

EPHESIANS

BACKGROUND

Ephesus was a principal port on the west coast of Asia Minor, situated near present-day Izmir. It was one of the seven churches to whom Jesus addressed His letters in Revelation 2 and 3, a relevant fact for studying this epistle since it was originally circulated to approximately the same group of churches.

Although Paul had been to Ephesus earlier (Acts 18:21), he first came there to minister in the winter of A.D. 55. He ministered there for over two full years (Acts 19:8–10), developing so deep a relationship with the Ephesians that his farewell message to them is one of the Bible’s most moving passages (Acts 20:17–38).

OCCASION AND DATE

While imprisoned in Rome, Paul wrote Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon. Confined and awaiting trial (3:1; 4:1; 6:20), the apostle writes this encyclical letter—one to be read by several congregations. Ephesians is probably the same letter referred to in Colossians 4:16 as being presently at Laodicea while being circulated.

It appears that after writing Colossians, Paul was deeply stirred by an expanding revelation about the church. Now seeing the church as Christ’s body and as God’s instrument to confound and overthrow evil powers, he writes an elaboration of these themes.

PURPOSE

Ephesians unveils the “mystery” of the church as no other epistle. God’s “secret” intention is revealed: 1) to form a body to express Christ’s fullness on Earth (1:15–23); 2) to do this by uniting one people—both Jew and Gentile, among whom God Himself dwells (2:11–3:7); and 3) to equip, empower, and mature this people to the end that they extend Christ’s victory over evil (3:10–20; 6:12–20).

CONTENT

The throbbing message of Ephesians is “to the praise of His [God’s] glory” (1:6, 12, 14). The word “glory” occurs eight times and refers to the exceeding excellence of God’s love, His wisdom, and His power. The magnificent goal is in Jesus’ announced commitment to build a glorious, mature, and ministering church, “not having spot or wrinkle” (5:27).

Ephesians unfolds the process by which God is bringing the church to its destined purpose in Christ. Basic maturing steps are taken toward the church’s appointed engagement in battle with dark powers: 1) before the church is called to *war*, she is taught to *walk*; and 2) before being called to *walk*, the church is taught where she *stands*.

The epistle divides into two sections: 1) the Believer’s Position, chapters 1–3, and 2) the Believer’s Practice, chapters 4–6. In chapter 1, the recurrent term “in Christ” sums up the Christian’s position, as having been given “every spiritual blessing.” Several of these blessings are enumerated: chosen, blameless (1:4), adopted, accepted (1:5, 6), forgiven, predestined, and sealed (1:7, 11, 13).

AUTHOR:

Paul

DATE:

A.D. 60, 61

THEME:

The Glorious Church

KEY WORDS:

Glory, Body, Heavenly Places

With sweeping strokes, this foundational series of statements moves to a bold, new assertion, declared in Paul's first of two prayers in this letter. He prays that each Christian may perceive God's grand purpose in raising Christ to triumph—that now the church may know Christ's victorious fullness as we resist evil and face life's trials (1:15—2:10). Chapter 2 describes how God's grace has formed a united people among whom He can dwell in His fullness and glory. Through this people His high purpose is to be unveiled. Grasping the message of Ephesians requires understanding two words from chapter 3—"dispensation" and "mystery" (vv. 2, 3). The apostle declared that God's "secret" in planning the church is hidden no longer (3:3, 4—*now* the "mystery" is *known*). He has designed the church to administer ("to dispense") Christ's fullness everywhere (3:2, 9), ministering as a living body, spreading over the Earth and penetrating "the heavenlies." God's "manifold wisdom" now demonstrates His glory in the church (3:10, 11), a manifestation that eventually will issue in the believer's strengthening (3:14–20), maturing (4:15), confrontation, and victory (6:10–20). However, the church cannot approach this without a practical understanding of how this present glory of God's grace and presence is to affect everyday living.

The great call to "walk worthy of the calling" introduces this letter's second section (chs. 4–6). Systematically, Paul presents the ethical and moral implications of Spirit-filled living (4:1–6:9). The maturing process of the believer's "equipping" (4:11–16) and the appeal to help each other forward ("speaking the truth in love") will bring growth in the disciplines essential to the triumphant spiritual warrior's life (6:10–20).

PERSONAL APPLICATION

In short, Ephesians discloses awesome blessings of grace ("accepted in the Beloved," 1:6) and awesome dimensions of spiritual authority over evil ("according to the power that works in us," 3:20). But this awaits the believer's first accepting the disciplines of unity (4:1–16), purity (4:17–31), forgiveness (4:32), and walking in the fullness of the Holy Spirit (5:1–21). With this, relationships at every point must be in order (5:22–6:9), the idea being firmly established that true spiritual power flows from true obedience to the divine order in relationships and personal conduct.

CHRIST REVEALED

Ephesians has been called "The Alps of the New Testament," "The Grand Canyon of Scripture," and "The Royal Capstone of the Epistles," not only because of its grand theme, but because of the majesty of Christ revealed here. Chapter 1: He is the Redeemer (1:7), the One in whom and by whom history will ultimately be consummated (1:10); and He is the Resurrected Lord who not only has risen over death and hell, but who reigns as King, pouring His life through His body, the church—the present expression of Himself on Earth (1:15–23). Chapter 2: He is the Peacemaker who has reconciled man to God and who makes possible reconciliation of man to man as well (2:11–18); and He is the Chief Cornerstone of the new temple consisting of His own people to be indwelt by God Himself (2:19–22). Chapter 3: He is the Treasure in whom life's unsearchable riches are found (3:8); and He is the Indweller of human hearts, securing us in the love of God (3:17–19). Chapter 4: Jesus is the Giver of ministry-gifts to His church (4:7–11); and He is the Victor who has broken hell's ability to keep humankind captive (4:8–10). Chapter 5: He is the Model

Husband, unselfishly giving Himself to enhance His bride—His church (5:25–27, 32). Chapter 6: He is the Lord, Mighty in Battle, the resource of strength for His own as they arm for spiritual warfare (6:10).

**THE HOLY SPIRIT
AT WORK**

As with Christ, the Holy Spirit is revealed in widely varied ministry to and through the believer. In 1:13 He is the Sealer, authorizing the believer to represent Christ; in 1:17 and 3:5 He is the Revealer, enlightening the heart to perceive God’s purpose; in 3:16 He is the Empowerer whom Christ gives to strengthen within; in 4:3, 4 He is the Spirit of Unity desiring to sustain the bond of peace in the body of Christ; in 4:30 He is the Spirit of holiness who may be grieved by insistence on carnal pursuits; in 5:18 He is the Fountain, from which all are to be continuously filled; in 6:17, 18 He is the Giver of the Word as a sword for battle and the heavenly Assistant given to aid us in prayer and intercession until victory is won.

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Greeting

PAUL, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God,

To the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus:

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

Redemption in Christ

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

4 just as ^aHe chose us in Him ^bbefore the foundation of the world, that we should ^cbe holy and without blame before Him in love,

5 ^ahaving predestined us to ^badoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, ^caccording to the good pleasure of His ^{*}will,

6 to the **praise** of the glory of His ^{*}grace, ^aby which He ¹made us accepted in ^bthe Beloved.

WORD WEALTH



1:6 praise, *epainos* (ep-ah-ee-noss); Strong's #1868: Approbation, commendation, approval, praise. *Epainos* expresses not only praise for what God does for us, but also for who He is, recognizing His glory.

③ 7 ^aIn Him we have ^{*}redemption through His blood, the ^{*}forgiveness of sins, according to ^bthe riches of His grace

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

CHAPTER 1

3 ^{a2} Cor. 1:3

4 ^aRom. 8:28

^{b1} Pet. 1:2

^cLuke 1:75

5 ^a[Rom. 8:29]

^bJohn 1:12

^{c1} Cor. 1:21

^{*}See WW at

[Matt. 12:50.]

6 ^a[Rom. 3:24]

^bMatt. 3:17

¹Lit. *bestowed*

grace (favor)

upon us

^{*}See WW at

2 Cor. 12:9.

7 ^a[Heb. 9:12]

^bRom. 3:24,

25]

^{*}See WW at

Rom. 3:24. •

See WW at

Heb. 9:22.

8 ¹*understand-*

ing

^{*}See WW at

Matt. 25:29. •

See WW at

Acts 6:10.

9 ^a[Rom. 16:25]

^{b2} Tim. 1:9]

^{*}See WW at

Mark 4:11.

10 ^aGal. 4:4

^{b1} Cor. 3:22

^cCol. 1:16,

20] ¹NU, M

omit *both*

^{*}See WW at

Eph. 3:19.

11 ^aRom. 8:17

^bIs. 46:10

^{*}See WW at

Rom. 8:28.

