

## Introduction to Ephesians – John W. Gregson Ephesians 1:1,2

Some of the greatest writers and theologians have extolled the epistle as superhuman. Indeed as the writer penned the words he was led and directed by the Holy Spirit. Samuel Taylor Coleridge described Ephesians as "the divinest composition of man." Others have evaluated it as "the distilled essence of the Christian religion," "the most authoritative and most consummate compendium of the Christian faith," and as "full to the brim with thoughts and doctrines sublime and momentous." Stalker calls the first three chapters - "the profoundest thing ever written." While A. T. Robertson says of this section, "(it) reaches the height of Christian thinking and sounds the profoundest depths of truth." Needless to say, it is an epistle worthy of the consideration of every Christian.

### 1. The Writer and His Recipients

The epistle of Ephesians has all the characteristics of such almost universally recognized Pauline epistles as Romans, I and II Corinthians, Galatians and Philippians. Eusebius' testimony is in favor of Pauline authorship. Origen quotes from the epistle and attributes it to Paul, while Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 195) ascribes Ephesians 4:13-15 to Paul. Ireneus (A.D. 175) quotes 5:13 and ascribes it to Paul. The epistle is further quoted by such ancients as Clement of Rome (A.D. 96), Barnabas (A.D. 106), Ignatius (A.D. 115) and Tertullian (A.D. 190).

Hendriksen refutes the idea that Ephesians is a "verbose amplification of Colossians" by comparing the two. It is true that both the epistles were written about the same time, and they do have some of the same subject matter; furthermore, there are no contradictions since the Holy Spirit led in the composition of both epistles (p. 5). If the epistle to the Ephesians was not written directly by Paul, but by one of his disciples in the apostle's name, then its author was the greatest Paulinist of all time – a disciple who assimilated his master's thoughts more thoroughly than anyone else ever did" (Bruce, p. II). The Muratorian Fragment (A.D. 180-200) names Paul as the author.

Paul refers to himself as the author (1:1; 3:1). In 4:1 the writer refers to himself as "the prisoner of the Lord." It is generally agreed that the prison epistles (Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon and Philippians) were written at Rome during the imprisonment referred to in Acts 28. All four of these prison epistles contain direct references to Paul's imprisonment. This first Roman imprisonment was of long duration and involved extensive ministry outreach. Ephesians was written about A.D. 61 or 62. Tychicus carried the letter to Ephesus at the same time he carried Paul's letter to the Colossians (Ephesians 6:21,22; Colossians 4:7-9; Philemon 10-21).

There are two main views regarding the original destination of Ephesians. First, to the church at Ephesus only (based on 1:1, 4:17 and 6:21-22) which point to a specific church. Second, to a circuit of various unspecified churches. It seems that Paul wrote in a form which would have been suitable to the Christians in neighboring churches, and intended that it should be communicated to them also. According to Acts 19:8-10; 20:31 Paul spent three years of extensive evangelism and church planting in Ephesus and the surrounding area.

It is true that "in Ephesus" is not found in the oldest extant manuscripts (Sinaiticus, Vaticanus and Greek papyrus). In fact the Marcion's copy bore - "to the Laodiceans." It could have been a circular or encyclical letter - going to various churches which each, in turn, was charged to pass on to another, with Ephesus as its final destination. Regardless of which ever view is accepted, it does not diminish the message that God intended that the one church or that a number of churches should receive. In fact, the message is apropos to existing churches two thousand years later.

## 2. The City of Ephesus and the Church

Commercially, the city of Ephesus was one of the three leaders of international trade, the others were Alexandria of Egypt and Antioch of Syria. It was in a strategic location. In Arts and Sciences the city was a haven for philosophers, poets, artists and orators. Corinth, just across the Aegean Sea, was one of its chief rivals in these areas. Religiously the worship of Diana (Artemis) was the dominant religion. The temple of Diana was world famous. In Acts 19:23-27 we are told of Demetrius' claim that "all of Asia and the world" worshipped Diana (19:27). Many of the area citizens were identified with the imperial cult of Augustus, which involved various forms of black magic and witchcraft (Acts 19:13-19; Ephesians 6:12).

