



Commentary on **Ephesians**

Benny B. Bristow

Commentary
On
EPHESIANS

BY
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QUALITY PUBLICATIONS

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DEDICATION

This commentary is affectionately dedicated to our two sons-in-law, Tony Anthony Lawrence and Bradford Lee Edgar. Tony married our oldest daughter, Corretta, January 21, 1978, and is a minister of the gospel in Tennessee. Brad married our youngest daughter, Alesa, November 1, 1986, and is a Real Estate appraiser and faithful Christian in Texas.

FOREWORD

It is the hope and prayer of this author that this "Pocket Commentary on Ephesians" will be a blessing to all that read it. The book is small enough to be carried in one's pocket or purse to Bible classes, when traveling, and to appointments where waiting is necessary.

Even though this material is brief, (compared to many other commentaries) each verse is covered to the point that one can know Paul's purpose, and be challenged to explore further the many scriptural subjects. In addition to the text from Ephesians, there is approximately 400 other scripture references. This material will be richer if one can take the time and opportunity to read and study these.

The version used throughout this "Pocket Commentary" is "The New King James Version." The purpose of this book is to help all understand more clearly the context and teaching of Ephesians, while challenging all to appreciate more the many spiritual blessings found ONLY in Christ Jesus.

It is my personal prayer that this small commentary will help increase your faith, and enrich your spiritual life.

Benny B. Bristow

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INTRODUCTION

Over the centuries there have been many that have denied that Paul is the author of Ephesians, and have denied that it was sent specifically to the church at Ephesus. However, this writer accepts fully the information furnished in chapter one, verse one: "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints who are in Ephesus. . ."

AUTHOR

Even though there are many unique expressions in this letter that are not found in his other letters, Paul, guided by the Holy Spirit is still the author. In all of his epistles, Paul was able to write and use the right approach to the needs of that particular church or churches. The book of Ephesians is considered a more general type letter than most of the others. This may be true because Paul wanted it circulated to other churches in Asia Minor.

This great man, Paul, had a very colorful background. He was born in Tarsus, the Capital of Cilicia in Asia Minor. He had the honor of being from the tribe of Benjamin and a Pharisee. Even though many pharisees became corrupt and hypocrites, they still represented a very strict group of law keepers. Paul was first known as Saul, being named after the first king of Israel. He was a Roman citizen, and shortly after he began his mission of preaching the gospel, he wore his Roman name, Paul.

In addition to his educational training in the religion of the Jews, Paul was also trained to be a tentmaker (Acts 18:3). Tarsus was noted for its goatskin cloth which was in great demand in the ancient world for tents. Thus, this would be a natural trade for Paul to follow. Even though he became a preacher of the gospel, this trade of tentmaking was a needed source of livelihood.

Paul was also permitted to advance himself in higher education by sitting at the feet of Gamaliel (Acts 22:3). When he began his work of persecution against Christians, he was doing this out of religious zeal for Judaism. The Jewish rulers considered him the most qualified to lead others against, what they considered, their worst enemy. Paul verifies this: "And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers" (Galatians 1:14).

Therefore, you can find Saul (before conversion) fighting in the places where Christianity was at its strongest. In Acts 7, Stephen was preaching a powerful message for Christ, and Saul was present and in leadership for the opposition: "And they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named

Saul" (Acts 7:58). Then we read: "Now Saul was consenting to his death" (Acts 8:1a). "As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison" (Acts 8:3).

This incident with Stephen seemed to excite Saul to do more persecution, and he obtained authority from the high priest to carry his "breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord" (Acts 9:1), to Damascus. While on the road to Damascus, Jesus stopped him, sent him into the city where he obeyed the gospel, and from that time forward (until he died) Paul did great things for the cause of Christ. With the same zeal that he had used AGAINST Christ, he afterwards used FOR Christ! Assisted by other workers, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, churches were established across the known world. One of these churches was in the city of Ephesus, and this letter was written by Paul to strengthen them as well as other churches that would read it.

CITY OF EPHEBUS

The city of Ephesus was an excellent place to establish a church. It was the metropolis of Ionia, and was noted for its wealth, culture, and perverted lifestyle. One of the major sources of evil came from the Temple of Diana recognized as one of the Seven Wonders of the World. Thus, the temple's worship, tourism, silversmith commerce, and sexual immorality attracted thousands of visitors. Ephesus was also noted for being a center for Emperor worship. Does this seem like a fertile field to plant the gospel? Paul thought so, because he spent more time here than any other place, and time proved that he was right!

Thus, work began on his second journey. At this time, he briefly visited Ephesus en route to Antioch of Syria (Acts 18:22), but he left behind his fellow workers, Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:19). After his stay in Antioch, he came back and accomplished some of his most important work (Acts 19). The enemies of Ephesus, such as Demetrius the silversmith tried to stop him but failed (Acts 19:23-41). By the preaching of the gospel and performing miracles, Paul was able to have great success over the magic of Ephesus. "And many who had believed came confessing and telling their deeds. Also, many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted up the value of them, and it totaled fifty thousand pieces of silver" (Acts 19:18,19). Paul and workers were able to establish a strong church with faithful elders. Paul's address to the Ephesian elders near the close of his third missionary journey, (Acts 20:17-38), expresses Paul's love, respect, and concern for the Ephesian church, and the elders.

BOOK OF EPHESIANS

The book of Ephesians is associated with Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon as prison epistles. As Paul writes to the Ephesians, he says: "I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord" (Ephesians 4:1). Again, "For this reason, I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles-" (Ephesians 3:1). Most Bible scholars believe that Paul was in prison at Rome when he penned this letter.

This epistle touches on many beautiful subjects, but the general theme is: God's glorious plan to make Jews and Gentiles ONE in Christ (Ephesians 1:10). One of the important phrases throughout the book is: "IN CHRIST." One can find similar statements when comparing Ephesians and Colossians. Those who prayerfully and sincerely study this book will have a deeper love and appreciation for the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

TIME

When one accepts the Roman prison as the place for writing this book, the date would be approximately A.D. 62. Paul wanted his readers to know that even under his present circumstances, he could rejoice over the many spiritual blessings that could be found in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 1:3). Even though he was a prisoner because of his work with the Gentiles, he did not express any regrets.

CHAPTER I EPHESIANS

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1. **PAUL**, [His Latin name which he had the right to wear as a Roman citizen - first called by this name, (Acts 13:9).] **AN APOSTLE OF JESUS CHRIST BY THE WILL OF GOD**, [the word apostle means to dispatch or to send out on a special mission. Paul was especially sent to preach to the Gentiles, (Acts 9:15; Acts 22:21; Romans 11:13). Since Christ sent him, he was an apostle of Jesus Christ. Many in Paul's day rejected his apostleship, thus he declares: "through the will of God."'] **TO THE SAINTS WHO ARE IN EPHESUS**, [The word saint means a holy one, one set apart for the service of God. Just as the temple was set apart for holiness, so are saints. Although addressed to those at Ephesus, (a city in Asia Minor) the letter applies to all saints.] **AND FAITHFUL IN CHRIST JESUS**. [True saints are faithful - this means those that have faith that is lived faithfully. They were called out by the Gospel, and are faithfully walking in the light, (1 John 1:7). God demands faithfulness even unto death (Revelation 2:10). Notice that those faithful are in Christ Jesus. When asked, "where are you located?" One can give his street and city address, but more importantly he can answer either, "IN CHRIST" or "OUT OF CHRIST." The most dangerous place for an accountable person to be is "OUT OF CHRIST." The safest place in this life to be is "IN CHRIST" (2 Corinthians 5:17).]

2. **GRACE TO YOU AND PEACE FROM GOD OUR FATHER AND THE LORD JESUS CHRIST**. [Grace and peace are among Paul's favorite words. Grace means an undeserved, and unearned gift of charm. Since this special gift of grace is from the Father and Son, Paul is referring to Christ's death (John 3:16). One of the reasons why this gift of grace is so precious is because it brings peace. The word for peace in the Greek translates the Hebrew word shalom. Paul is not wishing for them just a peaceful state free from persecutions, but rather a peaceful state of mind - come what may. Even death will not destroy this feeling - it is a gift from

God, and is eternal. Only those who have obeyed God's will and are in Christ can know this peace.]

3. BLESSED BE THE GOD AND FATHER OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, [Paul is praising God the Father for a long list of spiritual blessings bestowed upon mankind. The more we understand these blessings and their value to us, the more we understand why Paul is blessing the Father. He is worthy to be blessed or praised in this way.] **WHO HAS BLESSED US WITH EVERY SPIRITUAL BLESSING IN THE HEAVENLY PLACES IN CHRIST.** [Note that He has not limited spiritual blessings, but gives EVERY SPIRITUAL BLESSING. These blessings, in a general way, are numerated in the following long sentence through verse 14. They include such things as His choice (from the foundation of the world) to bring to the saved holiness, pureness, love, adoption, redemption, grace, the Christ, obedience to the gospel, the Holy Spirit, and an inheritance. Where are all of these things found? IN CHRIST! All that are outside of Christ are without these blessings, but those in Christ have them. How does one get INTO Christ? A penitent believer is baptized into Christ (Galatians 3:26,27; Romans 6:3). There are at least 34 references in the New Testament that use the phrase "IN CHRIST." Read these and see why all spiritual blessings are in Christ. (Acts 24:24; Romans 9:1; Romans 12:5; Romans 16:7,9,10; 1 Corinthians 3:1; 1 Corinthians 4:10; 1 Corinthians 15:18,19,22; 2 Corinthians 1:21; 2 Corinthians 2:14,17; 2 Corinthians 3:14; 2 Corinthians 5:17,19,20; 2 Corinthians 12:2,19; Galatians 1:22; Galatians 3:17,27; Ephesians 1:3,10,12,20; Ephesians 3:6; Philippians 1:13; Philippians 2:1; Colossians 2:5; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; 1 Timothy 2:7; 1 Peter 3:16).]

4. JUST AS HE CHOSE US IN HIM BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD, (God's plan to redeem man from sin did not originate from His creation of physical things, but rather before all things were made. Therefore, such represents a spiritual plan. God has made these spiritual blessings available for all who "will" choose. When one enters Christ where these spiritual blessings abound, he becomes a part of God's elect or chosen ones. It is error to believe that God decided who could or could not be His elect. He is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34), not willing that any should perish (2 Peter 3:9), and leaves it to man's free will to choose (Revelation 22:17). Those born of the seed of Abraham became God's chosen ones, (Israel) and those born into Christ's body, the church, become God's chosen ones, (Spiritual Israel) (John 3:5; Galatians 6:16). The difference being, Abraham's seed could not choose birth, but today all can. This plan was from the foundation of the world.)]

THAT WE SHOULD BE HOLY AND WITHOUT BLAME BEFORE HIM IN LOVE, [In God's marvelous plan, mankind could become without blemish before Him in love. Since God is love (1 John 4:8), this is the only way that mankind can be received. The plan that cleanses all is based on love (John 3:16; 1 John 3:16). The figure used here, to make one holy and without blemish, is an Old Testament figure. In Leviticus 1:3,10, before an animal could be used in sacrifice before God, it had to be without blemish. Mankind can be offered now without blemish because Christ gave His cleansing blood for this purpose (Colossians 1:22), when He offered Himself without blemish (Hebrews 9:14; 1 Peter 1:19).]

5. HAVING PREDESTINED US TO ADOPTION AS SONS BY JESUS CHRIST TO HIMSELF, ACCORDING TO THE GOOD PLEASURE OF HIS WILL, [Paul further shows how God's plan brings the spiritual blessings in Christ. In God's plan of love, ADOPTION was through Christ, so that those saved and made without blemish are also presented as sons of God. Being able to call God, Father, is among our greatest possessions. In Romans 8:15 Paul declared that Christians had received the "Spirit of adoption by whom they cry out, 'Abba, Father.'" Then in verse 16 he immediately declared that: "we are children of God." After this, the next verse tells of the blessings from such a relationship: "and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ." Someone might ask, "I thought that man was a child of God since God in the beginning made him in His own image (Genesis 1:26; Acts 17:28). What happened? Because of sin, mankind left God and chose the devil as his father (John 8:44). Therefore, God (through Christ) adopts us back into His family where the inheritance is eternal life. It is interesting to note also that this adoption was according to the good pleasure of His will. Some children feel hurt and disappointed when they learn that they are adopted. They feel less loved, etc. This is not the case generally speaking. Many children of natural families were not planned and in some cases parents were extremely upset to learn that they would have a child. Fortunately, the majority overcome this and love their children dearly. However, in the case of adoption, the children are specially chosen and in many cases weeks, months, and years are spent seeking adoption. The adopted child should feel a special honor. Likewise, Christians should be honored that God has adopted all, according to His pleasure. This adoption represents His will. He even gave His Son so He could adopt other sons (Galatians 4:5).]

6. TO THE PRAISE OF THE GLORY OF HIS GRACE, BY WHICH HE HAS MADE US ACCEPTED IN THE BELOVED. [The great privilege of becoming adopted, and children of God is made possible by His grace. This thought is truly praiseworthy. God is already glorious, but this adds to His glory. We could praise Him all of our lives for His grace and never praise Him enough! Grace is the free gift with the greatest value bestowed by the Beloved—Christ! When God bestows His grace freely making it possible to be adopted, all past sins are forgiven, and a new life is present. We give up the devil and his kingdom of darkness to receive God the Father and His kingdom of light—the Son of His love (Colossians 1:13).]

7. IN HIM WE HAVE REDEMPTION THROUGH HIS BLOOD, THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS, ACCORDING TO THE RICHES OF HIS GRACE [Here Paul numerates another great and precious spiritual blessing that God gives through His grace—REDEMPTION. This word means to ransom or to deliver from bondage. It describes the human race in a situation far beyond our own help or control. An analogy of this would be Israel in Egyptian bondage. Any human effort on their part brought more pain and bondage. Pharaoh had a powerful army with many chariots; however, God through Moses was able to deliver. The devil has a strong hold on us with his avenues of temptations and crafty ways, but through the blood of Christ, redemption is still possible. The redemption mentioned by Paul comes through His blood. Truly there is power in the blood when one is speaking of Christ's blood given in sacrifice. The blood of animals had been used throughout the Old Testament to keep Israel in covenant relationship with God; however, this blood could not permanently redeem (Hebrews 10:4). All efforts for true redemption pointed to the Messiah - Christ.

Redemption is possible because His blood can forgive our trespasses. When we sin, we go beyond God's bounds, we disobey His will and deserve death. Christ's blood forgives us such trespasses, and makes us right with God. Why would God do such great things? Because of the riches of His grace. Does man deserve it? No, but God's grace extends such favor without man deserving it!]

