PHŌTIZŌ) meaning, "to give light, to shine, to bring to light."

John 3:19-21, "And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth

comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God."

1 John 5:20, "And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life."

Today, the word of God gives us light and understanding.

Psalms 119:130, "The entrance of Your words gives light; It gives understanding to the simple."

2 Timothy 3:16-17, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."

that you may know - Paul now introduces three "whats":

- A. What is the hope of His calling?
- B. What are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints?
- C. What is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe?

what is the hope of His calling - His "calling" is the good news of salvation in the gospel message proclaimed to all (2 Thessalonians 2:14).

- A. Hope is a key word in the New Testament and is an essential element for Christians to possess (Ephesians 2:12; Ephesians 4:4).
- B. There is a vast difference between the world's definition of hope and the Bible's definition of hope.
  - 1. The way the world tends to use the word 'hope' comes across as if it is just a "wish" or "desire." What makes biblical hope different?
  - 2. Biblical hope is different because it possesses security.
  - 3. In Hebrews 6:19 hope is referred to as a "sure and steadfast" anchor.

Lamentations 3:22-24, "Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness. 'The LORD is my portion,' says my soul, 'Therefore I hope in Him!'"

what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints - The word "inheritance" may be referring to one of two things.

- A. Notice that it is called "His inheritance." So, this may refer to the saints (Christians) being God's inheritance unto the redemption, unto His own possession, His redeemed people.
- B. However, this may refer to the inheritance received by Christians.

Galatians 4:6-7, "And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, 'Abba, Father!' Therefore, you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ."

1 Peter 1:3-5, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

1:19 *and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power*

and what is the exceeding greatness of His power - Paul is here speaking of the blessing that belongs to Christians of the "exceeding greatness" of God's power which transcends all things. God's power is seen, both in the present redemption and the future reward of heaven. It is God's power that bestows upon Christians the inheritance in which hope is directed.

toward us who believe - This describes a Christian who has an obedient, working faith submitting to God's plan of salvation. This does not refer to an empty, vain dead faith (belief) that is without works of obedience (James 2:17, 20, 24, 26).

according to the working of His mighty power - Not only does Paul want the readers to experience this power, but he also wants them to understand the "exceeding greatness" of it.

- A. In order to expound on the superlative nature of this power, Paul uses four synonyms in this verse in quick succession.
  - 1. It is "power" (#1 - DUNAMIS),
  - 2. According to the "working" (#2 - ENERGEIA),
  - 3. Of His "mighty power" (#3 - KRATOS, #4 - ISCHUS).
- B. The original language being used makes clear to us the magnitude of God's power.

1:20 *which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,*

which He worked in Christ - God's power is demonstrated in two events:

- A. Raising Christ from the dead and,
- B. Seating Christ at God's right hand.

when He raised Him from the dead - Just as the death of Christ is a supreme display of God's love (Romans 5:8; John 3:16), the resurrection is also a supreme display of God's power (Romans 1:4).

and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places - Resurrection and enthronement are the two stages of Jesus being exalted (Acts 2:32).

Acts 2:32-33, "This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. Therefore, being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear."

Psalms 110:1, "The LORD said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.'"

1:21 *far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.*

far above all principality and power and might and dominion - Various shades of meanings can be found for these descriptive words, but they all express the same idea of Christ's universal authority.

Matthew 28:18, "And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth."

and every name that is named - His name is above every name. It is impossible to find a higher name or title than that of Jesus, meaning "Savior" of the world.

Philippians 2:9-11, "Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

not only in this age but also in that which is to come - The pre-eminence of His name (Jesus) is to be eternal. It shall never be overshadowed by any other name. Christ is raised far above all, of this present age, and the future beyond in heaven above.

1:22 *And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church,*

And He put all things under His feet - The phrase, "all things under His feet" means that Christ was made superior to all things. "All things" is from one Greek word (PAS) that means, "all, the whole, everyone, all things, everything."

and gave Him to be head over all things to the church - The original word for "head" is the Greek word (KEPHALĒ) that means, "supreme, chief, prominent, master, lord." All things connected with His church are subject to and regulated by Him. Any religious group that is not following His words has no Scriptural relation to His church.

1:23 *which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.*

which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all - It should be remembered that the body and the church are one and the same.

Romans 12:4-5, "For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another."

1 Corinthians 12:27, "Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually."

Colossians 1:24, "I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church."

[For additional information concerning the body and the church being the same please see the appendices - CHRIST'S DOMINION.]

## CHAPTER TWO

### III. Salvation by Grace Through Faith .....2:1-10

---

As we enter chapter two we must realize that Paul is not leaving the subject he has dealt with in chapter one, but rather he is now illustrating his point of verse 19, – THE GREATNESS OF THE POWER OF GOD. God has displayed His power by raising Jesus from the dead. Notice the contrast that has been introduced - Christ was dead - but made alive. "I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen" (Revelation 1:18).

Paul, in this chapter, will use the same contrast in a spiritual sense. "And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1). Paul will show how God has taken a people who were spiritually dead and useless and exercised His power to set them together with Christ in heavenly places and build them together for a habitation of God.

---

2:1 *And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins,*

And you He made alive - The words literally mean, "And you hath He made to live." This is a spiritual rebirth by obedience to God's plan of salvation.

Colossians 2:12-13, "Buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses."

Colossians 3:1, "If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God."

The same mighty power that was laid upon the dead body of Jesus to raise Him from the dead is laid upon those who are dead in trespasses and sins when they obey the gospel plan of salvation.

John 5:21, "For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will."

who were dead in trespasses and sins - When men are living in sin they are separated from God, because sin cannot have any connection with God. Living in sin is separation from God and spiritual death.

Isaiah 59:1-2, "Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear."

1 Timothy 5:6, "But she who lives in pleasure is dead while she lives."

Romans 6:23, "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

2:2 *in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience,*

in which you once walked according to the course of this world - Before they obeyed the gospel the Ephesians had lived like the world following a life of sin. Their life was one of disobedience against God's law of righteousness. Rather than being servants of righteousness, the Ephesians had been servants of sin (Romans 6:17-18).

Romans 12:1-2, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And **do not be conformed to this world**, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

1 John 2:15-17, "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever."

James asked, "Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God" (James 4:4). The "course of this world" is to seek happiness in the fulfillment of their lusts and appetites of the flesh in sin. True happiness is only found in the Lord (Psalm 84:12; 144:15; Philippians 3:1; 4:4).

according to the prince of the power of the air - Most certainly this refers to the devil. In various passages he is referred to using similar language.

- A. "The prince of the devils" (Matthew 9:34; 12:24; Mark 3:22; Luke 16:11).
- B. "The prince of this world" (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11).

the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience - The spirit referred to here is the spirit of disobedience by evil men. It is their attitude and character. It is the same spirit of the devil.

1 Peter 5:8-9, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world."

2:3 *among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.*

among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh - Paul explains that "we all" (all of mankind) were in the same condition. We were spending our lives in the lusts and works of the flesh.

Galatians 5:19-21, "Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God."

fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind - This is a sad state of affairs. Such low accomplishments for man who was made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27). In the Scriptures we see the phrases, "sins of the flesh," "sins of the world" and "sins of the devil." These are not different classes of sins, but different aspects of sin. Any one of these phrases can be used, but they all refer to the same condition. Notice the part the mind plays in the act of sin.

James 1:14-15, "But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death."

and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others - The Greek word translated as "nature in this verse (PHUSIS) means, "growth." It is that which comes by long habit or practice, not at birth. Very simply, it is the unconverted state. It is the condition of being "dead in sins" (Ephesians 2:1, 5). This is not teaching that men are born in sin. Man separated himself from God when he

transgressed, thus he was dead in sin. [For additional information concerning this issue please see the appendices - ARE INFANTS "BY NATURE" CHILDREN OF WRATH?]

Paul is showing a grand contrast. It is a contrast between being dead in sin or alive unto God. In this context we see this very clearly. Notice the chart below.

### PAUL'S CONTRAST

DEAD IN SINS	MADE ALIVE
We walked - course of this world	God is rich in mercy
We walked - prince of the power of the air	God has great love
Children of disobedience	Quickened with Christ
Lust of the flesh	Saved by grace
Fulfilling desires of the flesh	Raised up
Were by nature children of wrath	Sit together in heavenly places
Even as others	Shown the exceeding riches of His grace

2:4 *But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,*

But God, who is rich in mercy - Because of sin man was heading for ruin (Romans 6:23; Isaiah 59:1-2; Jeremiah 3:25). "But" in man's darkest hour God brings forth hope (Genesis 3:1-15). The total ruin of man fades away as the radiant light of God's mercy shines forth. The word "rich" denotes an overflowing or an abundance. There is none lacking. God is rich in mercy. "Mercy" is shown when God does not give us the punishment we really deserve.

Luke 6:36, "Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful."

2 Corinthians 1:3-4, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God."

2 Peter 3:9, "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."

because of His great love with which He loved us - Love is the great motive. 1 John 4:8 says, "He who does not love does not know God, for God is love." In John 3:16 Jesus said, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." The word "so" refers to the kind of love God had for the world.

Mercy is God's attitude toward sinful man, and love is the motive in all that He does for man. His mercy is rich and His love is great.

2:5 *even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),*

even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ - This phrase "dead in trespasses" is a repeat of Ephesians 2:1 to highlight the contrast between man's condition and God's love. Notice the connection of the Christian's resurrection with Christ. The New Testament often highlights the close relationship between Christ and the believer.

- A. Those who believe and obey are crucified with Him (Galatians 2:20).
- B. They die with him (Romans 14:8).
- C. They are raised with Him (Colossians 3:1-3).
- D. They live with Him (Philippians 1:21).
- E. They reign with Him (2 Timothy 2:12).
- F. They are joint heirs with Him (Romans 8:16-17).
- G. They share in His sufferings on earth (Philippians 1:29).
- H. They will share His glory on the throne (Revelation 3:21).

(by grace you have been saved) - Grace is defined as, "good will, favor, gift, mercy extended (all unmerited by man)." Grace is when God gives us what we do not deserve. Mercy is when He does not give us what we do deserve. The Ephesians had been saved by God's grace. In verse 8 we will deal in greater detail concerning how they were saved.

Romans 6:23, "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Hebrews 2:9, "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone."

2:6 *and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,*

and raised us up together - We must remember God's matchless power (Ephesians 1:19-23). In the context Paul is speaking about obeying the gospel, of being saved from "trespasses" (sins), of becoming a part of Christ, and being made alive "with Christ." It is plain this refers to Christian baptism.

Romans 6:3-4, "Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore, we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was **raised** from the dead by the glory of the Father, **even so we also** should walk in newness of life."

Colossians 2:12-13, "Buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were **raised** with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses."

and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus - Christians have been baptized into Christ and made alive together with Christ (being raised up with Him) enjoying the full rights and privileges of the heavenly kingdom.

Colossians 3:1-2, "If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth."

2:7 *that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.*

that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus - This is for the ultimate purpose of God being glorified.

1 Peter 4:11, "If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen."

---

The next section is often misunderstood because of preconceived ideas. In Ephesians 2:8-10 the Bible says, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it (salvation) is the gift of God, not of works (of merit), lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works (of obedience), which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." – The parentheses have been added for clarification.

Faith alone has never been enough for righteousness. The demons have faith but they are not righteous (James 2:19). Righteousness requires faith and obedience working together.

There is really no reason for the confusion in the religious world today concerning the issue of faith and works. One extreme says faith only and the other extreme says works only. The Bible is clear that neither extreme is correct. God's word teaches that we are counted as righteous when faith and works of obedience combine (Galatians 5:6; James 2:18, 22).

---

2:8 *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,*

For by grace you have been saved through faith - This shows us that being saved involves two parties; the one being saved (man), and the one doing the saving (God). We humbly accept the grace of God by complying with its terms. God is rich in mercy, love and grace. Salvation requires a living faith that is animated by "works" (James 2:24). God's plan for man's salvation has two parts: God's part and man's part. Man must do his part!

A. God's Part (Grace):

1. Having great love for man (John 3:16)
2. Giving His Son, Jesus Christ, as the Savior (Luke 19:10)
3. Providing the gospel as "the power" unto salvation (Romans 1:16)
4. Offering atonement (forgiveness of sins) by the blood of Christ (Romans 5:9)

B. Man's Part (Faith and Obedience):

1. Hearing the Gospel (Romans 10:17)
2. Believing the Gospel - the good news that Jesus is the promised Christ (John 8:24)
3. Repenting of past sins (Luke 13:3, Acts 17:30)
4. Confessing faith in Jesus Christ (Romans 10:10, Matthew

10:32)

5. Being Baptized (Galatians 3:27, Mark 16:16, Acts 2:38)
6. Remaining faithful unto death (Galatians 5:1-6)

and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God - The "it" in this verse refers to salvation. The subject under consideration is salvation, therefore it is the gift of God. Salvation was prepared and is bestowed on man by God. Salvation is obtained by being baptized into Christ (Galatians 3:27) according to the appointed instructions (John 8:24; Luke 13:3; Matthew 10:32; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38). We do not earn our salvation and there are no works of merit which will save us (Ephesians 2:9), but there are works of obedience which God requires (Ephesians 2:10; James 2:19-20). Man needs the cleansing blood of Christ, and the reconciling work of the cross to become spiritually alive again.

2:9 *not of works, lest anyone should boast.*

not of works, lest anyone should boast - In the Bible, the word "works" is used in different ways. There are works of the old law, works of merit and works of obedience.

- A. There are no works of the old law (law of Moses) that will save us. Today, we are required to have a specific kind of faith. It is the obedient faith of the New Testament. We do not follow the law of Moses, we must follow the law of Christ (1 Corinthians 9:21; Galatians 6:2). As Paul put it in Galatians 2:21, "I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law (law of Moses), then Christ died in vain." – The parentheses have been added for clarification.
- B. There are no works of merit that will save us, so that God owes us salvation. We cannot earn our salvation (Luke 17:10).
- C. However, there are works of obedience that are required for salvation (John 8:24; Luke 13:3; Matthew 10:32; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38).
  1. These points help us to see that there is no contradiction when Ephesians 2:9 says we are **not** saved by works and James says, "**by works a man is justified**, and not by faith only" (James 2:24).
  2. James and Paul are talking about different kinds of works.

3. We are not saved by works of merit, but works of obedience are required.
4. We cannot be saved without obedience. [For additional information concerning this issue please see the appendices - FAITH AND WORKS.]

2:10 *For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works - "Workmanship" comes from the Greek word (POIEMA) meaning, "that which has been made, a work, of the works of God as creator."

Romans 1:20, "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse."

Christians are the workmanship of God, perfected by following the instructions in His word, created to perform the good works He commands. The Christian joyfully follows these commands as does a loving son to his benevolent father. [For additional information concerning how "works" relate to our faith please see the appendices - FAITH AND WORKS.]

which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them - The word "walk" refers to a habitual manner of life. The Christian spends his life in good works. One of the dangers of the false doctrine that teaches that salvation is by grace only is a lack of understanding concerning the need for good works. Those who follow this false teaching are apt to think that good works are of little value. However, good works are an integral part of God's purpose in man's creation. If a Christian is not living a life of good works, he should have no confidence in his salvation by God's grace.

#### **IV. Jews and Gentiles in Christ..... 2:11-22**

2:11 *Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands—*

Therefore, remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands - Here Paul refers to the contempt the Jews (the circumcision) had for the Gentiles (the uncircumcision). Before Christ, there was no hope of unity, but in Christ they are united. The Ephesians had been Gentiles, but now they are one with the Jews in Christ.

Galatians 3:27-28, "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

2:12 *that at that time you 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.*

that at that time you were without Christ - In this verse Paul describes the hopeless condition of the Gentiles before Christ. They had no knowledge of Christ and therefore, no life or blessing from Him.

Ephesians 1:3, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ."

being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel - "Commonwealth" comes from the Greek word (POLITEIA) meaning, "citizenship, the rights of a citizen." The Gentiles were not a part of the nation of Israel.

and strangers from the covenants of promise - The Gentiles were strangers to the covenants God made with Abraham.

Genesis 12:2-3, "I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

having no hope - The Gentiles could not look forward with hope, because they had rejected God to follow after idols.

Romans 1:20-23, "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things."

without God in the world - The alienation of the Gentiles from God was not God's fault. They were the ones who had turned their backs on Him. Indeed, it was a tragic situation they found themselves in, before God sent His Son to the world to bring the way of salvation to all men.

2:13 *But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.*

But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ - Notice the wonderful contrast.

- A. Once they were separated and alienated from Christ, but now, with their obedience to the gospel, they are in Christ.
- B. Once they had been alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, but now they are a part of spiritual Israel.

Galatians 3:28-29, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

Romans 2:28-29, "For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God."

- C. Once they had been strangers from the "covenants of promise," but now they are under the new covenant (Galatians 3:8-9, 29).
- D. Once they were without hope, but now Christ was their glorious hope (Colossians 1:27).
- E. Once they were without God in the world, but now they are dead to the world and alive to God (Romans 6:1-8).

All of these things were accomplished by the blood of Christ.

1 Peter 1:17-19, "And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear; knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."

2:14 *For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation,*

For He Himself is our peace - The He in this verse is Christ.

Isaiah 9:6-7, "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this."

who has made both one - The sacrifice of Christ eliminated the separation between the Jews and Gentiles; in Christ the two are unified. Since, all are one in Jesus Christ there should be no distinctions made or prejudices felt. The old distinctions must now be gone forever.

Romans 1:16, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek."

and has broken down the middle wall of separation - The Jews and Gentiles had been separated religiously by the wall of separation which was the Mosaic law which was given by God from Mount Sinai for the Jews only (Deuteronomy 5:2-3). This wall of separation was removed at the cross (Colossians 2:13-14).

Today, we cannot be justified by the law of Moses because it is no longer in effect (Romans 7:4; Ephesians 2:14-16; Colossians 2:13-14), but we are under the Law of Christ (1 Corinthians 9:21; Galatians 6:2; James 1:25).

2:15 *having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace,*

having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances - The phrase "in His flesh" refers to the crucifixion of Jesus that put an end to the old law. The old law was fulfilled and nailed to the cross (Colossians 2:14-16). This opened the way for the new law of Christ to be established (1 Corinthians 9:21; Galatians 6:2; James 1:25). The "enmity" was the ordinances and commandments of the old law that kept the Jews and Gentiles religiously separated.

so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace - Christ took the old law out of the way so He could bring both Jews and Gentiles together into one body to make one new man.

2:16 *and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.*

and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity - The original Greek word for "reconcile" (APOKATALLASSŌ) is defined as, "to reconcile completely, to bring back to a former state of harmony." A significant part of this definition "back," which implies that a state of harmony existed before. This is true because man was once at peace with God before Satan persuaded him to sin (Genesis 3:6). Sin separated man from God and required a sacrifice to remove the sin and restore peace. This reconciliation is for all people through Jesus Christ (Acts 10:34-35).

The "one body" mentioned in this verse is the church (Ephesians 1:22-23). The death of Jesus on the cross made it possible for both Jews and Gentiles to serve God in one body – the church. As explained in verse 15, the "enmity" was the ordinances and commandments of the old law that kept the Jews and Gentiles religiously separated.

2:17 *And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near.*

And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near - Jesus (and the apostles) proclaimed the same terms of peace to both the Jews who were near, and the Gentiles who were far off (Acts 1:8).

Acts 15:7-9, "And when there had been much dispute, Peter rose up and said to them: 'Men and brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. So, God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us, and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.'"

2:18 *For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.*

For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father - "Both" refers to Jews and Gentiles. The proof that peace has been achieved for both Jews and Gentiles is that both have free access equally to God through Christ on the same terms or conditions. The phrase "by one Spirit" refers to the Holy Spirit.

- A. All of the teaching the Holy Spirit provided is found in God's word, and God's word is the seed of the kingdom (Luke 8:11).
- B. The Holy Spirit dwells in the hearts of those who receive, cherish and obey the word of God.

2:19 *Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,*

Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God - The Christians at Ephesus were no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens in the kingdom, because they had received, cherished and obeyed God's plan of salvation.

The phrase "household of God" is used to refer to the family of God.

1 John 3:1, "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore, the world does not know us, because it did not know Him."

Galatians 6:10, "Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith."

2:20 *having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone,*

having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone - The kingdom (church) was built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets using the living stones of the Jews and Gentiles, who had been brought together as one in Jesus Christ who served as the chief cornerstone.

- A. The "prophets" in this verse refers to the prophets of the New Testament (Acts 13:1; 1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:8-11).
- B. The "chief cornerstone" is from one Greek word (AKROGŌNIAIOS) meaning, "placed at an extreme corner, the corner foundation stone."
- C. Thayer gives the following historical information, "For as the cornerstone holds together two walls, so Christ joins together as Christians, into one body dedicated to God, those who were formerly Jews and Gentiles."

1 Peter 2:4-5, "Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."

1 Corinthians 3:11, "For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

2:21 *in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord,*

in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord - In Jesus Christ the whole building consisting of both Jews and Gentiles is fitly framed or fitted together, not separated and divided. This represents an action that is still going on today as more people are obeying the gospel message, being baptized into Christ and being added to the church (Galatians 3:27; Acts 2:47). The building being fitted together becomes the holy temple in (or on behalf of) the Lord.