When was the church at Ephesus established? Apparently one of the last places that the Apostle Paul visited on his second missionary journey (A.D. 51-54) was Ephesus (Acts 18:19,21). It was on his third missionary journey (A.D. 54-58), however, that Paul, Silas and Timothy did extensive evangelistic work at Ephesus after re-visiting the churches of Galatia and Phrygia (Acts 18:22,23). In fact, the missionary team stayed in Ephesus some three years. While here at Ephesus, Paul wrote a letter to the Corinthian church, which was lost.

Acts 20:31 records Paul stay at Ephesus at three years - first, a period of three months reasoning with the Jews and later for a period of two years in the "school of Tyrannus" (Acts 19:8-10). A spacious portico in the city gymnasium was offered to Paul by Tyrannus. The honored ruler of a Greek city-state used the portico for his school boys at the normal time for teaching, the cool of the day, and Paul used it from 11 a.m. until 4 p.m., the hours of heat and siesta when all Ephesus shut up shop; even slaves could come to hear him. Then Tyrannus and his students returned for two or three hours while Paul went off to private houses of the rich and the poor (Acts 20:20). Later Peter and John carried on the apostolic testimony in the region of Ephesus. John wrote the Revelation from Patmos which was only about sixty miles from Ephesus but separated by the Aegean Sea. Of course, the church at Ephesus was one of the seven churches to whom the glorified Christ spoke through John in Revelation.

## 3. The Aim and Theme of the Epistle

Paul wrote this letter in order to express his inner satisfaction with the Christ-centered faith of the addressed and their love for all the saints (1:15). Another purpose may have been to picture God's glorious redemptive grace toward the church, bestowed upon it in order that it might be a blessing to the world and might stand united against all the forces of evil and thus glorify its Redeemer. Various themes have been suggested. One writer stated that "reconciliation" is the theme and cites 1:10 as the verse stating such a theme, "That in the dispensation of the fullness

of times (God) might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in (Christ)."

There are two main sections: chapters 1-3 are expositional - the truth stated, and chapters 4-6 are exhortatory - the truth applied. Summers writes that chapters 1-3 are doctrinal and chapters 4-6 present the application.

#### 4 .The Exposition of Verses 1,2

The apostle begins with a usual salutation, "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God." Hendriksen says of this verse, "The apostle has attained his high office neither through ASPIRATION nor through USURPATION nor yet through NOMINATION by other men but by divine PREPARATION, having been set apart and qualified by the activity of GOD'S sovereign will (p.70).

"To the saints..." that is, holy people whom God has set apart for Himself (see: Exodus 19:5,6 and Leviticus 19:2). "To the faithful..." believers who have placed their whole-hearted trust in Jesus as Son of God, Lord and Savior. "In Christ Jesus" - the Source of their life, the element in which they lived, the Vine into which they were grafted. "Grace" - kindness, as a quality or attribute of God or the Lord Jesus Christ; the state of salvation; or the believer's gratitude for the salvation or for any gift of God.

Grace is more probably God's spontaneous, unmerited favor in action. His freely bestowed loving kindness in operation, bestowing salvation upon guilt-laden sinners.

Grace is that divine assistance for daily living. "Peace" a spirit at rest in all the changing circumstances of life. In that order: grace then peace; only after grace has dealt with the sin question can peace be known.

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A good paraphrase for verses one and two would be, "Paul, an apostle sent from Christ, the divine Messiah, who was incarnated as Jesus the Savior of mankind, and pertaining to Him, commissioned also through the will of God according to his wish, in address now to the saints, those being (whether Ephesus or elsewhere), set apart by God to be separated from sin, in holy living based on faith, and being faithful and loyal in union with the Christ Jesus. Grace which is the free divine unmerited favor of God, and peace, a result of reconciliation between man and God due to faith in and union with Christ and so proceeding both from God our gracious Father and (3 the divine Son, our Lord Jesus, and fellow-participator in the flesh, the Christ, who is the fulfillment of Jewish Messianic prophecy" (Shepard, pp. 531,2).

#### Gratitude for God's Electing and Keeping Grace Ephesians 1:3-14

This passage consists of 202 words, without a period. Paul begins with "blessed" and rolls on like a snowball tumbling down a hill, picking up volume as it descends and ends with 'glory'. "Paul's 'heart aflame' is bent on setting other hearts aflame also with sincere, humble overflowing praise to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Hendriksen p. 72).