8. WHICH HE MADE TO ABOUND TOWARD US IN ALL WISDOM AND PRUDENCE, [God did not stop in extending His mighty plan of grace, but has also given wisdom and prudence. Wisdom suggests the deep capabilities of the mind in regard to understanding deep things. Prudence is a gift of true intelligence and understanding. God's plan of redemption through

Christ's blood is scorned by many, because they are limited to man's wisdom (1 Corinthians 1:20-21); however, God's wisdom and prudence search out the eternal plans of God.]

9. HAVING MADE KNOWN TO US THE MYSTERY OF HIS WILL, ACCORDING TO HIS GOOD PLEASURE WHICH HE PURPOSED IN HIMSELF, [God has made known the mystery of His will. It had been hidden, but has now been made known. The seven years of plenty and seven years of famine were mysteries until made known by Joseph (Genesis 41:25-36). Thus His plan for man's redemption was a mystery, but not anymore—it has now been revealed. What was included in this mystery? Paul answers this question in detail to Timothy (1 Timothy 3:16) as he declares the mystery of godliness to be great. The mystery included Christ coming in the flesh, the work of the Spirit and angels, the Gentiles receiving the word, his impact on the world, which would include his preaching, death, burial, and resurrection, and then his ascension. God's complete plan has been revealed all according to His pleasure and as He purposed. Remember, God is in control and always has been. Christ carried out the complete will of His Father which had been purposed for Him.]

10. THAT IN THE DISPENSATION OF THE FULLNESS OF THE TIMES [This statement further enlarges upon God's plan to bring the human race, both Jews and Gentiles, to a oneness brought about by His plan of redemption through Christ's blood. All this did not happen by chance, but all was planned to the exact time. Man often tries to change God's master plan, but nothing changes. Armies may march, empires may fall, and mankind may even turn against God to sinful practices and idols, but God and plans go on to their fulfillment.] **HE MIGHT GATHER TOGETHER IN ONE ALL THINGS IN CHRIST, BOTH WHICH ARE IN HEAVEN AND WHICH ARE ON EARTH—IN HIM,** [Christ is at the center of all these plans. In fact, he sums them up both in the heavens and upon the earth. To make sure his readers understand that God chose all of this to happen in Christ, Paul adds: "IN HIM." Should you remove Christ, you would remove God's plan, purpose, and will.]

11. IN WHOM 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, [This verse also begins by showing what can be found in Christ. Paul says that it was in Christ that WE were made a heritage or inheritance. Since Paul was a Jew, the WE refers to the Jews. The Jews were chosen to bring this Messiah, Christ into the world. It was specifically planned by God; it was His will and

purpose. He made a covenant with Abraham which would bring about this special nation, but even more importantly, this Christ.]

12. THAT WE WHO FIRST TRUSTED IN CHRIST SHOULD BE TO THE PRAISE OF HIS GLORY. [Continuing God's purpose for the Jews, Paul speaks of their bringing God's glory. They had hoped in Christ as a nation looking for His coming, and they had hoped in Christ in that He was first preached to them (Romans 1:16). The door to the kingdom or church was first opened to the Jews (Acts 2), then later to the Gentiles (Acts 10).

13. IN HIM YOU ALSO TRUSTED, AFTER YOU HEARD THE WORD OF TRUTH, THE GOSPEL OF YOUR SALVATION; [The writer now turns specifically to the Gentiles. God's plan, and revealed will included the Gentiles. Therefore, they heard the word of truth, the gospel. This is another way of saying that they were saved through obedience to the Gospel. The truth of the gospel speaks of God's plans for mankind through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. Their salvation, like the Jews, came, not by a miracle, but by hearing the truth, the gospel of salvation. When obeyed from the heart (Romans 6:17), one gets into Christ (Galatians 3:27), where Christ's blood forgives sins.] **IN WHOM ALSO, HAVING BELIEVED, YOU WERE SEALED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT OF PROMISE,** [By their acceptance of the gospel, they were sealed with the Holy Spirit. With full assurance, they can believe that Christ's blood has forgiven them, and that His grace has been extended.]

14. WHO IS THE GUARANTEE OF OUR INHERITANCE UNTIL THE REDEMPTION OF THE PURCHASED POSSESSION, TO THE PRAISE OF HIS GLORY. [They can be sure of their salvation also, because they were sealed, and the Holy Spirit was an earnest of their salvation. The sealing in ancient times, assured that what was sent was the real thing and had not been opened. Thus, a form of a guarantee. The figure of earnest being paid, represented a partial payment given in advance to assure the balance. The Holy Spirit gives Christians full assurance of an inheritance and salvation. God's purpose and will are set in order through Jesus Christ and is assured true by the Holy Spirit.]

15. THEREFORE I ALSO, AFTER I HEARD OF YOUR FAITH IN THE LORD JESUS AND YOUR LOVE FOR ALL THE SAINTS, 16. DO NOT CEASE TO GIVE THANKS FOR YOU, MAKING MENTION OF YOU IN MY PRAYERS: [True faith in Jesus has a way of spreading, and to hear about such brought to Paul great joy. This kind of faith spreads itself into service for others. When one's faith does not serve others, it is a dead faith (James

2:14-18). Faith must be shown! It is not just something one holds in his heart, but it must break out into action. Paul says that they had love for all the saints. How often we choose a small group to love and neglect the rest. Just loving those in one's circle of friends is not enough. Because of their faith in action, Paul thanked God in his prayers for them. Do we rejoice in the strong faith of others? Do we thank God for strong Christians everywhere? Paul evidently called their names before the throne of God.]

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, [In Paul's prayer, he not only thanked God for their faith and love, but he asked God the Father to give them a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him. In simple terms, he wanted them to know more about Jesus. Since the New Testament was in the process of being written, they needed more revelation about Jesus Christ. Today we receive more about Jesus by studying the revealed word. Every Christian is continually in need of seeking to know more about the Christ.]

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 heart (as used here) refers to the mind, intellect, and understanding. Since one sees and perceives with his eyes, Paul wishes them to see with their hearts. Without proper knowledge, one gropes in darkness, but when one understands, the darkness dissipates. Why does he wish for them to see with their hearts? So that they may know hope. One cannot successfully exist as a Christian without hope. Our Lord is preparing an inheritance filled with glory (mansions), and riches. All saints long and hope to receive this inheritance. The more we learn about Jesus, the more we have this hope.]

19. AND WHAT IS THE EXCEEDING GREATNESS OF HIS POWER TOWARD US WHO BELIEVE, ACCORDING TO THE WORKING OF HIS MIGHTY POWER [Mankind tries to imagine the great power of God, but its greatness exceeds his ability to comprehend. However, the more we learn of God and His past actions, the more we can visualize His great power. In this passage, Paul focuses in on God's power to the believer. God has turned His great power "to us-ward who believe." This does not refer to simply someone who believes that there is a God, but rather to a believing saint—a Christian. His power is directed to those that obey the Gospel (Romans 6:17), but His power is AGAINST those that refuse to obey (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).]

20. WHICH HE WORKED IN CHRIST WHEN HE RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD AND SEATED HIM AT HIS RIGHT HAND IN THE HEAVENLY PLACES, [Paul now gives the proof of God's power toward saints—He raised Him from the dead and exalted Him to a right hand position of honor. All throughout man's history he has been powerless to raise the dead. He has made powerful bombs, built great cities, and many other wonders, but has never had any power over the dead. God proved His mighty power by raising Jesus and by exalting Him.]

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. [To further exalt Christ, Paul continues by showing the power of His rule—it is above all other rule. He is above the Emperor and the Roman Empire! If you could combine all authority, power and dominion into one great force, Christ would still rule over them. Furthermore, His name is exalted above all other names in Paul's age, and in all ages to come. Why would anyone in religion refuse to wear Christ's name? Why would they substitute other names? (Acts 4:12; Colossians 3:17).]

22. AND HE PUT ALL THINGS UNDER HIS FEET, AND GAVE HIM TO BE HEAD OVER ALL THINGS TO THE CHURCH, 23. WHICH IS HIS BODY, THE FULLNESS OF HIM WHO FILLS ALL IN ALL. [No one has the right to usurp authority over Jesus since all things are under His authority. He is the head of the church—His church (Colossians 1:18), and those that have set up an earthly head will stand in judgment before God. We must never make a law where Christ's authority has not approved. His church is His body. His church is called a body because this illustrates its organization. All Christians represent members of His body with Jesus as the head (1 Corinthians 12). To go beyond this organization is to go beyond Christ's authority. To fall short of it, is to fall short of His dominion. The church, the body of Christ, must obey the Head and fulfill all things for Him. Christians are the hands that minister, the tongues that speak, and the eyes that see opportunities to serve. This is His only plan to carry out His mission here on earth, and we must not let Him down.]

CHAPTER 2

1. AND YOU HE MADE ALIVE, WHO WERE DEAD IN TRESPASSES AND SINS, [In the first chapter Paul referred to Christ being brought from the dead in the resurrection, and now he shows his readers how they have been made alive. They were spiritually dead because of sins and trespasses. The Greek word (*hamartia*) for sin means to miss a mark or target. God sets up the target, but we miss it, therefore sinning. It is true that some sins are more damaging when committed than others because they often harm others. However, any sin, regardless of how innocent we consider it, is a "miss" in God's sight. Yes, murder, lying, and adultery miss God's target, but so do others. Do we "miss the mark" as parents, husbands, and wives, by wrong attitudes, and in failing to do good? If so, we sin. The Greek word (*paraptoma*) for trespasses, means to slip or fall to the point of losing one's way. It suggests going where God does not allow. Thus, both of these bring death unless one is made alive by Jesus Christ. When one obeys the gospel and is saved from trespasses and sins, this is a glorious resurrection!]

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, [Now Paul gives the way in which they missed the target before they were made alive by Jesus. In general, they walked with the world. The world naturally gives fleshly counsel such as: "Eat, drink and live it up today, for tomorrow you die," "you go around in life only once, so you better try it all," and "sow your wild oats while you are young." The world is opposite to God and His way, and those who follow the world are enemies to God (James 4:4; 1 John 2:15). Notice further that Paul associates the walk of this world with the prince of the powers of the air (the devil and his evil spirits). The devil promotes death, Christ brings forth life. The devil produces sons of disobedience resulting in death, while Christ encourages obedience for life. Millions are wrong and deceived in thinking they can follow the world in disobedience and be saved (Galatians 6:7,8).]

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. [To help these brethren appreciate their new resurrection from sin and death, Paul looks back to where they were before conversion. They had all once lived in the lust of their flesh. Christianity helps us discipline our bodies to refuse the ways of the flesh. The heathen religion of Paul's day practiced many lustful things in their worship. When one was converted to Christ, he put off these things. Christ shows us a better way to use our bodies. Some say we should do whatever is natural. Not so, if we want to live the Christian life. Paul calls upon these Christians at Ephesus to continue to turn their backs on their previous way of life. They had been fleshly like all the rest of the world, but now they must be different.]

4. BUT GOD, WHO IS RICH IN MERCY, BECAUSE OF HIS GREAT LOVE WITH WHICH HE LOVED US, 5. EVEN WHEN WE WERE DEAD IN TRESPASSES, MADE US ALIVE TOGETHER WITH CHRIST (BY GRACE YOU HAVE BEEN SAVED), [Paul now shows these brethren how they, as well as Paul, got out of the "children of wrath" state. God delivered them! Why did God deliver? Because He was rich in mercy and great love. Rich in mercy means that He had mercy in abundance. We often get short on mercy, but not God for He is rich with it and shares it with sinners. Why did he share His wealth of riches? Because of His great love. Love is a powerful force—it even moved God to show mercy to sinful man. No wonder, then, Paul wrote: "But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love" (1 Corinthians 13:13). When did this great love appear, was it when man deserved it? No, it appeared, even when we were dead through our trespasses, Paul says! The word **EVEN** suggests that this is something spectacular. To the Romans, Paul wrote on this subject: "But God commendeth His own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). Paul further introduces how God made them alive by saying: "By grace have you been saved." He will shortly (in this chapter, v.8) write more about **grace**, but here it is introduced as he speaks of God's love and mercy extended even when they were dead in sins.]

6. AND RAISED US UP TOGETHER, AND MADE US SIT TOGETHER IN THE HEAVENLY PLACES IN CHRIST JESUS, [Paul takes the beautiful figure of the resurrection of Jesus and His exaltation to God's right hand to illustrate what God has done for sinful man. Christ was raised from the dead, and sinners are also raised from the death of sin with Jesus. Just as Jesus ascended to heaven to His place with the Father, so sinners

are saved from death to be with Him in heavenly places. One becomes saved from sin, a child of God, able to approach the throne of God in prayer, and has his name recorded in the book of life when he allows the grace of God to save him. This marvelous grace is extended when the sinner submits to the will of God. Remember, all of this takes place in Christ Jesus where all spiritual blessings can be found (Ephesians 1:3).]

7. THAT IN THE AGES TO COME HE MIGHT SHOW THE EXCEEDING RICHES OF HIS GRACE IN HIS KINDNESS TOWARD US IN CHRIST JESUS. [Paul's generation of Christians received all this wonder from God, not only for their salvation, but to also become a pattern for ages to come, to show how rich God is in grace and kindness. Again, Paul reminds them that this all happens in Christ Jesus. When we see the grace of God extended to these Christians, we can be assured that He extends the same grace today!]

8. FOR BY GRACE YOU HAVE BEEN SAVED THROUGH FAITH, AND THAT NOT OF YOURSELVES; IT IS THE GIFT OF GOD, 9. NOT OF WORKS, LEST ANYONE SHOULD BOAST. [It is important for these brethren to remember how they were saved. It was not by their own strength or by their "law keeping" such as was required under the law of Moses, but rather by a gift from God which they had not earned nor deserved. The gift was free with one exception, they were required to have faith. What kind of faith? A faith that led them to submit to the will of God (Matthew 7:21). Certainly, not the kind of faith as the devils possessed, "faith only" (James 2:19), but an obedient faith (Galatians 5:6). When a sinner obeys to be saved, he is not in any sense buying salvation, but is rather preparing his heart to receive the gift. The only kind of heart that can receive this precious grace is a believing, repenting, obedient heart. When Peter offered this grace to the believing sinners in Acts 2, he called upon them to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). Peter was saying, "let your faith lead you to obey and your sins will be remitted." Once this is done and the gift received, there is no room for boasting - all the sinner does is prepare his heart to receive the gift.]

10. FOR WE ARE HIS WORKMANSHIP, CREATED IN CHRIST JESUS FOR GOOD WORKS, WHICH GOD PREPARED BEFOREHAND THAT WE SHOULD WALK IN THEM. [The gift of grace had been beautifully presented by Paul, but there was a danger that some might refuse works of any nature for fear they would be earning salvation. Paul hastens to correct such thinking by showing that Christians saved by the grace of God have been created by the workmanship

of God to perform good works. These good works do not pay for salvation, but rather show appreciation to God for His gift. Even more to the point, when we do good works and walk in them, we are performing the way God made us. The wind up toy that crawls across the floor performing all types of actions is doing so in response to its builder. No credit is due the toy, but much is due its designer and builder. Likewise, when we walk in good works, the praise and credit go to the workmanship of God the Creator. Those that refuse complete obedience to God for fear they might earn salvation, give up their right to receive the gift. The faith that brings grace is the faith that obeys.]