1 Timothy 3:15, "But if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."

1 Peter 2:9-10, "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy."

2:22 *in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.*

in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit - Buildings are built with a purpose in mind. The building of the church is no exception to this rule. In this verse Paul explains the purpose. The church (temple) is the dwelling place of God. Not that He literally dwells in it personally, for the Scriptures teach that God dwells in Heaven (Acts 7:48-49). However, God dwells in the church through the Spirit, or in a spiritual sense (1 Peter 2:4-5).

---

Notice, in chapter two we have seen the process of how a person dies spiritually and then, when dead in sin, become alive again spiritually.

- A. Man separated himself from God when he transgressed (sinned - Isaiah 59:1-2), thus he was dead in sin (Ephesians 2:1). But, God is rich in mercy, love and grace. So, by grace through faith a man is saved (Ephesians 2:8).

- B. This, however, requires the cleansing blood of Christ (Ephesians 2:13), and the reconciling work of the cross (Ephesians 2:16) to become spiritually alive again.
  - C. The end result of this is that living stones are built together "for a habitation of God through the Spirit" (Ephesians 2:22).
- 

## CHAPTER THREE

### V. The Mystery Revealed ..... 3:1-13

3:1 *For this reason, I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles—*

For this reason, I, Paul - Paul has just dealt with the grand scope of how the Jews and Gentiles are both reconciled to God in one body in Christ.

- A. He will continue this thought in verse 14, but now deals with himself and his office as an apostle.
- B. He is still dealing with the grace shown to the Gentiles emphasizing that his commission as an apostle shows God's great concern for the Gentiles.

the prisoner of Christ Jesus - Ephesians is one of four epistles known as, "Prison Epistles" – Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon. These are often referred to as, "Prison Epistles" because Paul wrote these letters while in prison.

- A. "I am an ambassador in chains" (Ephesians 6:20)
- B. "having become confident by my chains" (Philippians 1:14)
- C. "remember my chains" (Colossians 4:18)
- D. "he might minister to me in my chains" (Philemon 1:13)

Paul was a prisoner of (or for) the cause of Christ. He was innocent of any wrongdoing, imprisoned for simply preaching the gospel.

1 Peter 4:12-13, "Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy."

John 15:20, "Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also." [The word "kept" means to, "watch carefully to trap."]

for you Gentiles - Paul was made a prisoner on their behalf, because he insisted that the gospel should be preached to the Gentiles as well as the Jews (Acts 14:27, 15:1-29). Paul's primary mission was to go to the Gentiles (Romans 11:13; Galatians 2:9).

3:2 *if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you,*

if indeed you have heard - Paul's rhetorical meaning in the use of this phrase is, "Since, indeed you have heard." The Ephesians had heard all of these things, Paul was now simply reminding them of these truths.

of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you - The word "dispensation" comes from the Greek word (OIKONOMIA) meaning, "management, oversight, administration." Paul was given the oversight of going to the Gentiles, who had just as much right to God's grace of salvation as any Jew (Romans 1:16; Galatians 3:28; Acts 10:34; Romans 2:11).

3:3 *how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already,*

how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery - It had been made known to Paul by divine revelation concerning the mystery, "that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel" (Galatians 3:6). The word "mystery" simply refers to something that was not revealed by God before. However, now it had been revealed that the Gentiles would be fellow heirs with the Jews. This was first revealed to the apostle Peter (Acts 10) but, also to the apostle Paul (Acts 9:15; 26:17) and the rest of the brethren (Acts 15:13-29).

as I have briefly written already - Most scholars agree that Paul is referring back to that which had been written earlier in Ephesians 1:9-10 and 2:18. However, even if Paul is referring to another epistle it causes no problems. We are not missing any revealed information.

2 Peter 1:2-4, "Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power has given to us **all things that pertain to life and godliness**, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of

the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."

3:4 *by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ),*

by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ - The Ephesians were capable of understanding Paul's message. They were well able to understand their part as Gentiles being added as fellow heirs in the gospel and even the deeper things concerning God's overall plan for the salvation of mankind. We also learn from this verse (by implication) that we can understand God's word.

3:5 *which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets:*

which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men - This mystery had not been known before.

1 Peter 1:10-11, "Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow."

The Old Testament did not reveal, in a detailed way, how the Jews and Gentiles would be brought together as one. Yes, the Old Testament spoke of the Gentiles, but the Jews thought the Gentiles would have to go through the channels of Judaism to be saved. This was one of the greatest misunderstandings the first century church faced (Acts 15:13-29).

which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets - Again, we must emphasize it was only a mystery in the fact it was not revealed. Also, Paul was not the only one who received this revelation. The holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit also received this revelation.

- A. A prophet had the ability to speak God's word as directed by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 14:3-5; Acts 21:9; 1 Corinthians 13:2).
- B. The prophet simply delivered God's message to the people.
- C. Many mistakenly assume that all prophecy is the telling of future events (predictive in its nature). However, prophecy can also be the

revelation of events which occurred in the past or even in their present circumstances.

- D. The prophets were mouthpieces for God. They simply revealed to the people God's words, not their own.

3:6 *that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel,*

that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ - Here Paul clearly explains the mystery that had been revealed. That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs (belonging to the family of God) with the Jews receiving the promises as members of the one body (church).

through the gospel - Paul also explains "how" this was to happen. Through their obedience to the gospel the Gentiles would be added to the church, just as the Jews were added to the church (Acts 2:47). The Gentiles did not need to first become Jews to obey the gospel. The entrance requirements for the church were the same for both Jews and Gentiles (Acts 10:34-35).

3:7 *of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power.*

of which I became a minister - "Minister" comes from the Greek word "DIAKONOS" that means, "one who executes the commands of another, especially of a master." The word minister is basically describing a servant. Paul was carrying out the Master's command to take the gospel to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15; 26:17).

according to the gift of the grace of God given to me - Paul considered his role as a servant to be a great privilege given to him by God's grace.

1 Thessalonians 2:4, "But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts."

1 Timothy 1:11-12, "According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust. And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry."

by the effective working of His power - Paul was an inspired apostle, and possessed the miraculous measure of the Holy Spirit that enabled him to execute his official position as an apostle.

Matthew 10:16-20, "Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore, be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues. You will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you."

3:8 *To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ,*

To me, who am less than the least of all the saints - Paul considers himself to be "less than the least" because he once persecuted Christians (1 Corinthians 15:9; 1 Timothy 1:13). He uses this unusual phrase to emphasize his feelings of unworthiness in being entrusted with the Gospel.

this grace was given - Paul considered it a great privilege to preach the gospel to the Gentiles (1 Thessalonians 2:4; 1 Corinthians 9:16).

that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ - "Unsearchable" comes from the Greek word (ANEXICHNIASTOS) meaning, "that cannot be searched out, that cannot be comprehended." Paul was filled with gratitude to God for allowing him to have the opportunity to proclaim the glorious message of salvation to the Gentiles.

3:9 *and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ;*

and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery - "Fellowship" comes from the Greek word (KOINŌNIA) meaning, "association, community, communion, joint participation." The mystery, as has already been stated, is the truth that the Gospel was to be given to the world for the benefit of both Jews and Gentiles. Fellowship refers to the mutual enjoyment of all being added to the one body (church) in their equal relationship to Christ.

which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God - This is restating the message of verse 5, that God's plan to bring all (Jews and Gentiles) into one body was previously unknown (1 Peter 1:10-12). It was not revealed until the proper time. God does not owe man an explanation to explain why the mystery was concealed. The creation of the church was not a last second decision (or plan B) by God (Acts 15:18).

2 Timothy 1:8-11, "Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God, who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began, but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, to which I was appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles."

Galatians 4:4-5, "But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons."

who created all things through Jesus Christ - Why does Paul bring up this point in this context? It could be to back up God's right in concealing the mystery and then revealing it at His own good pleasure. It is a recognition of the sovereignty of God. All things (even the creation of man) is owed to Him. He had the right to order events according to His own will.

3:10 *to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places,*

to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God - The creation of the church makes known the indescribable beauty of God's wisdom in uniting the Jews and the Gentiles (Ephesians 2:13-16; 3:6). Through the church the manifold (many-sided) wisdom of God might be made known, as it is revealed in the working of His church on earth. "Wisdom" includes all the instructions mankind needs, not only for salvation, but also for serving and worshiping God correctly.

might be made known by the church - The church is given the responsibility for making this information known to the world (2 Corinthians 4:5-7).

to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places - There are many different views concerning the meaning of this phrase. The best meaning for the context is that this refers to the innumerable hosts of angels in their various ranks who through the ages searched to know God's plan of redemption for man (1 Peter 1:12). In the context, this means, the church will shout the gospel message to the highest heavens and praise the glory of the demonstration of God's wisdom.

3:11 *according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord,*

according to the eternal purpose - God chose before the creation of the world that He would save those who obey Him. The salvation of the obedient ones has

always been planned by our God. The sacrifice of Jesus to bring to man the opportunity for salvation was not some after-thought or secondary plan (Ephesians 3:9). The church holds a glorious position in the eyes of the Lord and in His plan. The church was planned and purposed!

which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord - Notice how Christ is the central thought again. There is no getting past this point. Jesus Christ is the central point of eternity.

- A. This section of the Ephesian letter (Ephesians 3:9-11) refutes the premillennial teaching concerning the founding of the church?
  - 1. The premillennialist says the church was an alternate plan put into motion when the Jews rejected the kingdom.
  - 2. But, Paul tells us the church is God's eternal purpose, therefore totally destroying the false doctrine of premillennialism.

3:12 *in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him.*

in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him - Paul explains that in Christ, Christians are priests in the kingdom of heaven (1 Peter 2:9; Revelation 1:6). Through the one mediator (1 Timothy 2:5), Christians boldly, or in plainness of speech, approach the throne of grace (Hebrews 4:14-16; 10:19). Faith in Christ secures access and provides boldness to approach God as His children; because of such a great High Priest.

Hebrews 4:14-16, "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

3:13 *Therefore I ask that you do not lose heart at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.*

Therefore, I ask that you do not lose heart at my tribulations for you, which is your glory - Paul did not want the Christians at Ephesus to be discouraged by his suffering. His imprisonment was actually to their glory. It was their honor that such a man would gladly suffer reproach to bring them the gospel. It is always an honor to suffer for the cause of Christ.

Acts 5:41, "So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name."

**VI. Paul Prays for the Ephesians Again ..... 3:14-21**

3:14 *For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,*

For this reason, I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ - In this verse Paul resumes with that which he began in earlier verses concerning the Jews and Gentiles becoming one in Christ and being reconciled to God. He is explaining to the Ephesians those things he had been praying for.

- A. First, we notice that his prayer was directed toward the Father. Paul always prayed to the Father, never to Jesus (Ephesians 3:14; 5:20).
  - 1. A Christian must recognize and respect the divine roles among the members of the Godhead.
  - 2. It is the Father's role, and His alone, to be addressed in prayer (Matthew 6:9-13).
  - 3. Jesus is our high priest and intercessor (Hebrews 4:14-16; 1 Timothy 2:5), and as such it is through Him that we approach God's throne in prayer.
  - 4. We address "our Father in heaven" in prayer, rather than Jesus, because Jesus Himself directed us to do so (Matthew 6:9; Luke 11:2).
- B. Second, we notice that he describes his posture in prayer (bow my knees). We might be tempted to think this is the only acceptable position in prayer if we did not consult other passages dealing with prayer.
  - 1. There are many occasions in the Scriptures where prayer was offered using a different posture.
  - 2. In Matthew 26:39 Jesus "fell on his face" and prayed; the publican's prayer was acceptable though he prayed "standing" (Luke 18:13); Jesus gave thanks while sitting (Luke 22:14-17).
  - 3. From this we understand that prayer depends on the condition of the heart, not the position of the body.

C. Third, we notice that God is again called the Father of Christ, which disproves the foolish notion that God and Christ are the same person.

1. The Bible tells us there is only one God, and yet there is distinctly God the Father, God the Son and God the Spirit.
2. There is only one God (Deity), but there are three Persons within that essence

3:15 *from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,*

from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named - The "family in heaven and earth" includes Christians on earth and the faithful in paradise awaiting the judgment. Just as a human family takes its name from the head and father of the family, so this spiritual family is named from the head and Father, God.

3:16 *that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man,*

that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory to be strengthened with might - Paul explains to the Ephesians that he was praying for God to strengthen them with might, according to the riches of His grace. Paul wanted them to be strengthened, so they could fulfill their responsibilities to stand against trials, to resist temptations, to discharge their duties as Christians and to live lives of faithfulness.

through His Spirit in the inner man - This strength would come through His Spirit "in the inner man." What is the inner man?

2 Corinthians 4:16, "Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day."

The inner man is to be strengthened with might by the Holy Spirit. We must understand that this does not happen against man's will. Man must play a part in this process. The Holy Spirit will increase their strength when they feed upon the sincere milk of the word – the pure teachings of the Holy Spirit as revealed in the Scriptures (1 Peter 2:2). The inspired word is the tool used by the Holy Spirit to strengthen and build up the inner man.

Acts 20:32, "So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified."

2 Timothy 3:16-17, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."

[For additional information concerning the work of the Holy Spirit please see the appendices - THE HOLY SPIRIT WORKS THROUGH THE WORD.]

3:17 *that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love,*

that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith - In the past God dwelt in the temple, but now He dwells spiritually in the church. When Christians receive God's word into their hearts, they have Jesus' teaching constantly with them. How is it that through "faith" Christ dwells in the heart of a Christian?

Romans 10:17, "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

John 20:30-31, "And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name."

that you, being rooted and grounded in love - Christians are to be "rooted" in love, like a tree establishes its stability by the root system, and "grounded" in love, like a building is stable because of its foundation (Matthew 7:24-27). They are to be rooted and grounded in Christ who is the very source of love.

John 15:9, "As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love."

Ephesians 5:2, "And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma."

Galatians 5:22-23, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law."

3:18 *may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—*

may be able to comprehend with all the saints - Paul wants them to comprehend the vastness of Christ's love.

what is the width and length and depth and height - Here Paul begins to express the immensity of Christ's love.

A. "Width" - It reaches all of mankind. It takes in the entire territory of human existence, both Jews and Gentiles. He tasted "death for everyone" (Hebrews 2:9). Not just His friends, but also His enemies. Christ died for all (2 Corinthians 5:15; 1 John 2:2).

B. "Length" - To what length will the love of Christ go?

John 13:1, "Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end."

John 15:13, "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends."

C. "Depth" - How far down does it go? The love of Christ is vast and measureless, it has gone down far deeper than the lowest depths of human sin.

1 Timothy 1:15, "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief."

D. "Height" - The love of Christ towers above all other institutions in dignity and efficiency. The desire of His love is that His disciples share in His glory, sit with Him "in heavenly places" and partake in all the fullness of His grace.

3:19 *to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.*

to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge - The love of Christ is so great that it is beyond full human comprehension, but man must gain some understanding of it to properly respond to it.

1 John 3:1, "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore, the world does not know us, because it did not know Him."

that you may be filled with all the fullness of God - When a man obeys God's plan of salvation, he gains all that God has provided for him in this life. There is nothing lacking in his spiritual needs (Colossians 2:10), even though he does not fully understand all its divine magnitude.

3:20 *Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,*

Now to Him - The "Him" in this verse is God the Father to whom Paul offered this prayer. It is not uncommon for Paul to refer to praise while speaking of the great blessings which God showers down on us (Galatians 1:5; Romans 9:5; 11:36).

who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think - We should not think this verse is teaching God will do all that we ask Him to do. God knows what is best for us. We may be asking for something that would actually not be for our spiritual good. The verse is teaching that God is able to do whatever He deems best for us spiritually. He will even answer our prayers in such a way that is better than we were able to express.

according to the power that works in us - This power is the power "which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead" (Ephesians 1:20). God's power to help the Christians at Ephesus was determined by their willingness and desire to seek His help. He cannot provide knowledge to those Christians who refuse to seek it in the study of His word (2 Timothy 2:15).

3:21 *to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.*

to Him be glory in the church - Here we find the purpose of the church – to glorify God! The church reflects the light of God's glory and makes it shine into the midst of a world in the darkness of sin. The Lord adds the saved to the church daily (Acts 2:47) and showers down all spiritual blessings upon the church (Ephesians 1:3). Outside the church a man is without hope and without God in the world. In the church a Christian can glorify God by bearing fruit.

by Christ Jesus - Anything that is done in the church must be done according to the direction of Jesus Christ since He is the head of the church (Ephesians 1:22-23). It is in the church, and only in the church, that anyone can glorify God.

Christians are to follow His instructions and not invent their own methods of praise and glory. Those who have invented their own ways of

worshiping God are not the Lord's church and their so-called "worship" is not accepted by the Father. God is not glorified by the nonsense practiced today as "modern" worship.

to all generations, forever and ever - The praise, glory and honor are to continue throughout all the ages of eternity (Revelation 5:13). Modern adaptations or additions are not needed or allowed. What are the ramifications of this verse?

- A. The church holds a glorious position in the eyes of the Lord and in His plan.
- B. The Lord adds the saved to the church daily (Acts 2:47) and showers down all spiritual blessings upon her (Ephesians 1:3).
- C. It is in the church, and only in the church, that anyone can glorify God. Outside the church a man is without hope and without God in the world, but in the church a man can glorify God by bearing fruit (John 15:1-8; Romans 7:1-4).

Amen - "Amen" literally means "so be it." The word "Amen" started as a Hebrew word (Numbers 5:22), that was transliterated into Greek and then eventually into English.

- A. The word "amen" comes from a Hebrew root word that means "to build up or support; to be firm or faithful, to trust or believe; to be true or certain."
  - 1. It is also used as an adverb at the beginning of a speech to mean "surely, of a truth, truly" (Matthew 5:18; Mark 3:28; John 3:3).
  - 2. At the conclusion of a sentence it is used to mean "so it is, so be it, may it be fulfilled."
  - 3. When the word is used as an adjective it means "firm or true."
- B. Some dictionaries claim that when "Amen" is used at the end of a prayer it means approval of what is being said.
- C. However, our approval does not make it true. It is more correct to think of it as "this is true, or may it come to pass, or may it be fulfilled."

## CHAPTER FOUR

**VII. The Worthy Walk .....4:1-16**

4:1 *I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called,*

I, therefore - The word "therefore" means that Paul is drawing a conclusion from the things he taught in the previous chapter.

the prisoner of the Lord - Paul was a prisoner for the cause of Christ. He was innocent of any wrongdoing, imprisoned for simply preaching the gospel.

beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called - To "walk worthy" is to live as a true Christian bringing honor to Christ. The "calling" is used to express one's chief occupation or position (cf. 1 Corinthians 7:20).

A. Being a Christian is a high and noble calling.

James 2:7, "Do they not blaspheme that noble name by which you are called?"

B. How are we called?

2 Thessalonians 2:14, "To which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."

C. The Scriptures often refer to the Christians' calling:

1. 1 Peter 2:9 - Christians are *called* out of darkness.
2. 1 Peter 2:21 - Christians are *called* to follow Christ's steps.
3. 1 Peter 3:9 - Christians are *called* to return good for evil.
4. 1 Peter 5:10 - God has *called* Christians into His eternal glory.
5. Jude 1 - Christians are sanctified and preserved and *called*.

4:2 *with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love,*

with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love - Notice these characteristics the Christian should possess:

- A. Lowliness (TAPEINOPHROSUNĒ) - "having a humble opinion of one's self; a deep sense of one's (moral) littleness; modesty, humility, lowliness of mind."
- B. Gentleness (PRAOTĒS) - "mildness, meekness." Meekness is often described as power under control. Meekness is not weakness.
- C. Longsuffering (MAKROTHUMIA) - "patience, endurance, constancy, steadfastness, perseverance; patience, forbearance, longsuffering, slowness in avenging wrongs."
- D. Bearing (ANECHOMAI) with one another in love - "to hold up; to hold one's self; to sustain, to bear, to endure."

Romans 12:9-13, "Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality."

John 13:35, "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

4:3 *endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace - The spirit that promotes unity comes from God. This unity can only be gained and maintained by doing God's will. All who are in the Lord's church are partakers of the one Spirit that provided life to the spiritual body. The church must have an attitude of unity. It is an attitude that realizes the value of a united people.

1 Corinthians 12:20, "But now indeed there are many members, yet one body."

Philippians 2:1-2, "Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind."

4:4 *There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling;*

There is one body - This section of Scriptures is sometimes referred to as, "the seven ones," "the seven unities," "the seven elements of unity" or "the platform of unity." The one spiritual "body" is the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. The church at Ephesus was the body of Christ at that place. The body follows the instructions of the head, Jesus.

Colossians 1:18, "And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence."

and one Spirit - This refers to the Holy Spirit.

- A. This logically follows. Since there is indeed but one Spirit, there cannot be more than one body (which is the church).
- B. The other bodies would be without a Spirit and therefore would be dead, since a body without a spirit is dead.
- C. There can be only one body.

In any case, the Spirit here is the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Galatians 4:6; Romans 8:9), who like Christ (Ephesians 3:17; Colossians 1:27) and like the Father (2 Corinthians 6:16; 1 John 4:15), dwells in the hearts of Christian.

just as you were called in one hope of your calling - There is only one hope because God has provided us with only one hope in His Son. If we do not have Jesus we do not have hope (1 Peter 1:3-5).

1 Timothy 1:1, "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God our Savior and the Lord Jesus Christ, our hope."

