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The EPISTLE *of* PAUL *the* APOSTLE *to the*

Ephesians

TITLE AND AUTHOR

The title of the book comes from the salutation (1:1). The author is Paul, as evidenced by the letter itself (1:1; 3:1). Themes and language common in Paul's earlier letters appear frequently in Ephesians, and the verbal similarities with Colossians are especially striking. The similarities are most easily explained by assuming that Paul wrote Ephesians shortly after completing Colossians. Paul's devotional and prayerful tone reaches its height as he contemplates the eternal and universal significance of Christ's church. In this way, he continues his reflections on the subject that dominated his correspondence with the Colossians—the eternal and universal significance of Christ.

DATE AND OCCASION

This letter may have had a broader audience than the church at Ephesus alone. Some of the oldest Gk. manuscripts do not include "in Ephesus" in the address of the letter (1:1). Many scholars believe Ephesians was written as a general letter to a number of churches in the region, which would be in keeping with the sweeping contents of the letter as a whole. It is possible that Paul originally sent the letter to Ephesus, but as the letter was sent from church to church the address was omitted. Questions about to whom Paul wrote this letter also lead to questions about when he wrote the letter. The imprisonment mentioned in 3:1 and 6:20 is the same as that in Colossians 4:3, 10, 18, and is probably Paul's two-year house arrest in Rome (A.D. 60–62), recounted in Acts 28.

Ephesus was the capital of the Roman province of Asia on the west coast of Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey). It lay between the eastern and western halves of the Roman Empire and was among the five most prominent cities in the empire during the first century. During Paul's unusually long stay in Ephesus, it became the center for evangelizing the western part of Asia Minor (Acts 19:10). Paul's affectionate ties with this church are evident in his farewell speech to its elders (Acts 20:16–38).

Ephesus's most prominent civic monument, the temple of the goddess Diana, was one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. The city is described in one inscription as the "nurturer" of the goddess, and the goddess in turn makes Ephesus the "most glorious" of the Asian cities. People from the area would have appreciated the irony of Paul's words about Christ's nourishing His own body, the church (5:29). They would have appreciated the point of contrast when Paul describes Christ's church as a glorious or radiant bride (5:27). It was also in Ephesus that Paul's preaching of Christ came into dramatic conflict with an important trade dependent on pagan worship (Acts 19:23–41) and that the gospel inspired a great turning away from the occult (Acts 19:17–20). Paul's call to expose the

deeds of darkness (5:8–14) and prepare for war against "the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places" (6:12; cf. 1:20, 21; 3:10) would have struck the original readers with force.

CHARACTERISTICS AND THEMES

Ephesians generally follows the standard epistolary conventions of the first century. It contains a standard letter opening (1:1, 2), body (1:3–6:20), and conclusion (6:21–24). As he does in his other epistles, Paul adapts the standard conventions to his own purposes.

The most striking feature of this book is how it reflects a deeply and thoroughly Pauline approach to thinking about the Christian life. Chapters 1–3 build up the "indicatives," the glorious statements of fact that undergird Christianity. Here Paul lays out the riches that are ours in Christ Jesus through His work of redemption. Chapters 4–6 then offer the "imperatives," the commands regarding how we are to live in light of our calling and the riches that are already ours in Christ.

One of the key words in this letter is "mystery," which appears seven times (1:9; 3:3, 4, 6, 9; 5:32; 6:19). The first statement is the most important: Paul tells us that God is now revealing the "mystery of his will," which is the uniting of all things in heaven and on earth in Christ. The great evidence that this cosmic redemption is happening is the church, the body of Christ, His new humanity (1:23; 2:15). In the church, God is uniting Jew and Gentile, reconciling them and tearing down the "wall of hostility" between them through the cross (2:14). This "mystery of Christ" was hidden in past times (i.e., before the coming of Christ), but is now seen clearly: "the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ through the gospel" (3:6).

That means, then, that the church is central to God's purpose in the world because it is a sign of the final reconciliation of all things in Christ. The church is God's precious possession, a colony in which the Lord of history has begun to fashion the renewed humanity after His own image (1:10–14; 2:11–22; 3:6, 9–11; 4:1–6:9). The church is a community where God's power to reconcile people to Himself is experienced and shared in transformed relationships (2:1–10; 4:1–16; 4:32–5:2; 5:22–6:9). It is a new temple, a building of people, grounded in the sure revelation of what God has done in history (2:19–22; 3:17–19). The church is an organism in which power and authority are exercised after the pattern of Christ (1:22; 5:25–27), and its stewardship is a means of serving Him (4:11–16; 5:22–6:9). The church is an outpost in a dark world (5:3–17), looking for the day of final redemption. Above all, the church is the bride preparing for the approach of her lover and husband (5:22–32).

CHRIST IN EPHESIANS

Ephesians helps us to understand the critical biblical doctrine of union with Christ. The importance of this doctrine is evident from the opening verses of the book. It is "in Christ" that the Father "has blessed us . . . with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places" (1:3) and that in whom He "chose us before the foundation of the world" and "predestined us for adoption" (1:4, 5). It is "in the Beloved" that we have been "blessed" by the Father's "glorious grace," and in Christ that we have "redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses" (1:6, 7). In Christ "we have obtained an inheritance" (1:11), and "in him . . . you were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit" (1:13).

Furthermore, it was by being united to Jesus Christ in His death and resurrection that we were saved by the grace of God (2:1–10). In Christ, the whole church is "being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit" (2:22) and is the bride of Christ (5:25–33). We are joined to Christ, as the body is to the head, and thus grow into maturity (4:15, 16).

In this letter, Paul particularly emphasizes Christ as raised from the dead as well as our union with Christ in His resurrection. The very same Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead made us alive together with Christ (2:5), presently indwells us (3:16, 17), and is at work in us presently "according to the working of his great might that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead" (1:19, 20a). Paul's point is plain—in Christ and by the Spirit of the risen Christ, believers have all the resources they need to walk with God in this age.

Chapter 1

1 [a]See 2 Cor. 1:1 [b]See 1 Cor. 1:1 [c]Col. 1:2

2 [d]See Rom. 1:7

3 [e]2 Cor. 1:3; 1 Pet. 1:3 [f]See Rom. 15:6 [g]ver. 20; ch. 2:6; 3:10; 6:12

4 [h][ch. 2:10; 2 Thess. 2:13; 1 Pet. 1:2] [i]James 2:5; [Deut. 7:6; 26:18] [j][2 Tim. 1:9]; See Matt. 13:35 [k]ch. 5:27; Col. 1:22; 1 Thess. 4:7

5 [l]ver. 11; Rom. 8:29, 30 [m]See Rom. 8:15 [n]ver. 9; [Luke 2:14; Heb. 2:4]; See Luke 12:32

6 [o]ver. 12, 14 [p][John 3:35; 10:17; Col. 1:13]; See Matt. 3:17

7 [q]Col. 1:14 [r]Rom. 3:24; 1 Cor. 1:30; [ch. 4:30] [s]See Acts 20:28 [t]See Acts 2:38 [u][ch. 3:8, 16; Col. 1:27];

GREETING

1 Paul, [a]an apostle of Christ Jesus [b]by the will of God,
To the saints who are in Ephesus, and [c]are faithful[1] in Christ Jesus:
2 [d]Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS IN CHRIST

3 [e]Blessed be [f]the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing [g]in the heavenly places, **4** [h]even as he [i]chose us in him [j]before the foundation of the world, that we should be [k]holy and blameless before him. In love **5** [l]he predestined us[2] for [m]adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, [n]according to the purpose of his will, **6** [o]to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in [p]the Beloved. **7** [q]In him we have [r]redemption [s]through his blood, [t]the forgiveness of our trespasses, [u]according to the riches of his grace, **8** which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight **9** [v]making known[3] to us the mystery of his will, [n]according to his purpose, which he [w]set forth in Christ **10** as a plan for [x]the fullness of time, [y]to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

11 In him we have obtained [z]an inheritance, [a]having been predestined [b]according to the purpose of him who works all things according to [c]the counsel of his

[1] Some manuscripts *saints who are also faithful* (omitting *in Ephesus*) [2] Or *before him in love,* [3] *having predestined us* [3] Or *he lavished upon us in all wisdom and insight, making known . . .*

See Rom. 2:4 **9** [v]See Rom. 16:25 [n][See ver. 5 above] [w][ver. 11; Rom. 8:28; 9:11] **10** [x]See Mark 1:15 [y]Col. 1:16, 20; [ch. 3:15; Phil. 2:9, 10] **11** [z]Deut. 4:20; 32:9; See ver. 14 [a]ver. 5 [b]ch. 3:11; [Rev. 4:11]; See Rom. 8:28 [c][Acts 20:27]

1:1 apostle of Christ Jesus. An authorized delegate commissioned and sent by the risen Lord Jesus, with the authority to receive and declare His special revelation.

in Ephesus. Some early manuscripts lack these words, suggesting that this epistle was a circular letter intended to be read by churches in various cities in the province of Asia in addition to Ephesus (cf. Col. 4:16; Rev. 1:4, 11).