Truly this passage is a doxology -to God, an expression of praise to God for His redemptive work. The writer addresses true adoration for God's goodness in action. He ascribes to God the honor due Him for spiritual blessings PAST (election), PRESENT (redemption), and FUTURE (certification as sons - complete possession of the reserved inheritance). Each of God's children should humbly, gratefully and enthusiastically acknowledge God's goodness by thought, word and deed.

### 1. The Fact of God's Electing Grace 3-6a.

In verse 3 Paul used the words 'blessed' or 'blessing' three times. The root word thus translated is EULOGIA and is the same word from which we get 'eulogy.' A eulogy is 'a commendatory statement,' 'set oration,' or 'high praise.' To "eulogize" someone is to 'to speak or write in high praise (of them).' Paul is writing here, "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is to be praised; He is worthy of our praise. God is the SOURCE and the OBJECT of all our thanksgiving, worship and praise. Because He is the Source of all blessings. He is to be eulogized. When did God bless us? In verse 4 we learn that these blessings were bestowed upon us "before the foundation of the world." Blessings are forthcoming - all that the Father can bestow, all that the Son can provide and all that the Holy Spirit can apply.

"In (the sphere) of the heavenlies" means the (third) heaven where God dwells along with those beings and things which pertain to Him. God 'lavishes' gifts upon His children; furthermore. He imparts Himself, "in Christ" occurs ten times in verses 3-14. All blessings from God come to God's children 'in Christ.' What the human race lost in Adam (Romans 5:19), we gained in Christ. Yea, and much more! From the ruin of the Old Creation, we have attained the abundant riches of the New Creation.

Doubtless, Paul is refuting astrology and determinism that leaves out the sovereign God of the Universe. "The destiny of the Christian is neither in the stars, nor in an impersonal universe of balanced forces, nor in a random universe in which men play a ghastly game of dice, but in Him Who has blessed us with all spiritual blessing in the superheavenlies" (Yeager, Vol. XIV, pp. 169-172).

Verse 4 says that God has chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world. To be "chosen" means to be elected, picked out for one's self. Election evokes adoration rather than explanation. In His sovereign grace, God elects, calls, inclines the heart, redeems, regenerates, preserves and presents faultless before His glory those who are the objects of His sovereign grace. But He also employs the means to accomplish His purpose (Chafer). "The fact that God chooses some to be saved does not mean that He arbitrarily condemns all the rest. He never condemns men who deserve to be saved (there are none), but He does save some who ought to be condemned" (MacDonald, p. 20). We who are Christians should emphasize the positive and not the negative.

God chose the believer "from the foundation of the world" or "the throwing down of the world." (See also: John 17:24; I Peter 1:20). "The point that should be emphasized in this connection (the time element) is the fact that if already before the foundation of the world those destined for

everlasting life were elected, then all glory for their salvation belongs to God and to Him alone" (Hendriksen, p. 77). The purpose of election was "that we should be holy and without blame (faultless) before (God)." We were unholy, vile and thoroughly unworthy in God's sight. God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing by means of His elective choice.

"The doctrine of election is something that we either believe by faith or reject by human reason. This is why the Christian is a fool for Christ (I Corinthians 3:18). God has chosen to hide this great truth from the Ph.D.'s and reveal it instead unto babes (Matthew 11:25-27; 18:3)" (Yeager, Vol. XIV., p. 175). As if this doctrine was not enough to boggle the mind, Paul writes, "having predestinated us unto the adoption of sons by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will" (verse 5). The heavenly Father is described as having "pre-horizoned" or "pre-encircled" His chosen ones.

Literally, God drew a circle about us before the foundation of the world. God chose by foreordaining; He foreordained us, or marked us off, unto sonship. God willed and, therefore, predetermined that those whom He chose should be adopted into His family as sons. This predestination or predetermination is one of the links of the chain which includes foreknowledge, calling, justification, and glorification. The end result is adoption which is simultaneous with regeneration (Romans 8:15).

Furthermore, in -this adoption, "(God) destined them to be members of His own family (Romans 8:15; Galatians 8:29). It is rather useless to look for human analogies, for the adoption of which Paul speaks surpasses anything that takes place on earth. It bestows upon its recipients not only a new name, a new legal standing, and a new family-relationship but also a new image, the image of Christ (Romans 8:29)" (Hendriksen, p. 79).