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—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. [To help these Gentile Christians appreciate the gift of grace they had received in Christ, the author now reminds them of where they were as a nation in the past. The human race was divided into two major classes—Jews and Gentiles, circumcised and uncircumcised. How did this division take place? God prepared a special nation from Abraham to bring His Son into the world to die for all. Circumcision of the males was a sign that all promises would be kept. God also gave them a special law to keep them pure from the rest of the world. On the other hand, the Gentiles went into heathenism and idolatry. They (as a whole) were lost from God. In verse 12, Paul points out the gloomy picture of the Gentiles—they were separated from Christ. The Jews longed for the Anointed One, and believed some day that He would appear. Not so with the Gentiles, because they were alienated or cut off from Israel, and were without covenants and promises. The bottom line to their dark, hopeless plight was this: they had no hope and were without God in the world! One cannot get any lower spiritually than this.]

13. BUT NOW IN CHRIST JESUS YOU WHO ONCE WERE FAR OFF HAVE BEEN MADE NEAR BY THE BLOOD OF CHRIST. [After showing the Gentiles where they were before Christ, Paul shows them where they are now. They were once so far away, but now are near; all because they are IN Christ, and within the power of His blood. This is another way of reminding them that all spiritual blessings are in Christ. Thus, man's only hope for eternal life is to be found in Him (Philippians 3:9).]

14. FOR HE HIMSELF IS OUR PEACE, WHO HAS MADE

BOTH ONE, AND HAS BROKEN DOWN THE MIDDLE WALL OF DIVISION BETWEEN US, 15. HAVING ABOLISHED IN HIS FLESH THE ENMITY, THAT IS, THE LAW OF COMMANDMENTS CONTAINED IN ORDINANCES, [To further show what being in Christ means, Paul reminds these Gentile Christians that Christ is our peace. Paul now includes himself as well as all other Jews because he is showing them what effect Christ has had on both Jews and Gentiles. In times past, they were at opposite ends of the pole from each other, but now they are brought together in Christ. There had existed a huge dividing wall or partition, but Christ tore it down. The Jews had the law of commandments, and the Gentiles did not! This caused great enmity and resentment between the two! Paul reminds them that all of this has changed. Christ has abolished the law of commandments contained in ordinances. (See also: Hebrews 8:7; 10:9; Colossians 2:14; Galatians 5:4).]

SO AS TO CREATE IN HIMSELF ONE NEW MAN FROM THE TWO, THUS MAKING PEACE, 16. AND THAT HE MIGHT RECONCILE THEM BOTH TO GOD IN ONE BODY THROUGH THE CROSS, THEREBY PUTTING TO DEATH THE ENMITY. [The bringing together of the Jews and Gentiles was a creation of God. They were divided to the point of being TWO, but after Christ finished, they were as ONE man. The Jews and Gentiles had been bitter enemies, but in this creation of one, Christ brought peace. To further explain this, Paul says that the two were reconciled in one body. The word reconcile means "to make friends again." Thus, this renewed friendship took place in the one body—the church (Colossians 1:18), through His death on the cross. When Jesus was slain on the cross, He slew the enmity between Jews and Gentiles. Outside the body there would still be hatred between these two races, but in the body there would be unity and brotherly love. It is wonderful to know that in Christ all barriers are removed (Galatians 2:28; Romans 10:12).]

17. AND HE CAME AND PREACHED PEACE TO YOU WHO WERE AFAR OFF AND TO THOSE WHO WERE NEAR. [This is another way of saying that Jesus came preaching to both Jews and Gentiles. His message was not just a better way of life, but also peace that comes through the forgiveness of sins. Without true forgiveness, there can be no real peace. Jesus brought the peace that passeth all understanding (Philippians 4:7).]

18. FOR THROUGH HIM WE BOTH HAVE ACCESS BY ONE SPIRIT TO THE FATHER. [Jesus made it possible for both Jews and Gentiles to reach the Father. Jesus said of Himself: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). The word access means a way of entrance. When a new house is constructed,

it is important to make an access to the attic. It is a custom to prepare a square entrance, and this represents the only way of entrance to the attic. Likewise, Christ is our only access in one Spirit unto the Father. Both Jews and Gentiles have one Mediator between themselves and God—Jesus Christ (1 Timothy 2:5).]

19. NOW, THEREFORE, YOU ARE NO LONGER STRANGERS AND FOREIGNERS, BUT FELLOW CITIZENS WITH THE SAINTS AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSEHOLD OF GOD, 20. HAVING BEEN BUILT ON THE FOUNDATION OF THE APOSTLES AND PROPHETS, JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF BEING THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE, [Since Jesus gave His life to bring both Jews and Gentiles into oneness before the Father, Paul reminds this Gentile church where they stand. They had been strangers and sojourners, but not any more! They now have full citizenship with God's sanctified ones. A stranger is one dwelling in a strange land away from home, while a sojourner is an alien without citizenship in a strange land. The Gentiles had come a long way. It is a great distance from a stranger and sojourner to being a fellow citizen in God's household! How secure is the household of God? Its foundation is the apostles and prophets with Christ the chief cornerstone. What could be stronger? All other foundations will falter, but this one will stand the test of time and eternity. All the world will fall, but when the Gentiles obeyed Christ, they became secure.]

21. IN WHOM THE WHOLE BUILDING, BEING JOINED TOGETHER, GROWS INTO A HOLY TEMPLE IN THE LORD, 22. IN WHOM YOU ALSO ARE BEING BUILT TOGETHER FOR A HABITATION OF GOD IN THE SPIRIT. [It is in Christ that this spiritual building whose foundation is on the apostles and prophets with Christ as chief cornerstone is built. Man does not have the right to determine the nature of Christ's church or spiritual house for He alone determines its framing. What materials does the Lord use to construct this holy temple - His house? In the Old Testament, the temple was made of physical stones, but this is far from being the case with His new temple. It is made of saved souls. In verse 22, Paul says: "in whom you also are being built together for a habitation of God in the Spirit." Thus, God dwells in His temple by dwelling in those that are saved from sin - the called-out of God. The apostle Peter taught the same thing when he referred to Christians as being living stones: "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 Peter 2:5). This is the only temple that God has today on earth. What a great honor to be a living stone in God's temple! Unless we are framed together in unity as living

stones, we cannot be the true temple of God. If we do not allow Christ, the chief cornerstone to determine our lives and position as a stone, we cannot be a part of this structure.]

CHAPTER 3

1. FOR THIS REASON I, PAUL, THE PRISONER OF JESUS CHRIST FOR YOU GENTILES— 2. IF INDEED YOU HAVE HEARD OF THE DISPENSATION OF THE GRACE OF GOD WHICH WAS GIVEN TO ME FOR YOU, [The reason mentioned here by Paul is the great effort made in God's plan for the Gentiles to be fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God. Before finishing what he started to say, Paul pauses and discusses the great mysteries of the Gentiles. In verse 14, he picks up again the words: "for this reason" and says, "I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Before giving his great thought concerning the Gentiles and his work with them, Paul identifies himself as a prisoner of Jesus Christ in behalf of you Gentiles. How was this? He was in prison because he had given his life preaching to the Gentiles. He reminds them of the dispensation of God's grace given them through Paul. Even though Paul preached some to the Jews, his mission was for the Gentiles (Acts 9:15; 26:18).]

3. HOW THAT BY REVELATION HE MADE KNOWN TO ME THE MYSTERY [The mystery mentioned here refers to the Gentiles being offered the Gospel. In the past, the Jews were God's chosen people, but now Paul unveils the fact that the Gentiles are included. The Old Testament had foretold this day. Paul quoted in (Romans 15:9-12) how the Gentiles had been foretold, but these prophecies had not been understood. Paul did not invent the Gentile plan, nor discover it, but it was made known to him by revelation.] **(AS I WROTE BEFORE IN A FEW WORDS,** [He is probably referring to his mention of this mystery in the first part of this book (Ephesians 1:9,10; 2:13-19), rather than referring to a previous letter.]

4. BY WHICH, WHEN YOU READ, YOU MAY UNDERSTAND MY KNOWLEDGE IN THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST), [Paul has confidence that he is able to reveal the hidden Gentile secret. He had a complete understanding because God revealed it to him. Joseph understood Pharaoh's dreams because the God he served revealed the interpretation (Genesis 41:16). This is how Paul could enlighten their understanding. The "mystery of Christ" alludes to Christ being the Savior of the Gentiles as well as the Jews.]

5. WHICH IN OTHER AGES WAS NOT MADE KNOWN TO THE SONS OF MEN, [Paul is not saying that the spiritual future of the Gentiles had not been foretold, but rather that which was revealed had not been understood. They had read: "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people" (Deuteronomy 32:43), and "For the Gentiles shall seek him" (Isaiah 11:10), but they (Jews) did not understand that Jews and Gentiles would be one under this Messiah. In this sense, the mystery was not known in other generations.] **AS IT HAS NOW BEEN REVEALED BY THE SPIRIT TO HIS HOLY APOSTLE AND PROPHETS:** [Even though it had (in an obscure way) been made known in past generations, not so in the same way as in Paul's day. The Holy Spirit came on Pentecost (Acts 2), and from that day forward the apostles were guided into all truth (John 16:13). For the ministry and edification of the church, Christ: "gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers," (Ephesians 4:11,12). Thus, the revelations received from the Holy Spirit by both apostles and prophets gave them a complete understanding of the mystery of the Gentiles. With this complete understanding, Paul could say that Christ had made both Jews and Gentiles one, "and has broken down the middle wall of division between us, . . . so as to create in himself one new man from the two, thus making peace," (Ephesians 2:14,15).

6. THAT THE GENTILES SHOULD BE FELLOW HEIRS, OF THE SAME BODY, [This is the great truth that had been revealed unto the holy apostles and prophets. Fellow heirs means that the Jews must share the heirship with the Gentiles. This was a difficult thing for the Jews to accept since they had been God's chosen children in the past, but now they must accept into their fellowship the Gentiles. The body mentioned by Paul is the spiritual body of Christ (His church) (Ephesians 1:22,23). To be fellow heirs and members of the same body, the two must experience the same birth. Since their physical births and lineage were different, God chose a new birth—a birth of "water and of the Spirit" (John 3:5). No longer can the claim for heirship be based on physical birth, but now on the Spiritual.] **AND PARTAKERS OF HIS PROMISE IN CHRIST THROUGH THE GOSPEL,** [Abraham was promised that through his seed all nations would be blessed (Genesis 22:18). This promise was fulfilled when Christ came to earth and died for all. This death, burial, and resurrection became the gospel (the good news) to both Jews and Gentiles (Romans 1:16,17). Thus, Paul could write: "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" (Galatians 3:26-28).]

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. [The Greek word for minister here (diakonos) is the same used to translate servant. God (by His grace) had made Paul a minister and he was grateful to serve. The "grace of God" is perhaps mentioned here because Paul felt that he was not even worthy to be a servant. He had been an enemy of God and only through grace was Paul given a chance. All that Paul had become was due to the grace of God: "But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me" (1 Corinthians 15:10). All that we are, or ever expect to be, we owe to the grace of God, and without it, we are nothing.]

8. TO ME, WHO AM LESS THAN THE LEAST OF ALL THE SAINTS, THIS GRACE WAS GIVEN, [It seems that Paul cannot forget that he came from an opposite direction to serve Christ. From a bitter enemy, he became a faithful friend. Before conversion, Paul (known as Saul) "made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison" (Acts 8:3). Even though he was forgiven, this remained a humbling remembrance which made him feel that he was "less than the least of all saints." Even though Paul was doing so much as an apostle, he still felt that he was: "least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God" (1 Corinthians 15:9).] **THAT I SHOULD PREACH AMONG THE GENTILES THE UNSEARCHABLE RICHES OF CHRIST,** [What a contrast Paul must have felt! He was so small and the unsearchable riches of Christ so great! Paul is saying that the riches of Christ cannot be exhausted. Take the wealthiest person in the world today; divide his/her wealth among the masses of people, and such wealth will run out, but not so with the riches of Christ. After all have received an abundance, there will still be plenty more to give. As Paul wrote to the Romans: "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!" (Romans 11:33).]

9. AND TO MAKE ALL PEOPLE 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; [Among these unsearchable riches, (which in Paul's day had been found) was the gospel of the Gentiles. The word fellowship is translated from koinonia. Paul's great mission was to bring forth the unveiled mystery of the Gentiles so that fellowship between Jews and Gentiles could be enjoyed. It was God who created all things through Jesus Christ that had revealed it through Paul. God, using Christ to create all things, shows that Christ is part of the great Godhead (John 1:3; Colossians 1:16).]

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, [Paul here makes an announcement—now that the mystery is out, there must be a revealing of God’s wisdom through the church. Even the angelic characters found in heavenly places must bear the announcement. What must the church reveal? Paul’s answer: “the manifold wisdom of God.” God’s creation certainly revealed His wisdom, but God chose something else to reveal it—“by the church!” The word “manifold” suggests something variegated. God’s wisdom is like a big bouquet of flowers with many sizes and colors. It is a diversified wisdom. There were the hidden mysteries before the foundation of the world, the promised Messiah, His miraculous appearance, His teaching, His sacrifice, His atonement, His body, the church, and the hope of eternal life. What beautiful, changing colors, found in God’s spiritual bouquet—His manifold wisdom. What an awesome responsibility placed on the church to reveal this wisdom on earth as well as in heaven!]

11. ACCORDING TO THE ETERNAL PURPOSE WHICH HE ACCOMPLISHED IN CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD, [God is so powerful that it is impossible to compare Him to human flesh. God has a plan—an eternal plan, and Christ is a part of that plan. God’s manifold wisdom set forth this eternal plan through Paul, but this was not its beginning—it was an eternal plan. Those that reject Christ, reject God’s eternal plan.]

12. IN WHOM WE HAVE BOLDNESS AND ACCESS WITH CONFIDENCE THROUGH FAITH IN HIM. [It seems at this point, Paul is ready to apply his teaching to the life of a Christian. This great wisdom and plan of God, allows those who have responded by faith and obedience, to have boldness and access to the throne of God. Boldness means “freedom of speech,” and in this context would suggest prayer (Hebrews 4:16; Ephesians 2:18). God’s eternal plan allows those that believe and obey the Son of God, to talk with their Father in heaven. Such a powerful faith also permits one to approach God with confidence (James 1:5-7).]