1:3–14 The passage, which is one long sentence in Greek, is an expansion on the praise of God's purpose in Rom. 8:28–30. Praise goes to the Father who elects (vv. 4–6), the Son who redeems (vv. 7–12), and the Spirit who seals (vv. 13, 14). Paul reflects on believers' election from eternity, their forgiveness in the present, and their inheritance in the future. Note throughout the repetition of the phrases "in Christ" or "in him," referring to the intimate union God has established between Christ and His people.

1:3 in the heavenly places. Two of the other five instances where this phrase appears in Ephesians have a bearing on its meaning here. Christ was raised from the dead and seated at the right hand of the Father "in the heavenly places," from where He governs "all things to [for the sake of] the church" (v. 22). Moreover, believers have also been raised up and seated with Him "in the heavenly places" (2:6). Christ's victory over death has won believers a series of benefits ("every spiritual blessing") for which Paul blesses the Father.

1:4 he chose us in him. Paul rejoices that God chooses people for a relationship with Himself (Rom. 8:29–33; 9:6–26; 11:5, 7, 28; 16:13; Col. 3:12; 1 Thess. 1:4; 2 Thess. 2:13; Titus 1:1). Paul says explicitly that the sole ground of God's predestinating love is His own good pleasure (vv. 5, 10; cf. Deut. 7:7, 8), not anything the elect have done or will do (Rom. 9:11, 16). "In him" means that God's choice always has had in view a fallen people in union with their Redeemer (2 Tim. 1:9). Cf. 1 Pet. 1:18–21; Rev. 13:8.

holy and blameless. Cf. 5:27; Col. 1:22. God intends to bring His elect all the way from spiritual death in sin (2:1–5) to the forgiveness of sins in Christ (1:7), and finally to the elimination of all sin from their experience (Rom. 8:29, 30). It is therefore untrue to say that election leads to careless, sinful living (cf. 2:10; 4:1–3, 17–24; 5:25–27).

In love. The phrase explains predestination not simply as a matter of God's decision, but as an act of His love (Hos. 11:1).

1:5 adoption. See Rom. 8:14–17, 29; Gal. 3:26, 27.

1:7 redemption. This means deliverance by paying a price or ransom. In view here is the deliverance from the guilt of sin by the blood of Christ shed at the cross.

1:9 mystery. For Paul, "mystery" is not a conundrum impenetrable to finite human reason, but a truth previously and partially hidden that is now fully revealed through the coming of Christ. See 3:3, 5, 6, 10; Col. 1:27; Rom. 16:25–27. The use of "mystery" in Paul always has to do in some way with OT prophecies, most of which have begun to be fulfilled during the church age (cf. 3:3, 4, 9; 5:32).

1:10 the fullness of time. This does not refer simply to the future. Christ has already come to bring redemption and adoption (cf. Gal. 4:4, 5, where "fullness of time" refers to the latter days that have begun with Christ's birth and redemptive work).

That Christ is "to unite" all things refers to His managerial or stewarding role in God's economy. The idea appears to be that the household of the cosmos has become fragmented and in disarray because the household managers allowed this to happen (Adam and his progeny). Christ is a faithful household manager who has come to put the fragmented household back together, especially the splintered relationships in the family of that household.

1:11 all things . . . his will. A sweeping statement on the comprehensive extent of God's will and His sovereign power to enact His entire purpose and plan. Believers have been "predestined" to receive an "inheritance."

will, **12** so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be [d]to the praise of his glory. **13** In him you also, when you heard [e]the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, [f]were sealed with the [g]promised Holy Spirit, **14** who is [h]the guarantee[1] of our [i]inheritance until [j]we acquire [k]possession of it,[2] [l]to the praise of his glory.

THANKSGIVING AND PRAYER

15 For this reason, [m]because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love[3] toward all the saints, **16** I [n]do not cease to give thanks for you, [o]remembering you in my prayers, **17** that [p]the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, [q]may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, **18** [r]having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is [s]the hope to which he has called you, what are [t]the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, **19** and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, [u]according to the working of [v]his great might **20** that he worked in Christ [w]when he raised him from the dead and [x]seated him at his right hand [y]in the heavenly places, **21** [z]far above [a]all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above [b]every name that is named, not only in [c]this age but also in the one to come. **22** And [d]he put all things under his feet and gave him as [e]head over all things to the church, **23** [f]which is his body, [g]the fullness of him [h]who fills [i]all in all.

BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH

2 [j]And you were [k]dead in the trespasses and sins **2** [l]in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following [m]the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in [n]the sons of disobedience— **3** among whom we all once lived in [o]the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body[4] and the mind, and [p]were by nature [q]children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.[5]

[1] Or *down payment* [2] Or *until God redeems his possession* [3] Some manuscripts omit *your love* [4] Greek *flesh* [5] Greek *like the rest*

12 [d]ver. 6, 14; [Phil. 1:11]
13 [e]2 Cor. 6:7; Col. 1:5; 2 Tim. 2:15; [Acts 13:26; 15:7] [f]ch. 4:30 [g]See Acts 1:4
14 [h]2 Cor. 1:22 [i]Acts 20:32; [ver. 18] [j]Titus 2:14; See ver. 7 [k]See 1 Pet. 2:9 [l]ver. 6, 12
15 [m]Col. 1:4; Philem. 5; See Rom. 1:8
16 [n]Col. 1:9 [o]Rom. 1:9; 2 Tim. 1:3
17 [p]See Rom. 15:6 [q][Col. 1:9]
18 [r][Heb. 6:4; 10:32; Rev. 3:17, 18]; See Acts 26:18 [s]ch. 4:4; [ch. 2:12] [t]ch. 3:8, 16; Col. 1:27; See ver. 7
19 [u]ch. 3:7; Phil. 3:21; Col. 1:29; 2:12 [v]ch. 6:10; [Dan. 4:30]
20 [w]See Acts 2:24 [x]See Mark 16:19; Acts 2:33; 1 Pet. 3:22 [y]See ver. 3
21 [z]ch. 4:10; Col. 2:10; See John 3:31 [a]1 Cor. 15:24 [b]ch. 3:15; Phil. 2:9; [Heb. 1:4] [c][Matt. 12:32]
22 [d]Cited from Ps. 8:6; See 1 Cor. 15:27 [e]ch. 4:15; 5:23; Col. 1:18; 2:19; [1 Cor. 11:3;

Col. 2:10] **23** [f]ch. 4:12, 16; 5:30; Col. 1:18, 24; [ch. 5:23; 1 Cor. 12:27] [g]ch. 3:19; See John 1:16 [h]ch. 4:10 [i][Jer. 23:24; Col. 3:11] **Chapter 2** **1** [j]Col. 2:13; [Col. 1:21] [k]ver. 5; [ch. 4:18]; See Luke 15:24 **2** [l]ch. 4:17, 22; 5:8; Col. 3:7; See Rom. 11:30; 1 Cor. 6:11 [m] [ch. 6:12; Rev. 9:11]; See John 12:31 [n]ch. 5:6; [1 Pet. 1:14] **3** [o]Gal. 5:16 [p]See Ps. 51:5; Rom. 5:12 [q][2 Pet. 2:14]

1:14 guarantee. The Spirit is not only a fulfillment of God's promise to indwell His people, but also a guarantee that He will bring them to their final inheritance. As a down payment or first installment on their full redemption (2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5), the Spirit is a foretaste of the glory of the age to come (Rom. 8:18–23). This is a prime example that the latter days have begun (the end-time inheritance in the new creation) but are not yet consummated.

possession. God's people are His "inheritance," which He will redeem finally and fully in our resurrection (Rom. 8:23). The OT teaches that God chose a people as His inheritance (Deut. 32:9; Ps. 33:12) and purchased them out of bondage to become His prized possession (Ex. 19:5; Deut. 7:6; 14:2; Mal. 3:17). Paul alludes to this theme in v. 18, mentioning God's "glorious inheritance in the saints."

