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By grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God.

Ephesians 2:8

THE EPISTLE
OF PAUL THE
APOSTLE TO THE

Ephesians

In Ephesians, the apostle Paul shows how God has graciously redeemed His people in Christ according to His eternal plan (1:1–2:10). Paul explains the mystery of the church—how Christ has gathered together believing Jews and Gentiles as one people by His death on the cross (2:11–3:13). Since God has made His wisdom known in the church, the apostle explains how believers ought to live as members of the church, which is the bride of Christ and the body of Christ, and to fight spiritual battles by the power of the Holy Spirit (3:14–6:20).

Ephesians

HISTORY

It is widely believed that the apostle Paul wrote this letter to the church in Ephesus sometime between A.D. 60 and 62 (see 1:1, 2; 3:1–3, 7–13; 4:1; 6:19–21). Ephesus was the capital of the Roman province of Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey). Paul ministered there for a number of years, seeking to establish the church there and to train its elders (Acts 19:1–20; 20:13–37).

STRUCTURE

Ephesians follows the standard literary structure of a first-century letter. It has a greeting (1:1, 2), a main body (1:3–6:20), and a conclusion (6:21–24). Theologically, it contains a two-part division. In chapters 1–3, Paul states the *facts* of Christianity; in chapters 4–6, he gives the *applications* of those facts.

I. Salutation (1:1, 2)
II. Blessings in Christ (1:3–23)
III. Position in Christ (2:1–3:13)
IV. Unity in Christ (3:14–6:9)
V. Victory in Christ (6:10–20)
VI. Final Greetings (6:21–24)

Spiritual Warfare

The battle against Satan and his forces that we wage by praying for the defeat of these enemies and by proclaiming God's Word, especially the gospel.

Triune God

A way of referring to the one God that stresses His existence as the Holy Trinity. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one in essence but three in person, equal in power and glory yet distinguishable from one another.

THEMES

Throughout the letter, the apostle focuses on the triune God, union with Christ, the grace of God, the church, and spiritual warfare.

1. *The Triune God.* Ephesians summarizes the gospel and its benefits, starting with how the triune God accomplishes and applies redemption to believers (1:3–14). God the Father chose His people in Christ before the foundation of the world (1:4). God the Son redeemed the elect by shedding His blood for them (1:7). God the Holy Spirit seals and secures the eternal inheritance for believers by applying the work of Christ to us (1:13, 14).

2. *Union with Christ.* Union with Christ is a central theme in Ephesians. Paul uses the phrases "in Christ" and "in him" more than twenty times. We get all that we need for redemption and the Christian life in union with the crucified and risen Christ (1:3–13).

3. *The Grace of God.* Believers are made the recipients of every spiritual blessing in Christ only because of God's grace (1:6, 7; 2:5–8). Apart from God's initiative, we are "dead in . . . trespasses and sins"—unable to do anything spiritually good before God (2:1–4). Therefore, salvation could only be though the free grace of God in Christ (2:8–10). We cannot earn our salvation or do anything to deserve it.

4. *The Church.* The church is the primary place where we experience the blessings of Christ's salvation (3:10). Christ is the Head of the church (5:23). God reconciles sinners to Himself in the church (2:1–10; 4:1–16). Believers have transformed relationships in the church (4:32–5:2; 5:22–6:9). God dwells with His people in the church (2:19–22; 3:17–19).

Paul wrote his epistle to the Ephesians in the early 60s A.D. while he was in prison in Rome. He addressed the church in Ephesus, a city in Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey), providing instruction on the sovereign grace of God, the nature of the church, and spiritual warfare.



5. *Spiritual Warfare.* Ephesus was polluted by spiritually evil practices. When Paul first went there, he encountered people who practiced magic arts (Acts 19:19) as well as people who worshiped the pagan goddess Artemis (Acts 19:23–41). In light of the spiritual darkness in the city, the apostle Paul charges his readers to "expose" the deeds of darkness (5:8–14) and to be ready to fight against "spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places" (6:12; see also 1:20, 21; 3:10).