12 ^{a2} Thess.

2:13 ^bJames

1:18

^{*}See WW at

Eph. 1:6.

13 ^aJohn 1:17

^{b2} Cor. 1:22]

9 ^ahaving made known to us the ^{*}mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure ^bwhich He purposed in Himself,

10 that in the dispensation of ^athe ^{*}fullness of the times ^bHe might gather together in one ^call things in Christ, ¹both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him.

11 ^aIn Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to ^bthe ^{*}purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will,

12 ^athat we ^bwho first trusted in Christ should be to the ^{*}praise of His glory.

13 In Him you also *trusted*, after you heard ④ ^athe word of ^{*}truth, the gospel of your ^{*}salvation; in whom also, having ^{*}believed, ^byou were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,

14 ^awho¹ is the ²guarantee* of our inheritance ^buntil the ^{*}redemption of ^cthe purchased possession, ^dto the ^{*}praise of His glory.

Prayer for Spiritual Wisdom

15 Therefore I also, ^aafter I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints,

16 ^ado not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers:

17 that ^athe God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, ^bmay give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him,

^{*}See WW at John 4:24. • See WW at Luke 19:9. • See WW at Rom. 10:9. 14 ^{a2} Cor. 5:5 ^bRom. 8:23 ^c[Acts 20:28] ^{d1} Pet. 2:9 ¹NU which ²down payment, earnest ^{*}See WW at 2 Cor. 1:22. • See WW at Rom. 3:24. • See WW at Eph. 1:6.

15 ^aCol. 1:4 16 ^aRom. 1:9 17 ^aJohn 20:17 ^bCol. 1:9

1:1 Saints is never a merely religious title in the Bible, but a declared state of being. Saints are “holy people,” so-called by God because He has made them holy through His salvation.

1:3–14 In an expression of great prose, Paul praises **God** for all the blessings He has bestowed on His people—blessings that are ours because of our relationship to **Jesus Christ** and that are activated in our lives by the Person of the **Holy Spirit**.

1:3–6 See section 2 of Truth-In-Action at the end of Eph.

1:3 Spiritual blessing refers to divine privileges and resources available now, that is, chosen, adopted, forgiven. 1 Cor. 12:1 uses the same Greek word for “spiritual” in referring to the gifts of the Holy Spirit, evidencing that they are among the “blessings” included.

1:5 Predestined does not suggest a fatalism that excludes some while including others, but assures an appointed plan and guaranteed destiny for all the redeemed.

1:6 Accepted is literally “graced with grace.” “In Christ” is a recurring term designating the sphere in which all salvation is realized and the realm in which God’s kingdom purposes are fulfilled—in the circle of the King’s (Christ’s) reign.

1:7, 8 See section 3 of Truth-In-Action at the end of Eph.

1:7 This letter repeatedly insists that the ground of all grace is the reconciling death of Jesus Christ on the cross (2:16), at the expense of **His** redeeming **blood** (2:13). Through this alone God offers forgiveness (4:32). Forgiveness is possible because Christ loved the church and gave Himself to provide it (5:25–27).

1:9 Mystery was formerly a divine secret, but in the NT is now a fully disclosed truth for understanding and application.

1:10 Dispensation is not a restricted period of time. It refer-

ences the fact God has a plan to **gather together** the fragmented and alienated universe, so that human history ultimately culminates in achieving His purposes.

1:11 Counsel of His will signifies God’s eternal and unchangeable plan. Repeated reference to God’s will (vv. 1, 5, 9, 11) establishes the confidence of strong purpose and solid ground for living.

1:13, 14 See section 4 of Truth-In-Action at the end of Eph.

1:13 You were sealed is seen by some as referring to justification, but that term is not used here and the emphasis is different. Justification brings acceptance; sealing brings authority (John 3:33, 34). This verse, therefore, may refer to Acts 19:1–6, where the Ephesians, who had already believed, received the fullness of the Holy Spirit after Paul taught and ministered to them.

1:14 Guarantee literally means “deposit,” “down payment,” or “first installment.” The Holy Spirit invested in us is God’s title to possessing us entirely and forever.

1:15–23 Paul prays that all believers might progress toward maturity and fully appreciate the greatness and power of their salvation, a power which he assumes will be demonstrated both in and through Spirit-empowered believers.

1:16 For insight into the weight and dimension of prayer life in the early church, study the content of Paul’s two prayers recorded in this letter (vv. 16–23; 3:14–21).

1:17 Wisdom and revelation are not to be interpreted as mystical. “Wisdom” concerns practical, workable principles; “revelation” refers to clear perception and applicable understanding. The Holy Spirit is the divine and supernatural source of both.

18 ^athe eyes of your ¹understanding* being enlightened; that you may know what is ^bthe hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the exceeding greatness of His *power toward us who believe, ^aaccording to the *working of His mighty power

KINGDOM DYNAMICS



1:17–19 The Spirit of Revelation, PROPHECY. In this

text, Paul says he prays for people to receive “the spirit of wisdom and revelation,” with the dual objective of their knowing Christ and understanding God’s purpose and power in their lives. Such “revelation” refers to an unveiling of our hearts that we may receive insight into the way God’s word is intended to work in our lives. It may be used of teaching or preaching that is especially anointed in helping people see the glory of Christ and His purpose and power for them. But in making such a biblical use of the term as it appears here in Eph. 1, it is wise to understand its alternate and grander use.

The word “revelation” is used in two ways in the Bible. It is important to distinguish them, not only to avoid confusion in studying the Word of God, but to assure the avoidance of a destructive detour into humanistic ideas and hopeless error. The Holy Scriptures are called “the revealed Word of God.” The Bible declares that God’s “law” (Deut. 29:29) and the “prophets” (Amos 3:7) are the result of His revealing work, essentially describing the whole of the OT as “revealed.” In the NT, this word is used of writings as well (Rom. 16:25; Eph. 3:3; Rev. 1:1)—writings that became part of the closed canon of the Holy Scriptures

18 ^aActs 26:18; 2 Cor. 4:6; Heb. 6:4 ^bEph. 2:12 ¹NU, M ^{hearts}

*See WW at Mark 12:30.

19 ^aCol. 2:12 *See WW at 1 Tim. 6:16. • See WW at Col. 1:29.

20 ^aActs 2:24 ^bPs. 110:1

21 ^aIs. 9:6, 7; Luke 1:32, 33; Phil. 2:9, 10; Rev. 19:12

^bRom. 8:38, 39] ¹rule

²authority

³power

*See WW at John 12:13. •

See WW at Matt. 28:20.

22 ^aPs. 8:6; 110:1; Matt. 28:18; 1 Cor. 15:27 ^bHeb. 2:7

*See WW at 1 Cor. 14:32.

23 ^aRom. 12:5 ^bCol. 2:9

¶1 Cor. 12:6]

CHAPTER 2

1 ^aEph. 2:5; Col. 2:13 ^bEph. 4:18

2 ^aCol. 1:21 ^bJohn 12:31; Eph. 6:12

^cCol. 3:6 ¹Gr. ^{aion, aeon}

3 ^a1 Pet. 4:3 ^bGal. 5:16

¶Ps. 51:5

*See WW at Mark 12:30.

(see “The Content of God’s Word Is Completed,” Prov. 30:5, 6).

Wisdom and understanding, as well as sound, practical speech, recommend that today’s believer both know and clearly express what is meant when he or she speaks of “revelations.” The Holy Spirit does indeed give us revelation, as this text teaches. But such prophetic insight into the Word should never be considered as equal to the actual giving of the Holy Scriptures. As helpful as insight into God’s Word may be, the finality of the whole of the revelation of God’s Holy Word is the only sure ground for building our lives (Matt. 7:24–29).

(1 John 4:1–6/1 Cor. 14:1) J.W.H.

20 which He worked in Christ when ^aHe raised Him from the dead and ^bseated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, 21 ^afar above all ^bprincipality¹ and ²power and ³might and dominion, and every *name that is named, not only in this *age but also in that which is to come.

22 And ^aHe put all things *under His feet, and gave Him ^bto be head over all things to the church,

23 ^awhich is His body, ^bthe fullness of Him ^cwho fills all in all.

By Grace Through Faith

2 And ^ayou He made alive, ^bwho were dead in trespasses and sins,

2 ^ain which you once walked according to the ¹course of this world, according to ^bthe prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in ^cthe sons of disobedience,

3 ^aamong whom also we all once conducted ourselves in ^bthe lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the *mind, and ^cwere by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

1:18 Eyes of your understanding being enlightened literally means that your heart may receive the brightness of hope resulting when the wealth of God’s investment in you is understood.

1:19 According to occurs repeatedly and means “in the same measure as” or “to the exact degree.”