13. THEREFORE I ASK THAT YOU DO NOT LOSE HEART AT MY TRIBULATIONS FOR YOU, WHICH IS YOUR GLORY. [When Paul wrote this letter to the Ephesians, he was in a Roman prison because he had preached the gospel to the Gentiles (Ephesians 3:1). They might blame themselves for Paul’s suffering, but he did not want this. Instead of their courage being lost over this, he wanted them rather to see strength and glory. Yes, Paul was suffering, but for a noble purpose, and he desired them to see the glory for THEM instead of the pain for HIM.]

14. FOR THIS REASON I BOW MY KNEES TO THE FATHER OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, 15. FROM WHOM THE WHOLE FAMILY IN HEAVEN AND EARTH IS NAMED, [In verse one of this chapter, Paul began: "For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles—" then at this point paused and spent twelve verses talking about how he had revealed God's hidden mystery in regard to the Gentiles, and how that God had brought them into covenant relationship with Him, and into one body with the Jews. Now in verse 14, he picks up the statement and completes it. Paul is now ready to say that for this reason I have prayed to God because He has given great spiritual things to you. The specifics of these are mentioned in the following verses.]

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, [Paul believed strongly (and taught others to feel the same) that God is rich with power, might, and glory. In Paul's weakness, he depended on God's strength and wanted all Christians to possess the same faith. Paul's concern is NOT the strength of the physical body, but of the inner man. Why? Because he knew that the body would grow old and perish, but the inner man would live forever. "Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day" (2 Corinthians 4:16). Therefore, he calls upon the Ephesian Christians to be strengthened through God's Spirit.]

17. THAT CHRIST MAY DWELL IN YOUR HEARTS THROUGH FAITH; THAT YOU, BEING ROOTED AND GROUNDED IN LOVE, [Even though Christ had ascended back to heaven reigning at the right hand of God, He can still dwell in the hearts of Christians. Therefore, Paul prayed that through faith He would dwell! It is a beautiful thought to have Christ dwelling in one's mind, thoughts, and intellect. When He is present, we will conduct our lives in a way that will honor Him. Like Enoch of the Old Testament, we will "walk with God" (Genesis 5:24), and will "please Him" (Hebrews 11:5). This is the kind of faith that pleases God in all ages (Hebrews 11:6).

However, for this faith to be complete, it must be "rooted and grounded in love," because even faith without love is nothing (1 Corinthians 13:2). Notice that Paul teaches that a shallow type love will not suffice, but it must be "rooted and grounded." Rooted is a figure taken from a tree that has a strong and deep root system. This kind of tree can withstand the severest storms that blow, and will flourish (Psalms 1:3). Grounded is a figure of a deep and solid foundation. The house built on such a solid foundation will stand (Matthew 7:24,25). With a faith in Christ, and love so secure, there is not a force of evil that can destroy.]

18. MAY BE ABLE TO COMPREHEND WITH ALL THE SAINTS WHAT IS THE WIDTH AND LENGTH AND DEPTH AND HEIGHT— [As Paul continues his prayer for the Ephesians, he wants them to join all the saints (Christians everywhere) in comprehending the fullest measure of spiritual things. God's greatness is extended in all directions (width, length, depth and height), and Paul wants them to know about it. We can realize this only through prayer, Bible study, and faithful living.]

19. TO KNOW THE LOVE OF CHRIST WHICH PASSES KNOWLEDGE; THAT YOU MAY BE FILLED WITH ALL THE FULLNESS OF GOD. [Even though it is impossible to know all the love of God, this is still Paul's prayer for them. All Christians should seek to know as much love as possible, even though it "passeth knowledge." How do we learn or know more about the love of Christ? By learning more about His death on the cross. "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" (1 John 3:16). The more we (as Christians) are filled with love, the more we are filled with God, because God is love (1 John 4:8). As Peter gives a list of Christian graces such as faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly love, and kindness, these are all culminated by adding LOVE (2 Peter 1:5-7). Therefore, the goal of every Christian: TO BE FULL OF GOD—FULL OF LOVE!]

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, [The apostle closes this chapter and prayer for the Ephesians by honoring God with power and praise. God's power to answer the requests of His children exceeds far beyond what can be asked or even thought. We might express it: "God can go beyond in an abundant way, far more than we can ask or even dream." Paul declares that God's power works in us in an exceeding and abundant way beyond our comprehension. What could strengthen one's faith in prayer more than these words? "The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much" (James 5:17b).]

21. TO HIM BE GLORY IN THE CHURCH BY CHRIST JESUS THROUGHOUT ALL AGES, WORLD WITHOUT END. AMEN. [Since God is so great and powerful toward His children, Paul glorifies His name in the church by Jesus Christ forever! The church represents God's spiritual flock (Acts 20:28), and is very important to Him. Since the church is Christ's body (Ephesians 1:22,23), and He is its head (Colossians 1:18), glory is to be by Christ in the church forever!]

CHAPTER 4

1. I, THEREFORE, THE PRISONER OF THE LORD, BESEECH YOU TO HAVE A WALK WORTHY OF THE CALLING WITH WHICH YOU WERE CALLED, [Christianity is more than an enrollment into something, it is a way of life - a special walk. Our actions show that we have been called out of the world to serve the Lord. The walk that Paul had in mind was a walk of light: "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" (1 John 1:7). This is the only walk that shows the light of Jesus to the world, "You are the light of the world. . . Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:14,16). Thus, a Christian is called by the gospel to light. Peter wrote: "of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;" (1 Peter 2:9b).]

2. WITH ALL LOWLINESS AND GENTLENESS, WITH LONGSUFFERING, BEARING WITH ONE ANOTHER IN LOVE, 3. ENDEAVORING TO KEEP THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT IN THE BOND OF PEACE. [The worthy walk that Paul had in mind is now numerated. (1) The first mentioned is: **Lowliness and gentleness.** Both of these words refer to one's attitude and actions. The walk of a Christian is one of humility and meekness. This especially refers to one's reactions when injured by others. Jesus taught His apostles the meaning of humility when He washed their feet (John 13:5-9). Peter wrote: "Yes, all of you 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). This also gives others their rightful place (Philippians 2:3). (2) Then Paul mentions **longsuffering**, and this suggests how we are to get along with others. Life is made up of many relationships which bring us close together. It may be parent and child, husband and wife, a friend, or a spiritual brother. There will be times when these (and others) irritate, disgust, and harm us, but how will we react? Those worthy of their Christian calling will react with longsuffering. "Love suffers long and is kind" (1 Corinthians 13:4). (3) The third way for worthy walking is: **bearing with one another in love.** The kind of love Paul mentions here is "agape" love which means to love even the people whom we do not like, which may or may not be loveable. One cannot have this kind of

love unless he has lowliness, gentleness, and longsuffering (1 Corinthians 13:4-7). This does not mean to condone the sins of others, but rather love them even in their weaknesses and strive to help them become strong. It means to return good when wronged. (4) Finally, in the ways to walk, Paul suggests: **endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.** The “unity of the Spirit” is from God, but it becomes the Christian’s responsibility to keep it in a peaceful way. The word endeavor suggests that one must make every effort—without failure, to keep this unity. Even as Paul wrote, the Spirit was guiding him and would direct him to spell out the planks in the platform of God’s unity. It is at this point where millions have failed. This precious unity is NOT kept and this propagates the doctrines and commandments of men (Matthew 15:9).]

4. THERE IS ONE BODY AND ONE SPIRIT, JUST AS YOU WERE CALLED IN ONE HOPE OF YOUR CALLING; [At this point Paul numerates the various planks of unity given by the Spirit. He begins with the **ONE BODY.** The one body comes from the fact that Christ had one physical body, but in this context refers to His **ONE** spiritual body—the church of which He is the head. “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” (Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:22,23). The one body/one church concept may sound strange in a land of **many churches** with their divided doctrines and creeds. However, human wisdom is responsible for this, and not God’s word. Man can devise a million churches which oppose each other, but this does not change the fact that there is only **ONE BODY/ONE CHURCH.** Christ built only one - His church (Matthew 16:18), and both Jews and Gentiles make up this one church/body (1 Corinthians 12:13), and all others are human in origin. To illustrate the **ONE BODY,** Paul refers to the **ONE HOPE** of your calling. Most religious people will accept the one hope concept found only in Christ, but they reject the one body. However, if there can be more than one body, there can be more than one hope. Those that endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit, accept both one body, and one hope. The **ONE SPIRIT** is one of the persons in the Godhead (Ephesians 2:18; 1 Corinthians 12:13).]

5. ONE LORD, ONE FAITH, ONE BAPTISM; [The **ONE LORD** not only teaches that one exists, but also that whether Jew or Greek, male or female, there is only one Lord (Galatians 3:28). The one Lord that Paul had in mind was Christ (1 Corinthians 8:6). His lordship is personal because: “every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:11).

Then Paul declares that there is ONE FAITH. Oh, how far humanity has drifted from this truth! The Holy Spirit declares ONE faith; modern man cries MANY faiths. Someone is wrong, and the Holy Spirit is not guilty! Paul foretold (by the Spirit) that the future would bring a rejection of the one faith: "Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons" (1 Timothy 4:1). Paul was able to say of his life before death that he had "kept the faith" (2 Timothy 4:7), and Jude commanded that they "should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3b). The apostle Paul continues his platform for unity with ONE BAPTISM. Earlier, there had been other baptisms such as when the apostles were baptized with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4; the first Gentile converted (Acts 11:15), and John's baptism (Matthew 3:6; Acts 19:3), but these had been fulfilled and now only ONE baptism for salvation and remission of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38) is valid. Thousands today are not content with the one baptism, and try to experience other baptisms; however, to do so is to disobey the Spirit, and to disrupt the unity of the Spirit. The one baptism is immersion—a burial (Romans 6:4; Colossians 2:12).]

6. ONE GOD AND FATHER OF ALL, WHO IS ABOVE ALL, AND THROUGH ALL, AND IN YOU ALL. [The one God that Paul speaks about here is the God that has always existed—He's eternal: "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever You had formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God" (Psalms 90:2). However, down through the centuries, mankind invented many gods and goddesses. The Ephesians were familiar with many of these and especially Diana of Ephesus. Therefore, when Paul declares that there is one God and Father of all, he is saying that all others are false. One of the ten commandments declared: "You shall have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:3). To the Athenians, Paul said of the one God: "for in Him we live and move and have our being. . . 'For we are also His offspring' " (Acts 17:28). This is the one God that Paul says is dwelling in the Ephesian Christians.]

7. BUT TO EACH ONE OF US GRACE WAS GIVEN ACCORDING TO THE MEASURE OF CHRIST'S GIFT. [After calling upon Christians to pursue unity, Paul wishes them to know that there is a sense in which they will be different. Even though they were united as to the one body, Spirit, hope, Lord, faith, baptism and God, they all had received differing gifts from the Lord. These gifts are called grace gifts because they were not earned nor did they come from one's own greatness. Christ was the one that determined the proper measure for each Christian. To the Romans, Paul wrote that they were one body in Christ, but had differing gifts "according to the grace that is given to us" (Romans 12:5,6). Also, Paul taught the Christians at Corinth that they

represented one body, but many members with individual gifts (1 Corinthians 12). Since all gifts are from God, we should never be “puffed up” and haughty. One must “serve” (in all ages) as a servant of the Lord in humility (Matthew 18:3).]

8. THEREFORE HE SAYS: “WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH, HE LED CAPTIVITY CAPTIVE, AND GAVE GIFTS TO MEN.” [When Paul mentioned the gifts of grace given by the Lord, he must have been reminded of a Psalm of victory, Psalm 68:8. In this Psalm, the Lord is pictured ascending on high after winning the battle with captives and receiving gifts. Paul takes the same idea with one exception. Instead of the Lord receiving gifts, He is giving gifts. In both cases, the Lord ascends in victory, and has (at His control) gifts. Thus, all Christians should be thankful for their gifts of grace even though they may be different from the gifts of others. It seems that Paul is saying in the overall context, you can keep the unity of the Spirit, even though you have received (by grace) differing gifts.]

9. (NOW THIS, “HE ASCENDED” - WHAT DOES IT MEAN BUT THAT HE ALSO FIRST DESCENDED INTO THE LOWER PARTS OF THE EARTH? 10. HE WHO DESCENDED IS ALSO THE ONE WHO ASCENDED FAR ABOVE ALL THE HEAVENS, THAT HE MIGHT FILL ALL THINGS.) [Paul has just referred to the ascension of the Victor with His captives and gifts, but he wishes to remind his readers that before this ascension could be possible, it was necessary for Him to descend. Before the exaltation back to heaven with the crown, there had to be the coming to earth—even to a burial in the earth. This is the only way that He could “fill all things.” The “all things” would (no doubt) refer to eternal salvation for all. When Jesus left heaven, He came to earth for death (John 3:16), and one of His cries from the cross was, “It is finished” (John 19:30). Therefore, the greatest gift the ascended Christ gives is the grace of salvation.]

11. AND HE HIMSELF GAVE SOME TO BE APOSTLES, SOME PROPHETS, SOME EVANGELISTS, AND SOME PASTORS AND TEACHERS, [To emphasize further that Christ Jesus is the author of Christian unity, and can give gifts, Paul numerates the various gifts and positions of leadership used (by the Lord) to promote unity. His great plan for edification and unity began with the apostles. Jesus called (originally) twelve men as apostles (Matthew 10:2-4), but others such as Paul, Barnabas, Silas, and others are mentioned (Acts 14:14; 1 Thessalonians 2:6; Romans 16:7). The word apostle means: “a messenger, one sent on a mission,” and this was the purpose of Christ’s apostles. They were to carry the gospel of Jesus Christ to the whole world (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15,16). These special men (with the exception of Judas, later replaced by Matthias) had a great part in the movement for unity.

Especially when Paul was added, these men preached the gospel of Christ and called upon all to unite around the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). The prophets were special spokesmen for God who received divine revelations (1 Corinthians 14:5; 29-31). Since they received their messages from God, they promoted unity (Acts 15:32). The work of unity is further established by giving some to be evangelists (Acts 21:8; 2 Timothy 4:5). These men promoted unity by preaching the word as they traveled from city to city. Then Paul mentions pastors and teachers. Each church or congregation of the one body (church) had men called elders and bishops (overseers) (Philippians 1:1). While overseeing the church and serving as pastors (shepherds), they fed the flock spiritual food (Acts 20:28). With their special qualifications (1 Timothy 3:2-7; Titus 1:5-9), they kept peace and unity within each local congregation. One of their qualifications was "able to teach" (1 Timothy 3:2). They (along with others) had the ability to teach. Therefore, the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers represented God's great leadership to promote unity.]