LESSONS

Here are a few practical lessons we get from reading Ephesians:

- We are to praise God for the blessings He gives us in Christ (1:3–14; Heb. 13:15).
- We are born into the world as sinners (2:1–4; Rom. 5:12–21).
- The greatness of God's mercy and grace to us in Christ gives us reason to marvel (2:4–10).
- God reconciles diverse people to Himself and to one another in Christ (2:11–22; Col. 2:19, 20).
- We should respect and submit to the pastoral ministry in the life of the church (3:7–13; 4:11–13; Heb. 13:17).
- Christians must love the church and labor for her spiritual well-being (4:1–16; 1 John 4:21).
- We are to live out our new life in Christ in the church and in the world by showing appropriate love and doing good (4:17–5:21; 3 John 11).
- Husbands and wives are to reflect Christ and the church in marriage (5:22–33; 1 Pet. 3:1–7).
- We must honor and obey our parents (6:1–3; Col. 3:20).
- Parents must bring up children in a way that is pleasing to the Lord (6:4; Col. 3:21).
- We are commanded to do our work to honor the Lord, seeking His approval (6:5–8; Col. 3:22–25).
- We must treat those who work for us justly (6:9; Col. 4:1).
- Only God's strength and spiritual resources can equip us for the spiritual battles in which we are engaged (6:10–17; 2 Tim. 2:1).
- We must pray for believers and for ministers (6:18–20; Heb. 13:18, 19).

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

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]; See Rom. 2:4
9 [v]See Rom. 16:25

What is predestination?

The doctrine of predestination deals with the eternal destiny of all people. In eternity past, before the world even existed, God chose (elected) some people to salvation by His grace, but He decided to pass over (not choose) others. The Bible teaches that God foreknew—set His love on before they were even created—all those whom He predestined to salvation, and He justifies and sanctifies them, making their salvation sure (Rom. 8:29, 30). If it were not for God's decision to save some by raising them to new spiritual life and giving them saving faith, no sinner would believe in Christ and every sinner would receive eternal punishment for sinful rebellion against Him.

1 Some manuscripts *saints who are also faithful* (omitting *in Ephesus*) 2 Or *before him in love,* 5 *having predestined us*

1:1 apostle of Christ Jesus. An authorized representative appointed and sent by the risen Lord Jesus, with the authority to receive and declare His special revelation. See note on 2 Cor. 1:1.

in Ephesus. This epistle was likely intended to be read by churches in various cities in the province of Asia in addition to Ephesus (for other books intended to be circulated among many churches, see Col. 4:16; Rev. 1:4, 11).

1:3–14 The passage expands 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.

1:3 in the heavenly places. 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. Paul says explicitly that the sole ground of God's predestinating love is His own good pleasure (vv. 5, 10; see Deut. 7:7, 8), not anything the elect have done or will do (Rom. 9:11, 16). It is not based on God's looking into the future, seeing who would believe, and then choosing them. "In him" means that God's choice has always had in view a fallen people in union with their Redeemer (2 Tim. 1:9).

holy and blameless. 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 lives (Rom. 8:29, 30). Some people might say that election leads to careless, sinful living, but that simply is not true (see 2:10; 4:1–3, 17–24; 5:25–27).

In love. This phrase explains predestination not simply as a matter of God's decision but as an act of His love (Hos. 11:1). God chose us in love so as to make us those who will express a holy and blameless love (see 3:17; 4:2, 15, 16; 5:2).

1:6 The thought of God's almighty love leads to an extravagant outpouring of praise (vv. 12, 14) to God, who has not only the power but also the will to overcome all obstacles in bringing the spiritually dead into a living relationship with Himself (expanded in 2:1–10).

grace . . . blessed us in the Beloved. "Beloved" is singular, referring to Christ. We are chosen by God, in His beloved Son, whom He has chosen as the source of all our blessings (see Matt. 3:17; 17:5; Col. 1:13; 1 Pet. 1:18–21; Rev. 13:8).

1:7 redemption. This means deliverance by paying a ransom. God delivered us from the guilt of sin by the blood of Christ shed at the cross. For the redemption that is yet to come, see v. 11.