1:20 Heavenly places does not refer to heaven in the sense of its being the destined home of the redeemed. Rather, the Greek word here refers to the invisible realm that surrounds our present daily situation, the arena or sphere of spiritual action and activity. Christ’s authority, which encompasses every age and exceeds every known power, is here and now (see also v. 3; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12).

1:21 Principality and power and might and dominion are terms consistently used for ruling authorities in both the visible and the invisible realms (see 3:10). The NT reveals an invisible hierarchy of evil powers who deceive and manipulate human behavior, thereby advancing satanic strategies. Christ Himself and all who are in Christ are shown to be placed in authority above these powers, an authority that only spiritual warfare can assert, demonstrate, and sustain (6:12).

1:22, 23 His body: The primary thrust of this letter is to show the church as the present, physical presence of Christ. The church is to be filled with Him by the Holy Spirit, and assigned by the Lord Jesus to represent Him to society to minister His life, love, and power.

2:1–10 Paul reminds us how formidably God’s power has influenced our lives and how truly transformed we are **in Christ Jesus**.

2:1 Were dead: Man does not merely need a guide or a teacher; he is spiritually and morally dead and needs someone able to resurrect his spirit and transform his moral essence.

2:2 The mood and manner of society is shaped by **the prince of the power of the air**, a title for Satan as he exercises influence globally and within each culture.

2:3 Children of wrath: The inevitable end of “sons of disobedience” (v. 2) is to come under the condemnation of God’s righteous anger, a justifiable judgment for having violated known boundaries of spiritual and moral duty (see Rom. 1:18–21).

4 But God, ^awho is rich in ^{*}mercy, because of His ^bgreat ^{*}love with which He ^{*}loved us,

5 ^aeven when we were dead in trespasses, ^bmade us alive together with Christ (by ^{*}grace you have been ^{*}saved),

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

7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in ^aHis ^{*}kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

8 ^aFor by grace you have been saved ^bthrough ^{*}faith, and that not of yourselves; ^c*it* is the gift of God,

9 not of ^aworks, lest anyone should ^bboast.

10 For we are ^aHis **workmanship**, created in Christ Jesus for ^{*}good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

WORD WEALTH 2:10 **workmanship**, *poiema* (*poy-ay-mah*); Strong's #4161:



From the verb *poieo*, “to make.” (Compare “poem” and “poetry.”) The word signifies that which is manufactured, a product, a design produced by an artisan.

Poiema emphasizes God as the Master Designer, the universe as His creation (Rom. 1:20), and the redeemed believer as His new creation (Eph. 2:10). Before conversion our lives had no rhyme or reason. Conversion brought us balance, symmetry, and order. We are God's poem, His work of art.

KINGDOM DYNAMICS 2:1–10 **Spiritual Response-ability, HUMAN WORTH/DIVINE DESTINY.** The creature that God created in man is enabled to respond to Him. Man becomes a response-able being. He is, qualitatively, a different sort of being, endowed with ability and a freedom



to fellowship and participate in the life of God. This is not the freedom of individual autonomy, which denies dependence on God. Nor is it the freedom behind the fall of man, as in the case of Adam and Eve (Gen. 3). Adam and Eve were given the freedom to respond to God following their disobedience, but instead attempted to hide from Him. Sin is the disobedience that severs man's fellowship with God. Sin confuses and distorts our humanity and obstructs the emergence of a true personhood by interrupting our fellowship with God. But when the power of sin is broken—by accepting Christ's vicarious act of obedience at Calvary—grace is revealed and the true order of humanity is restored. It is in the crucified humanity of Jesus that we find the true humanity intended in creation. Christ came to authenticate humanity in order for us to be in full communion with God. These truths are summarized by the apostle Paul who says that by nature, the human condition of mankind is dead, enslaved, and condemned (Eph. 2:1–3); but then, by the grace of God in Christ and His divine compassion, man is saved, made alive (vv. 5, 8), raised, and made to sit with Him in eternal fellowship and purpose (vv. 6–10).

(Matt. 27:32/1 Pet. 1:18, 19) J.M.

Brought Near by His Blood

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

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.

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

4 ^aPs. 103:8–11; Rom. 10:12
^bJohn 3:16; 1 John 4:9, 10
^{*}See VVV at 2 Tim. 1:16. •
See WW at Rom. 5:5. •
See WW at John 3:16.
5 ^aRom. 5:6, 8
^bRom. 6:4, 5]
^{*}See VVV at 2 Cor. 12:9. •
See WW at Luke 7:50.
6 ^aEph. 1:20
7 ^aTitus 3:4
^{*}See VVV at Gal. 5:22.
8 ^a[2 Tim. 1:9]
^bRom. 4:16
^c[John 1:12, 13]
^{*}See VVV at Mark 11:22.
9 ^aRom. 4:4, 5; 11:6 ^bRom. 3:27
10 ^aIs. 19:25
^{*}See VVV at Phil. 1:6.

11 ^a[Rom. 2:28; Col. 2:11]

2:4–10 See section 3 of Truth-In-Action at the end of Eph.

2:6 **Sit together . . . in Christ Jesus:** Three “togethers” in vv. 5 and 6 note our union with Christ 1) in His Resurrection, 2) in His Ascension, and 3) in His present rule at God's right hand. From this place of partnership, He grants that we share in the present works of His kingdom's power (Col. 1:13).

2:7 **In the ages to come:** Whatever glories of Christ's kingdom dominion and authority may be experienced and enjoyed in the present era, it is clear that there is much that will be unrealized until the consummation of this age and the inauguration of the unimaginable future God reserves for His own.

2:8 **Grace** describes the undeserved kindness by which salvation is given, but it is also the power-word describing the Holy Spirit's operational means. Grace is a *force* as well as a *favor*, a verb as well as a noun. See note on John 1:16.

2:10 **Created . . . that we should walk:** The genius of God's new creation work in each believer is that He renovates the

nature of His redeemed children to make **good works** a living possibility.

2:11–22 Addressed to the letter's Gentile readers, Paul contrasts their former estranged position with their new position as **members of the household of God**. God has only one people—the church—comprised of believers in **Christ Jesus** of every ethnicity.

2:11 **Uncircumcision** is the most direct term to describe the fact that Gentiles were outside any covenant relationship with God.

2:12 **Without Christ** is the first of five phrases in this verse describing the estrangement of Gentiles before Christ came. Being “without a Messiah” is the fountainhead of futility and hopelessness.

2:13 **But now** joins with “but God” (v. 4) as gloriously pivotal words upon which everything in life turns from death to life, sin to salvation, and hopelessness to eternal joy.

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2:13 Gentiles Embraced by Christ's Sacrifice, THE BLOOD. Prior to the New Covenant, Gentiles were excluded from citizenship in the commonwealth of Israel and were foreigners to the covenant promises of God. There was no hope in this life and no ability to know God's presence in the world. The covenant sacrifice of Christ's blood took Gentile believers who were far from God and joined them together with the Jews in the New Covenant. Gentiles were grafted in to enjoy the covenants of promise through the New Covenant and were included as heirs with the patriarchs of all of God's promises.

(1 Cor. 10:16/Col. 1:20) C.S.

Christ Our Peace

14 For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, **15** having abolished in His flesh the enmity, *that is*, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one ^anew man from the two, thus making peace, **16** and that He might ^areconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby ^bputting to death the enmity. **17** And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. **18** For ^athrough Him we both have access ^bby one Spirit to the Father.

Christ Our Cornerstone

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

WORD WEALTH



2:19 foreigners, *paroikos* (*par-oy-koss*); Strong's #3941: From *para*, "beside," and *oikeo*, "to dwell"; hence, "dwelling near." The word

15 ^aGal. 6:15
16 ^{a2} Cor. 5:18; [Col. 1:20-22] ^bRom. 6:6
18 ^aJohn 10:9
^{b1} Cor. 12:13; Eph. 4:4

came to denote an alien who dwells as a sojourner in a land without the rights of citizenship. The word describes Abraham and Moses, sojourners in a land not their own (Acts 7:6, 29), and the Christian who is traveling through this world as an alien whose citizenship and ultimate residence are in heaven (1 Pet. 2:11).

20 having been ^abuilt ^bon the foundation of the ^capostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being ^dthe chief cornerstone, **21** in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into ^aa holy temple in the Lord, **22** ^ain whom you also are being built together for a ^bdwelling place of God in the Spirit.

The Mystery Revealed

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

2 if indeed you have heard of the ¹dispensation of the grace of God ^awhich was given to me for you,

3 ^ahow that by revelation ^bHe made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already,

4 by which, when you ^{*}read, you may ^{*}understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ),

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:

6 that the Gentiles ^ashould be fellow ^{*}heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel, **7** ^aof which I became a minister ^baccording to the gift of the grace of God given to me by ^cthe effective ^{*}working of His power.