12. FOR THE EQUIPPING OF THE SAINTS FOR THE WORK OF MINISTRY, FOR THE EDIFYING OF THE BODY OF CHRIST, [Before there can be the unity of the Spirit, there must be strong saints. This verse shows the purpose of these special leaders: (1) To equip the saints (2) For the work of the ministry (3) To edify the body of Christ. Division is usually promoted by those in the church that are weak and inactive. Be assured that no church will grow strong or have unity without the proper leaders. Therefore, the leaders (that God selects) are essential and pleasing to the Lord.]

13. TILL WE ALL COME TO THE UNITY OF THE FAITH AND THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE SON OF GOD, [Now Paul mentions the goal and purpose of these leaders—to lead the church to the unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God. Unity in the faith was the goal of the early church and it should be the goal of the church today (John 17:6-9). There can never be unity with the concept of "many faiths," because the unity that God accepts comes ONLY through the knowledge of the Son of God.] **TO A PERFECT MAN, TO THE MEASURE OF THE STATURE OF THE FULLNESS OF CHRIST;** [The goal is further discussed as Paul considers the end results. The aim of every faithful Christian is to be like Christ, and the word "perfect" suggests full development or maturity. The only way one can be perfect like Christ, in the sense of being without sin (Hebrews 4:15; 5:8,9), is to be forgiven by Christ (1 John 1:7). However, Christians can strive daily to measure up to the stature of the fullness of Christ, and this is what pleases the Lord. One can grow from an unskilled diet of milk to a full age diet of meat, and able to discern both good and evil (Hebrews 5:12-14).

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 BY WHICH THEY LIE IN WAIT TO DECEIVE, [The purpose of these special leaders is further discussed in this verse. Without such leaders, Paul says that the saints would continue to be children tossed like something on the sea (perhaps a small boat or wave) driven by the wind. The wind represents different doctrines. Without the guidance of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, they would fall to the trickery of false teachers. Every age has had its lying teachers, and the only way to recognize them is to be united firmly on God's truth (John 8:32; 17:17). With God's true leaders, we can plant our feet on solid ground: "On Christ the solid rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand."]

15. BUT, SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE, MAY GROW UP IN ALL THINGS INTO HIM WHO IS THE HEAD—CHRIST—[Instead of the false deceitful teachers, Paul says that the opposite should be done. The truth in love should be spoken. What a contrast between those that deceive, and those that speak the truth in love! The first is of the devil, and the second is of God. The first tears down unity, while the second brings growth under the headship of Christ. Note that it is not enough just to speak the truth, but it must be spoken "in love." Those that speak the truth "in love" are interested in the ones being taught.]

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. [The "from whom" in this verse refers to Christ the head of the body. His spiritual body (the church) is totally dependent upon His headship and directions. Here Paul (as in 1 Corinthians 12) illustrates the church by the make-up and functioning of the human body. Christ as the head wants every member of His body joined and knit together in unity. When this happens, His prayer for unity (John 17) is answered, and His spiritual body grows. Paul wants all Christians to know that they are "joined and knit together." Also, each member must depend on the other members by supplying and fulfilling various needs. Each member (or part) is called upon to do its share under the direction of Christ. This is the only way that the body of Christ (the church) will be healthy and grow. Paul warned the Colossian brethren against those frauds that would not hold: "fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase which is from God" (Colossians 2:19). Notice also, that before the spiritual body of Christ can grow, it must edify itself in love. There can never be a

healthy church of our Lord without love. All other vital things may be present, but there will still be failure without love (1 Corinthians 13:1-3; Revelation 2:1-4).]

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, 18. HAVING THEIR UNDERSTANDING DARKENED, BEING ALIENATED FROM THE LIFE OF GOD, BECAUSE OF THE IGNORANCE THAT IS IN THEM, BECAUSE OF THE HARDENING OF THEIR HEART; [At this point, Paul calls upon these Gentile brethren to walk differently from the unconverted Gentiles. Instead of letting Christ direct them as head, the unconverted Gentiles follow their own minds. When this happens, they do not understand God's truth and do not find freedom (John 8:32), and are never sanctified through the truth—the word (John 17:17). When one's understanding is darkened, there is no way to be close to God: "But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear" (Isaiah 59:2). These Gentiles with a darkened understanding were cut off from the life of God. When one does not understand, he is in ignorance, and God no longer overlooks ignorance, "but now commands all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:30). One of the things that motivated Christ's enemies to put Him to death was ignorance (Acts 3:17). Notice the downward steps that these rebelling Gentiles took in their selfish walk: (1) Followed their own minds (2) Understanding darkened (3) Alienated from the life of God (4) Became ignorant (5) Hardened their hearts. These steps represent a walk of spiritual death when pursued!]

19. WHO, BEING PAST FEELING, HAVE GIVEN THEMSELVES OVER TO LICENTIOUSNESS, TO WORK ALL UNCLEANNESS WITH GREEDINESS. [Why are these people lost forever? Paul says that they have become past feeling. The downward steps hardened their hearts until all feelings for God and things spiritual were gone. Once God and His high standards of morals were forgotten, they turned to the ways of the devil. Licentiousness means violence, evil conduct without any shame or personal embarrassment. These have no love and concern for others, but with greediness have a passion to possess everything for themselves. This kind of greediness is usually associated with love for money which Paul says: "is a root of all kinds of evil" (1 Timothy 6:10).]

20. BUT YOU HAVE NOT SO LEARNED CHRIST, 21. IF INDEED YOU HAVE HEARD HIM AND HAVE BEEN TAUGHT BY HIM, AS THE TRUTH IS IN JESUS: [The apostle now reminds his Christian readers that they are different from the other Gentiles just described. What has made the dif-

ference? The opening of their hearts to learn of Christ! When one hears of Christ and allows His teaching to permeate the heart, truth overflows, because Jesus is truth: "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). These Christ-centered Gentiles are walking: "in the light as He is in the light" (1 John 1:7), and this kept their hearts soft and continually open to truth.]

22. THAT YOU PUT OFF, CONCERNING YOUR FORMER CONDUCT, THE OLD MAN WHICH GROWS CORRUPT ACCORDING TO THE DECEITFUL LUSTS, [These Ephesian Christians had not always been with Christ and truth. When they became converted, they had put off their former evil conduct. Paul truly believed in a complete change when converted to the Lord. The metaphor used here is "putting off" as an old coat (the old man), and putting on Christ: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17). The Roman Christians were called upon to "be transformed by the renewing of your mind," (Romans 12:2), and to: "cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light" (Romans 13:12). (cf. Colossians 3:9; Hebrews 12:1; James 1:21; 1 Peter 2:1). Therefore, these Christian Gentiles are opposite to the other Gentiles that follow deceitful lust. Since they had put off the old man, it is implied that they must never return to their former conduct. Those who return will be in a worse state than before conversion (2 Peter 2:21,22).]

23. AND BE RENEWED IN THE SPIRIT OF YOUR MIND, 24. AND THAT YOU PUT ON THE NEW MAN WHICH WAS CREATED ACCORDING TO GOD, IN RIGHTEOUSNESS AND TRUE HOLINESS. [It is not enough just to put off the old, but the old man must be replaced with something new. The mind and how it reacts to Christ determines whether or not one is evil or holy. The only way one's life will change is to have a new mind: "For as he thinks in his heart, so is he" (Proverbs 23:7). When Paul asked the Romans to be "transformed," he said, "by the renewing of your mind" (Romans 12:2). The "new man" that one becomes when he becomes a Christian is a creation of God, and is therefore, righteous and holy. When Paul referred to his becoming a Christian, he said: "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" (Galatians 2:20). To further show the great change that must take place when one's mind is renewed—to put off the old man and to put on the new, Paul writes: "And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires" (Galatians 5:24).]

25. THEREFORE, PUTTING AWAY LYING, EACH ONE SPEAK TRUTH WITH HIS NEIGHBOR, FOR WE ARE MEMBERS OF ONE

ANOTHER. (Now that Paul has laid the general foundation for living a new God-centered life, he continues by listing specific examples. He doesn't want them to misunderstand, therefore, he gives specific examples. The putting off the old man includes putting away lying (Zechariah 8:16). Since the general context of this chapter is unity, speaking truth to one's neighbor is important. Speaking lies can destroy peace and harmony faster than anything else. The apostle reminds them that they are members of one another, and to lie to each other can be compared to one member of the body fighting another. Truth is the glue that holds all members together in unity. Lying is one of the things that God hates (Proverbs 6:16,17).]

26. "BE ANGRY, AND DO NOT SIN": DO NOT LET THE SUN GO DOWN ON YOUR WRATH, 27. NOR GIVE PLACE TO THE DEVIL. [The writer further calls upon his readers to keep sin out of their anger. This is a quote from Psalm 4:4. It would be impossible to live and never be stirred within one's emotions; however, a Christian must keep such under control. Sinful anger says and does those things that are sinful. This kind of anger is associated with hate, fighting, revenge, and grudges. How can anyone that is a new creation participate? To help those Christians keep their anger under control, Paul gives them a rule to follow: "Do not let the sun go down on your wrath." Anger that burns out of control for days, months, and years, will destroy. The longer one waits to make corrections, the more difficult such becomes. Jesus taught: "Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift" (Matthew 5:23,24). Jesus was angry without sin (Mark 3:5; John 2:13-17), and as Christians, we must daily work to keep our anger under control; to do otherwise is to "give place to the devil." Not only is uncontrolled anger sinful, but it sets the stage for many related sins, and the devil takes control (1 Peter 5:8). Therefore, instead of evil anger, overcome evil with good (Romans 12:21).]

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. [This new way of life in Christ involves giving up stealing, and obtaining money by laboring with one's own hands. Failing to provide for one's own family is condemned by Paul as being "worse than an unbeliever" (1 Timothy 5:8), and such should not be allowed to eat (2 Thessalonians 3:10). However, the situation becomes even worse when stealing is added to laziness. In addition to working with their own hands what is good for their own necessities, they must also share with the needy (James 1:27). When one shares with those in need, he shares with Christ (Matthew 25:35-40).]

29. LET NO CORRUPT COMMUNICATION PROCEED OUT OF YOUR MOUTH, BUT WHAT IS GOOD FOR NECESSARY EDIFICATION, THAT IT MAY IMPART GRACE TO THE HEARERS. [Next, Paul turns to the improper use of the tongue. This little member is capable of cursing or blessing (James 3:9). Each Christian has the responsibility of bridling his/her tongue so that evil can be avoided and good spoken. Not only does evil speech come out corrupted, but it can also corrupt others. The way that one talks affects his or her total religion: "If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless" (James 1:26). Paul wants them to speak words that edify—that build up. Corrupt words tear down—good words build up! What could be more beautiful than to hear a Christian talking to others in such a way as to impart grace? When those with evil tongues leave, one may wish to deodorize the room and use a disinfectant, but when those with graceful tongues depart, they leave behind a fragrance of love, grace, and beauty.]

30. AND DO NOT GRIEVE THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD, BY WHOM YOU WERE SEALED FOR THE DAY OF REDEMPTION. [Any sin, (and especially in the context—the sin of corrupt communication) grieves the Holy Spirit. Since the Spirit of God is "Holy," and corrupt speech is unholy, such brings about pain. Remember, God hates sin because it brings death (Romans 6:23; Galatians 6:8). As Christians, their greatest fear should be to grieve the Holy Spirit since it is through this person of the Godhead that they were sealed for the day of redemption. The Holy Spirit has promised through the word that salvation is sure for the faithful: "The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with him, that we may also be glorified together" (Romans 8:16,17). This is the world's greatest guarantee for all faithful Christians. How foolish it would be to live our lives or to use our tongues in such a way as to grieve the Holy Spirit which seals our redemption.]

31. LET ALL BITTERNESS, WRATH, ANGER, CLAMOR, AND EVIL SPEAKING BE PUT AWAY FROM YOU, WITH ALL MALICE. [Since the control of the tongue is so important, Paul returns to sins that are destructive, and that must be put away. There is no way to describe the damage that can be done to individuals and to the unity of the body from these six sins. **Bitterness** is an evil attitude which refuses to forgive or be forgiven. This sin closes all doors to reconciliation. **Wrath and anger** represent an explosion of one's temper. Such may burst into uncontrollable words or actions. Certainly, these are not compatible with Christ and His beautiful way of life. **Clamor** is loud boasting or quarrelling between two angry persons. With clamor, there is no room for kindness. **Evil speaking** is from the Greek word *blasphemia*, and is

often used to describe those that speak against God as well as one's fellowman. This certainly must be put away to follow the footsteps of Jesus. In addition to these, Paul further tells the Ephesians to put away all malice. Malice means ill-will, with a desire to injure. Those that hold malice are wicked and depraved with a heart full of malignity.]

32. AND BE KIND TO ONE ANOTHER, TENDERHEARTED, FORGIVING ONE ANOTHER, JUST AS GOD IN CHRIST ALSO FORGAVE YOU. [It is not enough just to put away the evil, but kindness and a forgiving tender heart must fill one's life. How can one be kind if he refuses to forgive? Kindness represents a tender attitude toward others to the point of being concerned and considerate toward their needs. It seems that kindness would be the opposite to the many evil characteristics that Paul called upon the Ephesians to put away. Among the things one must add in the Christian graces is "brotherly kindness" (2 Peter 1:7). Someone might ask, "how can I be kind and forgiving toward those that wrong me?" Paul's answer: "Just as God in Christ also forgave you." There is not a stronger motive to be found than this, plus the fact, if we don't forgive, we will not be forgiven (Matthew 6:15).]

CHAPTER 5

1. THEREFORE BE FOLLOWERS OF GOD AS DEAR CHILDREN.

[After Paul had called upon the Ephesian Christians to be kind, tenderhearted and forgiving like God, he begins chapter 5 by asking them to follow God as dear children. God has set the perfect example of forgiving through His Son: "that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses to them" (2 Corinthians 5:19), and all must imitate His example. To do this, we must follow as "dear children." Even though children have their differences as they play together, they can easily forgive because they have a spirit of humility needed to forgive: "Let the little children come to me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 19:14). Paul is not calling upon them to be childish, but rather, like children. To be converted and become like children is the only way to enter the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 18:3).]

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. [It is not enough just to say I love my brethren, but love must be set into motion. To walk is a continuous motion which requires effort and energy. What kind of love action does Paul want? The kind illustrated by the perfect example, Jesus, when He went to the cross for all: "who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him" (1 Thessalonians 5:10; 2 Timothy 2:11; 1 John 4:9). His offering to God had a sweet-smell which means that such pleased Him. When Christians walk in love today with the spirit of sacrifice in their actions, they also please God. This represents the way we must follow in His steps: "For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:" (1 Peter 2:21).]