1:9 mystery. For Paul, "mystery" is not something impossible to understand but a truth previously and partially hidden that

known [t] 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 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 [2] of our [i] inheritance until [j] we acquire [k] possession of it, [3] [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 [4] 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

9 [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]
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]

[1] Or *he lavished upon us in all wisdom and insight, making known . . .* [2] Or *down payment* [3] Or *until God redeems his possession* [4] Some manuscripts omit *your love*

is now fully revealed through the coming of Christ. See 3:3, 5, 6, 10, and notes; Rom. 16:25–27; Col. 1:27. His use of "mystery" always has to do with OT prophecies, most of which have begun to be fulfilled during the church age (see 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 (see 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 world (translated as "plan"). The idea appears to be that the household of the cosmos has become broken and in disarray because the original household managers—Adam and his descendants—allowed this to happen. Christ is the faithful household manager who has come to put the broken household back together, especially the shattered relationships in the family of that household.

1:11–14 Paul anticipates what he will say in 3:6 about Jews and Gentiles being "fellow heirs" of the promise in Christ. Believing Jews of Paul's day, "who were the first to hope in Christ" (v. 12), have become heirs by the will of God. Gentiles who have now received the same promise that was made to Israel—the gift of the Holy Spirit—have likewise become heirs, to the praise of God's glory.

1:11 all things . . . his will. God's will for believers goes beyond rescue from sin. Believers have been "predestined" to receive an "inheritance," and God has the power to achieve this.

1:13 sealed. Like the irremovable impression made by a king's signet ring, the Holy Spirit is an inward mark of God's ownership of His people.

the promised Holy Spirit. As Jesus says in Luke 24:49, the Holy Spirit is the promise of the Father. This promise is extended to all those who trust in Christ, Gentiles as well as Jews (see Ezek. 36:26, 27; Joel 2:28; John 14–16; Acts 1:4, 5; 2:33, 38, 39; Gal. 3:14; 4:6).

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).

possession. The idea here is that God's people are His "inheritance," which He will redeem finally and fully in our resurrection (Rom. 8:23). The Old Testament 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 "to 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 and of the Son's work in vv. 7–12. 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. God can receive glory for the work of redemption only if that work is all 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.

1:15 because I have heard. Paul had ministered in Ephesus for more than two years, but the time of writing may be as much as five years later. The church had grown considerably since then. It may also be that Paul mentions people who live in the cities where the epistle circulated whose faith and love he has only heard about (see v. 1 note).

1:18 the hope to which he has called you. Paul repeats this theme in 4:4, showing that the unity of believers from diverse backgrounds is central to this hope (see also 4:13).

his glorious inheritance in the saints. It is amazing that God should so treasure as His inheritance a gathering of people who were once dead in trespasses and objects of His wrath (2:1–3), making His church the venue to display His great wisdom (3:8–10). This outcome results only from His grace and leads to His glory.

1:19–23 These verses summarize the NT's teaching on the resurrection and enthronement of Jesus. They also make two important contributions to understanding Jesus' resurrection and the

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 [1] and the mind, and [p] were by nature [q] children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. [2] **4** But [3] 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

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]

What is the church?

The word *church* refers primarily not to a building but to the group of people who belong to the Lord. It is the gathering of the covenant people of God. The church can be thought of as both visible and invisible. The visible church consists of all those who are part of a local church, but not everyone in the visible church has saving faith in Jesus Christ. It is called the "visible church" because it is made up of people who have been baptized and made a profession of faith, and baptisms and professions of faith are public and visible to us. The invisible church consists of all those who are truly united to Christ—and to one another—by faith. It is called the "invisible church" because we cannot see the hearts of people, so its members are invisible to us, but not to God.

[1] Greek *flesh* [2] Greek *like the rest* [3] Or *And*

Chapter 2

1 [l] 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]

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

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, but He is there representing believers (2:6; Col. 3:3) and governing the universe for their sake. Ephesians emphasizes 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; see 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; see 1 Cor. 15:25–27; Heb. 2:8, 9).