Hebrews 6:19-20, "This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek."

4:5 *one Lord, one faith, one baptism;*

one Lord - "Lord" comes from the Greek word (KURIOS) meaning, "he to whom a person or thing belongs, about which he has power of deciding; master, lord; the owner; one who has control of the person, the master." It is a title of honor expressing respect for a ruler.

- A. Jesus prayed, "I thank You, Father, **Lord** of heaven and earth," (Matthew 11:25), and yet Philippians 2:11 says, "that every tongue

should confess that Jesus Christ is **Lord**." Why then does Paul say there is **one Lord**?

- B. In this context, Paul is probably using the term in a special sense to indicate that Christ is Lord and "head over all things to the church" (chapter 1:22-23).
- C. Therefore, Christ is the one Lord over the church.

1 Timothy 6:14-15, "That you keep this commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing, which He will manifest in His own time, He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords."

one faith - The word "faith" can be used in two basic ways in the Scriptures.

- A. Sometimes it is used to refer to one's belief that Jesus is the Christ.
- B. However, at other times it is used to refer to the system or plan God has provided for man's salvation.
  - 1. In this way "faith" refers to the doctrine or body of teaching which we have from God.

Jude 1:3, "Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints."

Acts 6:7, "Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith."

Galatians 1:23, "But they were hearing only, 'He who formerly persecuted us now preaches the faith which he once tried to destroy.'"

- 2. There is only one doctrine or body of teaching that can provide the instructions we need for salvation.

one baptism - There are many different baptisms (immersions) mentioned in the Scriptures. Let us exam each one to determine which is the "one" to which Paul refers.

- A. John's Baptism (Matthew 3:16) - This baptism was preparatory and temporary (Acts 19:1-7).
- B. Baptism of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11) - This baptism was administrated by Christ. In Acts 2 we have baptism of the Holy Spirit upon the twelve (Acts 2:1-4). We have no recipients of baptism of the Holy Spirit today.
- C. Baptism of suffering (Luke 15:30) - This baptism (immersion) is in a context of great suffering and pain.
- D. Baptism of fire (Matthew 3:11) - This baptism is a promise of God to the wicked (Matthew 25:46; Mark 9:44, 46, 48; Revelation 20:14).
- E. Baptism for the dead (1 Corinthians 15:29) - This baptism is found in an obscure passage with many conflicting interpretations.
- F. Baptism associated with the Old Testament (1 Corinthians 10:2) - This baptism deals with the washings of the old law (Hebrews 6:2).
- G. Baptism of the great commission in water (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:47; Acts 2:38-39) - This baptism is an immersion in water (Acts 8:26-40) for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16).
  - 1. This baptism places one into Christ (Galatians 3:27; 1 Corinthians 12:13).
  - 2. Those baptized with this baptism are added to the church (Acts 2:47).
  - 3. This baptism is a burial (Romans 6:3,4; Colossians 2:12).

What is the conclusion? Of all of these, there was only one that fits the context. The "one" baptism of Ephesians 4:5 is the baptism of the great commission in water. The statement here that there is "one" means that only one pertaining to the Christian life in the present dispensation.

4:6 *one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*

one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all - The seventh of these great unities is God Himself. God the Father is the Creator, Preserver, and Benefactor of all things.

Deuteronomy 6:4, "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!"

It must be made clear that the Old Testament does not deny the Godhead as a plurality. The Hebrew word for God's oneness in the Old Testament is ('ECHÂD) that can be used as a compound unity, as in "indeed the **people** are **one** ('ECHÂD)" - Genesis 11:6. Therefore, Deuteronomy 6:4, and similar passages, cannot be used to deny the plurality associated with Deity.

- A. The Bible tells us there is only one God, and yet there is distinctly God the Father, God the Son and God the Spirit. There is only one God (Deity), but there are three Persons within that essence. All three are mentioned in Ephesians 4:4-6.
  - 1. One Spirit
  - 2. One Lord
  - 3. One Father
- B. Please notice two examples of the work of the Godhead (in creation and in salvation):
  - 1. In creation
    - a) Father - designer (Genesis 1:3, 6, 9)
    - b) Word (Son) - creator (John 1:3; Colossians 1:16)
    - c) The Spirit - organizer (Genesis 1:2; Job 26:13)
  - 2. In salvation
    - a) Father - designer of the plan (Ephesians 3:9)
    - b) Son - power of the plan (John 1:14; Philippians 2:6-8; John 1:29; 1 Peter 1:18-19; Revelation 1:5)
    - c) Holy Spirit – revealer of the plan (John 16:13; 1 Corinthians 2:13; 2 Peter 1:20-21)

The seven ones teach us the importance of unity. So, how do we overcome threats to this unity? How can we guard against disunity (or division)?

- A. The church should understand there will be problems.
  - 1. Acts 6:1
  - 2. Acts 15:36-41
  - 3. 1 Corinthians 5 and 6:12-14
  - 4. Galatians 2:11-14
  - 5. Philippians 4:2-3
  - 6. Galatians 1:6-9
    - a) The challenge is to deal with and overcome these problems while maintaining love and unity.
    - b) And not compromising or contradicting God's Word.
- B. The church must respect the authority of God's word
  - 1. 1 Corinthians 5 and 6; Galatians 2:11-14
  - 2. Problems where doctrine is involved
    - a) Acts 5:29
    - b) 1 Corinthians 5; 2 Corinthians 2
- C. The church must deal with the problem.
  - 1. Acts 6
  - 2. Discipline
    - a) Positive and
    - b) Negative
  - 3. Galatians 6:1

- D. In disagreements the church must not allow the work to be hindered.
    - 1. Purpose of church
      - a) Ephesians 3:21
      - b) Acts 15:36-41
  
  - E. The church must learn how to deal with matters of opinion.
    - 1. Acts 15:36-41
    - 2. Must be able to distinguish between matters of doctrine and opinion (John 3:2).
    - 3. Eating of meat
      - a) 1 Corinthians 8, 10
      - b) Romans 14
      - c) Acts 15:20, 29
  
  - F. The church must understand the principles behind the fruit of the spirit versus the works of the flesh (Galatians 5:16-26).
- 

4:7 *But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.*

But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift -

This is a reference to the spiritual gifts of the first century church. The gifts are referred to as "grace" because the possession of them was a favor, which is the meaning of grace.

- A. The first century church was endowed with numerous spiritual gifts. Paul listed nine of these gifts in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10.
  
- B. The phrase, "according to the measure" means that not all disciples received the same kind or amount of this spiritual favor (1 Corinthians 12:4-7). But whatever degree of this grace was bestowed upon the various members of the church, it was all a part of the gift of Christ.

1. These miraculous gifts were bestowed by the laying on of the apostles' hands (Acts 8:14-17).
2. These gifts provided instruction, confirmation, protection and stability to the first century church.
3. In its infancy, the church of Christ did not have the completed revelation of the New Testament. It would take some sixty-five years for it to be fully revealed.
4. Spiritual gifts were given, therefore, to provide what was needed until God's Word would be fully revealed.
  - a) Since the ability to impart miraculous gifts was only given to the apostles, it follows that after the apostles died no one ever received these miraculous gifts again.
  - b) Therefore, when the last apostle died and the last person they laid their hands on died, there was no one on earth who could perform miracles.
  - c) [For additional information concerning this issue please see the appendices - MIRACLES - LAYING ON OF AN APOSTLE'S HANDS.]

4:8 *Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men."*

Therefore, He says: "When He ascended on high" - This refers to the ascension of Jesus to Heaven (Acts 1:9,11; Daniel 7:13-14; Psalm 24:7-11).

Acts 1:9-11, "Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.'"

He led captivity captive - Paul uses this quote from Psalm 68:18 to describe Christ's ascension as a triumphal march.

- A. It is Christ's conquest over Satan, the world, sin, death and indeed every spiritual enemy.

- B. This especially emphasizes the work of the devil, who leads men captive at his will, and is therefore called captivity, and his principalities and powers (Ephesians 6:12), whom Christ has spoiled and triumphed over.

and gave gifts to men - Again this refers to the miraculous gifts given to Christians, only in the first century (1 Corinthians 12:8-10).

- 4:9 *Now this, "He ascended"—what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth?*

Now this, "He ascended"—what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? - The fact that He first descended from heaven proves the divine origin and character of Jesus. The phrase "lower parts of the earth" refers to the lowly state that Jesus took upon Himself living as a man.

Philippians 2:5-8, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross."

- 4:10 *He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.*

He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things - The first half of this verse repeats the statement made in verse 9. However, in this verse Paul adds the phrase "above all the heavens."

The word "heaven" can be used in various ways in the Scriptures. The first "heaven" is the sky above where the birds fly. The second "heaven" is where we find the stars and planets. The third "heaven" is the dwelling place of God.

Since all the heavens were created by Christ (Colossians 1:16-17), it only follows that in returning to His Father, He ascend above those things He made. His ascension was necessary to complete the work of establishing His spiritual kingdom (the church) on earth. After His ascension (Acts 1:9), Christ sent the Holy Spirit to the apostles as He had promised (John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7).

- 4:11 *And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,*

And He Himself gave some to be - Now Paul lists the gifts given to the disciples by Christ when He ascended, in the order of importance of these gifts.

apostles - These were qualified men chosen by the Lord with special responsibilities. Strictly speaking this included the twelve (Mathias replaced Judas) and Paul.

- A. What were the qualifications? They had to have been with the Lord Jesus from baptism of John to the Lord's ascension to heaven.

Acts 1:21-22, "Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection."

- B. Paul was unique in the sense that he was instructed by the Lord Himself.

Acts 22:14-15, "And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth. For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard."

Acts 26:16, "But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee."

Galatians 1:11-12, "But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."

some prophets - The prophets were inspired to make known the will of God after it had been revealed to them. Prophecy was one of the miraculous spiritual gifts of the first century (1 Corinthians 12:10).

some evangelists - Evangelists were those who would be sent out to spread the gospel. An evangelist was not fixed in any one place, but travelled as a missionary to preach the good news of salvation and establish congregations.

and some pastors and teachers - The term "pastors" applies to the elders of a congregation. This is seen in 1 Peter 5:1-5 where the elders are mentioned in

connection with Christ who is referred to as the chief Shepherd, thus representing the elders as shepherds. Elders (1 Timothy 5:1) are also referred to as Bishops (1 Timothy 3:1-2), overseers (Acts 20:28), pastors (Ephesian 4:11), rulers (Hebrews 13:7, 17), shepherds (1 Peter 5:2) and the presbytery (1 Timothy 4:14). The different terms are used to emphasize different aspects of the same office. "Teachers" is applied to any disciple engaged principally in giving biblical instruction to others.

4:12 *for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,*

for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry - Now Paul explains why these gifts were given. "equipping" means the furnishing or strengthening of the saints (Christians). The phrase "work of the ministry" describes the general service of Christians given to the cause of Christ. The religion of Christ is active.

1 Thessalonians 1:2-3, "We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father."

for the edifying of the body of Christ - "Edifying" comes from the Greek word (OIKODOMĒ) meaning, "the act of building, building up; the act of one who promotes another's growth in Christian wisdom, piety, happiness, holiness." It is the promotion of spiritual growth.

Romans 14:19, "Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another."

4:13 *till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;*

till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God - "Till" is an adverb of time. The miraculous elements of these gifts are limited in time. In 1 Corinthians 13:8-12 Paul tells us how long they will last.

1 Corinthians 13:8-12, "Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away. When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now, we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known."

In this passage Paul is telling the Corinthian Christians that prophecies, tongues and miraculous knowledge will not always be available.

The Greek word here for "fail," "vanish away" and "done away" is KATARGEŌ which means, "to render, inactivate, inoperative, with no further power, done away with and abolished."

What is "that which is perfect"? "Perfect" means "full, complete or entire." When the full, complete, written revelation of the New Testament came, then miraculous gifts were done away. In James 1:25, God's Word is referred to as "the perfect law of liberty." It took until the close of the first century to reveal this covenant to man in its completed form (perfection). When it came in its fullness, the miraculous, that which was in part, was done away. The partial revelation was no longer needed when the complete revelation came.

The word "perfect" comes from the Greek word (TELEIOS) which means "complete." If the Greek word had been translated correctly as "complete" there never would have been so many false interpretations of this verse. This whole section of Scriptures is contrasting that which is partial to that which is complete. To be done away means they are no longer in use.

Miracles came to an end at the beginning of the second century. They served their purposes and were taken away. We have the written Word of God in its fullness. Paul said that it is all sufficient for our needs (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ - The phrase "perfect man" is a figure of speech meaning complete or full-grown man as opposed to an immature child. This illustration is used to show the difference between the time when the church had to depend on spiritual gifts, and when it would have the completed New Testament. The "fulness of Christ" describes the complete spiritual maturity that Christ makes possible through the complete revelation of the New Testament.

4:14 *that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting,*

that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine - The original word translated as "children" is defined as, "untaught, unskilled," The illustration pictures untaught disciples as an incomplete raft tossed about in the angry waves. The waves being caused by the false doctrines of men. Without the complete revealed word of God, the disciples would not be able to easily detect the false doctrines. Complete revelation is better than partial revelation as the child of God faces the wiles of the devil (Ephesians 6:11).

Matthew 22:29, "Jesus answered and said to them, 'You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God.'"

by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting - "Trickery" and "cunning craftiness" are used by false teachers to mislead those Christians who lack the necessary tools to stand against the devil.

Matthew 7:15, "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves."

Romans 16:17-18, "Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple."

4:15 *but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—*

but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ - We must speak the truth in love.

- A. Speaking the truth in love is necessary for the growth and harmony of the body of Christ.
- B. Proclaiming God's truth in love converts sinners and brings them into the body of Christ.
- C. Their future growth and work in the church are also promoted through the truth.
- D. All truth must be proclaimed.

Acts 20:20, "How I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house."

Acts 20:27, "For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God."

4:16 *from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.*

from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love - In this illustration the human body is used to represent the church. Jesus is the head and from Him the church as the body is so constructed that it fits together closely as if knitted together to compose the body.

- A. The entire body (church) must be subject to the head (Christ).
- B. Also, every member of the body is expected to contribute something toward the edification of the body.
- C. When this process is followed it will result in the increase or growth of the body.
- D. The church will be edified or built up in love (1 Corinthians 12:12-27).

**VIII. The Worldly Walk.....4:17-32**

4:17 *This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind,*

This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind - The phrase "rest of the Gentiles" means those who had not become Christians. The congregation at Ephesus was composed, for the most part, of Gentiles. Paul was exhorting them to forsake the sinful practices they engaged in before their conversion. He points them to the role their minds (their thoughts) played in this process.

- A. Worldliness originates in the mind (Proverbs 23:7; Mark 7:5-16).
- B. The mind must be disciplined and controlled (1 Peter 1:13).
- C. It is important that we keep our thoughts pure (Titus 1:15).

Philippians 4:8, "Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things."

4:18 *having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart;*

having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God - In God's word light and dark are often contrasted as the representatives of good and evil (1 Peter 2:9; 2 Corinthians 6:14; 1 John 1:5-7). The religion Christ established is based on knowledge (understanding). Often times ignorance and lack of knowledge will be likened unto those who are blind or in darkness (Matthew 13:14-15; 15:14).

because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart - Ignorance will cause our spiritual destruction.

Hosea 4:6, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me; Because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children."

John 8:31-32, "Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, 'If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.'"

4:19 *who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.*

who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness - This is the result of the hardening of one's heart against the word of God. It causes unrestrained immorality, uncleanness, covetousness and a desire for sensuality (Romans 1:21-32). See also the works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21).

- A. "Lewdness" comes from the Greek word (ASELGEIA) meaning, "unbridled lust, excess, licentiousness, lasciviousness, wantonness, outrageousness, shamelessness, insolence." This word is very closely linked to licentiousness - unrestrained, especially in sexual activity.
- B. "Uncleanness" comes from the Greek word (AKATHARSIA) meaning, "uncleanness in a moral sense: the impurity of lustful, luxurious, profligate living; of impure motives."
- C. "Greediness" comes from the Greek word (PLEONEXIA) meaning, "greedy desire to have more, covetousness, avarice."

4:20 *But you have not so learned Christ,*

But - This important word emphasizes that there is a very clear and distinct line of separation between the ungodly world and the child of God.

you have not so learned Christ - In other words, Paul is saying to these brethren that they did not learn such worldly practices from Christ. To learn Christ is to learn truth (John 14:6). The religion Christ established is a religion based on learning and knowledge (Matthew 11:28-30; 28:19-20; John 8:32; 2 Timothy 2:2).

4:21 *if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus:*

if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus - "If indeed you have" is not said in the sense of there being any doubt, but in the sense of because you have heard Him and have been taught by Him your actions should reflect that fact. They had "heard" Christ and had been "taught by Him," when they heard His teaching through the inspired words of the apostle Paul.

4:22 *that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts,*

that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts - To "put off" means to stop doing those things they had done before when they lived according to the sinful world. The "old man" represents that former life of ungodliness (Romans 6:1-6). "Lusts" are deceitful because they trick a man into thinking he is enjoying genuine pleasure, when actually those sinful things will only bring sorrow and spiritual death to his life. True joy and happiness are only found in Christ (Matthew 5:3-12).

4:23 *and be renewed in the spirit of your mind,*

and be renewed in the spirit of your mind - The "spirit" here is not the Holy Spirit, but the spirit of the mind – the inner man (2 Corinthians 4:16). To "be renewed" means they will change their minds from an interest in worldly things, to a desire for those things that are spiritual. They must not follow after the desires of the flesh, but the higher things of righteousness (Philippians 4:8).

Romans 12:1-2, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be **transformed by the renewing of your mind**, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

4:24 *and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.*

and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness - A renewed mind will result in new actions (Mark 7:15). Basically, they must stop doing worldly things and start doing spiritual things of righteousness and holiness. The "new man" was created by God in the sense that He is the creator of the spiritual life that is to be practiced in Christ.

4:25 *Therefore, putting away lying, "Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor," for we are members of one another.*

Therefore, putting away lying, "Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor," for we are members of one another - Genuine repentance results in a changed life. It includes stopping those practices that are wrong, and doing those things that are right. The first, thing Paul mentions that should be "put away" is lying.

Revelation 21:7-8, "He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, **and all liars** shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

Proverbs 12:22, "Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD, But those who deal truthfully are His delight."

4:26 *"Be angry, and do not sin": do not let the sun go down on your wrath,*

Be angry, and do not sin - Anger is not necessarily sinful. God is angry with the wicked every day (Psalm 7:11). Jesus was angry when He saw the people's hardness of heart (Mark 3:5).

do not let the sun go down on your wrath - Paul's instruction here is to make sure their anger did not cause them to do something sinful. That is why he warns them to "not to let the sun go down on your wrath." Keeping angry thoughts in our hearts will tempt us into committing sinful actions. We must never allow our anger to lead us to sin. We should deal with anger properly (Matthew 5:21-26).

4:27 *nor give place to the devil.*

nor give place to the devil - It is possible to be angry for the wrong reason. This is sin. It is also possible to be angry for the right reason, but then deal with it in the wrong way. Keeping the anger in our heart and dwelling on it gives the devil an opportunity to tempt us to lash out in a sinful way.

James 4:7-8, "Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded."

4:28 *Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need.*

Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good - Her Paul makes a distinct contrast between stealing and honest labor.

- A. Today the world looks upon some forms of stealing as being sharp or shrewd in business.
- B. However, God's word teaches that if you get what belongs to another by false representation, concealment of defects or taking undue advantage it is nevertheless stealing.
- C. Gaining from others without fair and just consideration is dishonest.
- D. In this verse we truly see the power of the gospel. It can turn a thief into an honest laborer.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11, "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. **And such were some of you.** But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God."

that he may have something to give him who has need - Notice the purpose Paul gives for working honestly. They should work honestly to provide for their own needs, and also for the needs of others.

- A. There are some who are simply unable to support themselves and are deserving of help. The strong have a duty to help the weak (Acts 20:35; 4:34-37).
- B. Not only will a Christian not steal, but he will also not covet (Colossians 3:5; James 5:4; 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12) that often leads to stealing.

4:29 *Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.*

Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers - "Corrupt" comes from the Greek word (SAPROS) meaning, "rotten, putrefied; corrupted by one and no longer fit for use, worn out; of poor quality, bad, unfit for use, worthless."

A. Christians should not use any language that is bad or unfit.

Colossians 3:8, "But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth."

B. "Good" language are words that build up, encourage and strengthen the hearer.

4:30 *And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.*

and do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God - The word "grieve" comes from the Greek (LUPEŌ) meaning, "to make sorrowful; to affect with sadness, cause grief, to throw into sorrow; to grieve, offend."

A. God's word was given to us through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

B. If we show any disrespect toward that inspired word by our disobedience or neglect, we will be "grieving" (offending) the Holy Spirit. To grieve the Holy Spirit is the same thing as grieving the Lord Jesus and God the Father.

Isaiah 63:8-10, "For He said, 'Surely they are My people, Children who will not lie.' So, He became their Savior. In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the Angel of His Presence saved them; in His love and in His pity, He redeemed them; and He bore them and carried them all the days of old. But they rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit; so, He turned Himself against them as an enemy, And He fought against them."