Purpose of the Mystery

8 To me, ^awho am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles ^bthe unsearchable riches of Christ,

9 and to make all see what *is* the ¹fellowship^{*} of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God

20 ^{a1} Pet. 2:4
^bMatt. 16:18; 1 Cor. 3:10, 11; Rev. 21:14
^{c1} Cor. 12:28; Eph. 3:5 ^dPs. 118:22; Luke 20:17
21 ^{a1} Cor. 3:16, 17
22 ^{a1} Pet. 2:5
^bJohn 17:23

CHAPTER 3

2 ^aActs 9:15
¹stewardship
3 ^aActs 2:17, 21; 26:16
^bRom. 11:25; 16:25; Eph. 3:4, 9; 6:19; Col. 1:26; 4:3
4 ^{*}See WW at Mark 13:14. • See WW at Luke 2:47.
6 ^aGal. 3:28, 29
^{*}See WW at Heb. 11:9.
7 ^aRom. 15:16
^bRom. 1:5
^cRom. 15:18
^{*}See WW at Col. 1:29.
8 ^a1 Cor. 15:9
^bCol. 1:27; 2:2, 3
9 ¹NU, M ¹stewardship (dispensation)
^{*}See WW at Acts 2:42.

2:14 The essence of **peace** is dual, to cause a ceasing from separation as well as a ceasing from strife. Peace means "to be united with" as well as "to bring an end to hostility."

2:19 Household literally means "members of the family."

2:20 Apostles and prophets mentioned in this reference should be distinguished from the reference in 4:11. The founding apostles are meant here, as in Rev. 21:14, while the later reference (4:11) is to the ongoing mission of apostles and prophets, who serve the church of Christ in a more general way. The founding apostles and prophets bore doctrinal and ecclesiastical authority similar to that of the OT classical prophets, authority not transferred to either of the offices listed in 4:11.

2:21, 22 The metaphor of the body (1:22, 23) being filled by

Christ is complemented by that of a **building . . . temple** being inhabited by God through the Holy Spirit.

3:1-7 Paul reflects on his mission to help believing Jews and Gentiles accept each other as partners in God's covenant of salvation. This mystery was especially foreign to the OT Jewish mindset, not being understood by either Jew or Gentile until Jesus came. See "revelation" (1:17) and "mystery" (1:9).

3:9 A textual variation suggests "dispensation" here for **fellowship** (see note on 1:10). Paul describes his driving desire to help every believer see the personal role each has in dispensing (spreading, distributing, administering) the grand truth of God's purpose in the church.

who ^acreated all things ²through Jesus Christ;
 10 ^ato the intent that now ^bthe ¹manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church ^cto the ²principalities and powers in the heavenly *places*,

WORD WEALTH **3:10 manifold, *polupoikilos*** (pol-oo-poy-kil-oss); Strong's #4182: From *polus*, "much," and *poikilos*, "varied," "many-colored." The word pictures God's wisdom as much varied, with many shades, tints, hues, and colorful expressions. As a God of variety, He is still entering the human arena displaying many-sided, multicolored, and much variegated wisdom to His people and through His people.

11 ^aaccording to the eternal ^{*}purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord,
 12 in whom we have boldness and access ^awith confidence through faith in Him.
 13 ^aTherefore I ask that you do not lose heart at my ^{*}tribulations for you, ^bwhich is your glory.

Appreciation of the Mystery

- ② 14 For this reason I bow my knees to the ^aFather ¹of our Lord Jesus Christ,
 15 from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,
 16 that He would ^{*}grant you, ^aaccording to the riches of His glory, ^bto be strengthened with might through His Spirit in ^cthe inner man,
 17 ^athat Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, ^bbeing rooted and grounded in love,
 18 ^amay be able to ^{*}comprehend with all the saints ^bwhat *is* the width and length and depth and height—
 19 to ^{*}know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled ^awith all the **fullness** of God.
 20 Now ^ato Him who is able to do exceedingly ^{*}abundantly ^babove all that we ^{*}ask or think, ^caccording to the power that ^{*}works in us,

9 ^aJohn 1:3; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:2 ²NU omits *through Jesus Christ*

10 ^a1 Pet. 1:12; ^b1 Tim. 3:16; ^cEph. 1:21; 6:12; Col. 1:16; 2:10, 15 ¹variegated or *many-sided* ²rulers

11 ^aEph. 1:4, 11

^{*}See WW at Rom. 8:28.

12 ^a2 Cor. 3:4; Heb. 4:16; 10:19, 35; [1 John 2:28; 3:21]

13 ^aPhil. 1:14; ^b2 Cor. 1:6

^{*}See WW at John 16:33.

14 ^aEph. 1:3 ¹NU omits *of our Lord Jesus Christ*

16 ^aEph. 1:7; 2:4; Phil. 4:19; ^b1 Cor. 16:13; Phil. 4:13; Col. 1:11 ^cRom. 7:22

^{*}See WW at Acts 20:35.

17 ^aJohn 14:23; Rom. 8:9;

2 Cor. 13:5; [Eph. 2:22]

^bCol. 1:23

18 ^aEph. 1:18

^bRom. 8:39

^{*}See WW at John 1:5.

19 ^aEph. 1:23

^{*}See WW at John 8:32.

20 ^aRom. 16:25; ^b1 Cor. 2:9

^cCol. 1:29

^{*}See WW at John 10:10.

• See WW at Matt. 7:7.

• See WW at 1 Thess. 2:13.

21 ^aRom. 11:36

WORD WEALTH **3:19 fullness, *pleroma*** (play-row-mah); Strong's #4138:



Full number, full complement, full measure, copiousness, plenitude, that which has been completed. The word describes a ship with a full cargo and crew, and a town with no empty houses. *Pleroma* strongly emphasizes fullness and completion.

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

KINGDOM DYNAMICS **3:14–21 The Manifest Presence of Christ, PRAYER.**



Reformers like Calvin called Christian gatherings "*Coram Deo*"—"in the presence of God." During the Great Awakenings, Puritans spoke of revival as "the manifest presence of Christ." Prayer for revival is an invitation to this—to something wonderfully beyond God's "essential presence" (that is, He is always with us), and beyond His "cultivated" presence (that is, as the believer grows to know and walk with God daily). The apostle Paul prayed for believers to know that order of reformation or revival that brings about an intensification of the presence and power of Jesus Christ. In this text's prayer, Paul asked that the Holy Spirit deepen His work in their lives in three ways: 1) that Christ would dwell—more literally, "be at home"—in their hearts by faith, that is, that He would move from being an acquaintance to being the center of their church family; 2) that they would grasp God's love at a spiritual level, beyond intellectual or theological knowledge; and 3) that they would be filled with God's fullness, that is, that the Holy Spirit would reveal the things of Christ (John 16) more fully, achieving God's fuller work in each life—unhindered, unquenched, ungrieved.

(Zech. 8:18–23/2 Thess. 3:1–5) D.B.

3:10, 11 The eternal purpose is the same here as 1:9, 11. The text soars as Paul cites God's intent to display the church before all evil powers as His instrument to dispense throughout the earth what He has already **accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord** (that is, through Jesus' death, Resurrection, and Ascension).

3:14–21 The second apostolic prayer is for the Holy Spirit's power to fill every believer, which is the logical need if the grand objective of vv. 9–12 is to be realized.

3:14–19 See section 2 of Truth-In-Action at the end of Eph.

3:16 Strengthened with might is literally "become mighty

by His power," which the Holy Spirit brings to work in the believer.

3:17 Rooted like a tree **and grounded** like a building on a strong foundation.

3:18 Comprehend means to receive experientially, not simply to understand intellectually.

3:19 To know the love of Christ is the essence of the greatest fullness. **All the fullness of God** speaks of more than one experience or one aspect of His truth or power. It points to a broad-based spirituality, balanced through participating in all of God's blessings, resources, and wisdom.

Walk in Unity

4¹I, therefore, the prisoner ¹of the Lord, **4**²beseech you to ^awalk worthy of the calling with which you were called, **2** with all ^{*}lowliness and ^{*}gentleness, with ^{*}longsuffering, ^{*}bearing with one another in love, **3** ^{*}endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit ^ain the bond of ^{*}peace. **4** ^aThere is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one ^{*}hope of your calling; **5** ^aone Lord, ^bone faith, ^cone ^{*}baptism; **6** ^aone God and Father of all, who is above all, and ^bthrough all, and in ¹you all.