3. BUT FORNICATION AND ALL UNCLEANNES OR COVETOUSNESS, LET IT NOT EVEN BE NAMED AMONG YOU, AS IS FITTING FOR SAINTS; [One of the battles that had to be fought when

Christianity began was the battle against heathenism and all kinds of immoral practices. To teach that prostitution was wrong, was to oppose most of the known world of Paul's day. The false religions not only approved it, but used such as a means of support for their temples and worship, and this opened the door for every kind of sexual sin imaginable. With this kind of background, it was necessary to continually warn Christians to avoid fleshly temptations. Fornication is defined by Thayer as: "a man who prostitutes his body to another's lust for hire, a male prostitute, . . . a man who indulges in unlawful sexual intercourse, a fornicator" (pp. 531,532). Uncleaness in a moral sense as used here describes all kinds of impure, lustful practices. Covetousness is defined as one that has an unlawful desire to have more even to the point of depriving others. Thus, those that practiced these three things had no self-control, and were allowing their lustful flesh to lead them. How could anyone claim to be one of God's saints and practice such? These sins should not even be named among them, and especially never practiced.]

4. NEITHER FILTHINESS, NOR FOOLISH TALKING, NOR COARSE JESTING, WHICH ARE NOT FITTING, BUT RATHER GIVING OF THANKS. [Paul continues his list of corrupt things to avoid. Filthiness is a general word that describes all kinds of wickedness, ugliness, obscenity, and indecency. This word describes the opposite of things that are pure on which Christians should think (Philippians 4:8). Next Paul mentions foolish talking and coarse jesting. As saints, they were to control the way they used their tongues because: "the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles!" (James 3:5). A tongue turned loose in foolish talk and coarse jesting will: "defile the whole body, set on fire the course of nature; and is set on fire by hell" (James 3:6). This same tongue bridled (James 1:26) can give thanks to God, and this is what Paul wishes for them to do. What a contrast between a tongue that is filthy, foolish, and jesting, and one that is giving thanks to God!]

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. [Here, Paul gives a second reason why all these evil practices should be avoided. In addition to the fact that such is not fitting to saints, he reminds them that those that engage in such acts will not inherit the kingdom of Christ. Why? These evils are of the devil, and those that live by them are cut off from God. These represent the world, and make one an enemy to God: "Adulterers and adulteresses! 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 Kingdom of God mentioned here refers to eternal life—heaven! To lose heaven is to lose one's soul eternally (Matthew 25:46).]

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. [There was a religion known as Gnosticism which taught: "what the body does has no effect on the inner man." Thus, they believed that it was fine to engage in all these sexual, unclean acts. However, Paul refers to such teaching as empty words, and warns against being deceived. He further informs them that God will visit His wrath upon these sons of disobedience (sons of the devil). When one sows to the flesh, he WILL reap corruption (Galatians 6:8). Those that taught Gnosticism probably made their doctrine appealing, but they were wrong, and Paul tells these Christians not to partake with them. Deception is still one of the devil's most effective tools (Genesis 3:4).]

8. FOR YOU WERE ONCE DARKNESS, BUT NOW YOU ARE LIGHT IN THE LORD. WALK AS CHILDREN OF LIGHT [To help these Christians see where they WERE compared to where they are NOW, Paul uses a common illustration—darkness and light. God and His kingdom are always referred to as light; the devil and his kingdom to darkness: "He has delivered us from the power of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love" (Colossians 1:13). The apostle Peter referred to how Christ: "called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9). When one is converted, he changes from darkness to light, and becomes among those that Christ says are the light of the world (Matthew 5:14). Should these Christians revert to the evil practices (already named in this chapter), they would give up light for darkness—they would give up Christ the light of the world (John 8:12). They would turn from truth (John 14:6) to the father of all lies (John 8:44). When Paul referred to their past life, notice that they were not just IN DARKNESS, but WERE DARKNESS. The world where Christians live has darkness on every hand, but they don't have to let the darkness inside (Romans 12:2). The only way to keep darkness out of one's life is to "walk as children of light." This means to: "walk in the light as He is in the light" (1 John 1:7). He didn't say, "SIT as children of light," but rather "WALK as children of light!"]

9. (FOR THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IS IN ALL GOODNESS, RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND TRUTH), 10. PROVING WHAT IS ACCEPTABLE TO THE LORD. [When one walks as children of light, he

will be bearing the fruit of the Spirit or fruit of light. Instead of those wicked things mentioned in (vv. 3,4), they will have goodness, righteousness, and truth. Truly, this contrast is as different as light from darkness. The unrighteous things of darkness will keep one out of the kingdom of light, but the fruit of the Spirit (light) will be "acceptable to the Lord." These three things: "goodness, righteousness, and truth," represent God and His word. The fruit of the Spirit is: "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (Galatians 6:22,23). After listing these, Paul adds: "Against such there is no law" (v.23), and this is why they are acceptable to the Lord.]

11. AND HAVE NO FELLOWSHIP WITH THE UNFRUITFUL WORKS OF DARKNESS, BUT RATHER EXPOSE THEM. [It is impossible to have the fruit of the Spirit and the works of darkness dwelling in one's life at the same time. Since they have chosen light as their way of life to please God, they must NOT have fellowship with the works of darkness. Such works are called: "unfruitful," in the sense of not bearing fruit for goodness, righteousness, and truth. The only fruit born by the works of darkness is fruit for the devil, but as to God and righteousness, they are unfruitful. In addition to avoiding fellowship with the "works of darkness," they are to go a step further and expose them. This will warn others about their "unfruitfulness," and will point out the dangers of spiritual death (Romans 6:23). The devil tries to make the "works of darkness" appear as light, but this is a lie that must be exposed. The wages of sin has always been, and still is, DEATH (Romans 6:23), and will trap millions. The devil appears as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14), goes around seeking to devour (1 Peter 5:8), has been a sinner from the beginning (1 John 3:8), and needs daily to be exposed.]

12. FOR IT IS SHAMEFUL EVEN TO SPEAK OF THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE DONE BY THEM IN SECRET. [Paul continues his warnings to these brethren to keep them pure for God. They are to: (1) refrain fellowship with darkness, (2) expose the author of darkness (the devil), and (3) refuse to even speak of the deeds of darkness, because they are so shameful. Since the works done by those following the devil are so shameful, they are done in secret: "men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John 3:19). Therefore, a Christian should not contaminate his mind with such filth. This is one of the ways to: "Abstain from every form of evil" (1 Thessalonians 5:22), and to avoid being influenced by those that are evil (1 Corinthians 15:33).]

13. BUT ALL THINGS THAT ARE EXPOSED ARE MADE

MANIFEST BY THE LIGHT, FOR WHATEVER MAKES MANIFEST IS LIGHT. [Only Christ, and those that follow Him, can expose these evil ones of darkness, because of light (John 8:12; Matthew 5:14). One of the characteristics of light is to reveal or expose. Isn't there a vast difference between things at night and day? In darkness we stumble over objects, lose our way, have fears from certain sounds, but in the light all become visible. When Jesus the Light appeared, sin was everywhere, especially all who were in darkness but Christ exposed them. The reason why many hated Christ and His followers was because they exposed their sins (John 3:19), and this is still true today! The Scribes and Pharisees hated Jesus so much because His light exposed their hypocrisy (Matthew 15:7?). When one is accustomed to darkness only, the light becomes very uncomfortable!]

14. THEREFORE HE SAYS: "AWAKE, YOU WHO SLEEP, ARISE FROM THE DEAD, AND CHRIST WILL GIVE YOU LIGHT." [We are not sure whether Paul was quoting from the Old Testament (Isaiah 9:2; 26:19; 52:1; 60:1), a well known hymn of his day, or a quotation that had been handed down by word of mouth. Regardless of the source, it is a beautiful thought. Both sleep and dead represent a state of inactivity in the service of the Lord. Those in darkness are dead and inactive, and Paul does not want the Ephesian Christians to be in such a state. He also gave the same type of instruction to the Romans: "And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed" (Romans 13:11). Christ will not give light to the spiritually dead which sleep, but if they will only come forth to action, He will gladly give them light.]

15. SEE THEN THAT YOU WALK CIRCUMSPECTLY, NOT AS FOOLS BUT AS WISE, 16. REDEEMING THE TIME, BECAUSE THE DAYS ARE EVIL. [Once again Paul refers to the figure of walking. One can choose to walk in darkness and find disappointment, foolishness and death, or he can choose to walk cautiously in the light. Two divisions are continually presented: darkness, light; fleshly works, fruit of the Spirit; fools or wise. To walk wisely, one must walk circumspectly (carefully). Paul is actually calling upon them to live carefully and wisely! They must take advantage of every opportunity to use time wisely since they are living in evil days. This is true of all generations, since evil is ever present, and life is so brief (James 4:14; John 14:1,2). Many opportunities knock only once, and to neglect them is to fail forever. We cannot go back and relive our past, but we can take advantage of the present. Paul regretted his past when persecuting the church (Acts 8:3; 1 Corinthians 15:9; Gala-

tians 1:3), but this did not stop him from pressing onward for Christ (Philippians 3:14). This is the kind of wisdom that Paul wants the Ephesian Christians to walk in as they redeem the time.]

17. THEREFORE DO NOT BE UNWISE, BUT UNDERSTAND WHAT THE WILL OF THE LORD IS. [Now Paul gives more specific details as to the kind of wisdom he desired for them. In short, they were to understand the will of the Lord. How can one walk in light if he does not understand God's will? The Lord's will can be understood only by teaching and study (2 Timothy 2:15), and searching (Acts 17:11). Paul had already prayed that the eyes of their understanding might be enlightened so that they could know of hope (Ephesians 1:18), and here he calls upon these brethren to understand the will of the Lord. Jesus taught that only those that do the will of the Father will enter the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 7:21), and before one can "do the will," he must be taught (Romans 10:14,15; Matthew 28:19,20), and understand. Jesus said to the multitude: "Hear and understand" (Matthew 15:10). There were those of Christ's day that refused to understand (Matthew 13:13). Before Philip could help the Ethiopian eunuch, he had to first inquire: "Do you understand what you are reading?" (Acts 8:30).]

18. AND DO NOT BE DRUNK WITH WINE, IN WHICH IS DISSIPATION; BUT BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT, [Drunkenness is condemned in both the Old Testament and the New (Proverbs 20:1; 23:29-35; Isaiah 5:11; 5:22; Romans 13:13; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Galatians 5:21). Paul wishes to remind the Ephesians that drunkenness will bring dissipation. Instead of helping them (as millions suppose), it will destroy both their bodies and souls. The prodigal son supposed that wild living (which no doubt included drunkenness) would help him, but later learned that such had destroyed his happiness and self-respect (Luke 15:11-32). Instead of being filled with wine, Paul calls upon them to be filled with the Spirit. Both of these represent a certain kind of "being high," but the thrill from drunkenness is short lived, and dissipates, while the thrill of being full of the Spirit brings contentment and eternal happiness. Being filled with the Spirit is God's way of bringing happiness, and is spiritual—being filled with wine is the devil's way of destroying body, soul, and mind, and is fleshly.]

19. SPEAKING TO ONE ANOTHER IN PSALMS AND HYMNS AND SPIRITUAL SONGS, SINGING AND MAKING MELODY IN YOUR HEART TO THE LORD, [At this point, Paul seems to be reminded of how Spirit-filled Christians will react. The drunk person may mum-

ble, moan, and curse, but the Christian that is filled with the Spirit will want to sing from his heart to the Lord. The drunkard will speak, but fail to understand because his mind is intoxicated; however, the Christian will speak (with understanding) to one another and to God while praising Him in songs. What a contrast between these two! Since Paul mentions: "speaking to one another," he is referring to the occasions when Christians are assembled together, and not to an individual singing alone. Singing "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs," represent one of the ways that Christians are taught in the assembly. Those that refuse to sing, refuse to teach! He specifies the kind of songs, and note that all three types are spiritual in nature. They were for the purpose of teaching and praising God from the heart. The melody is to be made in their hearts (no mechanical instrument is mentioned, since such was added centuries later). In fact, singing is mentioned in all New Testament references (Matthew 26:30; Mark 14:26; Acts 16:25; Romans 15:9; 1 Corinthians 14:15; Colossians 3:16; James 5:13; Revelation 15:3).]

20. GIVING THANKS ALWAYS FOR ALL THINGS TO GOD THE FATHER IN THE NAME OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, 21. SUBMITTING TO ONE ANOTHER IN THE FEAR OF GOD. [There are so many wonderful things that we admire about Paul as we study his life, but one of these that always appears is thankfulness. He thanked God for everything that happened in his life, even the things that hurt him: "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God" (Philippians 4:6; 1 Thessalonians 5:18). It is also the will of God that all disciples be thankful, therefore, Paul wishes that they give thanks for all things to God through the name of Jesus. This is the only way that Christians can be like Jesus, because He was thankful. When He called upon God to raise Lazarus, He: "lifted up His eyes and said, 'Father, I thank You that You have heard me. And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may believe that You sent Me'" (John 11:41,42). Jesus noticed that only one of the ten lepers healed returned to thank Him. He asked: "were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine?" (Luke 17:11-19). Where would you be classified, with the ONE, or with the NINE? Since Jesus is the only mediator between man and God (1 Timothy 2:5), all prayers and thanksgivings must be in His name (John 14:13,14). These prayers must also be accompanied with the proper respect to one another based on the fear of God. In both the Old and New Testaments, the basic principle has been the right relationship to God, and to one's neighbor (Matthew 22:35-40), and when this is done, our lives will radiate Christian beauty.]

22. WIVES, SUBMIT TO YOUR OWN HUSBANDS, AS TO THE LORD. [It has been God's plan from the beginning that the wife must be in subjection to her husband. Why? Paul tells us: "For man is not from woman, but woman from man. Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man" (1 Corinthians 11:8,9). It would be just as easy to turn time back and reverse the order of creation as it would be to change the law of submission for the wife. Here, Paul calls upon the wife to submit "as to the Lord." He is using the relationship of the church to Christ and His headship as an example. Thus, the wife is called upon to submit to her husband the same way the church is to submit to Christ. If one can remove wife submission from this passage, one can remove submission of the church to Christ. If one is false, so is the other. What is meant by submission? In its simplest form, the wife allows her husband to be the head. There is no way that a husband can carry out his God-given assignment without a submissive wife! In regard to the command of submission, there are three types of wives: (1) Those that deny plain Bible teaching. They don't want to submit, and therefore, they just reject His word. (2) Those that believe the word, but fail to practice it. They would never suggest that God's word is not binding. (3) Those that believe the word and spend their lives practicing it. These may fall short, but they continue to try. Only this third group will please God. Submission means that she helps him in life and in making decisions, but never rules over him. A good husband will honor her input into decision making, but she must not force her decisions. Helping (without ruling) is part of her responsibility as a help meet. Two heads are better than one in marriage if God's laws are followed. Submission does not make a wife of less importance, but rather increases her value. A submissive wife knows her place and importance, and does her work well.]