The goal of the Spirit's sealing work is that it be "unto the praise of His glory." This is the main point of vv. 3–14, and this phrase is repeated as the goal and main point of the Father's work in vv. 3–6 (cf. v. 6) and of the Son's work in vv. 7–12 (cf. v. 12). Thus, the overriding main point of all of vv. 3–14 is that the work of the Trinity in electing, redeeming, and sealing is to the glory of God. If believers could contribute anything independently to their salvation, then Paul could say that they get a share of the glory, but instead, he says all the glory belongs to God.

1:19–23 These verses distill the NT's teaching on the resurrection and enthronement of Jesus (Col. 1:18 note). They also make two vital contributions to understanding Jesus' resurrection and the status of believers. First, the same power that raised Jesus from the dead is at work in believers (2:4, 5; 3:16, 17). Second, Christ enjoys His position as head over everything for the sake of the church. Not only is Christ at the most exalted position in the universe, He is there representing believers (2:6; Col. 3:3) and governing the universe for their sake. The principles of conduct in Ephesians emphasize that authority exists for the sake of service. Jesus' majestic use of power and authority in the interest of His people is the Christian's model (4:1, 2, 7–13; 4:32–5:2, 22–33). Paul reminds his Gentile readers of two specific ways in which Christ's power has blessed them: He brought them from death to life (2:1–10) and from alienation from God's people to inclusion with them (2:11–22). Paul alludes to OT passages cited elsewhere in the NT as fulfilled in Jesus' heavenly enthronement at God's right hand (Ps. 110:1; cf. Mark 12:36; 14:62; Acts 2:34–36; Rom. 8:34; Heb. 1:13) and in the submission of all things under His feet (Ps. 8:6; cf. 1 Cor. 15:25–27; Heb. 2:8, 9).

1:21 above all rule and authority. Paul boldly declares that in Jesus' resurrection and ascension, God exalted Him above all unseen forces, and that Jesus wields His supreme dominion for the sake of His church. "Rule and authority" here focuses on evil powers.

2:1–3 The natural state of all human beings is spiritual death. This condition is universal: both Gentiles (v. 2) and Jews (v. 3) are "by nature children of wrath" (v. 3; on

4 [r]ver. 7; Titus 3:5; See Rom. 2:4 [s]See John 3:16
5 [t]ver. 1; [Rom. 5:6, 8, 10] [u]Col. 2:12, 13; [John 14:19; Rev. 20:4] [v]ver. 8; See Acts 15:11
6 [w]See ch. 1:20
7 [x]ver. 4 [y]Titus 3:4
8 [z]ver. 5 [a]1 Pet. 1:5; [Rom. 4:16] [b][2 Cor. 3:5] [c][John 4:10; Heb. 6:4]
9 [d]2 Tim. 1:9; Titus 3:5; See Rom. 3:20, 28 [e]1 Cor. 1:29; [Judg. 7:2]
10 [f]Deut. 32:6, 15; Ps. 100:3 [g][ch. 3:9; 4:24; Col. 3:10] [h]ch. 4:24 [i][ch. 1:4] [j]Col. 1:10
11 [k]Rom. 2:26, 28; [Col. 2:11, 13]
12 [l]1 Cor. 12:2; [ch. 5:8; Col. 3:7]

4 But [t] God, being [r] rich in mercy, [s] because of the great love with which he loved us, **5** even [t] when we were dead in our trespasses, [u] made us alive together with Christ—[v] by grace you have been saved— **6** and raised us up with him and [w] seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, **7** so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable [x] riches of his grace in [y] kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. **8** For [z] by grace you have been saved [a] through faith. And this is [b] not your own doing; [c] it is the gift of God, **9** [d] not a result of works, [e] so that no one may boast. **10** For [f] we are his workmanship, [g] created in Christ Jesus [h] for good works, [i] which God prepared beforehand, [j] that we should walk in them.

ONE IN CHRIST

11 Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called [k] the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands— **12** remember [l] that you were at that time separated from Christ, [m] alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to [n] the covenants of promise, [o] having no hope and without God in the world. **13** But now in Christ Jesus you who once were [p] far off have been brought near [q] by the blood of Christ. **14** For [r] he himself is our peace, [s] who has made us both one and has broken down [t] in his flesh the

[1] Or *And*

[m]ch. 4:18; Col. 1:21; [Ezek. 14:5; Gal. 2:15; 4:8] [n]See Rom. 9:4 [o]1 Thess. 4:13; See ch. 1:18 **13** [p]ver. 17; Acts 2:39 [q][Col. 1:20]; See Rom. 3:25 **14** [r]Ps. 72:7; Mic. 5:5; Zech. 9:10; [Col. 3:15]; See Luke 2:14 [s]See Gal. 3:28 [t]Col. 1:21, 22; [Rom. 7:4]

Paul's view of "nature," see Rom. 1). Second, in their natural state, all people are in active rebellion against God; note the use of "walked" in regard to Gentiles in v. 2 and "lived" in reference to Jews in v. 3. Third, they are subject to the evil rule of Satan (called in v. 2 "the prince of the power of the air"; cf. Gal. 4:3; Col. 1:13). Fourth, they are totally unable to cease their rebellion against God (John 3:3). Fifth, they are exposed to the just anger of God (v. 3; 5:6; Rom. 1:18–20).

2:4 But God. Paul paints this bleak portrait of the human situation to throw into relief God's gracious and merciful response to it.

because of the great love. God loves His people of His own will. Paul excludes any consideration of merit, effort, or ability on the part of those who come to life (cf. Deut. 7:7, 8). The hopeless condition of sinners apart from Christ that Paul has described in vv. 1–3 is the context for understanding his teaching on God's election in 1:4–6 and on His gift of life here in vv. 4–10.

2:7 The ground of our salvation is God's love and mercy, and its goal is the promotion of His grace and kindness (3:6).

2:8 you have been saved. Salvation is a completed action that has a present effect. Because salvation ultimately encompasses several realities—including predestination, regeneration, justification, adoption, sanctification, and glorification—the apostle can speak of it as a past event (predestination, regeneration, justification, adoption), present process (sanctification), and a future reality (glorification). No matter the emphasis in any one passage, all who truly experience one of the aspects of salvation will certainly experience all of them (Rom. 8:28–30). Salvation is a completed action with a present effect because it is accomplished by God and sure to be consummated in all of its fullness. All who have true faith, having been justified, will certainly be glorified.

And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God. This parenthesis most likely refers to the whole complex of salvation by grace through faith as a gift of God. Others, however, take "this" as referring specifically to "faith." In either case, since faith is included in the whole complex of salvation, faith itself must be understood as a gift of God and not as a human achievement. Sinners are dependent on God's gracious gift for their believing response to Christ from the moment of conversion. Paul makes explicit here what is implicit elsewhere in the NT about the ultimate source of saving faith (Acts 13:48; Phil. 1:29).

2:9 not a result of works. The spiritual death, dominion by the devil and defiling desires, and liability to divine wrath that characterize both Gentile and Jew apart from the loving and gracious initiative of God in Christ show that salvation is wholly God's work, received through faith alone, and in no way contingent on the intentions or actions of those whom God saves. The Christian's utter dependence on divine grace and kindness (v. 7) silences all human boasting (Rom. 3:19–27; 1 Cor. 1:26–31).

2:10 for good works. Only faith, not works, can bring acceptance with God (vv. 8, 9). But good works are the vital and indispensable consequence and evidence of life with God (Titus 2:14; 3:8, 14; James 2:14–26). God chose His elect to make them holy sons and daughters (1:4, 5), and He has now fashioned them to be new bearers of His image (4:24), designed for the kind of life that conforms to God's character (4:1–6:20). Our good works are the fruit of salvation, not its cause, and those who do not have good works show that they do not have saving faith (cf. Rom. 6; James 2:12–26).

2:12 without God in the world. God has revealed Himself to all humanity in nature and in the conscience. Yet this general or natural revelation is insufficient to save, and apart from the Lord's act of regeneration, all people suppress the truth that this revelation gives them (4:17, 18; Acts 17:22–31; Rom. 1:18–2:16). The Gentiles whom Paul addresses in Ephesians were particularly bad off before Christ because they had no access to the Lord's special revelation to Israel, which reveals the plan of salvation, and so they turned to idolatry. It remains true today that all those who are strangers to the covenants of promise and have no access to special revelation (the Bible) are without hope and without God in the world. They have no way of knowing His plan of redemption.