1:21 above all rule and authority. Ephesus and its surrounding area abounded with pagan worship practices aimed at appeasing and manipulating invisible spiritual powers (see Acts 19:11–20). Paul boldly declares that in Jesus' resurrection and ascension, God exalted Him above all unseen forces and that Jesus reigns for the sake of His church. "Rule and authority" here focuses on evil powers, as is clear from 6:12 and Col. 2:10 in comparison to Col. 2:15.

2:1–3 The natural state of all human beings is spiritual death. Both Gentiles and Jews are, since the fall, "by nature children of wrath" and thus in active rebellion against God (vv. 2, 3). They are subject to the evil rule of Satan (called in v. 2 "the prince of the power of the air"; see Gal. 4:3; Col. 1:13). They are totally unable to cease their rebellion against God (John 3:3). Finally, they are exposed to the just anger of God (v. 3; 5:6; Rom. 1:18–20).

2:4 But God . . . because of the great love. Paul's discouraging portrait of the human situation helps us see God's gracious and merciful response to it. 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 (see 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.

2:5, 6 made us alive . . . raised us up . . . seated us. These are historical events in the life of Christ: His resurrection from the dead and His being seated at the right hand of God. But Paul also applies them to believers. Paul teaches a union between Christ and those who come to trust in Him (see 1:3; Col. 3:1–4), so that what is said of the Redeemer can also be said of the redeemed. What once happened to Jesus will one day happen to believers as well (see 2 Cor. 4:14: they will be resurrected to glory at His return

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 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,

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] [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]
15 [u] Col. 2:14, 20 [v] See Rom. 6:4

(Rom. 8:11; 1 Cor. 15). For the present, there is a new mind, a new identity as God's children, and a new ability to live free from the control of Satan (see 4:23, 24; Rom. 8:1–4, 14–17; 12:1, 2; 2 Cor. 5:17).

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

2:8 you have been saved. Salvation is a completed action that has a present effect. Because salvation ultimately includes several realities—among them, predestination (God's choice of His people for salvation), regeneration (God's granting us new hearts), justification (God's declaring us righteous in Christ), adoption (God's becoming our Father), sanctification (God's making us more holy in our lives), and glorification (God's removing the presence of sin and giving us a resurrected body)—the apostle can speak of it as a past event (predestination, regeneration, justification, adoption), present process (sanctification), and a future reality (glorification). 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 seen and experienced in all 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 statement refers to the whole of salvation by grace through faith as a gift of God. Since faith is included in the whole 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 states clearly here what is implied elsewhere in the New Testament about the ultimate source of saving faith (Acts 13:48; Phil. 1:29).

2:9 not a result of works. Salvation is wholly God's work, received through faith alone, and in no way depends on the good intentions or deeds of those whom God saves. The Christian's complete 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 necessarily flow from and prove 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—that is, we do good works after we have been saved not to be saved, for our good works are not the cause of our salvation. However, those who do not have good works show that they do not have saving faith (see Rom. 6; James 2:12–26).

2:12 alienated . . . strangers to the covenants of promise. Gentiles were not citizens of the nation with whom God made a covenant. Though God's relationship with Israel included a promise to bless the nations (Gen. 12:3), Gentiles had no awareness of that hope.

without God in the world. God has revealed Himself to all humanity in nature and in the conscience (our sense of right and wrong). Yet this general or natural revelation cannot save, and those whom the Lord has not raised to new spiritual life suppress or try to ignore 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 OT, 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 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 symbolizing the law's function of separating Israel 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 OT 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,

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

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]

3 [s]Acts 22:17, 21; 26:16-18 [t][Dan. 2:29]; 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

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

Chapter 3
1 [a]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

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; see Rom. 5:12–21), Christ is the head of a new human race, which is marked not only by new and greater unity but also by His "true righteousness and holiness" (4:24).

2:17, 18 Isaiah prophesied a day when God's peace would be proclaimed to Jews "far" and "near" (Is. 57:19). Through the gospel of Christ, the Spirit brings Gentiles ("you who were far off") and Jews ("those who were near") together as the true Israel before the Father, in fulfillment of this promise in Isaiah.

2:19–22 These verses describe the reversal of the Gentile disadvantages outlined in vv. 11, 12 (see 3:6). The building of a new spiritual temple replaces the outdated one in Jerusalem.