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. [When God gave the responsibility of headship to husbands, He could have chosen other arrangements. He could have made the woman the head of man, or He could have made them equal in authority, but He chose the husband for this role. However, this headship comes to a man with grave responsibility and deep love for his wife. Husbands are given a perfect model to follow in Christ as Head and Savior of His body (church). Christ will never do anything to harm the church, but will save it. Husbands as head, will never do anything to harm their wives, but will have as their mission to save, love, and protect them. They will save them from physical harm, from attacks on character, from unhappiness (when possible), and from spiritual death. Jesus loved

the church enough to die for it (Acts 20:28; Ephesians 5:25), and the husband will strive for this kind of love (1 Corinthians 13).]

24. THEREFORE, JUST AS THE CHURCH IS SUBJECT TO CHRIST, SO LET THE WIVES BE TO THEIR OWN HUSBANDS IN EVERYTHING. [Since husbands have such an awesome responsibility to care for their wives, Paul again calls upon the wives to be subject to their own husbands in everything. When the church refuses to submit to its head, Christ (Colossians 1:18), it becomes an unfaithful church, and the same can be said of an unsubmitive wife. She is not just to submit in things that she likes, or in areas where she agrees, but “in everything.” Such submission is not a necessary evil. Although many wives may not recognize such, God intends that submission to the husbands as head is for the wife’s benefit. She is under his protection, and when this is carried out the way God intended, she will be happy.]

25. HUSBANDS, LOVE YOUR WIVES, JUST AS CHRIST ALSO LOVED THE CHURCH AND GAVE HIMSELF FOR IT, [All actions of the husband will be based on love. No headship from a husband will ever please God unless it is done in love, “as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it.” To what extent will a good husband love his wife? Just like Christ, he will die for his wife! One might ask, “How does this great principle of love show itself in actual practice?” This is another way of asking what is Paul’s idea of love? The answer is found in 1 Corinthians 13. Here he shows in action what love is, and what love will do. When a husband loves his wife like Christ loves the church, all these characteristics will be present. Have you ever heard of a wife that complains about her husband’s headship when this kind of love is present?]

26. THAT HE MIGHT SANCTIFY AND CLEANSE IT WITH THE WASHING OF WATER BY THE WORD, [Even though Paul is teaching especially on the husband/wife relationship, he inserts (for the purpose of illustration) a beautiful truth about Christ and His church. When Christ died on the cross, He purchased His church with His blood (Acts 20:28), which also made possible cleansing. Once the sacrifice was made, how does Christ sanctify and cleanse the church? Paul says: (1) With the washing of water. (2) By the word. The washing of water refers to baptism since this is the command that a penitent believer obeys to be saved (Mark 16:16), to have sins remitted (Acts 2:38), and to obey Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6:3,4). Paul could remember when he was a penitent believer waiting in Damascus to be told what to do (Acts 22:10). He could also remember what the preacher Ananias told him: “And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash

away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). How can baptism cleanse? Does it wash away fleshly dirt? Peter answers: "There is also an antitype which now saves us, namely baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God)" (1 Peter 3:21). Baptism washes and causes cleansing because it is the act that puts the sinner into Christ where His blood cleanses! "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" (Galatians 3:26,27). Paul also mentions that the church is cleansed by the word. This refers to the gospel of Jesus Christ which relates the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). All in Christ's church have been born of "water and of the Spirit" (John 3:5), and this birth takes place by the word. "Having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever" (1 Peter 1:23). Since Christ went all the way for the church, the husband should have the greatest interest possible for his wife.]

27. THAT HE MIGHT PRESENT IT TO HIMSELF A GLORIOUS CHURCH, NOT HAVING SPOT OR WRINKLE OR ANY SUCH THING, BUT THAT IT SHOULD BE HOLY AND WITHOUT BLEMISH. [Paul continues his description of the church that Christ sanctified and cleansed by water and the word. Christ wants His church to be a glorious church without spot, wrinkle or such thing, and without blemish. Since Paul is illustrating the husband/wife relationship, it is wondered if he has in mind a bride presented to her husband in all purity. He has discussed how the husband is to be the head of the wife, like the Lord is the head of the church; that the wife is to submit to her husband as to the Lord; how the husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church even to the point of dying, and now the figure is continued by referring to a glorious church unsoiled. Again, what a perfect model of the church used to teach the beauty of marriage! When there is mutual respect by husband and wife as to God's laws, such relationship will be beautiful like the spiritual bride (the church) which Christ presents to Himself. When one becomes spiritually married to Christ (Romans 7:4), he is a part of this glorious church without blemish. Such a relationship should continue in purity before God. The same is true in regard to the husband and wife, and the greatest joy possible will be found.]

28. SO HUSBANDS OUGHT TO LOVE THEIR OWN WIVES AS THEIR OWN BODIES; HE WHO LOVES HIS WIFE LOVES HIMSELF. [After looking at the beautiful church which Christ presents to Himself, Paul mentions again the husband and wife. Love is the key to the church of our Lord with all its beauty, and the same must be true between

husbands and wives. The love that Paul calls for here is agape love—love that considers the best for the one loved. Only when this kind of love is present can a husband love his wife as his own body. As a general rule, we want what is best for our physical bodies. When sick, we seek medical help, when cold or hot, we seek comfort, and when hungry we obtain food. It is so natural to love ourselves that Christ used this kind of love as a standard by which we are to love our neighbors (Matthew 19:19). Paul wishes the husband to become one with his wife to the point that when he loves her he is loving himself. Just as we seek the best things for ourselves, the husband that loves his wife properly will seek the best for her.]

29. FOR NO ONE EVER HATED HIS OWN FLESH, BUT NOURISHES AND CHERISHES IT, JUST AS THE LORD DOES THE CHURCH. [To make this point more clear, Paul carries it further by pointing out that it is natural to love one's own flesh even to the point of feeding and caring continually for it. The Lord shows the same concern for the church, and such should serve as an example to the husband. The church is spiritually nourished and cherished by the Lord to the point that nothing can destroy it, not even the gates of hades (Matthew 16:18). When this kind of love is present, all other problems can be solved by both husband and wife.]

30. FOR WE ARE MEMBERS OF HIS BODY, OF HIS FLESH AND OF HIS BONES. [Before Paul approaches the one flesh between husbands and wives as taught in (Genesis 2:24), he establishes the Christian's relationship to Christ's body (the church). The "we" refers to Christians, and represents members of His body, flesh, and bones. What a close relationship to Christ, and to other Christians! This is a figure of unity, cooperation, concern, and love. This figure is discussed in full detail in Romans 12, and 1 Corinthians 12. When Eve was presented to Adam after being made from his side, he said: "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man" (Genesis 2:23). This same type of unity and oneness is used to show the closeness of those in Christ's church.]

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." [After discussing the oneness of members of Christ's Church, Paul returns to the oneness of the husband and wife. At this point, he quotes (Genesis 2:24), the first recorded law for marriage. There are three important demands mentioned in this verse for marriage: (1) Leave his father and mother. (2) Be joined to his wife. (3) Become one

flesh. To leave his father and mother means that he is to begin his own home. The man/woman that leaves father and mother still loves them and respects their faithful teaching, but they must leave to establish their own home. Happiness in marriage cannot be found when one runs back home every time there is a ripple on the sea of marriage bliss! Mistakes will be made, but these should be (as a general rule) worked out by the couple as they grow deeper in their love. To be joined to his wife means that they stay together, because they shall be one flesh. What a great concept from God! This is one of the miracles of His creation that man and woman are so made that they can become one flesh. How many married couples really believe this? Suppose we have an audience of people and bring before them a well developed man. We ask the audience, would it be alright to cut this man's arm off? Or, how do you feel about cutting his body in half? If they thought you were serious, there would be a mob fight to prevent such. However, in the case of a married couple that has become one flesh, they can be divided without too much concern. In God's sight, however, He sees a couple as ONE just as surely as He sees the oneness of an individual body!]

32. THIS IS A GREAT MYSTERY, BUT I SPEAK CONCERNING CHRIST AND THE CHURCH. [It is obvious that Paul is teaching a dual lesson—the oneness of the church and the oneness of husband and wife. The oneness of the flesh between man and woman helps illustrate the oneness of the spiritual body of Christ (His church). Even though there is much said about Christ's spiritual body, there are still many mysteries. Paul seems to be teaching that the church and the marriage relationship can both be better understood by considering them together. As he has just discussed in this chapter, there are many similarities between the two. Christ and His church serve as the perfect example to illustrate a faithful Christian marriage.]

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. [In spite of the mysteries that might be associated, love from the husband toward his wife, and respect from the wife toward her husband will win over all mysteries. When there is love and respect, all other facets of marriage will find their proper place. The idea of marriage is from God, and when His rules for such are followed, there will be happiness, but when such are neglected, there will be pain. His laws for marriage are important just as His laws are essential for the church. What could bring forth a more satisfying life than to respect and obey the laws for both.]

CHAPTER 6

1. CHILDREN, OBEY YOUR PARENTS IN THE LORD, FOR THIS IS RIGHT. [The home does not stop with the husband and wife relationship, but is expanded to include children. The first commandment given to Adam and Eve after God made them in His image was: "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it;" (Genesis 1:28). In Genesis 4:1, "Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain." Therefore, rules for the home must include both parents and children. Paul begins with children, and calls upon them to obey their parents. Obedience is a way of life that God demands toward Himself and others in authority. This obedience is to be done "in the Lord." When the parents are directing their children in the Lord, and when children respond in the Lord, all will be well. Such is right because the principle of obedience comes from God. King Saul of the Old Testament thought that offering sacrifices were more important than obedience, but Samuel informed him: "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams" (1 Samuel 15:22). This is one of the ways that children please the Lord. Paul also wrote: "Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord" (Colossians 3:20). Just think of the children that have gone wrong and dissipated their lives because they refused to obey their parents!]

2. "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." [To reinforce the importance of the obedience of children, Paul quotes from Deuteronomy 5:16. As Moses reviewed the ten commandments for Israel, one of the commandments promised things to go well in the land which the Lord was giving them—it was the commandment to honor father and mother as the Lord commanded. This commandment is singled out as the first one with promise. What is the promise? That it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth. To those that love the Lord and life, this is a very important promise. Godly parents are not perfect, and will occasionally make mistakes, but as a general rule, they will instruct their children for good. Thousands of graves over the centuries testify that children's lives have been cut short because

they did not obey their parents. At the time, strict discipline from parents seems wrong and unnecessary; however, the years show the truth. The parable of the prodigal son illustrates this principle. The young man that left his father and home thought that he didn't need his father's protection and care. He thought that things would be better out in the world living a sinful life, but in time: "he came to himself" (Luke 15:17), and saw the true picture of his life.]

4. AND YOU, FATHERS, DO NOT PROVOKE YOUR CHILDREN TO WRATH, BUT BRING THEM UP IN THE TRAINING AND ADMONITION OF THE LORD. [Before children can obey and honor their parents in the Lord, it is essential for their parents to be under the direction of the Lord. Godly parents pass on to their children what the Lord wishes—they discipline for the Lord. Just as Paul gave the headship to the husband, he now gives the responsibility of discipline to the father. This, no doubt, includes the mother, but all is done under the direction of the father. He is to discipline, but not in the wrong manner (Proverbs 13:24; 29:15,17). He must not provoke the child that he is disciplining to wrath. This is not to say that the child will enjoy discipline, or that he/she will not become angry, but such will be only temporary due to the pain of punishment. However, to provoke to wrath means to so discipline that hate, revenge, and distrust are promoted. When love is not present—love for God, and love for the children, there will be wrath! The key to unwrathful discipline is found in Paul's statement: "bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord." The children that see the Lord working through their parents, and that are trained by the many principles of the Lord, will sooner or later understand the discipline. Instead of being provoked to WRATH, they will be admonished to LOVE. With this godly attitude, the parents call upon their children to obey: "My son, hear the instruction of your father, and do not forsake the law of your mother; for they will be graceful ornaments on your head, and chains about your neck" (Proverbs 1:8,9). "My son, keep your father's command, and do not forsake the law of your mother. Bind them continually upon your heart; tie them around your neck. When you roam, they will lead you; when you sleep, they will keep you; and when you awake, they will speak with you" (Proverbs 6:20-22). When God's word is obeyed, all will be beautiful for both parents and children.]

5. SERVANTS, BE OBEDIENT TO THOSE WHO ARE YOUR MASTERS ACCORDING TO THE FLESH, WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING, IN SINCERITY OF HEART, AS TO CHRIST; [Even though Paul may have disliked the concept of masters and slaves, such was a fact of life in the world where he lived. Therefore, he felt obligated to give spiritual instruction to those in such positions. Since many households had parents, children, and slaves, he continues his teaching on having a relationship that will please God.

The law gave masters authority over their slaves, and slaves were legally bound to obey. When some slaves became Christians, they may have felt that they were not obligated to obey their masters. Paul implies that they can have a spiritual master and also a fleshly master, and to disobey one's earthly master could bring serious trouble, therefore, obey them, "with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart." The standard by which they are to obey is "as to Christ!" Please learn, that in all of our earthly relationships (whether in the days of slavery, or as an employer or employee) Christ must be the standard to follow. When one's heart is sincere and following the Lord, the earthly things will work out: "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28).]

6. NOT WITH EYESERVICE, AS MEN-PLEASERS, BUT AS SERVANTS OF CHRIST, DOING THE WILL OF GOD FROM THE HEART, 7. WITH GOOD WILL DOING SERVICE, AS TO THE LORD, AND NOT TO MEN, [This great apostle does not stop with asking slaves to obey, but specifies for them to obey "as servants of Christ," and with fear toward God (Colossians 3:22). With Christ as the standard, they will obey even if the master is not kind and good. The apostle Peter gives this command: "Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh. For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully" (1 Peter 2:18,19; Titus 2:9). When Christ is their model, they will obey when the master is watching, and when he is absent. As they serve their earthly master, such service will be as though Christ were their earthly master. Their service will look good to the eye, and will even please men, but such will be true because they serve Christ and God from the heart (Titus 2:9,10). Paul is condemning eyeservice and men-pleasers ONLY! These work when the master is watching, but when they can get by with fraud, laziness, and deceit, they do so. This is not true with the Christian servant. They: "Have regard for good things in the sight of all men" (Romans 12:17). They follow the rule: "And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance" (Colossians 3:23,24).]

8. KNOWING THAT WHATEVER GOOD ANYONE DOES, HE WILL RECEIVE THE SAME FROM THE LORD, WHETHER HE IS A SLAVE OR FREE. [To give the Christian slaves even a greater incentive to serve as "servants of Christ," he reminds them that the Lord sees and will reward good, with good. Being a slave must have been difficult, and especially when the master was not Christian in attitude, and therefore, it must have been difficult to do good under such circumstances. However, remembering that their good will

reach to the Lord of heaven would help them bear the evil. They needed to keep in mind at all times, that they were really serving the Lord rather than men (Colossians 3:22-24), and that one day they: "must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad" (2 Corinthians 5:10). This fact is true whether one is a slave or free!]