KINGDOM DYNAMICS



4:3-6 Unity of the Spirit, POWER OF UNITY. Spiritual unity was so much a part of the life and teaching of the early church that the apostle

Paul assumed the presence of such unity. In this passage he instructs us to do everything possible to keep or preserve the “unity of the Spirit” (v. 3). The assumption appears to be that spiritual unity is the norm within the church when its members live under the control of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, it is a very serious matter to cause division among God’s people. In fact, Paul instructed the church to warn a divisive person twice and then reject him if he does not repent (Titus 3:9-11). Spiritual unity is at the very heart

CHAPTER 4

1 ^{a1} Thess. 2:12
¹Lit. in
²exhort,
encourage
2 ^{*}See WW at Acts 20:19. •
See WW at 1 Tim. 6:11. •
See WW at Heb. 6:12. •
See WW at 2 Thess. 1:4.
3 ^aCol. 3:14
^{*}See WW at Gal. 2:10. •
See WW at Luke 1:79.
4 ^aRom. 12:5
^{*}See WW at 1 Thess. 1:3.
5 ^{a1} Cor. 1:13
^bJude 3 ^qHeb. 6:6
^{*}See WW at Matt. 21:25.
6 ^aMal. 2:10
^bRom. 11:36
¹NU omits you; M us
7 ^{q1}1 Cor. 12:7, 11
8 ^aPs. 68:18
9 ^aJohn 3:13; 20:17 ¹NU omits first
10 ^aActs 1:9
^b[Eph. 1:23]
11 ^{*}See WW at 1 Cor. 12:28. •
See WW at John 10:2.
12 ^{a1} Cor. 14:26 ^bCol. 1:24 ¹building up
13 ^aCol. 2:2

of the Christian faith and the life of Christ’s church. In this letter to the Ephesian church, Paul presents one of the most significant statements on spiritual unity shared anywhere in the Bible. He contends that in the church of Jesus Christ there is only one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father of all.

(Acts 4:32, 33/Phil. 2:2) P.A.C.

Spiritual Gifts

7 But ^ato each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift.

8 Therefore He says:

*“When He ascended on high,
He led captivity captive,
And gave gifts to men.”*

9 ^a(Now this, “He ascended”—what does it mean but that He also ¹first descended into the lower parts of the earth?

10 He who descended is also the One ^awho ascended far above all the heavens, ^bthat He might fill all things.)

11 And He Himself gave some ^{to be} ^{*}apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some ^{*}pastors and teachers,

12 for the **equipping** of the saints for the work of ministry, ^afor the ¹edifying of ^bthe body of Christ,

13 till we all come to the unity of the faith ^aand of the knowledge of the Son of God,

4:1-16 This opening section of the letter’s second half is an appeal for every believer to fully understand the process needed to attain unity and spiritual maturity in the church. The process includes both being equipped (v. 12) and participating in ministry (vv. 15, 16).

4:1 Prisoner of the Lord: See also 3:1 and 6:20, which remind us that although the writer is in jail, he still maintains that his real captor is Christ. **Worthy** means “of sufficient weight,” a quality issuing from acknowledging what Christ has poured into us, rather than whatever worth is felt or unfelt in oneself.

4:2-6 Unity is the responsibility of each believer and is to be pursued earnestly.

4:5 One baptism probably refers to water baptism, the common external point of publicly declaring faith in Jesus Christ. The issue is not the form of the ordinance as much as the fact of one’s obedience. The believer’s baptism *by* the Holy Spirit into Christ’s body (1 Cor. 12:13) and the baptism *in* or *with* the Holy Spirit *for* power-filled service (John 1:33; Acts 1:5, 8) are facts unchallenged by this observation. They clearly stand as spiritual realities linked in a tri-unity with the one baptism in water.

4:8, 11 Gifts . . . gave some: The five ministry offices listed here are gifts that Christ gave for the nurture and equipping of His church, not for hierarchical control or ecclesiastical competition. Beyond the distinct role filled by the original founding apostles (see note on 2:20), the NT mentions enough additional apostles to indicate that this office, with that of prophets, is as continuing a ministry in the church as the more commonly acknowledged offices of evangelists, pastors, and teachers (some make pastor-teacher one office). There is no prescribed formula or “gift-mix” for any particular office, as God uses different people in different ways in each of these five ministries Christ has given. Uniqueness

is manifested in individuals according to the varied gifts God the Father has given them (Rom. 12:3-8) and joined with whatever gifts the Holy Spirit distributes to or through them (1 Cor. 12:4-11). The distinct gifts of the Father (Rom. 12), the Son (Eph. 4), and the Spirit (1 Cor. 12) ought not to be confused, nor should any of the five ministry offices in this text be limited to the operation of any particular gift.

4:9, 10 Paul explains that the quote from Ps. 68:18 (v. 8) applies to the **ascended** Christ. An ascent implies a prior descent.

Christ’s descent **into the lower parts of the earth** has been variously interpreted as a descent into hell (associating it with 1 Pet. 3:19), a descent into Sheol/Hades (the realm of the dead [see Acts 2:25-35]), or as symbolically referring to His incarnation (whereby Christ descended to Earth from heaven), a descent carrying Him to the depths of humiliation (see Phil. 2:5-11). With reference to the view that He descended into hell, there is no biblical support for the notion that Jesus suffered in hell, only that He descended to Sheol to release the righteous dead into eternal glory, proclaiming the adequacy of the Atonement and validating the testimony of the prophets.

4:12 The Greek word for **equipping** implies: 1) a recovered wholeness as when a broken limb is set and mends; 2) a discovered function, as when a physical member is properly operating. The **work of ministry** is the enterprise of each member of the body of Christ and not the exclusive charge of select leaders. Taken together, vv. 11, 12 reveal that the task of the gifted leader is to cultivate the individual and corporate ministries of those he or she leads.

4:13-16 A progress in maturity (v. 13), stability (v. 14), and integrity (v. 15), taking place in every individual member’s experi-

KINGDOM DYNAMICS 4:11, 12 **Equipping Believers, SHEPHERDING AMID THE SUPERNATURAL.**



This text teaches that all leadership gifts are given by Christ as Lord of the church to “equip” (that is, to mend, prepare, and enable for function) the whole body of the congregation. Supernatural ministry is not flamboyant displays of platformed stars who gather followers like satellites. Rather, true supernatural ministry at work in the church begets vital, spiritually functional people throughout the whole church family. The body is to be built up by the mutual efforts of all the members supplying their contribution to the whole. The call to empower people requires mentoring, training, imparting, and discipling—all aimed at preparing the body for stability and increase (see vv. 13–16).

(1 Cor. 2:4, 5/Rom. 13:8) B.J.D.

WORD WEALTH 4:12 **equipping, katartismos** (kat-ar-tis-moss); Strong's



#2677: A making fit, preparing, training, perfecting, making fully qualified for service. In classical language the word is used for setting a bone during surgery. The Great Physician is now making all the necessary adjustments so the church will not be “out of joint.”

to *ba* *perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;
14 that we should no longer be *a*children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning *craftiness of *b*deceitful* plotting,
15 but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the *a*head—Christ—
16 *a*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.

The New Man

17 This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should *a*no longer walk as

13 *b*1 Cor. 14:20
*See VVV at James 3:2.
14 *a*1 Cor. 14:20 *b*Rom. 16:18
*See VVV at 1 Cor. 3:19. •
See WW at Jude 11.
15 *a*Eph. 1:22
16 *a*[Rom. 12:4]; Col. 2:19
*See VVV at Col. 1:29.
17 *a*Eph. 2:2; 4:22 ¹NU omits *the rest of*

18 *a*Rom. 1:21
*See VVV at Rom. 11:25.
19 *a*1 Tim. 4:2
*b*1 Pet. 4:3
*See VVV at 1 Pet. 4:3.
22 *a*Col. 3:8
*See VVV at 2 Tim. 2:22.
23 *a*[Rom. 12:2; Col. 3:10]
24 *a*[Rom. 6:4; 7:6; 12:2; 2 Cor. 5:17; Col. 3:10]
*See VVV at 2 Cor. 5:17.
25 *a*Zech. 8:16; Eph. 4:15; Col. 3:9

KINGDOM DYNAMICS 4:1–16 **The Source and Substance of Unity, CALL TO UNITY.** The word “unity”



(Greek *henotēs*) is used twice in the passage. It is from *hen*, the neuter of *heis*, meaning “one.” Paul admonishes us to “keep the unity of the Spirit” (v. 3) and to “come to the unity of the faith” (v. 13). This whole passage presses us toward a recognition of our mutual dependence, not only upon Christ, but also upon one another as we learn to minister in love to the need of another. It reveals the Holy Spirit as the source of unity, and “the faith,” containing the essential beliefs of the gospel, as the substance of unity. The ministry of the Holy Spirit is to bring us together in oneness based on the shared belief in Christ as Savior and Lord, His atoning death, His victorious resurrection, and His reigning power. The Spirit overcomes our proclivity to self-centeredness, independence, and self-serving. He draws us together with other believers and creates the miracle of oneness Jesus prayed for in John 17.