2:14 the dividing wall of hostility. This refers to the courts of the temple in

dividing wall of hostility **15** by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in [u]ordinances, that he might create in himself one [v]new man in place of the two, so making peace, **16** and might [w]reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. **17** And he came and [x]preached peace to you who were [y]far off and peace to those who were [z]near. **18** For [a]through him we both have [b]access in [c]one Spirit to the Father. **19** So then you are no longer [d]strangers and aliens,[1] but you are [e]fellow citizens with the saints and [f]members of the household of God, **20** [g]built on the foundation of the [h]apostles and prophets, [i]Christ Jesus himself being [j]the cornerstone, **21** [k]in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into [l]a holy temple in the Lord. **22** In him [m]you also are being built together [n]into a dwelling place for God by[2] the Spirit.

THE MYSTERY OF THE GOSPEL REVEALED

3 For this reason I, Paul, [o]a prisoner of Christ Jesus [p]on behalf of you Gentiles— **2** assuming that you have heard of [q]the stewardship of [r]God's grace that was given to me for you, **3** [s]how the mystery was made known to me [t]by revelation, [u]as I have written briefly. **4** [v]When you read this, you can perceive my insight into [w]the mystery of Christ, **5** which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. **6** This mystery is[3] that the Gentiles are [x]fellow heirs, [y]members of the same body, and [z]partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

7 [a]Of this gospel I was made [b]a minister according to the gift of [c]God's grace, which was given me [d]by the working of his power. **8** To me, [e]though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, [f]to preach to the Gentiles the [g]unsearchable [h]riches of Christ, **9** and [i]to bring to light for everyone what is the plan

[1] Or *sojourners* [2] Or *in* [3] The words *This mystery is* are inferred from verse 4

See Rom. 16:25; 2 Cor. 12:1 [u][ch. 1:9, 10] **4** [v][2 Cor. 11:6] [w]Col. 4:3 **6** [x]See Gal. 3:29 [y]ch. 2:16 [z]ch. 5:7 **7** [a]Col. 1:23, 25 [b]See 2 Cor. 3:6 [c]See ver. 2 [d][ver. 20]; See ch. 1:19 **8** [e]See 1 Cor. 15:9 [f]See Acts 9:15 [g][Job 5:9; Rom. 11:33] [h]See ch. 1:18; Rom. 2:4 **9** [i]See ver. 2, 3

15 [u]Col. 2:14, 20 [v]See Rom. 6:4
16 [w]Col. 1:20-22; [1 Cor. 12:13]
17 [x]Isa. 57:19 [y]ver. 13 [z]Deut. 4:7; Ps. 148:14
18 [a][John 14:6] [b]ch. 3:12; [John 10:7, 9]; See Rom. 5:2 [c]ch. 4:4; 1 Cor. 12:13; [John 4:23]
19 [d]ver. 12; [Heb. 11:13; 13:14] [e]Phil. 3:20; [Heb. 12:22, 23] [f]See Gal. 6:10
20 [g][Jer. 12:16]; See 1 Cor. 3:9 [h]Matt. 16:18; Rev. 21:14 [i][1 Cor. 3:11] [j]Ps. 118:22; Isa. 28:16
21 [k]ch. 4:15, 16 [l]See 1 Cor. 3:16, 17
22 [m]1 Pet. 2:5 [n][ch. 3:17; 2 Cor. 6:16; 1 Tim. 3:15]

Chapter 3
1 [o]ch. 4:1; Acts 23:18; Phil. 1:7; [ch. 6:20] [p]ver. 13; Col. 1:24
2 [q]ch. 1:10; Col. 1:25; 1 Tim. 1:4 [r]ver. 7; ch. 4:7; See Acts 11:23; Rom. 1:5
3 [s]Acts 22:17, 21; 26:16-18 [t][Dan. 2:29];

Jerusalem. A wall separated Gentiles and Jews, and signs were posted excluding Gentiles from the inner courts where sacrifices for sin were performed. Paul interprets it as emblematic of the law's function of keeping Israel separate from the surrounding pagan peoples.

2:15 abolishing the law of commandments. Christ offered in His own body the final sacrifice to which the temple's sacrifices merely pointed. The ceremonial laws of the Old Testament that separated Jews and Gentiles are no longer appropriate for God's people after their fulfillment in Christ.

create in himself one new man. Paul repeats the "creation" theme of v. 10, implying now that the age-old division between Jew and Gentile has been overcome in the reconciling death of Christ on the cross (v. 16). As the last Adam (1 Cor. 15:45; cf. Rom. 5:12–21), Christ is the head of a new human race, which is distinguished not only by unprecedented unity but also by His "true righteousness and holiness" (4:24).

2:19–22 The building of a new spiritual temple replaces the outmoded one in Jerusalem.

2:20 The foundation of God's house was laid once for all by the NT apostles and prophets (cf. Rev. 21:14). The cornerstone is Christ (1 Cor. 3:10, 11). In 3:4–6, Paul will show that the foundational role of the apostles and prophets lies in their reception of the revelation of the previously undisclosed mystery of Christ, and the Gentiles' inclusion among His people. The fact that the apostles and prophets make up the foundation of the church is an indicator that these offices have passed away. Since the foundation has been laid, there is no longer any need for apostles or prophets in the church. Until Christ returns, the church will build on this foundation, not by adding new revelation but by coming to an ever fuller understanding of what the apostles have given us and an ever more faithful application of their teaching to believers.

3:1 Paul begins a prayer that his Gentile readers will be filled with the presence of Christ and be able to grasp the truth about their Redeemer's love and power (vv. 14–21). Yet Paul's mention of his special call to serve the Gentiles leads him to interrupt himself to explain the nature of his own ministry and insight into the union of Jew and Gentile in Christ (vv. 2–13).

prisoner. Paul is under house arrest in Rome as he writes this epistle (Acts 28:16, 30).

3:5 as it has now been revealed. The silence of the OT about Paul's mystery—the union of Jews and Gentiles on equal terms in the church (v. 6)—is relative, not absolute. Many OT prophecies speak of the bringing together of Jews and Gentiles into one people of God, a fact that Paul recognized in his teaching (Is. 19:25; 56:3–7; 66:18; Acts 26:22, 23; Rom. 4; 15:8–12). The membership of Jews and Gentiles in the church on fully equal terms, however, was not explicitly articulated in the OT Scripture; nor was it fully implemented in history until Christ's death and exaltation inaugurated the new covenant. That is, the precise mystery that was not fully revealed is that Gentiles can become part of true Israel by identification with Christ. They do not need to travel to geographical Israel and become Jews, obeying the kosher laws, being circumcised, and so forth. Christ is now the only identifier for a true Israelite.

3:6 Gentiles are fellow heirs. Only in the light of Christ's sacrifice does God's plan become clear: in one magnificent act,

of the mystery [j]hidden for ages in [t]God, [k]who created all things, **10** so that through the church the manifold [l]wisdom of God [m]might now be made known to [n]the rulers and authorities [o]in the heavenly places. **11** This was [p]according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, **12** in whom we have [q]boldness and [r]access with [s]confidence through our [t]faith in him. **13** So I ask you not to lose heart over what I am suffering [u]for you, [v]which is your glory.

PRAYER FOR SPIRITUAL STRENGTH

14 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, **15** from whom [w]every family[2] in heaven and on earth is named, **16** that according to [x]the riches of his glory [y]he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit [z]in your inner being, **17** [a]so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being [b]rooted and [c]grounded in love, **18** may have strength to [d]comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and [e]height and depth, **19** and to know the love of Christ [f]that surpasses knowledge, that [g]you may be filled with all [h]the fullness of God.