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. [When Paul mentioned the words "slave or free," he was reminded of the master's attitude toward the slave. Just as the slave must be honest, and doing good, the master has the same obligation. The slave has been reminded by Paul that he follows Christ, and now the master must remember that he has a master in heaven. The master over slaves will have to answer before the same Judge, and there will be no partiality shown. We should always remember that whatever our standing in life, whether rich or poor, educated or uneducated, employer or employee, we will face God, and there is no partiality with Him. Those that are obedient and faithful to the Lord will be saved, and those that rebel in sin will be lost (Matthew 25:31-34).]

10. FINALLY, MY BRETHREN, BE STRONG IN THE LORD AND IN THE POWER OF HIS MIGHT. [The word "finally" lets his readers know that he is getting ready to close this letter, and wishes to leave them something very special. They are his brethren, and love motivates Paul to warn them against dangers and to especially protect them against the enemy of God —the devil! Such love motivates Paul to call upon them to "be strong in the Lord." They are not to trust their own strength, but that of the Lord because he refers them to "the power of His might." God's power is the only power that can have any true resistance against the devil. Those that are stripped of truth, righteousness, the word, faith, salvation, and the gospel, do not have a chance to win. Therefore, before closing this message to his beloved brethren, he will arm them with God's armor.]

11. PUT ON THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD, THAT YOU MAY BE ABLE TO STAND AGAINST THE WILES OF THE DEVIL. [The armor referred to by Paul includes all the parts needed to protect a fighting soldier. Since Paul was (at this writing) in a Roman prison with soldiers guarding (inside and out), it is easy to see why this figure was so impressive to him. Guided by the Holy Spirit, he must have seen clearly how Christians must also be protected against their enemy. The WHOLE armor of God is mentioned. If only one part is missing, this is the place where the enemy will attack. Thus, this is the only way (having the whole armor) that one can stand against the devil.

Next, Paul tells them something about the devil as an enemy—he is deceitful and uses cunning devices. The devil is a murderer, without truth, a liar, and the father of lies (John 8:44), full of deceit, enemy of righteousness, and perverter of the right way (Acts 13:10), transforms himself into an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14), and walks about like a roaring lion, seeking to devour (1 Peter 5:8). Truly, God's whole armor is needed to stand against him. Christians are called upon, not to run or retreat from the devil, but rather to stand (with God's whole armor) and fight.]

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. [Paul identifies the enemy of the Christian—it's not a physical battle, but a spiritual one. In Paul's day, it was believed that the air was filled with evil powers, darkness, evil spirits, and wickedness, and that the devil was the father of all evil. Again, only the whole armor of God with His power could win over these evil powers of the air in heavenly places. It is so important that we recognize our enemies, and be aware of their strength. Only then can we prepare for battle. Therefore, Paul wants these Christians to know what they are facing.]

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. [This is the second time Paul had reminded them to put on, or to take the whole armor of God. However, the first time that he mentioned its importance, they were not fully aware of its importance. After giving a powerful description of the enemy, he says: "therefore take up the whole armor of God." A stone must not be left unturned if you are to stand—"having done all," because Satan and his many servants are powerful.]

14. STAND THEREFORE, HAVING GIRDED YOUR WAIST WITH TRUTH, HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, [At this point, Paul begins naming the various parts of the armor that must be on if they are to stand. He begins with the waist being *girded with truth*. The soldier of Paul's day wore loose flowing robes, and when in battle it was necessary to use this special belt to bind such clothing tightly to their bodies. This belt affected the movement of the whole body. The Christian must be bound tightly with truth. Just as the devil is the father of all lies (John 8:44), Christ is truth (John 14:6). Truth allows one to freely move about within the bounds of God's will without being bound with lies. "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). Where is truth found? In the word of the Lord: "Sanctify them by your truth. Your word is truth" (John 17:17). Truth is so important that Jesus was born for the purpose of bear-

ing witness to the truth (John 18:37). Because of this purpose, Pilate asked, "What is truth?" (John 18:38). There is no hope of winning over the devil without having one's waist girded with truth. After the girdle of truth, Paul moves on to the **breastplate of righteousness**. Even though a Christian soldier must depend on righteousness, he must also seek to live righteousness in his life. In its simplest sense, righteousness means doing right as approved by God's will. When Paul defended his actions while among the church at Corinth, included in the list of virtues he wrote: "by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left" (2 Corinthians 6:7). One of the things that Paul wanted for the Philippian church was that they might be filled: "with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God" (Philippians 1:11). Righteousness is something that must be pursued, or else sin will rule one's life. Thus Paul, wrote to Timothy, "But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness. . ." (1 Timothy 6:11), and asked Timothy to personally: "Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, . . ." (2 Timothy 2:22). The apostle Peter gave the sum total of redemption, both on the part of God and man in these words: "who himself bore our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed" (1 Peter 2:24). There is no way that a person can be one of God's children without the breastplate of righteousness! "If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him" (1 John 2:29). ". . .Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, . . ." (1 John 3:29). When Paul thought of heaven, his crown of life, he referred to such as: "the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day" (2 Timothy 4:8). Thus, a Christian should never be found not wearing the breastplate of righteousness!]

15. AND HAVING SHOD YOUR FEET WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE; [The hobnailed sandals of the Roman soldier suggested to Paul the gospel of peace. The sandals of the soldier served two purposes: (1) The proper foundation needed to stand firmly during a battle. (2) The proper protection needed when marching, moving about in battle, and going forth to fight. One of the things that kept a good soldier of the Lord fighting was the peace that came from the power of the death, burial and resurrection. This was the message of hope and peace that Paul preached in every city (1 Corinthians 15:1-4), that which represented the "power of God to salvation for everyone who believes" (Romans 1:16), and the essential thing that Jesus commanded to be taught to the world to bring salvation from sin (Mark 16:16). Feet shod with sandals are prepared for going! The gospel is a message that must go, as the first two letters of the word Gospel suggest. Therefore, whether the Christian soldier stands prepared to fight, or goes forward in pursuit, his feet must be shod with the preparation of the gospel of

peace.]

16. ABOVE ALL, TAKING THE SHIELD OF FAITH WITH WHICH YOU WILL BE ABLE TO QUENCH ALL THE FIERY DARTS OF THE WICKED ONE. [Paul now gets to the part of the armor that is designed to cover and protect all the other parts as well as the body of the warrior. In Paul's day, there were two shields available—the small shield, and the long shield that covered and protected most of the body. In this verse, the author uses the Greek word *thureos* which describes the longer shield and with great confidence declares that such will be able to war off the attacks of the wicked one. What is this overall protection needed by all Christians? It is the "SHIELD OF FAITH." To please God and to solicit His protection, one: "must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6). Just as the soldier must be actively using his shield, a Christian must have a faith that works by love (Galatians 5:6), because faith without works is dead (James 2:17). This shield of faith sustains us against the attacks of the devil. Those that have enough faith to stand and fight evil, will be able to win. Paul describes the enemy (the devil) as shooting "fiery darts," which represent a very destructive type of weapon. However, the shield of faith can quench ALL the fiery darts of the wicked one. These long shields were constructed of wood, and overlaid with leather. The arrows were dipped in pitch, and set afire just before shooting them. When the fiery arrows stuck into the leather of the shield, they were extinguished and the warriors were protected. Paul wanted the same success with spiritual soldiers, and assured them that with faith they could win. Any method of attack used by the devil can be applied to these fiery darts, but it seems that the most destructive ones would come from: sins of the tongue, disappointments, selfishness, and impure attitudes. Especially, those attacks on faith, Christianity, and God would be included. Every age has had its scoffers to destroy faith. Peter warns: "knowing this first: the scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, 'Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation' " (2 Peter 3:3,4). However, those that have on their armor (with the shield of faith in place), will be able to stand.]

17. AND TAKE THE HELMET OF SALVATION, AND THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT, WHICH IS THE WORD OF GOD; [Other parts of the armor are listed as Paul mentions "the helmet of salvation." There are two senses in which God's armored soldier wears the helmet of salvation. (1) He is assured victory. The attacks of the wicked one will be futile because God will save His children from death and defeat. No soldier for Christ has ever gone through the hot battles that Paul experienced. However, at the end of the fight he could say: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have

kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day" (2 Timothy 4:7,8). The helmet of salvation brought him salvation from all fights. (2) The helmet of salvation also represents salvation in the sense of eternal life. Since Jesus saved Paul, the chief of sinners (1 Timothy 1:15) from all sins that destroy, there was salvation laid up for him in the form of a "crown of righteousness." Therefore, salvation is an incentive for all that fight satan to fight to the end knowing that those who continue faithfully to the end will win (1 Corinthians 15:58; Galatians 6:9). Next, Paul mentions "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" in the Christian armor. It is not enough just to stand protected defensively, but one must aggressively fight with the sword. When the devil met Christ in the wilderness duel (Matthew 4:1-11), our Lord was well protected against evil since he was the perfect Son of God, but He didn't stand silently until the devil stopped fighting! Jesus used the sword of the Spirit, the word of God. He met the devil's attack each time with the words: "It is written." As Jesus quoted the appropriate scriptures, both edges of the sword were cutting (Hebrews 4:12). If Christ had used the wisdom of the world or men, he would have been defeated because the sword of the Spirit (the word of God) is the only effective weapon. Only His words are eternal: "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will by no means pass away" (Matthew 24:35). This is the ONE and ONLY effective weapon for the Christian soldier today, and is therefore, a very important part of the armor.]

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—[This is a part of the armor that is often overlooked, but is essential for success. It is not enough just to let God speak to the Christian through His word, but the faithful Christian must speak to God in prayer. God calls through His word, and His call must be returned through prayer. So much of Paul's success as a winning soldier had depended on prayer. His epistles ring out with his prayer life, and his desire for the prayers of others (Romans 15:30-32; 2 Corinthians 1:11; Ephesians 6:19,20; Colossians 4:3,4; 1 Thessalonians 5:25; 2 Thessalonians 3:1,2). Paul believed, along with James, that: "The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much" (James 5:16). Notice, also, Paul wanted them to pray in the Spirit. Paul firmly believed in the help of the Spirit when he prayed: "Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Romans 8:26). To win over the devil, one must not just say a prayer, but must be watchful to persevere to the end. This implies that one might win over satan for a while, and then later (through lethargy) fall. True prayer keeps the whole armor available and the soldier alert to the end. "But the end of all things is at hand;

therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers" (1 Peter 4:7). Peter, James, and John succumb to sleep, and failed to watch with Jesus for only one hour. Jesus implied that such yielding to temptation could have been avoided had they prayed: "Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matthew 26:41). The prayers, that Paul suggests, should be a part of the armor "for all the saints." It is so easy to show partiality in praying! We may remember those Christians that we know personally and that are good friends. Yes, they need our prayers, but so do all others. Therefore, we should: "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6,7).]

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, [Paul not only wanted them (the Ephesian Christians) to pray that as good soldiers they might stand and be watchful to the end, but he desired that they pray for him in his ministry of the gospel. This is an unselfish request! So many prayers are: "Lord, give me!" It is not wrong to ask for personal blessings, but our prayers must not stop here. Paul felt the weight of responsibility to preach the gospel (1 Corinthians 9:16). However, it was not enough just to preach the gospel, but he wanted to speak the gospel "boldly." Why? Because there was a great mystery that needed to be revealed. Paul wanted the world to know that Jesus died, was buried, and arose from the dead so that both Jews and Gentiles might be saved and be one in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:28). The gospel to the Gentiles was not a popular subject, and it took courage to go against the opposition of the Jews. Thus, Paul felt the need of prayer so that he could open his mouth and speak boldly. Today, society is more interested in entertainment, sports, and materialism than the gospel, but this must NOT keep Christians from spreading the "power of God to salvation" (Romans 1:16), for the gospel represents lost humanity's only hope in eternity.]

20. FOR WHICH I AM AN AMBASSADOR IN CHAINS; THAT IN IT I MAY SPEAK BOLDLY, AS I OUGHT TO SPEAK. [Keep in mind that Paul is writing this letter from prison, and feels that he is the Lord's ambassador. He's not in prison for murder, theft, or insurrection, but because he dared to preach Christ. Shortly after he came to this Roman prison, he called the Jewish leaders together to inform them of his plight. Among other things, he said: "For this reason therefore I have called for you, to see you and speak with you, because for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain" (Acts 28:20). Therefore, he came to bear the word (the gospel) of his Lord! With such an important mission before Paul, he wanted the Ephesian Christians to pray that he

might: "speak boldly, as I ought to speak."]

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; 22. WHOM I HAVE SENT TO YOU FOR THIS VERY PURPOSE, THAT YOU MAY KNOW OUR AFFAIRS, AND THAT HE MAY COMFORT YOUR HEARTS. [These verses remind us once again of Paul's great concern for others. He believed that these brethren would be deeply concerned about him being in prison, thus, he sent word by Tychicus. What a great recommendation Paul gave this man! He is described as a beloved brother, and faithful in the Lord. Every faithful minister of the gospel should desire this kind of description. Tychicus is mentioned in other places, and was of great value to Paul and his work as a faithful minister and messenger (Acts 20:4; Colossians 4:7; 2 Timothy 4:12; Titus 3:12). Surely he was able to bring great comfort to the Ephesian Christians since he was faithful to Paul and the Lord.]

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. [Paul closes this outstanding epistle with four of his favorite words; *peace*, *love*, *faith*, and *grace*. Peace with the brethren, peace within, and peace with God should be the highest aim of every Christian. This kind of peace does not depend on outward circumstances, but rather is a feeling from within. In fact, persecutions may be raging, and difficulties of life present, yet this peace, love, faith, and grace can still be found. Love with faith is the only kind that pleases God (1 Corinthians 13:2b). Grace represents a favor from God which is not deserved nor earned, and without this amazing grace, all hope for salvation is gone (Ephesians 2:8). Finally, Paul wishes for the grace to be upon those that love Christ sincerely. One cannot follow the teaching and ministry of Jesus without seeing how He felt toward those that play act as hypocrites (Matthew 13:13-16). Failing to be sincere today has brought pain and disappointment to millions. All must: "love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind" (Matthew 22:37). This is the kind of sincerity that pleases God!]

Commentary on Ephesians

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About the Book

The purpose of this book is to help all understand more clearly the context and teaching of Ephesians, while challenging all to appreciate more the many spiritual blessings found ONLY in Christ Jesus. Written by Paul, this letter was penned to the church in Ephesus while he was in prison in Rome. Paul wanted to strengthen these brethren as well as other churches that would read this epistle. Paul's message is still pertinent today and anyone studying it will have a deeper love and appreciation for the Father and the Son and His beloved church.

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