2:20 The foundation of God's house was laid once for all by the NT apostles and prophets (see Rev. 21:14). The cornerstone of the foundation is Christ (1 Cor. 3:10, 11). In 3:4–6, Paul will show that the foundational role of the apostles and prophets involves their receiving 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 means 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.

2:22 you also are being built. Paul again addresses Gentile believers specifically (vv. 1, 2, 11, 12; see 1:13) to emphasize the stunning reversal that God's grace has effected. Not only are they no longer excluded from God's people and God's sanctuary (vv. 12–15) and granted access to the Father (v. 18), but they are actually being used (with Jewish believers) to build the very "dwelling place for God by the Spirit." The apostle Peter agrees: under the new covenant, God's "spiritual house" is composed of "living stones," people whom God's Spirit has made alive (1 Pet. 2:4, 5).

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).

3:3 mystery. Something that was previously hidden but is now revealed. See 1:9, 10.

3:5 as it has now been revealed. The OT was silent about Paul's mystery—the union of Jews and Gentiles on equal terms in the church (v. 6)—but not completely. 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 made completely clear in the OT, nor was it fully carried out in history until Christ's death and exaltation marked the arrival of the new covenant. That is, the precise mystery that was not fully revealed is that Gentiles can become part of true Israel by identifying with Christ. They do not need to travel to geographical Israel and become Jews, obey the kosher laws, be circumcised, and so forth.

now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets. These two offices are foundational for the new temple of God that the Spirit is building (2:20, 21) because through Christ's apostles and prophets of the NT church, God's formerly hidden mystery is now revealed.

3:6 Gentiles are fellow heirs. Although the OT gives occasional glimpses of a unified redeemed people, only in the

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 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 [z] 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

8 [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 [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

[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

light of Christ's sacrifice does God's plan become clear: in one magnificent act, He removed the hostility between Himself and humanity and also erases the divisions in humanity (2:14–18).

3:10 the rulers . . . in the heavenly places. Paul has already mentioned "the prince of the power of the air" (2:2) and will return to the Christians' battle against their spiritual enemies (6:10–17). Note that he argues in his letter to the Colossians that Jesus is Lord of all things, including the spirit world, and further that it is only in Jesus that heaven and earth are reconciled (Col. 1:15–20; 2:8–23). Accordingly, the peace between Jews and Gentiles in the church is a signal to all powers in the universe. 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).

3:15 every family in heaven. Jewish literature outside the Bible refers to families of angels.

3:16 in your inner being. Much of the letter to the Ephesians addresses believers' corporate identity (for example, 4:3–6, 12–16). Yet Christ also dwells in individual hearts. Elsewhere, Paul speaks of the ongoing renewal of believers' "inner self" (2 Cor. 4:16) and of God's working in them both the desire and the power to do what pleases Him (Phil. 2:12, 13; see Phil. 1:6). Christianity has both a corporate aspect and an individual aspect, and neither excludes the other.

3:18 breadth and length and height and depth. These measures of space recall the temple image of 2:21. As the "living stones" (1 Pet. 2:5) are linked in love, God's dwelling grows and is filled with Christ Himself. God uses the love among "all the saints"—Jew and Gentile alike—to build a whole that is greater than any of its individual parts. The spatial language points to Christ's love for His people—a love that is inclusive, inexhaustible, and self-sacrificing.

3:21 glory. Because of the power that God has given to the church, Paul gives glory to Him. Paul's doctrinal teaching opened in praise to God (1:3–14) and now closes in praise to God, laying the foundation for the rest of the letter's focus on righteousness in everyday living in response to 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 taught in chs. 1–3. Believers should live to give God glory and to reflect God's glory.

4:1 walk. Throughout the second half of this letter, Paul unfolds the "walk," or life of good works, first mentioned in 2:10 and then again in 4:17; 5:2; and 5:15.

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. He has already provided strong indications of its shape and significance (1:4; 2:10). 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 appeals in the gospel truths already explored 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).