Acts 7:51, "You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you."

by whom you were sealed - A seal is a sign guaranteeing and confirming a promise, or obligation. Therefore, the phrase "by whom you were sealed" means they were provided with the confirming evidence by the Spirit's revealing the truth of salvation through the apostles. It is through the Holy Spirit, in His teachings, that all Christians are sealed or confirmed until the day of redemption.

for the day of redemption - The day of redemption refers to the day of judgment when all faithful servants of God will receive their eternal crown of redemption from sin. Hope will be swallowed up in reality (1 Peter 1:13; Romans 8:22-26).

4:31 *Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.*

Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice - Here Paul continues the contrast between evil and good.

- A. Bitterness (PIKRIA) - "bitter gall; extreme wickedness; a bitter root, and so producing a bitter fruit; metaphorically bitterness, bitter hatred." Bitterness willfully retains anger or angry feelings.
- B. Wrath (THUMOS) - "passion, angry, heat, anger forthwith boiling up and soon subsiding again; glow, ardor, the wine of passion, inflaming wine." This is more of an inward feeling.
- C. Anger (ORGĒ) - "anger, the natural disposition, temper, character; movement or agitation of the soul, impulse, desire, any violent emotion, but especially anger; anger, wrath, indignation; anger exhibited in punishment." This is more of an active emotion. Anger is a deep agitated feeling usually with the view to taking vengeance
- D. Clamor (KRAUGĒ) - "a crying, outcry, clamor." This refers to loud, boisterous, disorderly speech.
- E. Evil speaking (BLASPHEMIA) - "slander, detraction, speech injurious, to another's good name; impious and reproachful speech injurious to divine majesty." This is to speak evil of that which is good, holy or righteous.
- F. Malice (KAKIA) - "malignity, malice, ill-will, desire to injure; wickedness, depravity; wickedness that is not ashamed to break laws, do evil or bring trouble."

4:32 *And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.*

And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you - We should be considerate of others in view of our own weaknesses (Galatians 6:1). We should be moved by God's example of forgiving us to forgive others. How did God forgive us? He loved us so much that He provided His Son as a sacrifice for our sins, even while we were still in sin. He longed for our repentance so He could grant unto us forgiveness.

Romans 5:8, "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

## CHAPTER FIVE

### IX. The Loving Walk ..... 5:1-14

5:1 *Therefore, be imitators of God as dear children.*

Therefore, be imitators of God as dear children - "Imitators" comes from the Greek word (MIMĒTĒS) meaning, "follower." The Ephesians are told by Paul to be followers of God as dear children. A good father is admired by his children. They want to be like him because they admire and respect him. A father who is a cruel tyrant is not admired by his children. God the Father has always demonstrated His loving care for His children.

1 John 3:1, "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore, the world does not know us, because it did not know Him."

1 John 4:7-8, "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love."

5:2 *And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.*

And walk in love - The word "walk" implies ongoing action.

1 Corinthians 16:14, "Let all that you do be done with love."

1 Thessalonians 1:3, "Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father."

1 John 3:17-18, "But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth."

as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us - Christ loved us even before we loved Him. His love for us was dramatically shown by the ultimate sacrifice He made for us on the cross.

2 Corinthians 8:9, "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich."

an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma - The phrase, "sweet-smelling aroma," refers back to the sacrifices that were offered up to God under the law of Moses in which sweet incense was burned (Deuteronomy 28:2, 6, 8, 13, 24, 27; 29:2, 8, 13, 36).

5:3 *But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints;*

But fornication - "Fornication" comes from the Greek word (PORNEIA) meaning, "illicit sexual intercourse." It is having sexual intercourse with anyone who is not your lawful spouse. Fornication is a broad term that includes all manner of illicit sexual conduct. It includes, adultery, fornication, homosexuality, lesbianism, incest and bestiality.

and all uncleanness - "Uncleanness" comes from the Greek word (AKATHARSIA) meaning, "physical or moral uncleanness: the impurity of lustful, luxurious, profligate living; of impure motives." The Greek word was originally used to describe the pus of an unclean wound. It is used here to mean impurity of either mind or body. It is the opposite of pure and makes a man unfit to come before God.

or covetousness - "Covetousness" comes from the Greek word (PLEONEXIA) meaning, "a greedy desire to have more" (cf. Luke 12:15-21; Colossians 3:5; 1 Timothy 6:6-18).

let it not even be named among you - The fact that Paul has just named these things shows that he is not saying that these sins should not be mentioned. If this was the case he would be condemning himself. The meaning of the phrase is that these sins should not be found or even mentioned with approval in the congregation.

as is fitting for saints - "Saints" comes from the Greek word (HAGIOS) meaning, "separated from sin and consecrated to God." Christians (saints) conduct themselves in true holiness.

1 Peter 1:13-16, "Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy."

What are the qualities of true holiness (Ephesians 4:24; 1 Peter 1:13-17)?

- A. Controlling your mind
- B. Being sober
- C. Having hope
- D. Living in obedience
- E. A life that is distinct
- F. Imitating God
- G. Having reverence for God

5:4 *neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.*

neither filthiness - "Filthiness" is from the Greek word (AISCHROTĒS) meaning, obscenity, all that is contrary to purity."

nor foolish talking - "Foolish talking" comes from the Greek word (MŌROLOGIA) meaning, "silly talk, that is, buffoonery." This refers to more than mere idle talk. This is talk that combines foolishness with sin.

nor coarse jesting - The phrase "coarse jesting" comes from the Greek word (EUTRAPELIA) meaning, "witticism, that is, (in a vulgar sense)." These are jokes or statements that hinge on vulgar innuendo.

which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks - All of these things mentioned (verses 3 and 4) are unfit. The "giving of thanks" is the kind of speech that should be coming from a Christian's mouth. The blessings a Christian has in Christ are a

source of joy and contentment, from which flows thanksgiving and praise (Psalm 75:1; Philippians 4:6; 1 Thessalonians 5:18).

5:5 *For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.*

For this you know, that no fornicator - "Fornicator" comes from the Greek word (PORNEIA) meaning, "illicit sexual intercourse." It is having sexual intercourse with anyone who is not your lawful spouse. Fornication is a broad term that includes all manner of illicit sexual conduct. It includes, adultery, fornication, homosexuality, lesbianism, incest and bestiality.

unclean person - "Uncleanness" comes from the Greek word (AKATHARSIA) meaning, "physical or moral uncleanness: the impurity of lustful, luxurious, profligate living; of impure motives." The Greek word was originally used to describe the pus of an unclean wound. It is used here to mean impurity of either mind or body. It is the opposite of pure and makes a man unfit to come before God.

nor covetous man - "Covetousness" comes from the Greek word (PLEONEXIA) meaning, "a greedy desire to have more" (cf. Luke 12:15-21; Colossians 3:5; 1 Timothy 6:6-18).

who is an idolater - "Idolater" comes from the Greek word (EIDŌLOLATRĒS) meaning, "an image worshipper; a servant or worshipper of false gods." Paul's warning is that the believers must not turn away from God to idolatry, whether openly or secretly.

has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God - "Inheritance" comes from the Greek word (KLĒRONOMIA) meaning, "what is given to one as a possession; an inheritance, property received (or to be received) by inheritance." Paul uses the phrase, "kingdom of Christ and God" because both the Father and the Son are united in purpose. Christ is the king, and His kingdom is the church (Matthew 16:18-19).

5:6 *Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.*

Let no one deceive you with empty words - "Empty" comes from the Greek word (KENOS) meaning, "empty, devoid of truth." The one who deceives would be the one who minimizes the true dangers of the sins mentioned. There are those who do not look at sin the way God does. They play down the nature of sin and the consequences of sin.

Romans 5:20-21, "Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Romans 6:1-2, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?"

for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience - The "these things" in this verse refers to the sins Paul has mentioned. We should never underestimate or disregard God's wrath (anger)

2 Thessalonians 1:6-9, "Since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power."

Romans 11:22, "Therefore, consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off."

Obedience is the key. We never want to be on the side of the "sons of disobedience."

Matthew 7:21, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven."

Luke 6:46, "But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the things which I say?"

John 14:15, "If you love Me, keep My commandments."

John 15:14, "You are My friends if you do whatever I command you."

Hebrews 5:8-9, "Though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him."

5:7 *Therefore do not be partakers with them.*

Therefore, do not be partakers with them - To be partakers with them is to participate in their sins. That participation brings swift and sure punishment.

5:8 *For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light*

For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light - This refers to the time when these Ephesians were living in the darkness of sin, separated from God (Ephesians 4:18-19). Walking in darkness is to be clouded in mind and thought and thus following the course of this world. Now that they have been led into the light of truth, their daily conduct (walk) should be in harmony with divine truth. To walk in the light is to possess understanding that comes from the light of God's word. Christians are to be "children of light."

Matthew 5:14-16, "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."

John 8:12, "Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, 'I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.'"

1 John 1:5-7, "This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin."

5:9 *(for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth),*

for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth - "Goodness" means, "morally honorable, pleasing to God, and therefore beneficial." "Righteousness" means, "the character or quality of being right or just" (Psalm 119:172). "Truth" denotes the true teaching of the gospel, in contrast to the perversions of the gospel (Galatians 1:6-9). The Scriptures have much to say concerning the "fruit of the Spirit."

Galatians 5:22-23, "But the **fruit** of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law."

Romans 7:4, "Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear **fruit** to God."

2 Peter 1:5-8, "But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor **unfruitful** in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

5:10 *finding out what is acceptable to the Lord.*

finding out what is acceptable to the Lord - The phrase "finding out" comes from the Greek word (DOKIMAZŌ) meaning, "to test, examine, prove, to see whether a thing is genuine or not; to recognize as genuine after examination, to approve, deem worthy." When men walk according to God's truth, it produces the good fruit of righteousness. This proves that God's way is the best way. Christians are commanded to test, examine and prove their faith.

Romans 12:1-2, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may **prove** what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

1 Thessalonians 5:21, "Test all things; hold fast what is good."

2 Corinthians 13:5, "Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? —unless indeed you are disqualified."

5:11 *And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.*

And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness - "Fellowship" comes from the Greek word (SUGKOINŌNEŌ) meaning, "to become a partaker together with others, or to have fellowship with a thing." The word means, "to have communion or participate with, to have in common." Paul's point is do not have sin in common with the world. We must never encourage, approve or endorse sin (2 John 9-11).

A. The phrase, "unfruitful works of darkness" emphasizes for us again the contrast of light and darkness.

John 3:19, "And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."

- B. Notice also the contrast with Ephesians 5:9 that states, "For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth."
1. These wicked things are unfruitful works.
  2. They have no value in spiritual production. In fact, they are destructive.
  3. Christians can have no fellowship with these "works of darkness" or those who promote these evil works.

but rather expose them - Christians must destroy these "works of darkness" by exposing them to the light of truth.

John 3:19-21, "And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God."

2 Timothy 4:2, "Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching."

5:12 *For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret.*

For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret - The things done by them in private were so vile and depraved it would be shocking for a decent minded person to hear the details. The "them" in this verse refers to the workers of darkness. These "shameful" things may also include the immoral acts done in their secret worship of their false gods.

5:13 *But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light.*

But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light - Those wicked acts performed in secret are exposed in their full depravity by the light of the gospel. Evil must be exposed by the light of truth. Christians become beacons of light (Matthew 5:14-16).

Philippians 2:14-15, "Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world."

5:14 *Therefore He says: "Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light."*

Therefore, He says - This is not an exact quote from an Old Testament verse so it may be a combining of several verses (Isaiah 9:2; 26:19;60:1-2). Regardless, we know this is the inspired message of God to those who are spiritually asleep.

Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light - Paul is exhorting the brethren to wake from their spiritual sleep, and to arise from their spiritually-dead condition, so they will be ready for the light that Christ offers. Christians need to wake up and be watchful (1 Peter 5:8; 1:13; Colossians 2:8). Christ is the source of the light of truth (Hebrews 5:14; Romans 13:11-14).

**X. The Wise Walk .....5:15-6:9**

5:15 *See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise,*

See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise - "Circumspectly" comes from the Greek word (AKRIBŌS) meaning, "exactly, accurately, diligently." Notice, that once again Paul refers to the Christian's life as a "walk."

- A. To "walk circumspectly" a man must study carefully God's law to direct his steps. Jeremiah 10:23 states, "O Lord, I know the way of man is not in himself; It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps."
- B. The difference between "walking in light" and "walking in darkness" is outlined well when we notice the fruit of the Spirit versus the works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-23).
  - 1. Walking in darkness is to be darkened in mind and thought and thus following the way (course) of this world.
  - 2. To walk in the light is to possess understanding that comes from the light of God's word.
- C. "Fools" comes from the Greek word (ASOPHOS) meaning, "unwise, foolish." It does not mean a person who lacks intelligence or incapable of understanding.

1. The word refers to one who does not have true wisdom in Christ.
2. This would be a person who does not study or apply the Lord's instructions so as to walk in the proper way.
3. The wise person is the one who follows the Lord's instructions.

James 3:17, "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy."

5:16 *redeeming the time, because the days are evil.*

redeeming the time, because the days are evil - "Redeeming" comes from the Greek word (EXAGORAZŌ) meaning, "to make wise and sacred use of every opportunity for doing good, so that zeal and well doing are as it were the purchase money by which we make the time our own."

- A. The origins of this term come from the market place. It meant to "buy while the buying is good."
- B. It refers to recognizing and make the best use of the opportunities that are presented.

Colossians 4:5-6, "Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time. Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one."

- C. Paul explains to his Ephesian brethren that "the days are evil."
  1. Evil days mean days in which evil abounds.
  2. The sinful times in which they lived would be a temptation to them to return to their former lives of wickedness.

2 Timothy 3:1-5, "But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong,

haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!"

5:17 *Therefore, do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.*

Therefore, do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is - Here Paul shows where true wisdom originates. Wisdom comes from understanding the Lord's will. The Lord's will is found in the inspired Scriptures.

- A. Also, notice that Paul implies we **can** understand the Bible (Ephesians 4:18).

Ephesians 3:3-4, "How that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)."

John 8:32, "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

- B. Not only can we understand God's word, we can understand it **in the same way**.

1 Corinthians 1:10, "Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."

Philippians 2:1-2, "Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind."

5:18 *And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,*

And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation - The word "drunk" comes from the Greek word (METHUSKŌ) meaning, "to intoxicate, make drunk; to get drunk, become intoxicated." God commands every Christian to be free from the influence of intoxicating beverages.

- A. Drunkenness is often condemned in the Bible (Matthew 24:48-50; Luke 12:45-46; Ephesians 5:18; Galatians 5:19-21).

1. It should be understood that drunkenness is a matter of degrees.
2. A person does not instantly go from sober to drunk.
3. If a person has one drink of alcohol they are one drink drunk. They are no longer sober.
4. The Bible teaches that we are to be "sober" (1 Thessalonians 5:6-8; Titus 2:2, 6; 1 Peter 1:13). "Sober" comes from the Greek word (NEPHO) that is defined as, "to abstain from wine, to be free from every form of mental and spiritual 'drunkenness' and to be free from the influences of intoxicants.
5. [For additional information please see the appendices - SCRIPTURES CONDEMNING THE USE OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES and ARGUMENTS USED FOR SOCIAL DRINKING.]

- B. In the book of Proverbs, we find several warnings concerning the dangers of alcohol.

Proverbs 20:1, "Wine is a mocker, Strong drink is a brawler, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise."

Proverbs 23:20-21, "Do not mix with winebibbers, Or with gluttonous eaters of meat; for the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty, And drowsiness will clothe a man with rags."

Proverbs 23:29-35, "Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaints? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? Those who linger long at the wine, those who go in search of mixed wine. Do not look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it swirls around smoothly; at the last it bites like a serpent, and stings like a viper. Your eyes will see strange things, and your heart will utter perverse things. Yes, you will be like one who lies down in the midst of the sea, or like one who lies at the top of the mast, saying: 'They have struck me, but I was not hurt; they have beaten me, but I did not feel it. When shall I awake, that I may seek another drink?'"

- C. "Dissipation" comes from the Greek word (ASŌTIA) meaning, "excess, debauchery, revelry, riot." The heathens of the day would

often fill themselves with wine and then engaged in their idolatrous and immoral demonstrations.

but be filled with the Spirit - In contrast to the heathens, Paul commands the Ephesian Christians to drink deeply from the fountain of truth (the preaching and teaching of the apostles who were inspired by the Spirit). This action will produce good instead of evil. To be filled with the Spirit is the same as having the word of God dwelling in the Christian's heart through study.

5:19 *speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,*

speaking to one another - This requires reciprocal action (Ephesians 5:19). It is the duty of the members of the church, themselves and for themselves, to sing. They cannot hand this responsibility over to a choir.

John Chrysostom (349-407 AD) said, "It was the ancient custom, as it still is with us, for all to come together and unitedly join in singing. The young and the old, the rich and the poor, male and female, bond and free, all join in one song. All worldly distinctions here cease, and the whole congregation forms one general chorus."

Colossians 3:16, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."

in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs - Some commentators try to make a clear distinction between psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, but there is actually little difference of meaning in these terms. The Septuagint (earliest Greek translation of the Old Testament from the original Hebrew) uses these terms interchangeably and with much overlap, as do the ancient historians Philo of Alexandria and Josephus.

- A. There are some who try to use the Greek word PSALMOS which is translated as "psalms" in this verse as proof that we are authorized to use mechanical instruments of music in our worship to God.
- B. The root of PSALMOS is the word PSALLŌ which is defined as "to twitch or twang, that is, to play on a stringed instrument" (*Strong's Greek and Hebrew Dictionary of the Bible*).
  - 1. However, the Bible clearly designates which instrument we are to use when we sing.

2. In this verse Paul says, "singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord."
3. The instrument we are required to use as we sing is the human heart.

singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord - Here we notice Paul's command concerning the instrument that must be used in our singing to God. It is not a man-made instrument (piano, organ, guitar, etc.), it is the human heart.

- A. Christians are never commanded to play (a mechanical instrument) as part of their worship to God. If they were commanded to do so, all Christians would be required to play a mechanical instrument.
- B. The command is always to sing:
  1. Sing (Romans 15:9; Hebrews 2:12)
  2. Sing psalms (James 5:13)
  3. They sang praises unto God (Acts 16:25)
  4. Sing with the Spirit (1 Corinthians 14:15)
  5. Sing with the understanding (1 Corinthians 14:15)
  6. Speaking to one another (Ephesians 5:19)
  7. Singing and making melody in your heart (Ephesians 5:19)
  8. Teaching and admonishing one another (Colossians 3:16)
  9. Singing with grace in your hearts (Colossians 3:16)
- C. Notice four points concerning the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship:
  1. **The use of mechanical instruments of music for worship is not authorized in the New Testament.**
    - a) As we study the New Testament we see that early Christians were taught to sing (not play) in their worship to God.
    - b) Time and time again the music mentioned in the New

Testament specifies singing (Matthew 26.30; Mark 14.26; Acts 16.25; Romans 15.9; 1 Corinthians 14.15; Ephesians 5.19; Colossians 3.16; Hebrews 2.12; James 5.13).

- c) There are three passages in Revelation where mechanical instruments (harps) are mentioned, but in each case, it is obviously being used in a symbolic way. For example, in Revelation 14:2 (ESV) we find, "And I heard a voice from heaven like the roar of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder. The voice I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps."
- d) Since, the New Testament uses the specific word "sing" rather than the general term "music" we are limited to doing only what the word "sing" allows (1 Corinthians 4:6; John 4:24; 2 John 1:9).

2. **Mechanical instruments of music were never used by the New Testament church.**

- a) Bible scholars and historians from every religious group and denomination agree that there was a complete absence of any mechanical instruments of music being used by the New Testament church.
- b) Noted scholar, Emil Nauman, wrote, "There can be no doubt that originally the music of the divine service was everywhere entirely of a vocal nature" (*The History of Music*, Volume I, page 177).
- c) The use of mechanical instruments of music was not practiced in the early church.
- d) The first century church, guided by the inspired apostles, did not use mechanical instruments of music in worship.
- e) This is significant when we consider that instruments were available and commonly used in the worship of the old law by the command of David (2 Chronicles 29:25).
- f) However, under the law of Christ we find the early

church sang psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God.

3. **The use of mechanical instruments of music in worship was not introduced until many years later.**

- a) The evidence is that organs were first introduced into "some of the churches of Western Europe, about 670, but the earliest trustworthy account is that of the one sent as a present by the Greek emperor, Constantine Copronymus, to Pepin, king of the Franks, in 755" (*The American Cyclopedia*, Volume 12, page 688).
- b) It is interesting that when the Reformation first started in Europe, one of the first abuses denounced by the reformers was the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship.
- c) During the Reformation many congregations quickly made three changes in their places of worship: (1) altars were changed to communion tables, (2) religious statues were taken down, and (3) organs were taken out.
- d) Martin Luther called the organ "an ensign of Baal."
- e) John Calvin said that musical instruments in worship were "no more suitable than the burning of incense, the lighting of lamps, and the restoration of other shadows of the law."
- f) John Knox urged that "plain singing of psalms unaccompanied by instrumental music" be restored in worship.
- g) John Wesley was adamantly opposed to the use of instruments in the worship service.
- h) Charles Spurgeon would not allow instrumental music where he preached each week. He said, "I would as soon pray to God with machinery as sing to God with machinery."