20 [i]Now to [j]him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, [k]according to the power at work within us, **21** [l]to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

UNITY IN THE BODY OF CHRIST

4 I therefore, [m]a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to [n]walk in a manner worthy of [o]the calling to which you have been called, **2** with all [p]humility and [q]gentleness, with [r]patience, [s]bearing with one another in love, **3** eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in [t]the bond of peace. **4** There is [u]one body and [v]one Spirit—just as you were called to the one [w]hope that belongs to your call— **5** [x]one Lord, [y]one faith, [z]one baptism, **6** [a]one God and Father of all, [b]who is over all and through all and in all. **7** But [c]grace was given [d]to each one of us [e]according to the measure of Christ's gift. **8** Therefore it says,

> [f]"When he ascended on high [g]he led a host of captives,
> and he gave gifts to men."[3]

[1] Or *by* [2] Or *from whom all fatherhood*; the Greek word *patria* in verse 15 is closely related to the word for *Father* in verse 14 [3] The Greek word *anthropoi* can refer to both men and women

[v] See ch. 2:18 [w] ch. 1:18 **5** [x] Zech. 14:9; See 1 Cor. 1:13; 8:6 [y] [ver. 13; Jude 3] [z] See Gal. 3:27, 28 **6** [a] 1 Cor. 12:5, 6 [b] Rom. 9:5 **7** [c] See ch. 3:2 [d] [Matt. 25:15; 1 Cor. 12:7] [e] Rom. 12:3; [ver. 16] **8** [f] Cited from Ps. 68:18 [g] Judg. 5:12; [Col. 2:15]

9 [j] Col. 1:26 [k] Rev. 4:11; [ch. 2:10]
10 [l] Rom. 11:33 [m] [1 Pet. 1:12] [n] ch. 1:21; [ch. 6:12] [o] See ch. 1:3
11 [p] See ch. 1:11
12 [q] Heb. 4:16; 10:19 [r] See ch. 2:18 [s] 2 Cor. 3:4 [t] Mark 11:22; Phil. 3:9
13 [u] ver. 1 [v] [2 Cor. 1:6]
15 [w] See ch. 1:10, 21
16 [x] See ver. 8 [y] 1 Cor. 16:13; [ch. 6:10; Phil. 4:13; Col. 1:11] [z] See Rom. 7:22
17 [a] [ch. 2:22] [b] Col. 2:7 [c] Col. 1:23
18 [d] [John 1:5] [e] Rom. 8:39; [Job 11:8, 9]
19 [f] [Phil. 4:7] [g] Col. 2:10 [h] ch. 1:23
20 [i] Rom. 16:25; Jude 24 [j] [2 Cor. 9:8] [k] [ver. 7]
21 [l] See Rom. 11:36

Chapter 4

1 [m] See ch. 3:1 [n] Col. 1:10; 2:6; 1 Thess. 2:12; [Phil. 1:27] [o] See Rom. 8:28
2 [p] Acts 20:19; Phil. 2:3; Col. 3:12; 1 Pet. 3:8; 5:5; [Col. 2:18, 23] [q] Gal. 5:23 [r] Col. 1:11 [s] Col. 3:13
3 [t] Col. 3:14; [Acts 8:23]
4 [u] ch. 2:16

He removed the enmity between Himself and humanity and also took away the divisions that fracture humanity (2:14–18).

3:10 the rulers . . . in the heavenly places. For Paul, there is no more basic division in the human race than that between Jew and Gentile. That they can be united with each other in Christ displays the profound wisdom of God (Is. 55:8, 9; 1 Cor. 2:6–10), and it proves even to supernatural powers that Jesus is Lord of the universe (1:20–23).

3:16 strengthened with power. Paul returns to the motifs of power and knowledge (v. 19, 20) that were the subject of his prayer for illumination of believers' minds (1:19–22).

3:17 grounded in love. The strength and knowledge for which Paul prays for believers are directed not toward their individual achievements but toward their love for each other, in response to the immeasurable love of Christ for them (v. 19; 4:32–5:2).

3:20 the power at work within us. See 1:19–23; 2:5, 6. This power is the Spirit of the risen Christ.

3:21 glory. Because of the power that God has given to the church, Paul gives glory to Him. Paul's doctrinal exposition opened in doxology (1:3–14) and now closes in doxology, laying the groundwork for his outworking of the ethical implications of God's gracious calling to His people in Christ (4:1). As in 1:3–14, 3:21 indicates that God's "glory" is the goal and main point of everything expounded in chs. 1–3. Believers should live to give God glory and to reflect God's glory.

4:1 calling. Paul earlier spoke of a hope to which believers are called (1:18; 4:4); now he focuses on the life to which they are called. God's call is both sovereign and gracious (1 Cor. 1:26–31), and in the ethical and relational instructions that follow, Paul will repeatedly ground his exhortations in the gospel truths already expounded in chs. 1–3.

4:3 maintain the unity of the Spirit. God's Spirit has united believers by drawing them to the Father through faith in the Son and indwelling them as a new temple (2:18, 21, 22). Christians have a responsibility to retain and express their unity through the Spirit's fruit, which include humility, patience, and love (v. 2; Gal. 5:22, 23).

4:4–6 one. This word is repeated seven times in vv. 4–6—three times regarding the persons of the Godhead and four times regarding aspects of His salvation. Just as the first half of Ephesians begins with the all-important work of the Trinity (1:3–14), so the second half of the book begins that way.

4:8 Ps. 68 celebrates God's triumphant march from Mount Sinai in the wilder-

9 (h In saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended
into i the lower regions, the earth?j 10 He who descended is the one who also k as-
cended l far above all the heavens, that he might l fill all things.) 11 And m he gave the
n apostles, the prophets, the o evangelists, the p shepherds[2] and teachers,[3] 12 q to equip
the saints for the work of ministry, for r building up s the body of Christ, 13 until
we all attain to t the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, u to
mature manhood,[4] to the measure of the stature of v the fullness of Christ, 14 so
that we may no longer be children, w tossed to and fro by the waves and carried
about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in x deceitful
schemes. 15 Rather, y speaking the truth in love, we are to z grow up in every way
into him who is a the head, into Christ, 16 b from whom the whole body, joined and
held together by every joint with which it is equipped, c when each part is working
properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

THE NEW LIFE

17 Now this I say and d testify in the Lord, e that you must no longer walk as the
Gentiles do, f in the futility of their minds. 18 They g are darkened in their under-
standing, h alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them,
due to i their hardness of heart. 19 They j have become callous and k have given
themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. 20 But that
is not the way you l learned Christ!— 21 assuming that m you have heard about him
and n were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, 22 to o put off p your old self,[5] which

[1] Or *the lower parts of the earth?* [2] Or *pastors* [3] Or *the shepherd-teachers* [4] Greek *to a full-grown man* [5] Greek *man*; also verse 24

1 Tim. 4:2 k [1 Kgs. 21:25; Rom. 1:24, 26, 28] **20** l See Matt. 11:29 **21** m ch. 1:13 n Col. 2:7 **22** o Col. 3:8; Heb. 12:1; James 1:21; 1 Pet. 2:1 p Rom. 6:6; Col. 3:9

9 h See John 3:13 i Ps. 63:9; Isa. 44:23
10 j See Mark 16:19 k Heb. 4:14; 7:26; 9:24 l ch. 1:23
11 m [1 Cor. 12:5, 6] n See 1 Cor. 12:28 o Acts 21:8; 2 Tim. 4:5 p Jer. 3:15; [Acts 20:28]
12 q See 2 Cor. 13:9 r ver. 16, 29 s See 1 Cor. 12:27
13 t [ver. 5] u Heb. 5:14 v ch. 1:23
14 w [Matt. 11:7; Heb. 13:9; James 1:6; Jude 12] x ch. 6:11
15 y 1 John 3:18; [ver. 25] z ch. 2:21
a See ch. 1:22
16 b Col. 2:19 c [ver. 7]
17 d 1 Thess. 2:12 e ver. 22; ch. 2:1–3; Col. 3:7; 1 Pet. 4:3 f Rom. 1:21; 1 Pet. 1:18; [Col. 2:18; 2 Pet. 2:18]
18 g [Rom. 11:10] h See ch. 2:12 i See Mark 3:5
19 j [Prov. 23:35];

ness to Mount Zion in Jerusalem and His enthronement there. Paul regards this as prefiguring Christ's victorious ascent into heaven.

captives. The spiritual forces of darkness were defeated at the cross (Col. 2:15). While Ps. 68:18 describes the victorious Lord receiving gifts from men, Paul pictures Christ as sharing His tribute with men. Paul may have thought of this psalm in light of Pentecost, the day on which the ascended Christ poured out His Spirit on the church (Acts 2:32, 33).

4:9 Christ came to the exalted position He now enjoys through humiliation. This passage is sometimes thought to teach Christ's "descent into Hades" between His death and resurrection, but it probably refers to His incarnation, when He took on a human nature here in "the lower regions, the earth" (cf. 1:20–23; Phil. 2:1–11). This pattern of service is to be imitated by believers.