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."[1]

9 ([h] In saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into [i] the lower regions, the earth?[2] **10** He who descended is the one who also [j] ascended [k] 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[3] and teachers,[4] **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,[5] 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

3 [t] Col. 3:14; [Acts 8:23]
4 [u] ch. 2:16 [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 [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

[1] The Greek word *anthropoi* can refer to both men and women [2] Or *the lower parts of the earth?* [3] Or *pastors* [4] Or *the shepherd-teachers* [5] Greek *to a full-grown man*

4:4–6 one. 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. Paul refers to God the Father in v. 6, God the Son in v. 5 ("Lord"), and God the Holy Spirit in v. 4.

4:7 But grace was given to each one of us. All Christians share the grace of salvation through faith alone (2:5, 8). Each Christian is also given some particular gift of grace to benefit the church (Paul speaks of his own in 3:2, 8). See Rom. 12:3–8; 1 Cor. 12:3–13, 27–30.

4:8 Paul quotes from Ps. 68, which celebrates God's triumphant march from Mount Sinai in the wilderness to Mount Zion in Jerusalem and His enthronement there. Paul regards this as pointing forward to 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 "among men," Paul pictures Christ as sharing the spoils of His victory 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 or being brought low. 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" (see 1:20–23; Phil. 2:1–11). This example of service is to be followed 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 appointed by Jesus to be founders of the church (see Acts 1:21, 22; 1 Cor. 15:1–9). The word was also used in a broader sense for people sent out as representatives of particular churches (as in 2 Cor. 8:23; Phil. 2:25), though these do not appear to be whom Paul has in mind in this passage.

prophets. The NT prophets delivered 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), so there are no longer these offices in the church. 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 guide 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. Thus, Paul goes on to describe the growth that results when each member of the body works "properly" to serve others (vv. 15, 16). Effective teachers help believers find their own way to benefit the rest of the church.

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 become perfectly mature, as defined by the example of Jesus Christ. 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. Paul uses the analogy of the human body. Believers are not given gifts for their own private benefit, and no one can grow to maturity on their own

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 understanding, [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, [r] which 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, tenderhearted, [i] forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

16 [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]; 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 [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

[r] Greek *man*; also verse 24

(1 Cor. 12:7, 12–26). Paul himself strives for a knowledge of the Son of God that comes to maturity only when all believers attain it as well.

4:17–19 This passage closely resembles the critique of Gentile culture in Rom. 1 and contains echoes of the descriptions of the Ephesians' prior condition in paganism in 2:1–3, 11, 12. While Rom. 1:18–32 shows God as giving Gentiles over to a reckless and sinful life, 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).

4:20 you learned Christ. As Paul elsewhere sums up the gospel as "proclaiming Christ" (see 1 Cor. 2:1, 2; Phil. 1:18; Col. 1:27), so here he characterizes as "learning Christ" the new pattern of desiring and behaving that flows from gratitude for God's grace in the gospel.

4:21 as the truth is in Jesus. God has broken the cycle of death by giving them an understanding of His Son and His work on their behalf (1:13, 15).

4:22–24 put off . . . be renewed . . . put on. Belonging to Christ involves casting off 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"). In 2:15, 16, Paul speaks of God's creating "one new man" in Christ and reconciling believing Jews and Gentiles to God through His cross. In Gal. 3:27, Paul describes conversion as having "put on Christ." The image is that of taking off frayed clothes and putting on new ones. In Col. 3:9–11, Paul says that this change of "clothing" (identity), from Adam to Christ, has already happened decisively for believers. Thus, to put on Adam is to live at odds with who we are in Christ.

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

4:25 members one of another. Since believers are now a "new man" in the last Adam (Christ), they have the responsibility to speak truth with their neighbor. In vv. 25–32, the behavior that Paul's readers are urged to show 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 idea is not new to the NT, as is clear from Paul's quotation of the prophet Isaiah (Is. 63:10). The attitudes and behaviors forbidden in v. 31 disrupt the unity that the Spirit has established in Christ's church (v. 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. In the same way, because the Israelites were purchased from slavery in Egypt, they were to have a special regard for aliens, slaves, and the dispossessed in their own midst (Ex. 22:21; 23:9; Lev. 19:33, 34; Deut. 5:15). The same logic is found in Jesus' new commandment: "As I have loved you, you also are to love one another" (John 13:34).