4. **If PSALLŌ includes the use of mechanical instruments of music (which it does not), then all members of the**

**congregation would be required to play.**

- a) This verse is a command!
- b) The brethren must teach and admonish "one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" (Colossians 3:16).
- c) Teaching "one another" requires all to be involved.
- d) This must be done just as they must let the word of Christ dwell in them richly in all wisdom.

5:20 *giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,*

giving thanks always for all things to God the Father - The "giving of thanks" is a vital part and motivation for Christians to sing praises to God. It is proper and right for man to give thanksgiving to the Creator for all blessings

in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ - The phrase "in the name of" means by the authority of Jesus.

- A. Christ is the head of the church and He has all power (authority) over the church, His body (Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18).

Colossians 3:17, "And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."

Acts 4:7, "And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, 'By what power or by what name have you done this?'"

- B. All these things must be done in the name of (by the authority of) the Lord Jesus Christ.

5:21 *submitting to one another in the fear of God.*

submitting to one another in the fear of God - "Submitting" comes from the Greek word (HUPOTASSŌ) meaning, "to yield to one's admonition or advice."

- A. In what sense should Christians submit to one another?

- B. As they are "speaking to one another" in song ("teaching and admonishing one another" - Colossians 3:16), their words must be heeded because they are teaching the truth from God's word ("in the fear of God").
- C. Submitting to or subjecting yourselves to God's word is always the right course of action.

5:22 *Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.*

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord - Wives are commanded to submit to the authority of their husbands, as long as the husbands do not require something that contrary to the will of God (Acts 5:29).

- A. When the wives submit to their husbands they are not only showing honor to their husband, but also to Christ.
- B. In no way is this teaching that women are inferior or of less value (Galatians 3:28).
- C. Christ is not lower in Deity just because He humbled Himself to the Father (1 Corinthians 11:3).

5:23 *For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.*

For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church - In this verse, Paul makes a comparison between a husband as the head of his wife, and Christ as the head of His church. The body must be under the control of the head.

and He is the Savior of the body - Christ is the Savior of the body. Therefore, if they are not a part of the Lord's body they are not saved. Man-made churches are not the body of Christ and their members are not saved.

5:24 *Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.*

Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ - The church (body) is to obey Christ (head) in all things.

- A. Consider well Christ's relationship to His church.
  - 1. He built the church (Matthew 26:28).

2. He purchased the church with His own blood (Acts 20:28).
3. He is the head of the church (Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:23).

B. It is only reasonable that the church would be subject to Christ.

so, let the wives be to their own husbands in everything - In the same way that the church is to be subject to Christ, wives are to be subject to their husbands. Her complete submission is only modified by being compatible with God's will. The husband can require nothing from his wife except what is in harmony with what God allows.

5:25 *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,*

Husbands, love your wives - Husbands also have a responsibility in the marriage. They must love their wives. Paul uses the love Christ has for His church as an example of the love a faithful husband has for his wife. This is the highest form of love. It is a self-sacrificing, devoted love that is all-giving.

just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her - Here Paul shows the magnitude of Christ's love for His church. His love was a sacrificial love.

John 15:13, "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends."

1 John 3:16, "By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."

5:26 *that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,*

that He might sanctify and cleanse her - Christ gave His life, as a sacrifice on the cross, to provide His cleansing blood for the sanctification and cleansing of His church. He gave His own life for His bride.

with the washing of water by the word - The phrase "washing of water" refers to baptism, by which men and women are added to the Lord's church (Acts 2:38, 41, 47; Titus 3:5; 1 Peter 3:21). It is "by the word" because baptism, by itself, without obedience to the word of the Lord is useless (Romans 6:17).

Romans 6:17, "But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered."

5:27 *that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.*

that He might present her to Himself a glorious church - Christ shed His blood for the purification of His bride, the church.

- A. When a groom looks upon the woman who is to become his bride, he delights when he sees her dressed appropriately in her spotless wedding garment.
- B. This is what Jesus wants for His bride, the glorious church.
- C. The actual marriage will take place on the day of judgment, and when that time comes Jesus wants to see His bride adorned properly, in purity, morality and holiness.

Revelation 19:7-8, "'Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.' And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints."

not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish - Here Paul refers to the purity and holiness of the church.

2 Corinthians 11:2, "For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ."

5:28 *So, husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself.*

So, husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself - Once again Paul says that husbands are to love their wives. The repetition is used to emphasize the importance of this matter. This is the highest form of love.

- A. It is a self-sacrificing, devoted love that is all-giving and understanding.

1 Peter 3:7, "Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered."

- B. Husbands love their wives as they love their own bodies because the two have become one flesh

Genesis 2:24, "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh."

1 Corinthians 7:1-5, "Now concerning the things of which you wrote to me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise, the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control."

- C. The wants and needs of the wife become the wants and needs of her husband. The wants and needs of the husband become the wants and needs of his wife. Just as in the case with Christ and the church. This is not out of a sense of duty, but a natural instinct. This love can be taught and developed (Titus 2:4).

5:29 *For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church.*

For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church - No one of a sound mind ever hated his own flesh. Men are concerned about their bodies. They do not neglect their own bodies. If the husband neglects the welfare of his wife, it shows that he does not recognize her as being a part of his own body. Christ never neglects His church. He always provides for the needs of His body.

5:30 *For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.*

For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones - Christians are members of the body of Christ, His church. This union is strong. Christ is the head and from the head comes all strength, power, guidance and wisdom.

5:31 *"For this reason, a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."*

For this reason, a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh - Paul quotes Genesis 2:24 to strengthen the argument he is making concerning Christ's relationship to His church.

5:32 *This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.*

This is a great mystery - "Mystery" comes from the Greek word (MUSTĒRION) meaning, "hidden thing, secret." The word "mystery" here simply means something which is not fully known. It is not referring to something mysterious. This is what cannot be known without divine revelation. It is made known, manifested, or revealed, in a time appointed by God for man to understand.

but I speak concerning Christ and the church - Paul uses a relationship man is familiar with and reveals the communion and tie that exists between Christ and His church.

5:33 *Nevertheless, let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.*

Nevertheless, let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband - Yes, Paul is dealing with the relationship of Christ and His church, but everything he said about marriage is true. The love a husband is expected to have for his wife should not be overlooked.

## CHAPTER SIX

6:1 *Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.*

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right - Our father in heaven expects obedience (Matthew 7:21; Luke 6:46; John 14:15; 15:14; Hebrews 5:8-9) and He has always required children to obey their parents (Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 21:18-21).

- A. The phrase, "in the Lord" means that the children are to obey their parents in harmony with God's will. The children should always obey as long as the parents do not require them to do something contrary to God's word (Acts 5:29). If a child decides to obey the parents instead of the commandments of God he shows that he loves that parent more than God (Luke 14:26-27; 17:33).
- B. "For this is right" states the highest motive that can prompt anyone in obeying the commands of the Lord. Not simply fitting or good, but right (2 Timothy 3:2; Romans 1:30).

Colossians 3:20-21, "Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord. Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged."

6:2 *"Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise:*

Honor your father and mother - "Honor" comes from the Greek word (TIMAŌ) meaning, "to prize, to revere, to value." There is more than just obedience implied here, there is also respect.

which is the first commandment with promise - This phrase has confused some people.

- A. However, it can be understood when one realizes that this is one of the ten commandments written on tables of stone at Sinai.

Exodus 20:12, "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you."

- B. Notice, that this is the first commandment that has a specific promise connected to it.
- C. The child owes his parents obedience and respect throughout life, also care and support in old age and kindness and love at all times.

6:3 *That it may be well with you, and you may live long on the earth.*

That it may be well with you, and you may live long on the earth - This blessing comes to those children who have a character that loves and honors their parents. Those children who are disobedient, arrogant, and unrestrained will not follow their parent's godly desires, and therefore, will be self-destructive.

6:4 *And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.*

And you, fathers - The husband is the head of the wife (Ephesians 5:23) so, it is only reasonable that he would also be the head of the family.

do not provoke your children to wrath - The fathers are warned by Paul to not be excessively severe, so as to provoke bitterness, wrath and rebellion in their children.

- A. How can we have our homes be what God would have them to be?

1. As always, we must follow God's instructions and teach our children to follow God's instructions (Deuteronomy 6:1-9).
2. We must put the kingdom (church) first in our lives (Matthew 6:33; Mark 12:30; Luke 9:23; 14:27; Philippians 3:14).
3. We must make sure the father is the head of the house (1 Timothy 5:8), and that he is instructing his children correctly.
4. Mothers must be honored as the keepers of the home as the Scriptures teach (Titus 2:5; Proverbs 31:25-28).
5. Discipline must take place in the home.
  - a) Positive - instruction (Deuteronomy 6:1-9; Proverbs 22:6)
  - b) Corrective (Proverbs 23:13-14; 29:15)
  - c) Consistent (Proverbs 13:24)
  - d) Loving (Hebrews 12:6)
  - e) Merciful (Proverbs 19:18)
  - f) Forgiving (Proverbs 29:17)

but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord - God has provided us with precepts and commands that must be obeyed. Children must be trained to obey these things as well.

- A. Of course, as the child grows and matures they will have greater responsibility to follow God's will.
- B. The training may seem harsh and restrictive to the child, but it is for the child's own good and is prompted by love.
  1. The most unloving thing a parent can do is withhold both discipline and instruction in godliness from the child.
  2. Parents sin if they do not bring up their children in the training and admonition of the Lord.

6:5 *Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ;*

Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ - In this section Paul addresses the relationship between bondservants (slaves) and masters.

- A. The New Testament does not directly oppose or condemn slavery.
- B. However, it does regulate it in such a way as to bring about its end.

William Barclay explained in his commentary: *The Letters To The Galatians And Ephesians*, **the attitude toward slaves in the first century** - "A slave is no better than a beast; the old and sick must be thrown out to starve; when a slave is sick, it is a waste to give him rations; masters had power of life and death over slaves; Augustus killed a slave for killing a pet quail; Pollio flung a slave alive to the savage lampreys in his fish pond because he dropped and broke a crystal goblet. One Roman nobleman's wife killed a slave because she lost her temper. Slaves used as maids often had their cheeks torn, their hair torn out, or were branded with hot irons at the caprice of their heartless and cruel masters."

- C. In studying these verses, we must keep in mind that slavery was widespread in the Roman world at this time.
  - 1. For example, scholars have estimated 30-40% of the population of Italy were slaves in the 1st century.
  - 2. That would be upwards of two to three million slaves in Italy alone not including the slaves in the rest of the empire which are estimated to be around 10-15% of the total population.
  - 3. [For additional information please see the appendices - DID PAUL ENDORSE SLAVERY? by Eric Lyons, M.Min.]
- D. "Bondservants" were to obey, respect and serve their masters from the heart as unto the Lord.

Colossians 3:22, "Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God."

1 Timothy 6:1, "Let as many bondservants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and His doctrine may not be blasphemed."

Titus 2:9-10, "Exhort bondservants to be obedient to their own masters, to be well pleasing in all things, not answering back, not pilfering, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things."

1 Peter 2:18, "Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh."

6:6 *not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart,*

not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart - "Eyeservice" is defined as being diligent and industrious only when the master is watching.

- A. Obviously not an exact equivalent, but similar principles also apply to the relationship in a modern-day work context, between employee and employer.
- B. The phrase "from the heart" means that slaves were expected to serve from with the right attitude of heart.
  - 1. Their reverence for God should cause them to provide sincere (not fake or phony) service.
  - 2. A Christian should always do the will of God from a sincere heart (Colossians 3:22; 1 Timothy 6:1; Titus 2:9; 1 Peter 2:18).

6:7 *with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men,*

with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men - The service that slaves provided to their masters was really service to their true Lord and Master (Matthew 25:34-40).

6:8 *knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free.*

knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free - The Christian's highest concern should be pleasing Christ.

- A. He is the Savior (Acts 4:12), foundation (1 Corinthians 3:11), way to the Father (John 14:6), refuge and strength (Psalm 46:1).
- B. Christ Jesus, who is the judge (2 Timothy 4:1) also provides the reward of the inheritance to both the faithful free man and slave (Ephesians 1:18; 1 Peter 1:4).

6:9 *And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.*

And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him - "Masters" must also act accordingly. They must not threaten for they, too, are servants to the Master in heaven. God does not show favoritism (Acts 10:34; Galatians 3:27-29).

**XI. The Whole Armor of God ..... 6:10-20**

6:10 *Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.*

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might - In this section, Paul draws his epistle to a conclusion. He changes topics as he leaves the idea of "subjection and submission" behind, and moves on to his discussion of the great battle that is going on. He exhorts the Christians at Ephesus to prepare for the battle.

- A. The phrase "be strong in the Lord" exhorts them to recognize the source of their strength. It is the power of His might (Matthew 22:29; Romans 1:16; 1 Corinthians 1:18).

2 Timothy 1:7, "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."

1 Corinthians 16:13, "Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong."

- B. We become stronger in the Lord by drawing closer to God.

James 4:7-8, "Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw

near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded."

6:11 *Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.*

Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil - The "armor" will be detailed in verses 14-17. Paul is telling them that they need to prepare themselves to stand against the devil. Remember in Ephesians 5:14 Paul told them to "awake and rise."

A. They needed to be able to "stand" steadfast in their faith.

1 Corinthians 15:58, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

B. The "wiles" of the devil means, "to lie in wait."

1 Peter 5:8-9, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world."

C. "Devil" comes from the Greek word (DIABOLOS) meaning, "false accuser, slanderer." He is full of lies and deception and the enemy of the righteous.

John 8:44, "You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it."

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

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood - Christians are in a battle (1 Corinthians 9:26; 1 Timothy 6:12; 2 Timothy 2:3-4), but it is a spiritual battle not a physical battle (John 18:36; 2 Corinthians 10:3-6).

but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places -

"Principalities" comes from the Greek word (ARCHĒ) meaning, "rulers with seniority." The word "powers" refers to the source of their authority –"darkness of this age." This refers to the doctrines being taught by false teachers.

- A. This verse describes the scope of the devil's influence.
  - 1. It was clearly evident in the days of the Ephesians and it is as easily seen by us today.
  - 2. It is the godless wickedness that surrounds us in our world.
- B. The devil's vicious influence is observed in almost every aspect of the modern culture. Things that could be good are perverted into an instrument for evil.
- C. In a world filled with evil the Christian needs "the whole armor of God."

6:13 *Therefore, take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.*

Therefore, take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand - The elements of the Christian's armor will be explained in verse 14-17. The "evil day" refers to any day the enemy appears. This refers to the times Christians face temptations and persecutions. The phrase "having done all" means having overcome all.

- A. Christians must resist temptations and overcome persecutions.
- B. How?
  - 1. They must be determined to overcome.
  - 2. They must realize that temptations can be resisted.
    - a) Others have overcome and so can we.
    - b) God will help.

1 Corinthians 10:13, "No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it."

c) Some temptations can be avoided.

1 Corinthians 15:33, "Do not be deceived: 'Evil company corrupts good habits.'"

6:14 *Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness,*

Stand therefore - They should continue to be prepared and stand steadfast (1 Corinthians 15:58; Galatians 6:9; Matthew 10:22).

having girded your waist with truth - This illustration refers to the belt that would hold together all the instruments of the soldier's armor. Notice it is the truth that holds together all things for the Christian.

John 8:31-32, "Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, 'If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.'"

John 17:17, "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth."

having put on the breastplate of righteousness - The "breastplate" was a piece of metal or thick leather that covered the chest area to protect the heart and other vital organs of the soldier.

A. A Christian's life of righteousness protects him from the devil's attacks.

Psalms 119:172, "My tongue shall speak of Your word, for all Your commandments are righteousness."

B. The Scriptures say of Zacharias and Elizabeth that "they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless" (Luke 1:6).

1. They were righteous because they were obedient.
2. However, there are some who think they are righteous when actually, they are not.
3. Jesus told the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector to condemn those who, "trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others" (Luke 18:9).

6:15 *and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace;*

and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace - A soldier needs to have firm footing as he engages in battle. The Roman soldiers would have well secured footwear that often-included hobnails on the soles that enabled them to stand firm during the hand to hand combat that was often required.

- A. The Christian soldier has his feet shod with the powerful gospel (Romans 1:16).
- B. It is referred to as the "gospel of peace" because it restores the peace between man and God that was lost due to man's sin (Isaiah 59:1-2).
- C. Christians have the responsibility to proclaim the gospel of peace to the lost (Mark 16:15-16; 1 Corinthians 9:16; 1 Thessalonians 2:4).
- D. The gospel is the call of salvation that goes out to a lost and dying world (2 Thessalonians 2:14).

6:16 *above all, taking the shield of faith with which, you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.*

above all, taking the shield of faith with which, you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one - The shield was designed to protect the soldier from the weapons of the enemy. The Christian soldier's shield is his faith.

- A. Hebrews 11:1 says that, "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."
- B. Literally, this means that, "faith is of things hoped for a confidence, of matters not seen a conviction" (YLT).

Hebrews 11:6, "But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."

Romans 10:17, "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

- C. The "fiery darts of the wicked one" refers to the intense hatred of the devil in his slanderous and evil attacks against the righteous people of God.

6:17 *And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;*

And take the helmet of salvation - The Roman soldier's helmet was made of metal or thick leather fitted to his head. The helmet would protect the soldier's head against the weapons of the enemy.

- A. The Christian soldier's protection is his salvation.
- B. The faithful Christian can face all enemies and even rejoice in the presence of death, because of his confident hope for salvation after death.

1 Thessalonians 5:8, "But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation."

Hebrews 5:9, "And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him."

1 Peter 1:9, "Receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls."

and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God - In this verse, Paul notes the only weapon that is furnished to the Christian soldier – a sword.

- A. The sword in this illustration represents the word of God.

Hebrews 4:12, "For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

- B. The perfect example of the use of this sword is seen in its use by Jesus against Satan in the wilderness (Matthew 4:4, 7, 10).
- C. Paul refers to it as the sword of the "Spirit" because the word of God is inspired by the Holy Spirit.

2 Timothy 3:16-17, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."

2 Peter 1:20-21, "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."

6:18 *praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—*

praying always - An important part of a Christian's preparation for the spiritual battle is prayer. Notice Paul says, "praying always." Considering the many battles faced daily, Christians should be people of prayer.

1 Thessalonians 5:17, "Pray without ceasing."

Philippians 4:6, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God."

with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit - "Supplication" comes from the Greek word (DEĒSIS) meaning, "a petition, request." We also notice that prayer is to be "in the Spirit." There is a clear pattern set forth in the Scriptures for prayer. We are to pray **to** God the Father, **through** Jesus Christ **with the assistance** of the Holy Spirit. Prayers must be in harmony with the teaching of the Spirit in the word of God.

A. Prayers are to be "TO" the Father (Ephesians 3:14).

B. Prayers are to be "THROUGH" Jesus (Romans 1:8; 7:25).

C. Prayers are to be "IN" the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 6:18; Jude 1:20).

being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication - The soldier is to always be alert to the enemy and watchful (Matthew 26:41; Colossians 2:8; 1 Peter 5:8). "Perseverance" means patient continuance in the service of Christ, even when conditions might be difficult.

for all the saints - Christians should not only pray for themselves, but also for all Christians everywhere (Galatians 6:1-5; 2 Corinthians 11:28).

6:19 *and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel,*

and for me, that utterance may be given to me - Paul also wants the Ephesian brethren to pray for him (Romans 15:30; 2 Corinthians 1:11; Philippians 1:19; Colossians 4:2-4; 1 Thessalonians 5:25; 2 Thessalonians 3:1; Philemon 1:22). If

an inspired apostle so often needed the prayers of his brethren there is no doubt that we need prayers today.

that I may open my mouth boldly - Paul was not concerned about his personal welfare, but his future opportunities to preach the gospel. He was always wanting to do more.

to make known the mystery of the gospel - The mystery is explained in Ephesians 1:9. The thing that had not be revealed before, but was now being revealed by the preaching of the apostles was that God's plan was the inclusion of the Jews and the Gentiles as one in the church (Galatians 3:27-29; Ephesians 3:3-6).

6:20 *for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.*

for which I am an ambassador in chains - "Ambassador" is from the Greek word (PRESBEUŌ) meaning, "one who acts as an official representative."

A. This word is only used twice in the New Testament, here and in 2 Corinthians 5:20.

B. Both passages refer to the apostles.

2 Corinthians 5:20, "Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God."

C. There are no people today who have the right or authority to call themselves ambassadors of Christ.

that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak - In bonds or free, the gospel must be spoken clearly - no matter what the consequences.

2 Timothy 4:2, "Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching."

**Conclusion ..... 6:21-24**

6:21 *But that you also may know my affairs and how I am doing, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make all things known to you;*

But that you also may know my affairs and how I am doing, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make all things known to you -

Tychicus was being sent so that he could make Paul's condition and activities known to them.

- A. Tychicus was a friend and companion of Paul being mentioned five times in the New Testament (Acts 20:4; Ephesians 6:21; Colossians 4:7; 2 Timothy 4:12; Titus 3:12).
- B. He is described as a "beloved brother, faithful minister, and fellow servant in the Lord."

6:22 *whom I have sent to you for this very purpose, that you may know our affairs, and that he may comfort your hearts.*

whom I have sent to you for this very purpose, that you may know our affairs, and that he may comfort your hearts - Their comfort would come in learning of Paul's continued steadfastness and faithfulness. It is encouraging to hear of other Christians who are remaining strong in their faith (2 John 1:4 and 3 John 1:4-5).