4:11 apostles. In a restricted sense, those who walked with Jesus during His earthly ministry and witnessed to His resurrection (or received a special revelation of the risen Jesus) and who were commissioned by Jesus to be founders of the church (Acts 1:21, 22; 1 Cor. 15:1–9). The word was also used in a broader sense of people sent out as delegates of particular churches (2 Cor. 8:23; Phil. 2:25), though these do not appear to be whom Paul has in mind in this passage. See 2:20; 3:5; 2 Cor. 1:1.

prophets. The NT prophets conveyed special revelation to the early church. Their functions included prediction, exhortation, encouragement, warning, and explanation (Acts 15:32; 21:9–11; 1 Cor. 14:3). The teaching of the NT prophets and apostles laid the foundation of the church (2:20; 3:5), and certain aspects of their work related to that unique task have been discontinued. However, teachers and elders continue to be responsible for exhorting, encouraging, and warning believers through the explanation of God's Word (2 Tim. 4:1, 2).

evangelists. People especially gifted to proclaim the gospel (Acts 21:8; 2 Tim. 4:5).

shepherds and teachers. The two words may go together to refer to a single set of individuals who both shepherd and instruct God's flock. On the other hand, two distinct but related offices may be in view: "teachers" and other elders who provide spiritual oversight with less of a focus on teaching (1 Cor. 12:28; 1 Tim. 5:17).

4:12, 13 It is not primarily those mentioned in v. 11 who do the work of the ministry; it is the people they equip. Effective teachers help believers find their own way to benefit the rest of the church.

4:13 the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Saints' ministries to each other, which further the building of the body of Christ, will continue until all believers attain maturity or perfection, as defined by the norm of Jesus Christ Himself. This process will last until Christ's return from heaven. So the mark of increasing maturity is believers' ongoing pursuit of conformity to Christ and of helping one another in that pursuit as they await the return of Jesus (Phil. 3:12–16, 20, 21).

4:16 body. Believers are not given gifts for their own private benefit, and no one can grow to maturity in isolation (1 Cor. 12:7, 12–26).

4:17–19 While the letter to the Romans shows God as giving Gentiles over to a reckless and wanton life (Rom. 1:24–31), Ephesians presents the same progression from the human side: those who have turned aside "have given themselves up" (v. 19). Similarly, in Exodus, God is said to harden Pharaoh's heart (Ex. 4:21; 7:3), but Pharaoh also hardens his own heart (Ex. 8:15, 32; 9:34).

4:22–24 put off . . . be renewed . . . put on. Belonging to Christ involves repudiating an old life, the way of living "in Adam" (the "old self," or "old man") and embracing a new one, the way of living "in Christ" (the "new self," or "new man"). The image is that of taking off frayed

belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through [q] deceitful desires,
23 and [r] to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, **24** and to put on [s] the new self,
[t] created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

25 Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you [u] speak the truth
with his neighbor, for [v] we are members one of another. **26** [w] Be angry and do not
sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, **27** and [x] give no opportunity to the
devil. **28** Let the thief no longer steal, but rather [y] let him labor, [z] doing honest work
with his own hands, so [a] that he may have something to share with anyone in
need. **29** [b] Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good
for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give [c] grace to those who hear.
30 And [d] do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, [e] by whom you were sealed for the day
of [f] redemption. **31** [g] Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander
be put away from you, along with all malice. **32** [h] Be kind to one another, tender-
hearted, [i] forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

WALK IN LOVE

5 [j] Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. **2** And [k] walk in love, [l] as
Christ loved us and [m] gave himself up for us, a [n] fragrant [o] offering and sacrifice
to God.

3 But [p] sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness [q] must not even be
named among you, as is proper among saints. **4** Let there be [r] no filthiness nor
foolish talk nor crude joking, [s] which are out of place, but instead [t] let there be
thanksgiving. **5** For you may be sure of this, that [u] everyone who is sexually im-
moral or impure, or who is covetous ([v] that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in
the kingdom of Christ and God. **6** [w] Let no one [x] deceive you with empty words, for
because of these things [y] the wrath of God comes upon [z] the sons of disobedience.
7 Therefore [a] do not become partners with them; **8** for [b] at one time you were [c] dark-
ness, but now you are light in the Lord. [d] Walk as children of light **9** (for [e] the fruit
of light is found in all that is good and right and true), **10** and [f] try to discern what
is pleasing to the Lord. **11** [g] Take no part in the [h] unfruitful [i] works of darkness, but
instead [j] expose them. **12** For [k] it is shameful even to speak of the things that they
do in secret. **13** But when [l] anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, **14** for
anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says,

22 [q] [Heb. 3:13]
23 [r] See Rom. 12:2
24 [s] See Rom. 6:4 [t] See ch. 2:10
25 [u] Zech. 8:16; Col. 3:9; [ver. 15] [v] Rom. 12:5
26 [w] [Ps. 37:8]
27 [x] See James 4:7
28 [y] Acts 20:35; Gal. 6:10 [z] 1 Thess. 4:11; 2 Thess. 3:8, 11, 12 [a] [Prov. 21:26]
29 [b] ch. 5:4; Col. 3:8; [Matt. 12:34] [c] Col. 4:6; [Eccles. 10:12]
30 [d] Isa. 63:10; [1 Thess. 5:19] [e] ch. 1:13 [f] See ch. 1:7
31 [g] Col. 3:8, 19
32 [h] Col. 3:12, 13; 1 Pet. 3:8 [i] [2 Cor. 2:7, 10]; See Matt. 6:14

Chapter 5
1 [j] [ch. 4:32; Matt. 5:7, 48; Luke 6:36]
2 [k] Rom. 14:15; [Col. 3:14]; See John 13:34 [l] See Rom. 8:37 [m] See Rom. 4:25 [n] See Gen. 8:21 [o] Heb. 7:27; 9:14; 10:10, 12
3 [p] 1 Cor. 6:18; See Gal. 5:19 [q] [ver. 12; Ps. 16:4]
4 [r] ch. 4:29; [Eccles. 10:13] [s] [Rom. 1:28] [t] ver. 20
5 [u] See 1 Cor. 6:9 [v] Col. 3:5
6 [w] See Matt. 24:4 [x] Col. 2:8 [y] Rom. 1:18; Col. 3:6 [z] ch. 2:2; [1 Pet. 1:14]
7 [a] ch. 3:6

8 [b] See ch. 2:1, 2 [c] See Acts 26:18 [d] Isa. 2:5; See Luke 16:8; John 12:35, 36 **9** [e] [Gal. 5:22]; See Rom. 7:4 **10** [f] 1 Thess. 2:4; 5:21 **11** [g] See 1 Cor. 5:9 [h] Rom. 6:21 [i] Rom. 13:12 [j] Lev. 19:17; 1 Tim. 5:20 **12** [k] [ver. 3] **13** [l] John 3:20, 21; [ver. 9]

clothes and putting on new ones. See also Col. 3:9–11, where Paul makes explicit that this change of "clothing" (identity), from Adam to Christ, has already happened for believers.

4:25–5:5 Paul outlines six concrete ways that Christians "put off" their old lives and "put on" life in Christ: they must turn from lying to telling the truth (4:25, 26), from uncontrolled anger to self-control (4:26, 27), from stealing to useful labor (4:28), from harmful to helpful speech (4:29, 30), from bitterness to love (4:31–5:2), and from unrestrained sexual desires to a thankful acknowledgement of God's good gifts (5:3–5). In each case, Paul offers a reason for the change from old to new.

4:25 members one of another. On the basis ("therefore") that believers are now a "new man" in the last Adam, they have the responsibility to speak truth with their neighbor, which is grounded not only in OT scripture (Zech. 8:16) but also in the reality that we belong to one body, which grows in unity as we speak truth in love (4:12, 15, 16). In vv. 25–32, the behavior that Paul's readers are exhorted to exhibit is that of the "new man" living out the reality of the new creation.

4:30 do not grieve. That is, by the destructive use of speech described in v. 29. That the Holy Spirit can be grieved is an indication of His being a person and not an impersonal force. The divisive attitudes and behaviors forbidden in v. 31 disrupt the unity that the Spirit has established in Christ's church (4:3).

4:32–5:2 as God . . . as Christ. Believers must extend to others—especially to fellow believers—the forgiveness and love that God has extended to them. The same logic is found in Jesus' new commandment: "as I have loved you, you also are to love one another" (John 13:34).