All this action of God was accomplished "to the praise of the glory of (God's) grace." Since God is sovereign whatever He does is contingent upon nothing external to Himself, so anything He does He can do for His own honor and glory.

## 2. The Means of God's Electing Grace - 6b-7.

"In the light of the papyri, we might say that before God created the universe and man. He drew a circle or built a fence (boundary) saying that all who are within this fence shall be saved. The fence is Christ. God elected all who are 'in Christ' shall be saved" (Hobbs, p. 19,20). He makes all the saved accepted in the Beloved (His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ). "In the Beloved" seems like the refrain of a song. "Included in the refrain is an exclamation - a holy gasp at the transcendent glories of such grace. There is also an explanation - that the object and the result of all God's gracious dealings with us is for His own glory. Also there is an exhortation - let US praise Him for His glorious grace (MacDonald).

In verse 7 the antecedent is Christ Jesus the Lord. "in (Christ) we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." "Forgiveness and grace are in complete harmony. The standard established by God's grace determines the measure of His forgiveness. Illustration: Here are two very rich persons.

When asked to contribute toward a good cause, both give OF their riches. The first one, however, donates a very paltry sum, far less than had been expected of him. He merely gives OF his riches, not ACCORDING TO. The second is lavish in his support of every noble cause. He gives ACCORDING TO the amount of his wealth. God ever gives and forgives ACCORDING TO His riches. And HE is rich, indeed! His favor toward the undeserving is infinite in character" (Hendriksen, pp. 83-84).

In the forgiveness of sins, God sends them away like the scapegoat of the Old Testament (Leviticus 16). God sends our sins away from us much like the release of water from a reservoir; like the sending away of horses in a race; like prisoners at the judgment bar are dismissed, pardoned and released from the penalty of evil deeds. "Redemption" implies: (1) emancipation from the curse; that is, from the guilt, punishment and power of sin, and (2) restoration to true liberty. Redemption is always a deliverance as the result of the payment of a ransom or a price. Substitution took place also; it was through Christ's blood shed at Calvary. The purpose of Christ's coming was to seek and save the lost, to give Himself a ransom for many. Through the redeeming power of His blood we have "forgiveness of sins (trespasses)." Redemption by blood and forgiveness of trespasses go together. Redemption would not be complete without procuring pardon.

"Trespass" means a falling to the side of; a deviation from the path of truth and righteousness; a misdeed or lapse of proper conduct. The question always arises, "Why did God permit sin?" "Could He have prevented it?" Since He is a sovereign God, He could have prevented sin, but for some reason unknown to man. He did not choose to prevent it. Chafer says, "While (God) permitted sin in the universe, God is not disclosed as being responsible for it. He is rather revealed as the One Who hates it with a perfect hatred. However, the problem is not without a partial solution. There was that in God which had never been expressed, nor could it be expressed until sin had entered into the world, His wisdom. His power, and His glory had been disclosed by created things (Psalm 19:1; Romans 1:19,20); but until there were fallen beings, no manifestation of the compassion of God was possible. How gracious He could be to a hell-deserving sinner could not be demonstrated until such an object of His grace existed. A soul tested in the furnace of temptation and saved from eternal condemnation by divine grace- will be a witness in heaven of that in God which otherwise could never have been made known. So great a salvation will redound 'to the praise of the glory of his grace'" (p. 41).

Gratitude for God's Electing and Keeping Grace - #2  
Ephesians 1:3-14

In a preceding message under the same title, we looked at the fact and the means of God's electing grace. But we still did not come to the end of the writer's sentence consisting of 202 words. We joined Paul in his doxology to the God of the universe. We can join the song-writer in singing, "Praise God from whom all blessing flow. Praise Him all creatures here below. Praise Him above ye heavenly hosts, Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost." The Heavenly Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is to be praised; He is worthy of our praise. He is the Source and Object of all our thanksgiving, worship and praise.

God ordained our salvation by electing us to divine grace in the Lord Jesus Christ, then Jesus purchased our salvation on Calvary. "Because Jesus is God He was capable of suffering infinitely and thus capable of paying an infinite debt. When He shed His blood He poured out His life, but not until He had finished the atonement, which He accomplished during those dreadful three hours when He plumbed the depths of sinful humanity and for reasons that He could not understand was totally alone in the universe, forsaken by God and man...