6:23 *Peace to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Peace to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ - "Peace" comes from the Greek word (EIRENE) meaning, "harmony, security, safety, prosperity." Paul wanted his brethren at Ephesus to have peace and love with faith that comes from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (James 1:17).

6:24 *Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.*

Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity - The word "grace" is translated from the Greek word (CHARIS) meaning, "that which affords joy, pleasure, delight, sweetness, charm, loveliness" (Romans 6:23; 2 Corinthians 8:9). Grace is the favor we receive from God (Romans 5:8).

- A. Grace literally means "unmerited favor." Grace is unearned but not unconditional.
- B. It means blessings from God that the sinner does not deserve or merit. Salvation is thus conceived as something given to man, not as a matter of debt, but as an undeserved gift.
- C. In short, man cannot achieve heaven by works of merit, but works of obedience are required (Ephesians 2:8-9; James 2:20-26; Titus 2:11-14).

- D. [For additional information please see the appendices - FAITH AND WORKS]

Amen - "Amen" literally means "so be it." The word "Amen" started as a Hebrew word (Numbers 5:22), that was transliterated into Greek and then eventually into English.

- A. The word "amen" comes from a Hebrew root word that means "to build up or support; to be firm or faithful, to trust or believe; to be true or certain."
1. It is also used as an adverb at the beginning of a speech to mean "surely, of a truth, truly" (Matthew 5:18; Mark 3:28; John 3:3).
  2. At the conclusion of a sentence it is used to mean "so it is, so be it, may it be fulfilled."
  3. When the word is used as an adjective it means "firm or true."
- B. Some dictionaries claim that when "Amen" is used at the end of a prayer it means approval of what is being said.
- C. However, our approval does not make it true.
- D. It is more correct to think of it as "this is true, or may it come to pass, or may it be fulfilled."

**FINIS**

**APPENDICES**.....

THE FIVE POINTS OF CALVINISM .....

UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION.....

ARE INFANTS "BY NATURE" CHILDREN OF WRATH? .....

CHRIST'S DOMINION.....

FAITH AND WORKS.....

MIRACLES - LAYING ON OF AN APOSTLE'S HANDS .....

THE HOLY SPIRIT WORKS THROUGH THE WORD.....

SCRIPTURES CONDEMNING THE USE OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES and ARGUMENTS USED  
FOR SOCIAL DRINKING .....

THE HOLY SPIRIT WORKS THROUGH THE WORD.....

SCRIPTURES CONDEMNING THE USE OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES.....

ARGUMENTS USED FOR SOCIAL DRINKING .....

DID PAUL ENDORSE SLAVERY? .....

## THE FIVE POINTS OF CALVINISM

The doctrine that is commonly known as "Calvinism" did not in fact originate with the French theologian and reformer John Calvin (1509-1564), but with Augustine (396-430), a Roman Catholic philosopher and bishop of the fifth century. It was, however, John Calvin (and others) who would crystallize this teaching of Augustine into what has come to be known as the "Five Points of Calvinism." Let us examine what the Bible teaches concerning the Five Points of Calvinism commonly delineated with the "TULIP" acrostic where each letter stands for one point of doctrine.

### 1. T = Total Hereditary Depravity

Total Hereditary Depravity is a doctrine that states that: (1) all of humanity is born guilty of sin, because we inherit the "original sin" of Adam and Eve and fall into God's condemnation from birth, (2) since we are born in sin and have a sinful or depraved nature, we are incapable of doing anything to ultimately please God in regard to salvation and (3) therefore, God alone must totally take all the initiative in our salvation from beginning to end.

Proponents of Total Hereditary Depravity frequently use Psalm 51:5 and Psalm 58:3 to assert we are all born sinners. However, in context, the scriptures teach that David was born into a sinful world and that the wicked are estranged from the womb.

#### What Does the Bible Teach About Sin?

In Romans 3:23, the Bible teaches all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. This (sin) occurs when one transgresses the law of God (1 John 3:4). Therefore, sin is not hereditary and it is not passed on through genetics or birth.

Furthermore, in Ezekiel 18:19-20, God's word states that the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, and the father shall not bear the iniquity of the son. Each person has the responsibility of their own sin when they transgress God's law.

In Matthew 18:1-4, Jesus answered the question, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" by admonishing them to be converted and become like little children. If a baby is born a sinner, why did Jesus encourage His disciples to be like little children? Let us be encouraged to understand and teach the truth of the Bible concerning when one becomes a sinner.

### 2. U = Unconditional Election

Unconditional election builds upon the foundation of Total Hereditary Depravity. As a result of the belief that humanity is born in a sinful state, the Calvinist claims there is absolutely nothing a sinner can do for their Salvation. They would say that salvation is only the work of God and man has no part at all.

The doctrine of Unconditional Election or "Predestination" states that before God created the world He chose to save some individuals apart from any conditions placed on the sinner. In other words, from the foundation of the world God has chosen some individuals to be saved and others to be lost without regard to their obedience.

### What Does the Bible Teach About Predestination?

The word "predestined" comes from the Greek PROORIZO, which means to predetermine, to decide beforehand, to foreordain or appoint beforehand. In Ephesians 1:3-14, we learn God has predetermined the church to be saved. The church is composed of those individuals that are in Christ, who have obeyed the commandments of God to be saved, and who are abiding in the doctrine of Jesus Christ. Notice it is not unconditional. They have actually met several conditions.

The Bible teaches that: (1) God has given mankind the freedom of choice to obey or disobey Him (Genesis 2:16-17; Deuteronomy 11:26-28), (2) God is impartial and is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34-35; Romans 2:11), (3) God desires that all men be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9) and (4) Man's salvation is not dependent on God alone.

God has provided the means for salvation by grace through His Son's sacrifice on the cross for the sins of the world. However, man must meet the conditions to be saved by that grace through faith and obedience (Ephesians 2:4-10; Matthew 7:21; James 2:17-26).

### **3. L = Limited Atonement**

As a result of the belief that God elected (chose, predestined) only some to be saved, apart from any conditions for salvation, the Calvinists formed the doctrine of "Limited Atonement." The doctrine of Limited Atonement states that Jesus Christ died only for the ones God has unconditionally elected (chose, predestined) to save. Therefore, the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross for sin was only for a select (limited) group and not for all. Thus, the Calvinist teaches that the atonement for sins given by the death of Jesus was limited to the unconditionally elected and not all people.

### What Does the Bible Teach About Atonement?

The Bible teaches that the gospel of Jesus Christ is for all. If the gospel is not for all, why did Jesus commission the Apostles to go out and teach all the world and preach the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15-16)? God's desire is for all to be saved and Jesus Christ gave Himself a ransom for all to pay the price to free all the world (all sinners) from the bondage of sin (1 Timothy 2:4-6).

Furthermore, the blood of Christ can wash away anyone's sin when they are willing to walk in the light of Jesus Christ to obey His commandments (1 John 1:7; 1 John 2:1-2). The Bible teaches that the atoning blood of Jesus makes it possible for all to be saved. All who are willing to come to Him in obedience can be saved. God loved the world and gave His son for the sins of the world and whosoever will believe and obey Him will have eternal life (John 3:16-17). The blood of Jesus is not limited to a few. It is available for all.

#### **4. I = Irresistible Grace**

The doctrine of Irresistible Grace states that the elect (those whom God unconditionally elects to save) cannot resist the grace of God and God's determination to save them. Even if they want to they can do nothing to resist His saving grace.

According to the teaching of irresistible grace, there is a direct operation of the Holy Spirit which works in the lives of the elect so they will inevitably come to faith in Jesus and be saved. They have no free will in the matter. A belief in the direct operation of the Holy Spirit is a belief that the Holy Spirit influences people apart from the gospel in order to save them. With Calvinism, it is a belief that the Holy Spirit must miraculously enable a person to do what is right, and without this influence, a person can neither understand nor obey the gospel.

#### What Does the Bible Teach About the Holy Spirit and Irresistible Grace?

The Bible teaches that man can only know the mind of God or the things of God by the word of God which was inspired by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:10-11). 2 Peter 1:19-21 states that holy men of God were directed by the Holy Spirit to speak and write the things of God in the Holy scriptures. Therefore, the Holy Spirit and the Word of God work together in the conversion of sinners.

Titus 2:11-14 teaches that God calls all men to be saved through His Son, Jesus Christ. From 1 Timothy 2:4 we learn that it is God's will that all men obey the truth and be saved.

The Bible teaches that it is man's responsibility to accept or reject the salvation that God provides through Jesus Christ. In Acts 2:38-41 the gospel message of salvation was preached by the Apostles to the Jews. They had the choice to obey it and be saved or reject it and be lost.

Consider the implications of the Irresistible Grace doctrine. Aside from implying the gospel is incapable of saving souls (Romans 1:16; 2 Timothy 3:15-17), the idea that the Holy Spirit must miraculously change our hearts before we can obey God means God is to blame if we are not saved. After all, if the Holy Spirit must change our nature and our will so that we are capable of obedience, then whose fault is it if our nature and will are

never changed? The logical implication is that our refusal to do what is right becomes God's fault because He refused to change our wills by giving us the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit is involved in our salvation. However, rather than miraculously changing our hearts from evil to good without the gospel, we will find the Spirit acts through the word. Growing up, I helped cut firewood for our home. Even though I say I cut it, everyone understands I used a tool, an ax, to perform the work. Even so, the Spirit is said to save us (Titus 3:5) but we must understand He uses a tool (the word of the gospel) to perform that work (James 1:21). The Spirit guided Christ and the Apostles in their preaching (Acts 10:38; John 12:49; 16:13) and directed the Biblical writers to the point of choosing the very words they wrote. By giving us the Father's will in written words, the Spirit appeals to man's reasoning abilities and then lets each person determine for himself whether or not he will obey and be saved.

## **5. P = Perseverance of the Saints**

The doctrine of Perseverance of the Saints teaches that apostasy is impossible. It is commonly known as "once in grace always in grace" or "once saved always saved". Perseverance of the Saints states that all who are chosen by God are kept in faith by the power of God and are preserved to the end.

### What Does the Bible Teach About Perseverance?

Clearly, the Bible teaches the security of the believer in Christ (John 10:22-30; 1 John 5:11-13). However, this security of the believer is shown to be conditional on being faithful to Christ (John 8:31-32; Hebrews 3:12-19).

- The Bible makes it clear that some will depart from the faith (1 Timothy 4:1-2). Paul charges Timothy to keep the faith because some would fall away into apostasy (1 Timothy 1:18-20).
- The Bible teaches one can be in a saved state and then be lost based upon unfaithfulness to Him (Jude 1:5-6).
- The Bible states that we have the choice to obey Jesus and have life or disobey Him and have death. The choice is ours (John 3:36; Joshua 24:15; Acts 2:38-47).

To enjoy the benefits of God we must be in Christ, because in Christ there is salvation (2 Timothy 2:10). It is only in Christ where all spiritual blessings are found (Ephesians 1:3). Outside of Christ we are lost, which is why Jesus told His disciples to abide in Him (John 15:1-6).

## ARE MEN UNCONDITIONALLY ELECTED/APPOINTED TO SALVATION? 1 Thessalonians 1:4; 5:9; 2 Thessalonians 2:13

To explain this false doctrine let us begin by going back to Augustine, who was consecrated archbishop for the English people, November, 597. "Augustine taught that with fallen humanity in mind, God 'justly predestined to punishment' (or death) a part of the race, while some He 'benignantly predestined to grace, not because we were holy, but that we might be.'" Classic Calvinism is rooted in Augustinianism as it rejects the ability of man to act and portrays him as totally passive in the plan of redemption.

Calvinism's teachings have come to be known by the acrostic, "TULIP," with the "U" representing "Unconditional Election." Various aspects and shades of this teaching are seen among many different groups. For instance, the **Hiscox Manual for Baptist Churches** says, "American Baptists are decidedly Calvinistic." Please notice these other quotes. "Election looks back to God's choice of certain individuals to be his children, predestination looks forward to the destiny He has planned for them... Election is entirely by the grace of God; it is not related to human acts or works." The Lutheran Augsburg Confession likewise states: "Of justification: Also, they teach that men cannot be justified before God by their own strength, merits, or works, but are freely justified for Christ's sake, through faith, when they believe that they are received into favor, and that their sins are forgiven for Christ's sake, who, by His death, has made satisfaction for our sins" (Article IV). These are but samples of the many quotes that could be given from the writings of various groups. The doctrine is relatively simple to express. Brother Guy N. Woods describes the Calvinistic view of election this way:

Those subscribing to this view hold that God, before the creation of the world, entered an immutable decree irrevocably fixing the number of the elect, a decree based solely on the sovereignty of the Lord, and without regard whatsoever to the character or disposition of those thus elected. It is further alleged that this number cannot be increased nor diminished.

Many Verses are abused to propagate this false teaching, with three specific verses taken from the books of 1 and 2 Thessalonians. In 1 Thessalonians 1:4 Paul wrote, "Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God." Again, in chapter 5:9 we read, "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ." In 2 Thessalonians Paul said, "...God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth" (2 Thessalonians 2:13). Ronald A. Ward comments on these verses and makes it very clear where he stands.

Election then is of individuals, in love, and in Christ. The process is surveyed by Paul in Romans 8:29-30. It is God's purpose and He is completely free, uninfluenced by anything outside Himself, and sovereign, having all things and all men at His disposal.

With all of this given we have set forth the false doctrine of men being unconditionally elected/appointed to salvation. We will now refute this doctrine biblically, and then give the meaning of these verses.

Guy N. Woods again comments on this doctrine by saying: "Some doctrines are so palpably false that they have only to be clearly stated to bear refutation on their own face. Such is the monstrous and obnoxious doctrine of Election and Reprobation as taught in the Philadelphia and London Confessions of Faith."

First, if this doctrine is true, the damnation of the non-elect is just as much the result of an omnibenevolent God's decree as is the salvation of the elect. The wicked will suffer, not because of sins committed, but because God predetermined such before creation. This point stands in direct contradiction to the God of the Bible. He is a God who is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). Our God is a God "who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4). A God who wants all men to repent and be saved could not appoint (or elect unconditionally) some to an eternal damnation, as this doctrine implies.

Second, if this doctrine is true, Jesus did not know it. Jesus said, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). He did not say, "Come unto me all ye that are appointed/elected." In Mark's account of the great commission, Jesus said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:15-16), not, "He that is appointed/elected..." In Revelation 3:20 Jesus said, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." He did not say, "If the appointed/elected hear my voice..." Jesus did not seem to be familiar with this doctrine.

Third, if this doctrine is true, why would we need to preach the gospel (Romans 1:16)? Why would we need to preach repentance (2 Peter 3:9; Acts 17:30; Luke 13:3)? How could God's Word save my soul (James 1:21; 1 Peter 1:23)? Why would I even need God's Word (2 Timothy 3:16-17)? If there is nothing I can do to affect this appointing, why would I do anything (Acts 9:6; Hebrews 5:8-9)? How could men have the power to become children of God if they are powerless (John 1:12)? Each of these points, though taught in the scriptures, is flatly contradicted by this doctrine. The only conclusion we can draw is that this doctrine is false.

If this doctrine is false, what then does the Bible teach on this subject? The fact that the Bible speaks of an election appointing, and a choosing by God (1 Thessalonians 1:4; 5:9; 2 Thessalonians 2:13) is undeniable. In Ephesians 1:5 Paul wrote, speaking of God. "Having predestined us unto the adoption of children..." These points cannot be denied, neither should we feel any need to deny them. What we must remember, however, is that these epistles are addressed to Christians, not alien sinners. These verses are describing the situation of those who have obeyed the gospel. The fact that

men must choose (Joshua 24:15) to obey God (Hebrews 5:8-9) is also undeniable. Please notice the summation given by Troy Cummings on this subject.

Summary: God foreknew and foreordained the plan of salvation for man; He planned before, the condition or terms and goals and purposes of his whole plan of redemption. But, each person is left free to choose, to make his own decision, as to whether he will accept or reject God's plan. God desires the salvation of every soul. But the final decision is left with each person; God holds him responsible for that decision.

God has chosen a type of people whose hearts are fertile for God's Word (Luke 8). They will receive that Word, believe that Word, obey that Word and thus be predestined to the adoption of children (Ephesians 1:5).

## ARE INFANTS "BY NATURE" CHILDREN OF WRATH?

During a recent speech before the American Humanist Association, television mogul Ted Turner leveled a blast at Christianity for its alleged doctrine that infants are born in sin. The fact is, though this teaching is popular with certain denominational groups, it is unknown to the Bible. However, a few biblical passages are perverted in a futile attempt to support the doctrine.

In Ephesians 2:1-3 Paul wrote:

"And you did he make alive, when ye were dead through your trespasses and sins, wherein ye once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the powers of the air, of the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience; among whom we also once lived in the lusts of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest."

Here, the apostle describes unregenerate people as being "by nature children of wrath." Calvinists appeal to this verse for support of the doctrine of hereditary total depravity. They feel the passage is affirming that humans are "by birth children of wrath."

Baptist writer B. H. Carroll contended that Ephesians 2:3 "knocks the bottom out of the thought that sin consists in the wilful transgression of a known commandment." He argued that the allusion is to "original sin" (**An Interpretation of the English Bible**, Vol. 6, pp. 105-106). This is the theory that all people are born tainted with the guilt of Adam's sin.

The assertion is absolutely false. There are several interesting observations that can be made in connection with Ephesians 2:1ff.

First, note that in verse 1 the apostle plainly declares that spiritual death is the consequence of "your trespasses and sins" (ASV). Note that **your**. This emphasizes **personal** sin. We are not spiritually dead as a result of Adam's transgression. Though the term "your" is not found in the King James Version (following the Textus Receptus), it is amply supported by evidence from ancient Greek manuscripts, early versions, and the writings of the "church fathers" in the post-apostolic period (cf. **Expositor's Greek Testament**, Vol. 3, p. 283).

Second, in verse 3 Paul affirms that all of us "were...children of wrath." The verb **emetha** ("were") is an imperfect tense form. The imperfect tense describes continuity of action as viewed in the past. Thus, here it depicts the habitual style of life which had characterized these saints prior to their conversion. Had the apostle intended to convey the notion of inherited sinfulness at the time of their birth, he easily could have expressed that idea by saying, "you **became** by birth children of wrath."

Third, it is also significant that the verb is in the middle voice in the Greek Testament. The middle voice is employed to suggest the subject's personal involvement in the action of the verb. The language therefore stresses that the sinful condition of the Ephesians had been their individual responsibility. Hence, combining the imperfect tense and middle voice aspects of the verb, we might paraphrase the passage thusly: "...**you kept on making yourselves** children of wrath."

(4) It is probable that the King James Version, and most subsequent translations, reflect a Calvinistic bias in the rendition, "by nature children of wrath." The Greek word **phusei**, rendered "nature" in our common versions, can denote "a mode of feeling and acting which by long habit has become nature" (Thayer, **Greek Lexicon**, p. 660). Edward Robinson observed that the term can be understood of a "native mode of thinking, feeling, acting" on the part of those who are "unenlightened by the influence of divine truth" (**Greek Lexicon**, p. 771). Clearly, these people, by habitual practice, had become worthy of divine wrath. Hugo McCord's translation has an excellent rendition of this passage. It suggests that the Ephesians had "by custom" become children of wrath. Winer contended that their trespasses and sins had made them "natural children of wrath" (**Greek Grammar**, p. 270). Moule suggested that the phrase rendered "by nature children of wrath" might be equivalent to saying, "**left to ourselves** we are **des-tined to suffer the consequences of sin**" (**Idiom Book of New Testament Greek**, p. 174). Thus, the Ephesians, in their unregenerate state, had become, by long practice of sin, deserving of the wrath of God. These thoughts are consistent with the immediate context and with the tenor of the Bible as a whole.

Fourth, it is worthy of note that if this passage teaches that babies are born totally depraved, one would have to necessarily infer that infants who die in that condition are lost since they are clearly designated as "children of wrath" (cf. the expression "son of perdition"- John 17:12). Yet, this is a conclusion that even denominationalists are loath to accept.

The Bible does not teach the doctrine of inherited depravity. The dogma is strictly of human origin. And it is a serious tragedy that those who profess to be friends of the scriptures will teach this error, thereby subjecting the Christian system to unjustified criticism. Ephesians 2:3 does not teach inherited depravity.

[<https://christiancourier.com/articles/are-infants-by-nature-children-of-wrath>]

## CHRIST'S DOMINION

[This article is from the ninth annual Spiritual Sword Lectureship on "The Book of Ephesians." It is from Gary Workman's lecture entitled "Paul's Prayer" (1:15-23), pp. 21-25.]

"And he put all things in subjection under his feet." This is but an expansion on the previous thought. Having demonstrated God's power in the resurrection and enthronement of Christ leads naturally to this concluding declaration of Christ's universal (v. 22a) and spiritual (v. 22b) Lordship. Since Christ is "far above" all else, it is inevitable that all things are "under his feet." But Paul leaves nothing to supposition. He wants his readers to know that God wrought his power in raising and exalting Christ and then "subjected" all things to him. The words here (v. 22a) are an application of Psalm 8:6, which originally referred to Adam. But scripture applies the ultimate fulfillment of what the first man should have done to the Second Man - Jesus (1 Corinthians 15:27; Hebrews 2:8). However, it will not be fully accomplished until the end of time when the last enemy - death - is no more (1 Corinthians 15:26), for "now we see not yet all things subjected to him" (Hebrews 2:8). At the last, universal subjection to Jesus will have only the one exception of the Father Himself (1 Corinthians 15:27), implied here by the fact that it was God who seated him and subjected all others.