(Gal. 3:28/Phil. 4:1–5) L.O.

¹the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind,
18 having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the *a*“blindness*” of their heart;
19 *a*who, being past feeling, *b*have given themselves over to *a*“lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.
20 But you have not so learned Christ, ³
21 if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus:
22 that you *a*“put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful *lusts,
23 and *a*“be renewed in the spirit of your mind,
24 and that you *a*“put on the *new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

Do Not Grieve the Spirit

25 Therefore, putting away lying, *a*“Let each one of you speak truth with his

ence, results in the whole body’s **growth** (numerical expansion) and **edifying** (internal strengthening).

4:17–24 This passage lists general conduct appropriate and inappropriate to Christ’s followers for experiencing renewal in the **spirit of [their] mind**. It teaches that all spiritual renewal must be appropriated ethically.

4:17–19 Five traits of a worldly walk are summed up in the word **futility** (emptiness, purposelessness): darkened understanding, alienation from God, ignorance of God’s way, hardened heart, and an unfeeling state. (The Greek word means “to have ceased to care.”)

4:20–24 See section 3 of Truth-In-Action at the end of Eph.

4:22, 24 **The old man . . . the new man** contrasts the old life-style dominated by the spirit of disobedience (2:1–3) with the believer’s newly created capacity for a life-style of obedience by the Holy Spirit’s power (2:10; 3:16).

4:25–5:2 These hortatory sentences address seven areas of Christian speech and conduct, most exhortations being followed by a motivating reason.

neighbor," for *b*we are members of one another.

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

27 *"nor give ^lplace to the devil.*

① 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 ^bto *give him who has need.*

29 *"Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but ^bwhat is good for necessary ^ledification, ^cthat it may impart grace to the hearers.*

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

31 *"Let all bitterness, *wrath, anger, ^lclamor, and ^bevil speaking be *put away from you, ^cwith all malice.*

32 And *"be *kind to one another, tender-hearted, ^bforgiving* one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.*

Walk in Love

① 5 Therefore^a be imitators of God as dear ^bchildren.

2 And *"walk in love, ^bas Christ also has loved us and *given Himself for us, an *offering and a sacrifice to God ^cfor a sweet-smelling aroma.*

3 But **fornication and all ^auncleanness or ^bcovetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints;*

4 *"neither filthiness, nor ^bfoolish talking, nor coarse jesting, ^cwhich are not fitting, but rather ^dgiving of thanks.*

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

25 ^bRom. 12:5

26 ^aPs. 4:4; 37:8

*See VVV at Rev. 12:17.

27 ^aRom.

12:19 ^lan opportunity

28 ^aActs 20:35

^bLuke 3:11

*See VVV at John 3:21. •

See VVV at Phil. 1:6. • See

WW at Rom. 1:11.

29 ^aCol. 3:8

^b1 Thess. 5:11

^cCol. 3:16

^lbuilding up

^as. 7:13

*See VVV at Rom. 3:24.

31 ^aCol. 3:8, 19

^bJames 4:11

^cTitus 3:3

^lloud quarrel-

ing

*See VVV at Luke 4:28. •

See VVV at John 16:22.

32 ^a2 Cor. 6:10

^b[Mark 11:25]

*See VVV at Matt. 11:30. •

See VVV at Col. 3:13.

CHAPTER 5

1 ^aLuke 6:36

^b1 Pet. 1:14–16

2 ^a1 Thess. 4:9

^bGal. 1:4

^c2 Cor. 2:14, 15

*See VVV at Luke 23:25. •

See VVV at Acts 21:26.

3 ^aCol. 3:5–7

^b[Luke 12:15]

*See VVV at Matt. 15:19.

4 ^aMatt. 12:34,

35 ^bTitus 3:9

^cRom. 1:28

^dPhil. 4:6

5 ^a1 Cor. 6:9, 10

^lNU know this

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

7 Therefore do not be *"partakers with them.*

Walk in Light

8 For you were once **darkness, but now ① you are ^alight in the Lord. Walk as children of light*

9 (for *"the fruit of the ^lSpirit* is in all *goodness, righteousness, and truth),*

10 *"finding out what is acceptable to the Lord.*

11 And have *"no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather ^lexpose them.*

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

13 But *"all things that are ^lexposed are *made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light.*

14 Therefore He says:

*"Awake, you who sleep,
Arise from the dead,
And Christ will give you light."*

Walk in Wisdom

15 *"See then that you walk ^lcircumspectly, ① not as fools but as wise,*

16 *"redeeming the time, ^bbecause the days are evil.*

17 *"Therefore do not be unwise, but ^bunderstand ^cwhat the will of the Lord is.*

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

*See VVV at 1 Cor. 6:10. 7 ^a1 Tim. 5:22 8 ^a1 Thess. 5:5
*See VVV at Luke 11:35. 9 ^aGal. 5:22 ^lNU light *See VVV
at Rom. 7:6. • See VVV at Rom. 15:14. 10 ^a[Rom. 12:1, 2]
11 ^a2 Cor. 6:14 ^lreprove 12 ^aRom. 1:24 13 ^a[John 3:20,
21] ^lreproved *See VVV at Col. 3:4. 14 ^a[Is. 26:19; 60:1]
15 ^aCol. 4:5 ^lcarefully 16 ^aCol. 4:5 ^bEcl. 11:2 17 ^aCol. 4:5
^b[Rom. 12:2] ^c1 Thess. 4:3 18 ^aProv. 20:1; 23:31

4:26 Being **angry** may win a moment, but it is not to be allowed to win a day.

4:27 The Greek word for **place** (*topos*) emphasizes that believers can actually give ground in their lives to satanic control. This is a warning against theologized suppositions that argue against the possibility that demonic vexing or oppression may succeed with Christians. But the surrounding commands balance the issue (v. 17–5:14), making clear that responsible believers cannot glibly blame the Devil for sin they yield to in carnal disobedience.

4:28 See section 1 of Truth-In-Action at the end of Eph.

4:28 Note that the first motive for a believer to earn money is **that he may have something to give**. The occupational enterprise of Christians is not simply to make a living, but to make possible their being instruments of God's service to mankind through their work and giving.

4:29 **Corrupt** is literally "decayed, rotten," as used for spoiled meat, rotted fruit, or crumbled stones.

4:30 **The Holy Spirit** has **sealed** ("authorized as a representative," 1:13) and dwells in the inner man (3:16). If he is grieved, the believer will be the first to know. **Grieve** means to cause injury or distress, the precise feeling the believer senses when sin or disobedience finds its place.

4:32 Jesus taught the duty of **forgiving . . . even as God**, and showed it to be fundamental to having one's own prayers for forgiveness answered (see Matt. 6:14, 15; 18:21–35).

5:1, 2 See section 1 of Truth-In-Action at the end of Eph.

5:2 **Sweet-smelling aroma** parallels the figure of the OT sacrifices offered in worship. See also 2 Cor. 2:15, 16, concerning one's witness, and Heb. 13:15, 16, concerning one's worship.

5:3–14 Paul contrasts the conduct of believers and unbelievers, especially in areas of sexual morality. The contrasts are appropriately described in terms of **light** and **darkness**.

5:3 **Fornication** encompasses all acts of sexual immorality; **covetousness** identifies the insatiability of human carnality—never able to "get enough."

5:8–10 See section 1 of Truth-In-Action at the end of Eph.

5:11 **Have no fellowship** means to have no share in the darkened life-style. See 1 Cor. 5:9–13.

5:15–20 Contrasts believers and unbelievers, with an emphasis on the difference between wise and foolish living. Wise living is the result of being **filled with the Spirit**.

5:15–17 See section 1 of Truth-In-Action at the end of Eph.

5:15 **Circumspectly** means to walk cautiously, sensitively, as a person would walk through thorny terrain.

5:16 **Redeeming the time** is capitalizing on every appropriate opportunity.

5:18 The tense of the Greek for **be filled** makes clear that such a Spirit-filled condition does not stop with a single experience, but is maintained by continually being filled, as commanded here.

The Spirit is to influence all aspects of our lives, overflowing in

19 speaking to one another ^ain psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making ^bmelody in your heart to the Lord,
20 ^agiving* thanks always for all things to God the Father ^bin the name of our Lord *Jesus Christ,
21 ^asubmitting* to one another in the *fear of ¹God.