"Calvary was not an afterthought which became necessary when God discovered that forgiveness of sins and salvation for the elect was possible only after the demands of divine righteousness, which issue from divine holiness, had been met. Heaven's court anticipated that if the Judge was to declare the elect righteous. His sentence of eternal death must be imposed upon some sinless substitute. The Judge Himself became that substitute" (Yeager, Vol. XIV, p. 179,180).

### 1. The Purpose of God's Electing and Keeping Grace - 8-12

Verse 8 reads, "In (the Beloved of God) he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence," Through the Lord Jesus God has lavished His wisdom and prudence upon (the saved of God). The word translated here (abounded) is rendered elsewhere abundant, enough and to spare, increase more and more. In all of this lavishness of the divine bounty there is no squandering or wastefulness. For God does nothing aimlessly and without purpose. All is directed toward an end, known, foreseen, and foreordained in the divine wisdom, provided for in His ..Providence. We cannot always see this; it is a matter of faith and not of sight (Romans 11:33) (Frost).

These graces (wisdom and prudence) go beyond to the overflowing all the edges around. Not only did God provide salvation, but He also provided wisdom and prudence going beyond the bare necessity. This "wisdom" of which Paul writes is knowledge, plus applying knowledge to the best advantage. Insight (understanding) is the result of setting one's mind on God's redemptive revelations in Christ, the mystery of His will. "Prudence" means understanding or perception. This kind of wisdom enables us to make the right choice; prudence helps us to live properly in the choice made (Hobbs).

Thank God that He did not keep the mystery to Himself. A "mystery" is that which was not understood or that which could not be explained until it was revealed by the all-wise God. Paul writes about another mystery - how that the Jews and Gentiles are made one in Christ (Romans 11:25). This mystery (verse 9ff) was broadcast far and wide. The mystery and the Father's will, good pleasure and cherished purpose go together. The mystery of salvation has its origin, wholly and alone, in God's own gracious purpose to redeem man 'in Christ.' This is the "good news?" that is, the total wisdom and prudence of the Godhead in Jesus Christ and the fact that salvation is in Him. Of what good is predestination, calling, redemption, forgiveness, adoption or acceptance if sinners know nothing about these things? This mystery is to be accepted by faith.

The word "dispensation" in verse 10 may not be the best word for the verse. In Luke 16:2,3,4 the word is translated "stewardship." In Ephesians 3:9 the word is translated "fellowship." Technically, it means the principle that governs, regulates, dictates and conducts the affairs of a

household. Here an extended translation could be "in the general management of God's affairs across the many dispensations until all time is passed and God's eternal purpose is fulfilled."

God will fulfill (sum up) all things in Christ. Summers illustrates this summing up thus - "the way a regiment, which has been scattered in battle with the enemy, is gathered up under the leadership of their captain (commander)" (p. 21). Martin says "to sum up" is to gather up under a single head as a tally at the end of a column of numbers or a conclusion in an argument, and so present as a whole (P. 17). Paul is writing here of universal dominion; the entire harmony of the universe, which shall no longer contain alien and discordant elements, but of which all the parts shall find their center and bond of union in Christ. God shall bring this to pass at the appropriate time; in the fulness (fitness) of time.

Verse II begins "in whom" that is, "IN CHRIST we have obtained an inheritance." Hobbs says this phrase should read, "in whom also we were MADE an inheritance." In vital union with Christ we have the right to future glory bestowed upon us. We are HEIRS! God has purposed to do this for His children - MAKE US HEIRS. A sovereign God is always able to do what He purposes to do because He is in total control of everything. The decrees of a sovereign God are thus certain to be fulfilled (Yeager). Neither fate nor human merit determine our destiny, but rather the benevolent purpose of God, His providence in time is as comprehensive as is His decrees from eternity. Paul includes believing Jews and Gentiles in this passage.

In verse 12 there is another refrain - "To the praise of (God's) glory." No boasting in ourselves! Whatever we are or have or do is for God's glory. The Jews to whom the gospel was first preached and then to the Gentiles upon whom God saw fit to shower with His mercy and glory. "Who first trusted," or "trusted beforehand" were Paul and a few other Jews saved before the entire nation accepts the Messiah (Romans 11:26). A few Jews were looking for Christ's first coming (Simeon and Anna - Luke 2:25-38), later a few disciples followed Christ (although many of them did not understand His mission as the Messiah). Later (at Pentecost) there was a remnant of Jews who accepted Jesus as the Messiah.