"And gave him to be head over all things to the church." This passage (v. 22b) contains the first mention of "church" in Ephesians. The Greek term EKKLESIA, from which the word "church" is translated, is found some 115 times in the New Testament. It sometimes refers to a secular assembly and sometimes to a Christian worship assembly. Usually, though, it is properly translated "church," most often in the local sense of one or more specific congregations. But in the nine occurrences of the term in Ephesians (1:22; 3:10,21; 5:23,24,25,27,29,32), it is used only in the universal sense of the Lord's one church. Indeed, the "one body" is specified (Ephesians 2:16; 4:4). This usage of the term EKKLESIA had its origin in the statement of Jesus: "I will build my church" (Matthew 16:18).

This last statement of verse 22 is another part of our passage that has given difficulty to interpreters. Notice the KJV rendition of "gave him to be head," where the words "to be" are italicized. Since these words are not in the Greek text, some have felt they should be replaced by the word "as." In the line of thinking, "head over all things" is but a reverse way of saying "all things in subjection under his feet" from the earlier part of the verse. And Paul would therefore be saying, "God gave Jesus (as head over all things) to the church." In this case, the headship of Jesus over the church is not explicitly stated, but would be implied in that God "gave" Jesus to the church as the one who is sovereign over all. Those who defined this interpretation point to Paul's statement in Colossians 2:10 where Christ is said to be "the head of all rule and authority" (two of the very words mentioned in Ephesians 1: 21). (This interpretation is supported by the *Arndt-Gingrich Lexicon*, *Blaikie Pulpit Commentary*, Hendriksen, Lenski, et al.)

There are reasons for rejecting the above interpretation. Except for Colossians 2:10 (and possibly 1 Corinthians 11:13), all other references to Christ as "head" are connected with the church. He is "the head of the corner" in God's spiritual building (Matthew 21:42; Mark 12:10; Luke 20:17; Acts 4:11; 1 Peter 2:7). He is "the head" as contrasted with "the body" (Ephesians 4:15-16; Colossians 2:19). And he is specifically identified as "the head of the body, the church" (Ephesians 5:23). We would therefore understand "gave" in the sense of "appointed," - that God "appointed him as supreme head to the church" (NEB). Out of 13 translations consulted, 7 rendered "gave" (EDOKEN) as either "appointed," "made" or "set up," in the sense that God "gave him to the Church as its supreme Head" (TCNT). In any case, nearly all translations understand 'head' in this passage to mean head of the church.

Some commentators want to have it both ways, something like this: "There is given to the Church, and for the Church's benefit, a Head who is also Head over all things" (Francis Foulkes, *The Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians*, Eerdmans, 1963, p. 65.). However, there would seem to be no justification for taking "head" in a double sense. Further Paul has already said that Jesus is the omnipotent ruler over all creatures. This statement at the end of verse 22 adds the further truth that he is spiritual Lord of the church - made "head of the body, the church that in all things he might have the preeminence" (Colossians 1:18). In fact, he is the "one Lord" spoken of in Ephesians 4:4-6 where the "one body" is also mentioned.

"Which is his body." In some of Paul's earlier letters, the Lord's people are represented as a body (Romans 12:4-5; 1 Corinthians 10:17; 12:12-27). Though it is understood that the "body" spoken of is the church (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:27 with v. 28), the identification of the "church" as the "body" is given explicitly only here (Ephesians 1:22-23) and, in reverse order, in Colossians 1:18,24. The church is not only called "his body," but "the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:12; cf. 1 Corinthians 12:27), for it is "from" (out of) Christ as head that the body is enabled to grow (Ephesians 4:15-16). It is only in the twin epistles of Ephesians and Colossians that the metaphors of Jesus as "the head" and the church as "his body" are brought together. And since "head" and "body" are connected in Paul's description, it is apparent that the headship of Jesus refers not only to his position as Lord, but also speaks of the vital union that exists between him and his people.

"The fulness of him that filleth all in all." This last element of Paul's prayer is probably the most profound part of the entire passage and certainly the most enigmatic aspect to try to understand. It has been called "a difficult phase," "a much-vexed passage," a statement the interpretation of which "is much contested" and the discussion of which "covers many pages in scores of commentaries." The major interpretations of the first part of the statement are these: (1) Christ is made full by God, (2) Christ is made full by the church, (3) The church is made full by either Christ or God. The discussion centers mainly around the exact meaning of "fulness" (PLEROMA), and whether the participle PLEROUMENOU at the end of the verse means "filling" or "being filled."

1. Interpretation number one is ably championed by Meyrick. (F. Meyrick, "Ephesians," *The Bible Commentary*, F. C. Cook, ed. Eerdmans, reprinted 1981.) It takes its starting place from John 1 where Jesus is said to be "full" of grace and truth (v. 14) and therefore possessing divine "fulness" (v. 16). It is also true that in Christ "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2:9; cf. 1:9). And since Paul speaks of the "fulness of God" (Ephesians 3:19) and "fulness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:13), the word is said to theologically indicate divine completeness. In this view, the words "which is his body" are treated as a parenthesis, and "the fulness" refers back to "him" (Christ). The parallel passage (Colossians 1:17-18) is appealed to for support, where Paul, after saying Jesus is "head of the body, the church," refers back to Jesus in the words that follow. However, Paul inserts the pronoun "who" in Colossians to make it clear. The statement in Ephesians would amount to a very awkward grammatical construction, to say the very least, if this interpretation is correct.
2. Interpretation number two is ably championed by Robinson and, more recently, Abbott. (J. Armitage Robinson, *Commentary on Ephesians*, Kregel, reprinted 1979; T. K. Abbott, "Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians," *The International Critical Commentary*, T & T. Clark, 1897. See also Barry [Ellicott's Commentary], Lenski, Hendriksen, Bruce, et al.) This view insists that "fulness" be taken in the active sense of that which fills rather than in the passive sense of that which is filled. More precisely, it is said that "fulness" in our passage indicates "that which makes complete" so that the church is the "complement" of Christ. Certain versions have incorporated this view into their translation of the passage (Weymouth, Knox, NEB). One basis for this interpretation is an assumption that the end of the verse contains a passive participle and so speaks of Christ "who all in all is being fulfilled" by the church and all things, or "who is perpetually being filled" by Deity. This was the view of some ancient versions and commentators. But this argument is surely incorrect, being based on faulty grammatical understanding. Nor does the view as a whole seem likely, for the context of this passage (as well as the entire New Testament) presents what Christ does for the church, not what the church does for Christ.
3. Interpretation number three is surely the correct view. It has the support of Arndt-Gingrich and Thayer lexicons, and is ably championed by Salmond and Foulkes. (Salmond, Foulkes, as already noted. See also Robertson, Blaikie, et al., and especially Lightfoot in his commentary on Colossians.) This view takes "fulness" in the passive sense (that which is filled) and as modifying its immediate antecedent - "body," as is most natural. In Ephesians, Paul represents the church as growing up into the "fulness of Christ" (4:13-16) and ultimately "filled with all the fulness of God" (3:19). Paul has also said that "in him (Christ) ye are made full" (Colossians 2:10,

and John said that "of his fulness we all received" (John 1:16). And since it was God's purpose to "sum up all things in Christ" (Ephesians 1) so that Christ might "fill all things" (Ephesians 4:10), it may very well be our Lord Jesus who Paul says, "filleth all in all" (Ephesians 1:23). In that case, the church is represented as the fulness of Christ. On the other hand, since Christians are to be "filled with all the fulness of God" (Ephesians 3:19), and since God has said, "Do not I fill heaven and earth?" (Jeremiah 23:24), it may be God the Father who Paul says, "filleth all in all." In that case, the church is represented by Paul as the fulness of God. Either way, the concept would be Scriptural and true. Thus, with a grand finale expounding on the dignity of the church because of what she receives from Deity itself, the apostle closes this prayer. We can only say "Amen!"

## FAITH AND WORKS

### A. INTRODUCTION:

1. Is a man saved by good works?
2. Is a man saved by works of the law?
3. Does Paul's statement in Romans 4:4, "now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt" or in Ephesians 2:9, "not of works, lest any man should boast" nullify the need to animate our faith by obeying God's Word?
4. Does James mean the same thing by "works" in James 2 as Paul means by "works" in Romans 4 and Ephesians 2?

### B. THESIS:

We will attempt to answer these and other questions from a biblical perspective.

### C. BODY:

1. First notice the Bible uses the term "works" in different senses.
  - a. Good and necessary works.
    - 1) Romans 13:3 - rulers are not a terror to good works.
    - 2) Ephesians 2:10 - created in Christ Jesus unto good works.
    - 3) 1 Timothy 6:18 - rich must be rich in good works.
    - 4) 2 Timothy 3:17 - scriptures furnish us unto good works
    - 5) Hebrews 10:24 - we must provoke to love and good works.
    - 6) Other passages:
      - a) 1 Timothy 2:10; 5:10; 5:25.
      - b) 2 Timothy 2:14.
      - c) James 3:13.
    - 7) James 2.

- a) Verse 14 - "Can faith without works save him?"
  - b) Verse 17 - "Faith without works is dead."
  - c) Verse 18 - "Faith seen by my works."
  - d) Verse 20 - "Faith without works is dead."
  - e) Verse 21 - "Abraham was justified by works when Isaac was offered."
  - f) Verse 22 - "By works faith was made perfect."
  - g) Verse 24 - "By works a man is justified, not by faith only."
  - h) Verse 25 - "Rahab was justified by works."
  - i) Verse 26 - "Body without the spirit is dead, so too is "faith without works dead."
- b. Evil or unprofitable works (not necessarily in nature or in origin - but in application).
- 1) Romans 3:27 - "Boasting because of works."
  - 2) Romans 4:2 - "Not justified by works."
  - 3) Romans 4:6 - "Righteousness without works."
  - 4) Romans 9:11 - "Election not of works."
  - 5) Romans 11:6 - "If by grace then no more by works."
  - 6) Galatians 2:16 - "Man not justified by works of the law."
  - 7) Galatians 3:2 - "Do not receive Spirit by works of the law."
    - a) Acts 5:32 - God gave the Spirit to them that obeyed Him. (See also Acts 2:38).
  - 8) Galatians 3:5 - "Do not labor by works of the law."
  - 9) Galatians 3:10 - "Those under works of the law under curse."

10) Other passages:

a) Romans 9:32; 13:12.

b) Ephesians 2:9; 5:11.

c. "Walk in them."

1) Ephesians 2:10 - "Walk in good works."

2) Ephesians 4:1 - "Walk worthy of the vocation (calling)."

3) Ephesians 4:17 - "Walk not as other Gentiles walk."

4) Ephesians 5:2 - "Walk in love."

5) Ephesians 5:8 - "Walk as children of light."

6) Ephesians 5:15 - "Walk circumspectly."

D. SO, WHAT THEN DOES "TO BE SAVED BY GRACE . . . NOT OF WORKS" MEAN?

Man does not have the ability to save himself. Salvation is a gift from God that is unmerited.

Yet, man must have faith (Ephesians 2:8). It must be a live faith that is animated by "works" (James 2:24). Man is not saved by "works of the Law" (Gal 3; Ephesians 2:9), but rather, by faithful obedience (Romans 1:5; 16:26).

"So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, we were unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do" (Luke 17:10).

## MIRACLES - LAYING ON OF AN APOSTLE'S HANDS

Simon the sorcerer saw that it was only "through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given" (Acts 8:18).

He wanted to have their ability to lay his hands on others so they would be able to perform miracles. Perhaps, he thought he could charge money to give others the ability to perform miracles.

It is important to note that since the ability to impart miraculous gifts was only given to the apostles, it follows that after the apostles died no one ever received these miraculous gifts again. Therefore, when the last apostle died and the last person they laid their hands on died, there was no one on earth who could perform miracles.

In Acts chapter 8, an evangelist named Philip went into Samaria to preach the gospel of Christ. Philip's efforts were rewarded. "But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women" (Acts 8:12). Philip could work miracles (Acts 8:6, 13), but he did not have the ability to pass miracles on to others. When the apostles heard of the redemption of the Samaritans, they sent two of their number to Samaria. These two men, Peter and John, laid hands on the new converts so they could receive the miraculous powers of the Holy Spirit. "Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit: (for as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit" (Acts 8:14-17). Note: it was only the apostles who had the power to pass on miraculous gifts. When the last apostle died, therefore, the ability to pass on miraculous gifts also ended. John was the last apostle to die. He passed from this life near the close of the first century. The ability to pass on spiritual gifts, therefore, ended at his death. A few people may have lived into the second century who had the ability to perform miracles, but once they died the age of miraculous gifts came to a close.

There are many who do not believe miracles have ceased. These individuals believe they have witnessed miracles. Some believe they themselves have performed miracles. Such, however, is not the case. Trickery, deceit, and false claims are not miracles. A true miracle is undeniable. When the horrible lesions of leprosy are instantly replaced by skin as soft and fresh as a little child's (2 Kings 5:14), no one can honestly deny that a miracle has occurred. If you know someone who from birth has been lame, lying down in public places and is suddenly able to walk and leap (Acts 3:2-8), you cannot honestly deny that a miracle has occurred. However, I can easily and honestly deny that anything miraculous has happened when I see modern day events that some claim to be miracles. In fact, most people will have no trouble dismissing them as fake. That is not the case with the miracles we read of in God's word. Even the men who wanted Jesus

dead, believed His miracles were genuine (John 11:47-53), not because they wanted to believe, but because His miracles were undeniable.

Miracles came to an end at the beginning of the second century (1 Corinthians 13:8-10). They served their purposes and were taken away. We have the written Word of God in its fullness. Paul said that it is all sufficient for our needs (2 Timothy 3:16-17). We need to study it, apply it, and live by it until we die. It alone will judge us in the last day (John 12:48).

## THE HOLY SPIRIT WORKS THROUGH THE WORD

1. The Holy Spirit does not enlighten the soul of man apart from the word of God; He does this only through the Word.
  - Psalms 19:8 -- "The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes."
  - Psalms 119:130 -- "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple."
  - Ephesians 5:17 -- "Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is."
2. The Holy Spirit does not convert the soul of man apart from the word of God; He does this only through the Word.
  - Psalms 19:7 -- "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple."
  - Romans 1:16 -- "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."
  - 1 Corinthians 4:15 -- "For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel"
3. The Holy Spirit does not make us wise unto salvation apart from the word of God; He does this only through the Holy Scriptures.
  - 2 Timothy 3:15 -- "And that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."
4. The Holy Spirit does not cleanse us apart from the word of God; He does this only through the word.
  - John 15:3 -- "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you."

5. The Holy Spirit does not sanctify apart from the word of God; He does this only through the word.
  - John 17:17 -- "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."
6. The Holy Spirit does not save apart from the word of God; He does this only through the word.
  - James 1:21 -- "Wherefore lay part all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls."
  - Romans 1:16 "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."
7. The Holy Spirit does not make men free from sin apart from the word of God; He makes them free from sin only through their obeying that "form of doctrine."
  - Romans 6:17-18 "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."
8. The Holy Spirit does not work apart from the word of God in order to bring about the new birth; He brings about the new birth only by the word.
  - 1 Peter 1:23 "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever."
9. The Holy Spirit does not produce faith in the hearts of men apart from the word of God; He does this only through the word.
  - Romans 10:17 -- "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."
10. The Holy Spirit does not produce fruit in the life of a Christian apart from the word of God; He does it only through the word.
  - Matthew 13:23 -- "But he that receiveth seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."

- Galatians 5:22-23 -- "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."
11. The Holy Spirit does not make the Christian "perfect" and "furnished unto all good works" apart from the word of God; He does this only through the word.
    - 2 Timothy 3:16,17 -- "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."
  12. The Holy Spirit does not produce growth in Christians apart from the word of God; He does this through only the word.
    - 1 Peter 2:2 "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby."
  13. The Holy Spirit dwells in the Christian -- not directly, apart from the word of God, but only through the medium of the word.
    - Galatians 3:2 "This only would I learn of you, received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?"
    - Ephesians 3:17 -- "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love."

## **SCRIPTURES CONDEMNING THE USE OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES**

There are more Scriptures condemning the use of alcoholic beverages than will be found on the subjects of lying, adultery, swearing, cheating, hypocrisy, pride, or even blasphemy.

Genesis 9:20-27 - Noah became drunk; the result was immorality and family trouble.

Genesis 19:30-38 - Lot was so drunk he did not know what he was doing; this led to immorality.

Leviticus 10:9-11 - God commanded priests not to drink so that they could tell the difference between the holy and the unholy.

Numbers 6:3 - The Nazarites were told to eat or drink nothing from the grape vine.

Deuteronomy 21:20 - A drunken son was stubborn and rebellious.

Deuteronomy 29:5-6 - God gave no grape juice to Israel nor did they have intoxicating drink in the wilderness.

Deuteronomy 32:33 - Intoxicating wine is like the poison of serpents, the cruel venom of asps.

Judges 13:4, 7, 14 - Samson was to be a Nazarite for life. His mother was told not to drink wine or strong drink.

1 Samuel 1:14-15 - Accused, Hannah said she drank no wine.

1 Samuel 25:32-38 - Nabal died after a drunken spree.

2 Samuel 11:13 - By getting Uriah drunk, David hoped to cover his sin.

2 Samuel 13:28-29 - Amnon was drunk when he was killed.

1 Kings 16:8-10 - The king was drinking himself into drunkenness when he was assassinated

1 Kings 20:12-21 - Ben-Hadad and 32 other kings were drinking when they were attacked and defeated by the Israelites.

Esther 1:5-12 - The king gave each one all the drink he wanted. The king was intoxicated when he commanded the queen to come.

Psalms 75:8 - The Lord's anger is pictured as mixed wine poured out and drunk by the wicked.

Proverbs 4:17 - Alcoholic drink is called the wine of violence.

Proverbs 20:1 - Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging.

Proverbs 23:19-20 - A wise person will not be among the drinkers of alcoholic beverages.

Proverbs 23:21 - Drunkenness causes poverty.

Proverbs 23:29-30 - Drinking causes woe, sorrow, fighting, babbling, wounds without cause and red eyes.

Proverbs 23:31 - God instructs not to look at intoxicating drinks.

Proverbs 23:32 - Alcoholic drinks bite like a serpent, sting like an adder.

Proverbs 23:33 - Alcohol causes the drinker to have strange and adulterous thoughts, produces willfulness, and prevents reformation.

Proverbs 23:34 - Alcohol makes the drinker unstable

Proverbs 23:35 - Alcohol makes the drinker insensitive to pain so he does not perceive it as a warning. Alcohol is habit forming.

Proverbs 31:4-5 - Kings, princes, and others who rule and judge must not drink alcohol. Alcohol perverts good judgment.

Proverbs 31:6-7 - Strong drink could be given to those about to perish or those in pain. Better anesthetics are available today.

Ecclesiastes 2:3 - The king tried everything, including intoxicating drink, to see if it satisfied. It did not.

Ecclesiastes 10:17 - A land is blessed when its leaders do not drink.

Isaiah 5:11-12 - Woe to those who get up early to drink and stay up late at night to get drunk.

Isaiah 5:22 - Woe to "champion" drinkers and "experts" at mixing drinks.

Isaiah 19:14 - Drunken men stagger in their vomit.

Isaiah 22:12-13 - The Israelites choose to drink; their future looks hopeless to them.

Isaiah 24:9 - Drinkers cannot escape the consequences when God judges.

Isaiah 28:1 - God pronounces woe on the drunkards of Ephraim.

Isaiah 28:3 - Proud drunkards shall be trodden down.

Isaiah 28:7 - Priests and prophets stagger and reel from beer and wine, err in vision, and stumble in judgment.

Isaiah 28:8 - Drinkers' tables are covered with vomit and filth.

Isaiah 56:9-12 - Drinkers seek their own gain and expect tomorrow to be just like today.

Jeremiah 35:2-14 - The Rechabites drank no grape juice or intoxicating wine and were blessed.

Ezekiel 44:21 - Again God instructed the priests not to drink wine.

Daniel 1:5-17 - Daniel refused the king's intoxicating wine and was blessed for it along with his abstaining friends.

Daniel 5:1 - Belshazzar, ruler of Babylon; led his people in drinking.

Daniel 5:2-3 - The king, along with his nobles, wives, and concubines, drank from the goblets which had been taken from God's temple.

Daniel 5:4 - Drinking wine was combined with praising false gods.

Daniel 5:23 - God sent word to Belshazzar that punishment would be swift for the evil he had committed.

Hosea 4:11 - Intoxicating wine takes away intelligence.

Hosea 7:5 - God reproves princes for drinking.

Joel 1:5 - Drunkards awake to see God's judgment.

Joel 3:3 - The enemy is judged for selling girls for wine.

Amos 2:8 - Unrighteous acts of Israel included the drinking of wine which had been taken for the payment of fines.

Amos 2:12 - Israel is condemned for forcing Nazarites to drink wine.

Micah 2:11 - Israelites are eager to follow false teachers who prophesy plenty of intoxicating drinks.

Nahum 1:10 - The drunkards of Nineveh will be destroyed by God.

Habakkuk 2:5 - A man is betrayed by wine.