Marriage—Christ and the Church

22 Wives, ^asubmit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.
23 For ^athe husband is head of the wife, as also ^bChrist is head of the *church; and He is the *Savior of the body.
24 Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands ^ain everything.
25 *Husbands, love your wives, just as *Christ also loved the church and ^bgave Himself for her,
26 that He might ¹sanctify* and cleanse her ^awith the washing of water ^bby the word,
27 ^athat He might present her to Himself a glorious church, ^bnot having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.
28 So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself.
29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord *does* the church.
30 For ^awe are members of His body, ¹of His flesh and of His bones.
31 ^a“For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be *joined to his wife, and the ^btwo shall become one flesh.”
32 This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.
33 Nevertheless ^alet each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife *see* that she ^brespects *her* husband.

19 ^aActs 16:25
^bJames 5:13
20 ^aPs. 34:1
^b1 Pet. 2:5
*See VVV at John 6:11. • See WW at Phil. 4:23.
21 ^a[Phil. 2:3]; 1 Pet. 5:5 ¹NU Christ
*See VVV at 1 Cor. 14:32. • See WW at 1 John 4:18.
22 ^aEph. 5:22—6:9; Col. 3:18—4:1; 1 Pet. 3:1–6
23 ^a1 Cor. 11:3] ^bCol. 1:18
*See VVV at Acts 8:1. • See WW at John 4:42.
24 ^aTitus 2:4, 5
25 ^aEph. 5:28, 33; Col. 3:19;
[1 Pet. 3:7]
^bActs 20:28
*See VVV at 2 Tim. 4:22.
26 ^aJohn 3:5
^bJohn 15:3; 17:17; Rom. 10:8; Eph. 6:17] ¹set it apart
*See VVV at John 10:36.
27 ^a[2 Cor. 4:14; 11:2]; Col. 1:22
^bSong 4:7
30 ^aGen. 2:23
¹NU omits the rest of v. 30.
31 ^aGen. 2:24; Matt. 19:5; Mark 10:7
^b[1 Cor. 6:16]
*See VVV at Mark 10:7.
33 ^aCol. 3:19
^b1 Pet. 3:1, 6

21). This applies in a unique way to the husband/wife relationship (v. 22).

The wife is called to submit to her husband “as to the Lord,” to respect, regard and deeply care for him (Greek *phobeo*, “to reverence” or “to be in awe of,” v. 24; 1 Pet. 3:5, 6). This points toward her serving her husband, honoring him, and edifying him (building him up). Her attitude, according to this terminology—“as to the Lord”—is to be one of highest esteem and regard.

In a matching—even more, an initiating and leading way—the husband is called to lay down his life for his wife. He is to sacrifice his own interests in order to enhance hers. His role is to nourish (Greek *ektrepheō*, to support her growth toward her own maturity) and to cherish (Greek *thalpō*, to warmly care for and attend to). In this way, each marriage partner contributes to bringing the other their full potential.

A marriage lived out in this mutually loving environment mirrors the interactive love that Christ has for His church and His church is called to have toward Him.

(1 Cor. 7:3, 4/Matt. 19:5–8) R.L.B.

KINGDOM DYNAMICS 5:21–32 The Hope for Marital Health, WOMEN IN GOD’S DESIGN. Within marriage, the companion truth of mutual responsiveness to the NT elaboration of Gen. 2:23, 24 is pivotal today. Eph. 5:21–32 reveals “submission” and “cleaving” as bookends of the same truth: “Because she was taken out of Man” (Gen. 2:23), therefore, the man (husband) is to cleave (be joined) to his wife; and she is to submit to him as her “head” (source, origin). Without both sides in place, the structure (family, the church, and society) topples over. Furthermore, “order” is not all there is to the point: it is about relationship, interdependency, and God’s original design. In essence, the man and woman began as one in Adam. After the divine surgery, cleaving

(continued on next page)

KINGDOM DYNAMICS



5:21–33 Marriage Involves a Relationship of Mutual Submission, FAMILY. All believers are called to live in mutual submission to one another (v.

transformed relationships, dynamic ministry, and enhanced worship, which includes a personal prayer language (“tongues”).

5:19 Note the place of songful worship as a means to fulfilling the directive in v. 18—to be filled continually with the Spirit.

Psalms are scriptural lyrics in song; **hymns** are humanly inspired lyrics in song; **spiritual songs** are impromptu rhythmic lyrics given by the Holy Spirit in one’s language or in “tongues” (see 1 Cor. 14:15).

5:21–6:9 Spirit-filled living is to influence and transform family and vocational relationships, which are to be built on the platform of mutual respect.

5:21, 22 Submitting is taking the divinely ordered place in a relationship. Submission can never be required by one human being of another; it can only be given on the basis of trust, that

is, to believe God’s Word and to be willing to learn to grow in relationships.

5:22 Women are never made second to men in general, but the wife is specifically called to accept her husband’s leadership and not endeavor to dominate (see note on Gen. 3:16). The husband must lead with mutual respect (v. 21).

5:23 The Bible does not put males over females, but it does call for husbands to accept responsible leadership in the same spirit of self-giving and devotion Christ has shown for His church.

5:24–33 These verses put such demands upon the Christian husband that it is impossible to see how a charge of male chauvinism could justly be made against the Bible, or how a license to exploit women or wives could ever be claimed from such texts.

(continued from preceding page)

and submitting were the dynamic that would keep them united in relationship and function as they manifested the image of God, male and female, in the Earth. (Outside the marriage relationship, corporate submission “to one another” [Eph. 5:21] secures the dynamic of God’s intended health and productivity for all relationships).

(Prov. 31:13, 21, 25, 27/1 Pet. 3:4) J.H.

Children and Parents

6 Children, “obey* your parents in the Lord, for this is *right.

2 ^a“Honor your father and mother,” which is the first commandment with promise:

3 “that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.”

4 And ^ayou, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but ^bbring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.

Bondservants and Masters

5 ^aBondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, ^bwith fear and trembling, ^cin sincerity of heart, as to Christ;

6 ^anot with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the *heart,

7 with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men,

8 ^aknowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether *he is* a slave or *free.

9 And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that ^ayour own ^aMaster also is in heaven, and ^bthere is no *partiality with Him.

CHAPTER 6

1 ^aCol. 3:20

*See WW at Rom. 6:17.

• See WW at Matt. 1:19.

2 ^aDeut. 5:16

4 ^aCol. 3:21

^bGen. 18:19

5 ^a[1 Tim. 6:1]

^b2 Cor. 7:15

^c1 Chr. 29:17

6 ^aCol. 3:22

*See WW at Luke 21:19.

8 ^aRom. 2:6

*See WW at Rev. 6:15.

9 ^aCol. 4:1

^bRom. 2:11

¹NU *He who is both their Master and yours is*

*See WW at Col. 3:25.

10 *See WW at 1 Tim. 6:16.

11 ^a[2 Cor. 6:7]

¹schemings

*See WW at Jude 24.

12 ^aRom. 8:38

^bLuke 22:53

¹NU *this darkness,*

*See WW at 1 John 1:7.

13 ^a[2 Cor. 10:4]

^bEph. 5:16

14 ^aIs. 11:5

^bIs. 59:17

*See WW at 2 Tim. 4:8.

15 ^aIs. 52:7

16 ^a1 John 5:4

The Whole Armor of God

10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the *power of His might.

11 ^aPut on the whole armor of God, that you may *be able to stand against the ¹wiles of the devil.

12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and *blood, but against ^aprincipalities, against powers, against ^bthe rulers of ¹the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly places.

13 ^aTherefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to **withstand** ^bin the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

WORD WEALTH 6:13 **withstand**, *anthistemi* (anth-is-tay-mee); Strong’s

#436: Compare “antihistamine.” From *anti*, “against,” and *histemi*, “to cause to stand.” The verb suggests vigorously opposing, bravely resisting, standing face-to-face against an adversary, standing your ground. Just as an antihistamine puts a block on histamine, *anthistemi* tells us that with the authority and spiritual weapons granted to us we can withstand evil forces.

14 Stand therefore, ^ahaving girded your waist with truth, ^bhaving put on the breastplate of *righteousness,

15 ^aand having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

16 above all, taking ^athe shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.

6:1–4 The guidelines are for the family in the Lord and are not necessarily expected to work outside the believing home.

6:5–9 In contrast to vv. 1–4, the believer’s ethical duty and diligence in the marketplace is to perform as though serving Christ even when the worker’s counterpart—employer or employee—is **according to the flesh**, that is, even when the other is not necessarily a Christian.

6:10–20 Reminded that believers draw their strength from the Lord and His power, this final section warns that our life in the world involves standing strong against evil powers aligned against us.

6:10–18 See section 4 of Truth-In-Action at the end of Eph.

6:10 **Finally** implies not “in conclusion,” but rather “insofar as the rest of life and its challenges are concerned.”