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 immoral 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]darkness, 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,

> [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.

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]

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]
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

5:3, 4 proper . . . out of place. To make light of the sexual relationship ("crude joking") on the one hand or to idolize it on the other is out of step with our identity as "saints." As those chosen and called to bear God's restored image, we can accept God's gifts, including sexuality, with thanksgiving and restore them to their proper use (see 1:4–6; 4:24; Prov. 5:18, 19; 1 Tim. 4:1–5; Heb. 13:4).

5:7 do not become partners with them. Christians must consider the awful destiny of nonbelievers and refuse to join them in their folly (1 Pet. 4:3–5). Instead, they should remember their status as partakers with the Jews in the promise of God in Christ (3:6).

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

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

5:14 Therefore it says. The imagery of light and awakening or rising is found in Is. 60:1, describing the restoration of Israel in the end times; there the Lord shines light on Israel, and here Christ is identified with the God of Is. 60 in shining light on people. Paul may be citing a portion of an early Christian hymn well known to the churches, as he seems to do elsewhere (for example, see Phil. 2:5–11; Col. 1:15–20; 1 Tim. 3:16). If so, it would be a hymn that has been influenced by Is. 60:1.

5:18 drunk with wine. Christians are not to be under the control of intoxicating beverages but should be under the controlling influences of the Holy Spirit.

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

5:19–21 addressing . . . making melody . . . giving thanks . . . submitting. These words depend on the command "Be filled with the Spirit" (v. 18) and therefore make clear the actions that result from and demonstrate the Spirit's filling in believers' lives.

5:19 one another . . . to the Lord. Worship is offered to God alone. At the same time, there is also a human aspect to corporate worship, since people worship together and address each other for their mutual benefit (see 1 Cor. 14; Heb. 10:24).

5:21 This verse is last in a series of expressions explaining the effects of being filled

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. 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.

[1] Or *holy and blameless*

22 [z] For ch. 5:22–6:9, 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]

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

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

with the Spirit (vv. 19–21). Regardless of their social rank, all Christians should pattern their social behavior on the humility and kindness of Christ (4:32–5:2; Luke 22:24–27; John 13:14–16). This submission "to one another" is further explained by the forms of authority and submission in the specific relationships discussed in 5:22–6:9.

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 by nurturing those under their care. At the same time, 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 that men and women are equal before God. Yet in marriage, God has called the husband to lead. There are limits to this leadership, however, for the husband is not to be followed if he calls his wife to sin. Nevertheless, the husband's leadership role allows him to act 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).

his body. That is, the church as His body—Christ Himself indwells the church (vv. 28–30) and rules over her.

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; see 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. Christ did not give up His kingly authority or become subject to the church when He "gave himself up for her" but demonstrated His authority through His sacrifice, especially since His sacrifice accomplished redemption and victory over Satan.

5:26, 27 Paul outlines in these verses the entire process to which Christ has committed Himself in His relationship with the church: He has washed her from sin and is preparing her for a glorious destiny with Himself. Husbands are called in like manner to adapt their lives to their wives' needs and to provide for their spiritual growth and development.

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

5:31, 32 The idea is that God's pre-fall commission for a man to leave his family and become one with his wife was ultimately intended to foreshadow Christ's relationship with His bride, the church. This was not so clearly seen in the OT but now has been fully revealed in Christ. As a man leaves his family and joins to his wife, Christ left His Father's side and came to join to His bride. Having returned to His Father, He brings us with Him to dwell before God forever.

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,

[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*

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

6:1–3 Children in the church have responsibility to live as disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. For Paul, part of what shows that Gentile culture stands under God's judgment is children's disobedience to their parents (Rom. 1:30; 2 Tim. 3:2).

6:2 the first commandment with a promise. The law of God has lost its power to condemn those who are in Christ, and the need to keep the ceremonial law is set aside after its fulfillment in Christ (2:15; Col. 2:13–17). However, the "weightier matters of the law" (Matt. 23:23) reveal God's character and provide permanent principles for behavior, found in the Ten Commandments, 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 fourth commandment points forward to 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 (see Heb. 11:10, 13–16; 13:14; see Rom. 4:13)—the gift of God's grace received by persevering faith.