5:6 Although the day of reckoning may be denied with "empty words" (cf. 2 Pet. 3:3, 4), God's judgment will make a final separation between "the sons of disobedience" (2:2; cf. 5:5) and God's beloved children (1:4, 5; 5:1).

5:8 one time . . . but now. See 2:11, 13. Paul wants believers to do more than abstain from the things that bring God's wrath. They should live as "children of light" (Col. 1:13). A result of the believers' union with Christ is that He who is "the light of the world" (John 8:12; 9:5) has made them also "the light of the world" (Matt. 5:14).

5:13 it becomes visible. Paul assumes that certain sins are so shameful that bringing them to light will shame some nonbelievers into repentance. The

[m]"Awake, O sleeper,
and [n]arise from the dead,
and [o]Christ will shine on you."

15 [p]Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, **16** [p]making the best use of the time, because [q]the days are evil. **17** Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what [r]the will of the Lord is. **18** And [s]do not get drunk with wine, for that is [t]debauchery, but [u]be filled with the Spirit, **19** addressing one another in [v]psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, **20** [w]giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father [x]in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, **21** [y]submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

WIVES AND HUSBANDS

22 [z]Wives, [a]submit to your own husbands, [b]as to the Lord. **23** For [c]the husband is the head of the wife even as [d]Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is [e]himself its Savior. **24** Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit [f]in everything to their husbands.

25 [g]Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and [h]gave himself up for her, **26** that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by [i]the washing of water [j]with the word, **27** so [k]that he might present the church to himself in splendor, [l]without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.[1] **28** In the same way [m]husbands should love their wives as their own bodies.

[1] Or *holy and blameless*

25 [g]ver. 28, 33; [1 Pet. 3:7] [h]ver. 2 **26** [i]Titus 3:5; [Rev. 7:14] [j]ch. 6:17; Heb. 6:5; See John 15:3 **27** [k]2 Cor. 11:2; See ch. 1:4 [l]Song 4:7 **28** [m]ver. 25, 33

14 [m][Isa. 51:17; 52:1; 60:1; Mal. 4:2]; See Rom. 13:11 [n]Isa. 26:19 [o]Luke 1:78, 79
15 [p]Col. 4:5; [Prov. 15:21]
16 [p][See ver. 15 above] [q]ch. 6:13; Eccles. 12:1; Amos 5:13; Gal. 1:4
17 [r]Rom. 12:2; 1 Thess. 4:3; 5:18
18 [s]Prov. 20:1; 23:20, 31; 1 Cor. 5:11 [t]Titus 1:6; 1 Pet. 4:4 [u][Luke 1:15]
19 [v]Acts 16:25; 1 Cor. 14:26; Col. 3:16; James 5:13
20 [w]Col. 3:17; 1 Thess. 1:2; 2 Thess. 1:3 [x]Heb. 13:15; [John 14:13]
21 [y][Phil. 2:3]
22 [z]For ch. 22–6:9, see Col. 3:18–4:1 [a]See Gen. 3:16 [b][ch. 6:5]
23 [c]1 Cor. 11:3 [d]See ch. 1:22, 23 [e][1 Cor. 6:13]
24 [f][Col. 3:20, 22; Titus 2:9]

Christians' presence alone may expose sins through contrast, or Christians may openly denounce such sins.

5:18 be filled with the Spirit. While the sealing of the Spirit (1:13, 14; 4:30) is a once-for-all initiation into the Christian life, the filling of the Spirit applies to all the Christian life. This filling is progressive and is to be sought on an ongoing basis. In the parallel passage in Colossians, Paul tells Christians to let the "peace of Christ" govern their hearts and to allow the "word of Christ" to dwell in them richly (Col. 3:15, 16). The one who is filled with the Spirit is filled with Christ, God, and His Word (Eph. 1:23; 3:19; 4:10; cf. John 14:16, 26; 16:12–15; 17:17).

5:19–21 addressing . . . making melody . . . giving thanks . . . submitting. These words make explicit the actions that result from and exhibit the Spirit's filling in believers' lives.

5:22–6:9 At least as far back as Aristotle (fourth century B.C.), Greek ethics had addressed relationships within the household in a familiar pattern: husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and slaves. Consistently, the interest was to help the male head of household learn to govern his family and slaves. In their treatment of such rules, Paul and Peter (1 Pet. 2:18–3:7) transform the question from how husbands, fathers, and masters dominate to how they can imitate the love of Christ in their own lives by nurturing those under their care. Simultaneously, as wives, children, and slaves understand their roles in terms of service to Christ, they turn from being passive objects in a social world that devalues them and become instead active partners with God in expressing Christian love before a world divided by gender, age, and economics.

5:22–32 Jesus gives life to a new community of love—the church, His own body. His love also defines the marriage relationship for His people. Paul teaches that the genders are complementary and a man and a woman are equal before God. Yet in marriage, God has called the husband to exercise leadership. This leadership is not absolute, for the husband is not to be followed if he calls his wife to sin. Nevertheless, the husband's leadership role gives him the initiative in directing his family in glorifying the Lord, to which the wife responds. Paul's understanding is grounded in the creation order (1 Cor. 11:8, 9; 1 Tim. 2:13), and he takes account of the lingering effects, even among Christians, of the fall (1 Tim. 2:14). Redemption in Christ restores the intimacy men and women were created to enjoy in marriage.

5:22 submit. A Christian wife is called to grateful acceptance of her husband's care and leadership.

5:23 head of the wife . . . head of the church. In other passages on Christ's headship in this letter, Paul speaks of the way Christ governs the universe and the church (1:22) and serves as the source of the body's health and growth to maturity (4:14–16).

Savior. It is especially in His role as Savior that Christ serves as the husband's model (vv. 25–27).

5:24 as the church . . . so also wives. The church's subjection to Christ is a revealed and heavenly order, not a natural order. Christ's disciples were His friends, not just His servants, and He died for them (John 15:12–15; cf. Luke 22:25–27).

5:25 Husbands, love. The emphasis in the passage is not the husband's authority to govern, but his responsibility to love.

as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. Nowhere in the New Testament is Christ's self-sacrificing love applied more directly to a specific relationship as a pattern to be emulated (cf. v. 2). Christ did not give up His kingly authority or become subject to the church when He "gave himself up for her," but His authority was expressed through His sacrifice, especially since this accomplished redemption and victory over Satan.

5:28–32 A person's union with his or her own body is intimate and permanent, so

He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, 30 because [n]we are members of his body. 31 [o]"Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and [p]the two shall become one flesh." 32 This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. 33 However, [q]let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she [r]respects her husband.

CHILDREN AND PARENTS

6 [s]Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 [t]"Honor your father and mother" (this is the first commandment with a promise), 3 "that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land." 4 Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, [u]but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

BONDSERVANTS AND MASTERS

5 [v]Bondservants,[1] obey your earthly masters[2] with fear and trembling, [w]with a sincere heart, [x]as you would Christ, 6 not by the way of eye-service, as [y]people-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, 7 rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man, 8 [z]knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, [a]whether he is a bondservant or is free. 9 Masters, do the same to them, [b]and stop your threatening, knowing that [c]he who is both their Master[3] and yours is in heaven, and that [d]there is no partiality with him.

THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD

10 Finally, [e]be strong in the Lord and in [f]the strength of his might. 11 [g]Put on [h]the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against [i]the schemes of the devil. 12 For [j]we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against [k]the rulers, against the authorities, against [l]the cosmic powers over [m]this present darkness, against [n]the spiritual forces of evil [o]in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore [p]take up

[1] For the contextual rendering of the Greek word *doulos*, see Preface; also verse 6; likewise for *bondservant* in verse 8 [2] Or *your masters according to the flesh* [3] Greek *Lord*

30 [n] [Gen. 2:23]; See 1 Cor. 6:15
31 [o] Matt. 19:5; Mark 10:7, 8; Cited from Gen. 2:24 [p] 1 Cor. 6:16
33 [q] ver. 25, 28 [r] 1 Pet. 3:2, 6

Chapter 6

1 [s] Prov. 1:8; 6:20; 23:22
2 [t] Cited from Ex. 20:12
4 [u] Gen. 18:19; Deut. 4:9; 6:7; 11:19; Ps. 78:4; Prov. 19:18; 22:6; 29:17; [2 Tim. 3:15]
5 [v] See 1 Pet. 2:18 [w] [2 Cor. 11:3] [x] [ch. 5:22]
6 [y] See Gal. 1:10
8 [z] See Ps. 62:12 [a] Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:11
9 [b] Lev. 25:43 [c] John 13:13; [Job 31:13-15] [d] See Deut. 10:17
10 [e] Rom. 4:20 (Gk.); 2 Tim. 2:1; [1 John 2:14]; See ch. 3:16 [f] ch. 1:19
11 [g] ver. 14; Job 29:14; See Rom. 13:12 [h] ver. 13; [2 Cor. 10:4] [i] ch. 4:14
12 [j] See 1 Cor. 9:25 [k] ch. 1:21 [l] See ch. 2:2 [m] Luke 22:53; Col. 1:13 [n] [ch. 3:10] [o] See ch. 1:3
13 [p] [1 Pet. 4:1]

protecting and providing for one's body is natural and instinctive. Each husband must understand that marriage creates a similar union with his wife, according to the Creator's original design (Gen. 2:24). Christ has joined the church to Himself through the bonds of the covenant He fulfilled, and this intimate union forms a pattern for Christian marriage (2:6).