Habakkuk 2:15 - Woe to him that gives his neighbor drink to lower his inhibitions.  
Habakkuk 2:16 - Drinking leads to shame.  
Matthew 24:48-51 - A drinking servant is unprepared for his Lord's return.  
Luke 1:15 - John the Baptist drank neither grape juice nor wine.  
Luke 12:45 - Christ warned against drunkenness.  
Luke 21:34 - Drunkenness will cause a person not to be ready for the Lord's return.  
Romans 13:13 - Do not walk in drunkenness or immorality.  
Romans 14:21 - Do not do anything that will hurt your testimony as a believer.  
1 Corinthians 5:10-11 - If a Christian brother is a drinker, do not associate with him.  
1 Corinthians 6:10 - Drunkards will not inherit the kingdom of God  
1 Corinthians 15:34 - Be sober-minded and stop sinning.  
Galatians 5:21 - Acts of the sinful nature, such as drunkenness, will prohibit a person from inheriting the kingdom of God.  
Ephesians 5:18 - In contrast to being drunk with wine, the believer is to be filled with the Spirit.  
1 Thessalonians 5:6-8 - Christians are to be alert and self-controlled, belonging to the day. Drunkards belong to the night and darkness.  
1 Timothy 3:2-3 - Bishops (elders) are to be temperate, sober, and not near any wine.  
1 Timothy 3:8 - Deacons are to be worthy of respect and not drinkers.  
1 Timothy 3:11 - Deacons' wives are to be temperate and sober.  
Titus 1:7-8 - An overseer is to be disciplined.  
Titus 2:2-3 - The older men and older women of the church are to be temperate and not addicted to wine.  
1 Peter 4:3-4 - The past life of drunkenness and carousing has no place in the Christian's life.

## ARGUMENTS USED FOR SOCIAL DRINKING

The use of alcoholic beverages has been popular for so long, few people stop to consider whether the Bible actually supports it use or not. Let us look at each example given above to see if it really supports moderate or social drinking.

### ***"Jesus turned water into wine."***

"On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding. And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him, 'They have no wine.' Jesus said to her, 'Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come.' His mother said to the servants, 'Whatever He says to you, do it.' Now there were set there six waterpots of stone, according to the manner of purification of the Jews, containing twenty or thirty gallons apiece. Jesus said to them, 'Fill the waterpots with water.' And they filled them up to the brim. And He said to them, 'Draw some out now, and take it to the master of the feast.' And they took it. When the master of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom. And he said to him, 'Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine, and when the guests have well drunk, then the inferior. You have kept the good wine until now!' This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him" (John 2:1-11).

The Greek word being used for the word "wine" is OINOS, a generic word that applies to any beverage derived from grapes whether alcoholic or not. To understand whether alcohol was involved or not, we must examine the context.

A wedding feast was in progress and part way through the celebration, the wine that was purchased had run out. Weddings were big things in ancient days. A wedding feast lasted about a week and to run out of provisions before the end would have been an embarrassment to the new couple and their families. Mary asked Jesus to handle the problem. Jesus had six waterpots filled. These held twenty to thirty gallons a piece, which means when the water was changed to wine, Jesus had made between 120 and 180 gallons of wine. If this wine was alcoholic, then there was more than sufficient quantities available to get the guests well drunk -- especially when you consider that everyone had drunk the original supplies. Yet we know that the Bible condemns drunkenness, such as in Romans 13:13 or 1 Corinthians 6:9-10. Since Jesus did not sin, we know He would not have been the cause of other men's sins (Romans 1:32).

Some point out that the governor of the feast tasted Jesus' wine and declared it to be good -- better than the wine served earlier. The problem with the argument is that one must assume that the higher the alcoholic content of the wine, the better it tastes. Such is definitely not the case. In fact, in a society that lacked refrigerators in every home, fresh juice was prized over juice that had become vinegary or alcoholic from

storage. The governor's declaration does not prove the wine contained alcohol.

Another argument is that the governor mentioned that everyone was already drunk. The Greek word METHUO is used much like the English word "drunk." It literally means "filled to the full." It can be used to refer to a person who has had enough to drink to satisfy them; or if it is referring to an alcoholic beverage, it can refer to a person who has had too much to drink. If the guests at this wedding party were drunk with alcohol, then the governor of the feast had failed in his duties. You see the Jews considered drunkenness such a sin, they had people assigned the task of making sure it didn't happen. This is one of the reasons he was offered the first taste of the new wine brought in. If he thought it might cause drunkenness, he would have ordered it to be watered down. The governor's presence at this feast and his praise of Jesus's wine without an order to water it down is strong indication that the wine was not alcoholic.

Finally, this feast is taking place in Israel where the Old Testament laws were enforced. The Old Testament forbade the use of alcoholic beverages (see Old Testament Beverages for more details). Hence, we must conclude that Jesus did not serve alcoholic beverages.

The result is that the wedding feast does not prove that alcoholic beverages were in use. Instead, there are strong hints that non-alcoholic beverages were available and used.

***"The disciples were accused of being drunk,  
so, alcohol must have been in use."***

"When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, "Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs -- we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God." So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "Whatever could this mean?" Others mocking said, "They are full of new wine." But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words. For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day" (Acts 2:1-15).

The charge is that the apostles were full of new wine. The Greek word is GLUEKOS, which literally means "sweet wine." It is a word that refers to unfermented juice. If you recall that the charge came from those mocking the disciples, it makes perfectly good sense. Luke records that there were people present from fifteen different regions of the world and as the apostles spoke, they were all hearing them speak in their native language. But even if I knew one of the languages, there were fourteen others being spoken that I could not comprehend. It would have sounded to those running to the scene as chaos. People couldn't understand what was going on. Others taunted and said, "Oh, they're just drunk on grape juice!" In other words, they are so unable to handle their liquor that grape juice makes them drunk. Peter adroitly uses this as an opening to his sermon. He notes that since it is only nine o'clock in the morning, it is too early for people to be drinking. Yes, even in those days, people who were looking to get drunk generally did it at night (1Thessalonians 5:7).

Once again, this verse does not prove alcoholic beverages were in use. In fact, the crowd was charging the apostles with getting drunk on grape juice. The charge was deliberately facetious because those making the charge were mocking the disciples.

***"Older women were only told not to be given to much wine."***

"But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine: that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience; the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things-- that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed" (Titus 2:1-5).

The Greek phrase under consideration is ME OINO POLLO DEDOULOMENAS, which literally means not enslaved to much wine. In contrast they were to train the young women to be, among other things, discreet. The word translated "admonish" in the New King James Version, is from the Greek word SOPHRONIZOSIN that means "to train in self-control." The word "discreet" comes from the related Greek word SOPHRONAS, which means "self-controlled." The root word SOPHRON literally means "safe mind." It refers to someone who is intellectually sound of mind or rational. The Jewish philosopher Philo defined the opposite of SOPHROSUNE, namely APHROSUNE, as a person who "inflamed by wine drowns the whole life in ceaseless and unending drunkenness." Paul is making the same point: older women are not to be drunkards enslaved by the overuse of wine but to teach younger women to live as they live -- sober.

In two passages, 1 Timothy 3:2 and Titus 2:2, the word "sober" (SOPHRON) is joined in a list with the word "temperate" (NEPHALEOUS). As the commentator Adam Clarke explains, "He must be vigilant, NEPHALEOS, from NE, not, and PINO, to drink. Watchful; for as one who drinks is apt to sleep, so he who abstains from it is more likely to keep awake, and attend to his work and charge." Though temperate today refers to

moderation, it wasn't all that long ago that temperate meant abstinence, as in the women's temperance movement which sought the banning of alcohol. Albert Barnes, another commentator says, "This word (NEPHALIOS) occurs only here [1 Timothy 3:2] and in verse 11; Titus 2:2. It means, properly, sober, temperate, abstinent, especially in respect to wine; then, sober-minded, watchful, circumspect." Hence, elders and older men were charge with both being sober and not to drink. Now are you prepared to say that older men are not to drink, but older woman may drink so long as it is not in excess?

A very similar phrase is found in 1 Timothy 3:3 and Titus 1:7 where men seeking to be elders are told to be "not addicted to wine." Actually, the literal translation of the phrase ME PARONINOS is "not near to wine." Of this phrase, the commentators Lee and Burn say, "The ancient PAROINOS was a man accustomed to attend drinking parties, and, as a consequence, to become intimately associated with strong drink." Albert Barnes said, "The Greek word (PAROINOS) occurs in the New Testament only here [1 Timothy 3:3] and in Titus 1:7. It means, properly, by wine; that is, spoken of what takes place by or over wine, as revelry, drinking-songs, etc. Then it denotes, as it does here, one who sits by wine; that is, who is in the habit of drinking it ... It means that one who is in the habit of drinking wine, or who is accustomed to sit with those who indulge in it, should not be admitted to the ministry. The way in which the apostle mentions the subject here would lead us fairly to suppose that he did not mean to commend its use in any sense; that he regarded it as dangerous and that he would wish the ministers of religion to avoid it altogether."

To tell a group of elderly ladies not to be enslaved by the overuse of wine is not necessarily an implication that moderate use in social settings is allowed. Other words within the same context show that Paul has in mind that people should not be using alcohol casually. Could wine (OINOS) be used? Most certainly! In its non-alcoholic form, it makes a pleasant drink. In its vinegar form, it is used in cooking. In its alcoholic form it can be used as medicine. None of these proper uses constitute an overuse of OINOS. That is why you don't find a direct forbiddance of OINOS. Its use had to be limited.

***"Paul told Timothy to drink a little wine for his stomach's sake."***

"No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for your stomach's sake and your frequent infirmities" (1 Timothy 5:23).

Paul is not instructing Timothy to use OINOS (wine) casually at dinner. Timothy had a stomach ailment and other problems for which Paul recommended that he use a little wine to treat the symptoms. Especially notice what is implied here. Timothy normally drank water exclusively. He was not in the habit of using any grape beverage at all. Paul had to encourage him to ease up on his total abstinence so as to use a little wine for its medicinal properties.

Wine was used in the New Testament days for medical purposes. For example,

in the parable of the good Samaritan, "So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him" (Luke 10:34). However, medical uses do not imply acceptance of casual use. Valium can be used to relax injured muscles, but valium can be abused when casually taken. I knew a man dying of cancer who needed a mild pain killer. He was instructed by his doctor to drink a glass of sherry before bed time so he might sleep in more comfort. This is a proper use of alcoholic beverages.

Hence, once again we fail to find support for social drinking or moderate drinking. Instead we find that at least one Christian strongly avoided all use of wine and had to be encouraged to take some when he needed it for his medical condition.

**<https://www.lavistachurchofchrist.org/cms/what-is-wrong-with-drinking-so-long-as-it-is-done-in-moderation/>**

## DID PAUL ENDORSE SLAVERY?

by Eric Lyons, M.Min.

Thousands of years prior to the establishment of the Lord's Church, and long before Paul addressed the conduct of Christian slaves in the first century, various forms of slavery were commonplace. In fact, virtually every ancient civilization used slaves.<sup>1</sup> Slavery was prevalent enough in Babylon in the 18<sup>th</sup> century B.C. to be mentioned numerous times in the Code of Hammurabi.<sup>2</sup> The Egyptians enslaved hundreds of thousands of Israelites in the 16<sup>th</sup> century B.C. (Exodus 1; cf. Numbers 1:46). Historians estimate that, by the time Paul wrote his New Testament epistles in the first century A.D., five to eight million slaves resided within the Roman Empire,<sup>3</sup> including 15-25% of the total population of Italy.<sup>4</sup>

### "SLAVERY"—A BROAD TERM IN THE FIRST CENTURY

The English term "slave" is translated from the Greek word *doulos*. Some translations use the term "servant" (or "bondservant"), but *doulos* is best translated "slave" (especially since "in normal usage at the present time the two words ["slave" and "servant"—EL] are carefully distinguished").<sup>5</sup>

So what is meant by "slave" or "slavery"? Americans often envision ancient slavery as the kind of oppressive bondage that was popular among many slave owners in North America in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, when millions of Africans were stolen from their homelands and shipped across the Atlantic. Certainly, some first-century slavery was similar, but often it was quite different. For example, slavery in New Testament times was not based on race. Many foreign soldiers and their families became slaves after being captured during times of war.<sup>6</sup> What's more, "[s]ome became slaves because they could not pay back the money they had borrowed. The government would also take people into slavery if they could not pay their taxes. There were also many cases of poor people selling their children as slaves to richer neighbours."<sup>7</sup>

Consider the fact that the ancients would likely interpret certain modern American practices as forms of "slavery." For example, hundreds of thousands of Americans who work, labor nearly one-third of every year **for the government**. That is, Americans are **forced** by the government **with the threat of fines and imprisonment** to pay over 100 days wages to local, state, and federal governments every year in the form of taxes. Many Americans hand over more money to the government each year than they spend on food, clothing, and shelter combined.<sup>8</sup> According to irs.gov, U.S. citizens who fail to pay government-mandated taxes can be prosecuted and imprisoned for up to five years. And what about the military draft—"the practice of **ordering people by law to serve** in the armed forces"?<sup>9</sup> To this day, all 18-25-year-old males in the U.S. are required to register with the Selective Service System in case of "a crisis requiring a draft"<sup>10</sup>—a draft in which thousands or millions of men would be forced to go to war, and possibly die for their country, whether they wanted to or not.

Please understand, I am not suggesting that we should defraud the government, or that we should refuse to submit to its authority if the draft is reinstated. I am simply suggesting that “slavery” was broadly defined in the first century. When people ask questions such as “Did Paul endorse slavery?” we must understand that there were various kinds of slavery in the first century, including some forms that resemble certain practices today which may be generally accepted and morally justified.

#### DEFINE “ENDORSE”

Did Paul “endorse” slavery? The word “endorse” means “to publicly or officially say that you support or approve of (someone or something).”<sup>11</sup> To endorse is to advocate or champion an idea, a thing, or a person. Did Paul “endorse” slavery? Did he champion it or publicly promote it as one advocates a particular product or political candidate? No, at least not the kind of slavery most people think of when they hear the term.

In truth, Paul specifically condemned “kidnappers” (*andrapodistais*) or “menstealers” (KJV) as lawless and insubordinate individuals who practice that which is “contrary to sound doctrine” (1 Timothy 1:10). Danker, et al. defines this kidnapper as a “slave-dealer.”<sup>12</sup> Far from endorsing such activity, Paul groups these men-stealing, slave traders with murderers, liars, and other ungodly sinners (1 Timothy 1:9-10).

Yet, five chapters later Paul wrote: “Let as many bondservants [*doulos*, slaves] as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and His doctrine may not be blasphemed. And those who have believing masters, let them not despise them because they are brethren, but rather serve them because those who are benefited are believers and beloved. Teach and exhort these things” (1 Timothy 6:1-2). What did Paul instruct Timothy to teach the various Christian slaves in the first century? To respect, honor, and even serve their masters (i.e., to set a good example of Christianity before them).

#### PAUL ENDORSED GODLY SUBMISSION, NOT SINFUL FORMS OF SLAVERY

Paul’s instruction for slaves to honor their masters is perfectly consistent with the rest of God’s Word regarding all Christians submitting to those in positions of authority. To the Christians living in the heart of the Roman Empire, Paul taught: “Let **every soul** be subject to the governing authorities.... Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor” (Romans 13:1,7; cf. Matthew 22:21).<sup>13</sup> Similarly, Peter wrote: “Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake, whether to the king as supreme, or to governors.... For this is the will of God.... Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king” (1 Peter 2:13-17). Was the Roman Empire corrupt in many ways? Certainly. Was a Christian’s submission to Rome a

blanket endorsement of the Empire? Not at all. But Christians were (and are) to be humbly compliant.

God expects all Christians to have a spirit of submission. Children are to submit to their parents (Ephesians 6:1-3). Young people are to be submissive to older people (1 Peter 5:5). Wives are to submit to their husbands (1 Peter 3:1-2). Members of local churches are to submit to their overseeing elders who rule over them (Hebrews 13:17; Acts 20:28). Local shepherds are to submit fully to the Chief Shepherd (1 Peter 5:1-4). In short, all Christians, including those in leadership positions, are to “be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for ‘God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble’” (1 Peter 5:5). And, yes, God expects His people to humbly “submit...to every authority instituted among men,” whether to kings or to slave masters (1 Peter 2:13,18, NIV).

### SUBMISSION FOR A HIGHER PURPOSE

God did not create the practice of slavery. Furthermore, Paul’s inspired instructions regarding a slave’s submission to his master were not given because God favors a master over his slave (Galatians 3:28), or because He simply wants some people to have harder lives than others. The specific purpose that Paul gave for Christian slaves submitting to their pagan masters was “so that the name of God and His doctrine may not be blasphemed” (1 Timothy 6:1).

Imagine if Christian slave after slave in the first century became less submissive to their masters as they learned more about the equality of all mankind (Genesis 1:26-27). Consider how the reputation of Christianity would have been greatly tarnished in the eyes of the unbelieving world if Paul explicitly taught that all slaves should be set free. As William Barclay noted: “For the Church to have encouraged slaves to revolt and rebel and rise against their masters would have been fatal. It would simply have caused civil war, mass murder, and the complete discredit of the Church.”<sup>14</sup>

God, in His infinite wisdom, commands all men to do their best to make the most for the cause of Christ **in whatever situation** they find themselves. “Let each one remain in the same calling in which he was called. Were you called while a slave? Do not be concerned about it; but if you can be made free, rather use it. For he who is called in the Lord while a slave is the Lord’s freedman. Likewise he who is called while free is Christ’s slave” (1 Corinthians 7:21-23). Whether a person becomes a Christian while in slavery or in a terrible marriage, God wants His people to change from the inside out and have a positive spiritual impact on others. **Be obedient** to parents, husbands, governing officials, and yes, even slave owners. “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works **and glorify your Father in heaven**” (Matthew 5:16). Rather than giving people reasons to curse Christ and His doctrine, be obedient to all those in positions of authority “for the Lord’s sake” (1 Peter 2:13). Be honorable at all times so that you may “put to silence the ignorance of foolish men” and “by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of

visitation” (1 Peter 2:15,12; cf. 3:1-2). In short, “humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time” (1 Peter 2:6).

### TAKING PAUL’S TEACHING TO ITS LOGICAL CONCLUSION

Over time, with the spread of Christianity (cf. Acts 19:10,26; 21:20) and with increasing numbers of slave masters becoming Christians, the physical lives of many slaves would have improved dramatically. As slave owners with honest and good hearts learned (1) to love the Lord with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength, and (2) to love their neighbors (including their slaves) as themselves (Matthew 22:36-40), they would give up “threatening” (Ephesians 6:9). As Christian slave owners contemplated treating others how they want to be treated (Matthew 7:12), they would give their slaves “what is just and fair,” knowing that they, too, had a Master in heaven (Colossians 4:1). As slave owners submitted to Christ, they would be transformed by the Gospel, learning to be “kindly affectionate” to everyone (Romans 12:2,10), including all those who served them. In short, far from endorsing sinful slavery, Paul’s teachings, **taken to their logical conclusion**, would eventually lead truth-seeking masters and government officials to help bring an end to any kind of cruel, sinful captivity.<sup>15</sup>

### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> “History of Slavery” (no date), *History World*, [www.history-world.net/wrldhis/PlainTextHistories.asp?historyid=ac41](http://www.history-world.net/wrldhis/PlainTextHistories.asp?historyid=ac41).

<sup>2</sup> “Code of Hammurabi, King of Babylon” (no date), [https://archive.org/stream/cu31924060109703/cu31924060109703\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/cu31924060109703/cu31924060109703_djvu.txt).

<sup>3</sup> Walter Scheidel (2007), “The Roman Slave Supply,” p. 6, <https://www.princeton.edu/~pswpc/pdfs/scheidel/050704.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> Scheidel, pp. 3-6.

<sup>5</sup> Frederick William Danker, William Arndt, and F.W. Gingrich (2000), *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Chicago: University of Chicago), p. 260.

<sup>6</sup> John Simkin (2014), “Slavery in the Roman Empire,” *Spartacus Educational*, <http://spartacus-educational.com/ROMslaves.htm>.

<sup>7</sup> Simkin.

<sup>8</sup> Scott Greenberg (no date), *Tax Foundation*, <https://taxfoundation.org/tax-freedom-day-2016-april-24/>.

<sup>9</sup> “Conscription,” *Merriam-Webster.com*, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/conscription>, emp. added.

<sup>10</sup> “Who Must Register” (2008), Selective Service System, <https://web.archive.org/web/20090507213840/http://www.sss.gov/FSwho.htm>.

<sup>11</sup> “Endorse,” *Merriam-Webster.com*, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/endorse>.

<sup>12</sup> Danker, et al., p. 76.

<sup>13</sup> All bold text in Scripture quotations has been added for emphasis.

<sup>14</sup> William Barclay (1956), *The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon* (Philadelphia: Westminster), p. 141.

<sup>15</sup> For a more extensive response to questions regarding slavery, and especially slavery in the Old Testament, see Kyle Butt (2005), “Defending the Bible’s Position on Slavery,” *Reason & Revelation*, 25[6]:41-47, June, [https://www.apologeticspress.org/pub\\_rar/25\\_6/0506.pdf](https://www.apologeticspress.org/pub_rar/25_6/0506.pdf).

<https://apologeticspress.org/apPubPage.aspx?pub=1&issue=1262#>  
Copyright © 2018 Apologetics Press, Inc. All rights reserved.