6:4 Fathers. Conversely, to parents Paul stresses the responsibility of those in authority.

discipline. The shaping of the will through training and correction.

instruction. The shaping of the mind through teaching and guidance.

6:5–8 Slaves follow the example of Christ through obedient submission (Phil. 2:1–11 describes Christ's submission to the Father). All believers are called to share Christ's accepting a lower position and His 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 brought about by Christ (2 Cor. 5:17). Paul insists elsewhere that being owned by Christ makes all other definitions of our personhood irrelevant: "You were bought with a price; do not become bondservants [or slaves] of men" (1 Cor. 7:23). By gladly serving their true heavenly owner, slaves can work not for earthly gain but in devotion to the One who poured out His own life for them, displaying the gospel's beauty (Titus 2:9, 10).

6:9 do the same. If masters can expect their Christian slaves to serve them willingly, slaves can expect Christian masters to treat them the way Christ treats His own servants.

6:10–17 The Christian duty of unity and purity is complicated by the presence of hostile spiritual powers. Christ's cross was the devil's undoing, and in His resurrection Christ was exalted over every created being, visible and invisible, heavenly and earthly (1:20–22). At Christ's second coming, Satan's defeat will be completed (as promised in Rom. 16:20; Rev. 20:7–14). But the peace of the cross is experienced in the meantime in the midst of spiritual struggle. The forces of darkness are defeated but not yet harmless.

6:10 be strong . . . the strength of his might. Paul refers to the Spirit's "might" also in 1:19, 20 to describe the power that raised Jesus from the dead. We are encouraged to face the evil hosts of darkness not 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 (see 4:22–24 note) now becomes a warrior's battle gear. 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. Elsewhere, Paul directs believers to "put on the armor of light" and then explains the metaphor: "put on the Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 13:12–14).

stand. Repeated three times in vv. 11, 13, 14 (the related term "withstand" in v. 13 has the same meaning). The "walking" image of chs. 4 and 5 gives way to the picture of a soldier standing firm in battle (see Phil. 1:27, 28).

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.

against [n] the spiritual forces of evil [o] in the heavenly places. **13** Therefore [p] take up 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.

12 [n] [ch. 3:10] [o] See ch. 1:3
13 [p] [1 Pet. 4:1] [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
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]

[1] Or *brothers and sisters*

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). They can stand up to the accusations of the devil, whose title in Greek means "slanderer" (see 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. This piece of armor is what God was prophesied to wear in judging and defeating the enemy in the latter-day battle (Is. 59:17). Believers are to identify with this armor of God's righteousness in Christ.

6:15 shoes for your feet. This is a clear reference 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. Ironically, the peace that comes from the gospel readies one for war against evil (see 2:14, 15, 17). Is. 52:7 prophesied that in the end-time restoration of Israel there would be peace, and this restoration has begun in Christ and in all who identify with Him.

6:16 shield of faith. The Roman shield was large enough to cover the whole body; it was made of wood, covered with animal skin, 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 (a flammable substance) and set on fire. 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 (see Is. 59:17). Believers are to identify with this armor in Christ. For Paul, salvation is a present experience (2:8) 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 equipment 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; see 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" (v. 17), prayer is one more offensive weapon in the believer's arsenal. See 1:15–23 for Paul's dependence on prayer. The radical change brought about by the gospel is shown in the fact that Paul now asks Gentiles, once excluded from God's communion and community, to pray on his behalf, since they now have access to the Father through the Son in the Spirit (2:11, 12, 18).

6:20 ambassador in chains. Paul's situation is full of irony. He is an authorized delegate of the Lord, who is exalted above every creature in heaven and earth and whose title is above every other name (1:20, 21). Yet the rulers of this age have chained Paul as a prisoner, showing their foolish blindness to the Lord of glory (see 1 Cor. 2:8). His office as an ambassador demands that he speak on behalf of his Sovereign, while his chains tempt him to lack boldness, prompting him to plead for prayers for courage.

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