6:2 the first commandment with a promise. The law of God has lost its power to condemn those who are in Christ (Col. 2:13, 14), and the observance of the ceremonial law is abrogated after its fulfillment in Christ (2:15; Col. 2:16, 17). However, the "weightier matters of the law" (Matt. 23:23) are revelations of God's character, and provide permanent ethical principles, found in the Decalogue, which Paul quotes here (Ex. 20:12) and which define the Christian's calling to respond to divine grace with love for God and others, thereby fulfilling the law (Rom. 13:8–10; Gal. 5:13, 14). One of these principles is that children must honor their parents.

6:3 live long in the land. The promise supporting the fifth commandment anticipates the covenantal blessings offered to Israel upon their entrance into the Promised Land (Deut. 28:1–14). Israel's residence in that land foreshadowed new covenant believers' eternal life in the "heavenly homeland" in the new creation for which the patriarchs hoped (Heb. 11:10, 13–16; 13:14; Rom. 4:13)—the gift of God's grace received by persevering faith.

6:5–8 Slaves follow the example of Christ through obedient submission (Phil. 2:1–11). All believers are called to share Christ's humiliation and sufferings in this age, in order to be exalted and glorified with Him in the next (Rom. 8:17). Paul is not interested in making anyone's share of suffering greater than it has to be (1 Cor. 7:21). He also does not pretend there is an easy route around it. As slaves serve the exalted Christ, and not merely an earthly master, they do so in the new reality inaugurated by Christ (2 Cor. 5:17). By rendering ungrudging service to their true heavenly owner, slaves can work not for their value in the marketplace but in devotion to the One who poured out His own life for them, displaying the gospel's beauty (Titus 2:9, 10).

6:10 be strong . . . the strength of his might. We are not encouraged to face the evil hosts of darkness in our own strength, but in the strength of the Holy Spirit who raised Jesus and believers with Him (2:4–6; 3:16–19).

6:11 Put on the whole armor of God. The new set of clothes (4:22–24) now becomes a warrior's battle gear (Col. 3:10, 12). The OT allusions in Paul's description of the various pieces of armor show that believers are now arrayed with the very weapons that the Lord and His Messiah have worn to wage war on behalf of His people.

6:12 rulers . . . spiritual forces. These terms all refer to powerful spiritual beings that make up the "power of the air" (2:2) ruled by Satan.

the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in [q]the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. **14** Stand therefore, [r]having fastened on the belt of truth, and [s]having put on the breastplate of righteousness, **15** and, [t]as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. **16** In all circumstances take up [u]the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all [v]the flaming darts of [w]the evil one; **17** and take [s]the helmet of salvation, and [x]the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, **18** praying [y]at all times [z]in the Spirit, [a]with all prayer and supplication. To that end, [b]keep alert with all perseverance, making [c]supplication for all the saints, **19** and [d]also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth [e]boldly to proclaim [f]the mystery of the gospel, **20** for which I [g]am an ambassador [h]in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

FINAL GREETINGS

21 [i]So that you also may know how I am and what I am doing, [j]Tychicus the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord will tell you everything. **22** I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may [k]encourage your hearts.

23 [l]Peace be to the brothers,[1] and [m]love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. **24** Grace be with all who [n]love our Lord Jesus Christ with love incorruptible.

[1] Or *brothers and sisters*

22 [k]Col. 2:2 **23** [l]Gal. 6:16; 2 Thess. 3:16; 1 Pet. 5:14 [m][Gal. 5:6; 1 Thess. 5:8] **24** [n][1 Cor. 16:22]

13 [q]ch. 5:16

14 [r]1 Pet. 1:13; [Isa. 11:5]; See Luke 12:35 [s]Isa. 59:17; 1 Thess. 5:8; [Isa. 61:10; 2 Cor. 6:7]

15 [t]Isa. 52:7; Rom. 10:15; [Ex. 12:11]

16 [u][1 John 5:4] [v][Ps. 120:4] [w]See Matt. 13:19

17 [s][See ver. 14 above] [x]Heb. 4:12; [Isa. 49:2; Hos. 6:5; 2 Cor. 6:7]

18 [y]Luke 18:1 [z]Jude 20; See Rom. 8:26 [a]Col. 4:2-4 [b]See Mark 13:33 [c]1 Tim. 2:1

19 [d]Col. 4:3; 1 Thess. 5:25; 2 Thess. 3:1; [Isa. 50:4] [e]See Acts 4:29 [f]ch. 3:3

20 [g]See 2 Cor. 5:20 [h]See Acts 28:20

21 [i]Col. 4:7-9 [j]Acts 20:4; 2 Tim. 4:12; Titus 3:12

6:13 the whole armor of God. Paul combines the weapons of a Roman foot soldier with a number of OT images of God, or the Messiah, as a warrior (see esp. Is. 11:1–5). Strikingly, what is said of God and the Messiah in the OT is applied to believers.

6:14 fastened on the belt of truth. The Roman soldier's leather belt supported and protected his lower abdomen, gathered his tunic together, and held his sword. Paul seems to have in mind the confidence that comes from certainty about the truthfulness of God's Word.

breastplate of righteousness. Believers are protected by the righteousness of Christ imputed to them (Rom. 4:6–11; Phil. 3:9), and they can stand up to the accusations of the devil, whose title in Greek means "slanderer" (Rom. 8:31–34). Simultaneously, Paul sees believers taking on the righteous character of Christ (4:25; 5:9) while their growing conformity to His image gives them confidence in resisting temptation.

6:15 shoes for your feet. This is a clear allusion to Is. 52:7. Paul has in mind the messenger who takes the gospel to others. The image here is of the Roman soldier's sturdy sandals, which gave him stability and protection in battle, so that Isaiah has been combined with this Roman background.

6:16 shield of faith. The Roman shield was large enough to cover the whole body; it was made of wood, covered with animal hide, and bound with iron at the top and bottom. When dipped in water before a battle, it could extinguish arrows that had been dipped in pitch and set ablaze. In the OT, the Lord is the "shield" of His people (Gen. 15:1; Ps. 144:1, 2).

6:17 helmet of salvation. This part of the armor is what God was predicted to be wearing when He would come to judge and defeat the opponent in the end-time battle (cf. Is. 59:17). Believers are to identify with this armor in Christ. For Paul, salvation is a present experience (2:8 and note) as well as a future hope (1 Thess. 5:8). The believer's final ground of confidence is the faithfulness of God to complete the salvation He has begun (Phil. 1:6).

sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. The one offensive weapon in the believer's arsenal is compared to the Roman sword, short and designed for hand-to-hand combat. Jesus used the Word of God in His battle against the temptations of Satan in the wilderness (Matt. 4:1–11; Luke 4:1–13). The Lord was prophesied to make the mouth of His messianic Servant like a sharp sword (Is. 49:2; cf. Rev. 1:16; 2:12, 16; 19:15). Christ has begun to fulfill this prophecy at His first coming (Rev. 1:16; 2:12, 16) and the prophecy will be completed at Christ's final coming (Rev. 19:15). Christ's followers also have this offensive weapon when they believe in Christ and come into union with Him.

6:18–20 The battle theme in this passage ends with an urgent call to militant prayer ("keep alert") on behalf of all believers and on behalf of Paul's ministry (Col. 4:2–4). It is possible that, together with "the sword of the Spirit," prayer is one more offensive weapon in the believer's arsenal.

6:21–24 The absence of personal greetings in this letter may be an indication that it was intended for circulation to more than one church.

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