6:11 The charge is to “brethren” (v. 10), not only each individual, but with corporate implications for the whole church.

6:12 Not . . . **against flesh and blood**: One of the church’s greatest demands is to discern between the spiritual struggle and other social, personal, and political difficulties. Otherwise, individual believers and groups become too easily detoured, “wrestling” with human adversaries instead of prayerfully warring against the invisible works of hell behind the scenes. **Heavenly places** recalls earlier references to: 1) spiritual resources available to the church (1:3); 2) Christ’s authority over evil (1:21); 3) the church’s being seated together with her ascended Lord (2:6); 4) the Father’s will to display His wisdom through the

church to the confounding of evil powers (3:10). On these grounds this passage announces the church’s corporate assignment to prayer warfare, in order that evil will be driven back and the will of God advanced.

6:13–17 The metaphor here is based on the **armor** and battle dress of the first-century Roman soldier. Clearly the military metaphor is intended to show the reader that we are engaged in an active battle now. Though some suggest that the viewpoint of a continuous aggressive struggle minimizes the accomplished victory of the Cross, it in fact asserts that victory all the more. All spiritual warfare waged today is victorious only on the basis of appropriating the provision of the Cross and Christ’s blood (Col. 2:15). 1) Personal faith that positions itself against evil and 2) aggressive prayer warfare that assails demonic strongholds are two distinct and complementary facets of spiritual life.

This entire passage lends further support to this perspective: “To stand against” (v. 11) means to hold at bay aggressively or to stand in front of and oppose; “wrestle” (v. 12) means to engage actively in one-on-one combat; “to stand” (v. 13) means to be found standing after an active battle; and “stand” (v. 14) means take your stand for the next battle.

6:15 **Preparation** refers to that which is already accomplished and ready.

6:16 **The wicked one** is a direct reference to the personal assault of Satan against believers.

17 And ^atake the helmet of ^{*}salvation, and ^bthe sword of the Spirit, which is the ^{*}word of God;

18 ^apraying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, ^bbeing watchful to this end with all perseverance and ^csupplication for all the saints—

KINGDOM DYNAMICS



6:10–18 Spiritual Warfare,

FAITH'S WARFARE. Paul admonishes us to put on the whole armor of God in order to stand against the forces of

hell. It is clear that our warfare is not against physical forces, but against invisible powers who have clearly defined levels of authority in a real, though invisible, sphere of activity. Paul, however, not only warns us of a clearly defined structure in the invisible realm; he instructs us to take up the whole armor of God in order to maintain a “battle-stance” against this unseen satanic structure. All of this armor is not just a passive protection in facing the enemy; it is to be used offensively against these satanic forces. Note Paul’s final directive: we are to be “praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit” (v. 18). Thus, prayer is not so much a weapon, or even a part of the armor, as it is the means by which we engage in the battle itself and the purpose for which we are armed. To put on the armor of God is to prepare for battle. Prayer is the battle itself, with God’s Word being our chief weapon employed against Satan during our struggle.

(* / 2 Kin. 6:8–17) D.E.

KINGDOM DYNAMICS



6:18 Prayer “in the Spirit,”

INTERCESSION. Any prayer that is directed, energized, and sustained by the Holy Spirit is a prayer that is prayed in the Spirit. It falls into the same category as

17 ^{a1} Thess. 5:8
^{#s.} 49:2; Hos. 6:5; [Heb. 4:12]

^{*}See WW at Acts 28:28. •
See WW at Matt. 4:4.

18 ^aLuke 18:1; Col. 1:3; 4:2; 1 Thess. 5:17
[#][Matt. 26:41]
^ΦPhil. 1:4

being in the Spirit, speaking by or in the Spirit, and singing in the Spirit. Praying in the Spirit: 1) will be according to God’s will (1 John 5:14, 15); 2) will glorify the Father through the Son (John 14:13); 3) is based upon God’s character, ways, and Word (15:7); 4) comes from a clean heart (James 5:16); 5) is prayed in full assurance of faith (1:6); and 6) is asked in Jesus’ name (John 14:14). Such prayer will always find God’s answers.

(Ezek. 22:30/Is. 66:8, 9) A.J.D.

19 and for me, that utterance may be given to me, ^athat I may open my mouth ^{*}boldly to make known the ^{*}mystery of the gospel, ^①

20 for which ^aI am an **ambassador** in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

WORD WEALTH



6:20 ambassador, presbeuo

(pres-byoo-oh); Strong’s #4243:

Literally “to be the elder,” and later “to be an ambassador,” a representative of a ruling authority. Ambassadors would be chosen from the ranks of mature, experienced men. To be an ambassador for Christ necessitates spiritual maturity.

A Gracious Greeting

21 But that you also may know my affairs and how I am doing, ^aTychicus, a beloved brother and ^bfaithful minister in the Lord, will make all things known to you;

22 ^awhom I have sent to you for this very purpose, that you may know our affairs, and ^athat he may ^bcomfort your hearts.

23 Peace to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

24 Grace *be* with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.

19 ^aActs 4:29; Col. 4:3

^{*}See WW at Acts 4:31. •
See WW at Mark 4:11.

20 ^{a2} Cor. 5:20; Philem. 9

21 ^aActs 20:4; 2 Tim. 4:12; Titus 3:12

^{b1} Cor. 4:1, 2

22 ^aCol. 4:8
^{b2} Cor. 1:6

6:18 All prayer is literally “every order of praying,” the specific method by which spiritual warfare is carried on. Prayer is to include **supplication in the Spirit**, a phrase that elucidates Rom. 8:26, 27 and Jude 20, where Holy Spirit-assisted prayer is taught and directed. In 1 Cor. 14:14, 15 Paul clearly shows that such praying may include prayer “in a tongue” not known to the person praying.

6:19, 20 See section 1 of Truth-In-Action at the end of Eph.

6:19, 20 The focus of all spiritual warfare is ultimately the opening of doors (Col. 4:3; 1 Cor. 16:9) so that the ministry of the gospel may be advanced.

TRUTH-IN-ACTION

THROUGH EPHESIANS

Letting the Life of the Holy Spirit Bring Faith's Works Alive in You!

TRUTH	ACTION
<p>EPHESIANS TEACHES</p> <p>① Growing in Godliness</p> <p>Growing in godliness means learning to live a life that honors God and follows the example of Christ. Live in such a way that your life will be a fragrant offering, pleasing to the Lord.</p>	<p>TEXT</p> <p>EPHESIANS INVITES</p> <p>4:28 Make restitution. Repay anything you have stolen and start working so that you can give to others.</p> <p>5:1, 2 Live in Christ's love. Let your life be a fragrant aroma of worship to the Lord.</p> <p>5:8-10 Live as light. Walk in goodness, righteousness, and truth.</p> <p>5:15-17 Seek to understand God's will for your life. Be careful to live wisely, making the most of the time and opportunities you have.</p> <p>6:19, 20 Boldly tell those around you the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ. Do not allow circumstances to restrain you from speaking.</p>
<p>② Cultivating Dynamic Devotion</p> <p>Seek, hunger, and thirst to know and understand the surpassing greatness of Jesus' love for you. In Him, you are adopted as a child of God. In Him, you are fully accepted. In Him, you will find a love that is higher and deeper than you could ever imagine. Through the Spirit, you can begin to know this love and, in knowing it, you will be filled with the fullness of God. Devote yourself to knowing, living, experiencing, and giving Jesus' love.</p>	<p>1:3-6 Bless God, your Father. Praise Him who has destined you to be His child, adopted through Jesus Christ. Be comforted and rest, knowing that you are accepted in the Beloved, Jesus.</p> <p>3:14-19 Meditate; think about; ponder these verses. Pray that the Holy Spirit will enable you to comprehend the incomparable love of Christ Jesus for you. Be filled completely with the fullness of God.</p>
<p>③ Pursuing Holiness</p> <p>Because of the great love God has for us, He has cleansed us by the blood of Jesus, making us holy by His grace. We cannot earn His forgiveness or become holy through our works. It is by grace through faith in Jesus that we are made righteous. However, God <i>has</i> created us to do good works, things He prepared in advance for us to do. Do the good things God gives you to do, but know that you are holy by His grace.</p>	<p>1:7, 8 Receive the assurance of full forgiveness for all the wrong you have done. Because of Jesus' blood, shed for you on the cross, you are forgiven and made holy.</p> <p>2:4-10 Receive the rich mercy, great love, and kindness of God in Christ Jesus. Receive the gift of salvation by grace through faith. Be confident, knowing that God raised you up out of death into life and positioned you securely in Christ.</p> <p>4:20-24 Be renewed in your heart and mind. Do not live as you did when you did evil things. Put off your old self and put on the new self, created in the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.</p>