## 2. The Effecting of God's Electing Grace - 13,14

These verses (13,14) conclude Paul's long convoluted sentence. "In (the Messiah) ye also (trusted), after ye heard the word of truth..." Thus begins the third stanza of Paul's hymn of praise. The Ephesians (and we) should never doubt nor forget that we are included in Christ and all His benefits. The Jews who had beforehand hoped in Christ have found in Him a Redeemer and the Gentiles also who heard and believed in Christ have found in Him a Redeemer as well. The Gentiles had heard the message from Paul's own lips. "After that ye believed" is probably a better translation rather than "having also believed." The Gentiles, saved out of paganism, have a share in the mystery of God's will, as well as converted Jews.

Both Jew and Gentile are "sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." "Sealed WITH the Holy Spirit" like an object placed in a container and is sealed. We are sealed BY the Holy Spirit, as well, like putting upon an object an identifying and possessive mark, thus confirming, securing, and authenticating a possession. A seal could be placed on a document to make it genuine,

(Esther 3:12), to mark ownership, (Song of Solomon 8:6), and to protect against tampering or harm, (Revelation 5:1).

Why does Paul write that "Holy Spirit of promise?" Could he have reference to Acts 1:4, "Wait from the PROMISE of the Father which, saith he, ye have heard from me" (Acts 1:4), which is a fulfillment of Joel 2:28, "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions; and, also, upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit."

Verse 14, "(The Holy Spirit) is the earnest of our inheritance..." The earnest is money (a pledge) placed down in the purchase of an animal or even of a wife (Genesis 38:17,20). In our day a contract is signed and a down payment is paid which means that we can take possession of that which is purchased and pay it out later. Summers says that it is a commercial term - money paid down in pledge that the full contract would be carried out in due time.

The earnest looks forward to the full redemption, just as the first-fruits looked forward to the complete harvest. The Holy Spirit, Who dwells within the believer, is God's guarantee of eternal inheritance. What does Paul mean by "purchased possession" or (God's own possession)? First, he may mean our inheritance (Romans 8:17; I Corinthians 3:21-23); or secondly, he may mean the believer's body (I Thessalonians 4:13-18; Philippians 3:21); or thirdly, he may refer to the church (I Peter 2:9; Ephesians 5:27) (MacDonald, p. 27,28).

Then, Paul concludes this passage, "unto the praise of (God's) glory," which is the third time he used similar words. Chafer says that an apt summary of verses 3 through 14 would be - "The saved one is CHOSEN in sovereign grace, PREDESTINATED in love, ADOPTED into heavenly-high privilege, REDEEMED, ILLUMINATED, made a PARTAKER of Christ's INHERITANCE, and, finally, SEALED with the Holy Spirit of Promise" (p. 46).

Intercession for the Saints  
Ephesians 1:15-23

The writer, -the Apostle Paul, continues his letter to the saints at Ephesus with a prayer for knowledge and power to do God's will. Herein is another of the apostle's involved sentences. What he begins in verse 15 he doesn't finish until we get to verse 23. Of course, the epistle was not divided into chapters and verses until much, much later. I can visualize the apostle so overcome with emotion and desire to pen the words to his friends that he continues on with words as they come to him in rapid-fire fashion.

1. A Prayer of Thanksgiving for the Saints - 15,16.

"Wherefore," Paul begins verse 15 or another word could be "for this cause." Paul, after, hearing of the faith of the saints in Christ, constantly gives thanks to God for them. The apostle lets nothing hinder him from giving thanks. His prayer also is that the faith of the saints might be a manifest example to all their fellow Christians. Faith in Christ and love to all saints go hand in hand. True Christianity combines sound doctrine with sound living. Hendriksen says, "The

Ephesians' rosebud of FAITH had burst forth in the flower of LOVE" (p. 96). He also says, "As the spokes of a wheel approach the hub they at the same time approach each other," so faith in Christ prompts love for others (Galatians 5:6; I John 4:21) (Ibid).

The interest of God and His glory in redemption are steadily held as the starting point, the focus, and the end of the entire argument. The prayer begins in praise to God for "the called." There are parallel passages in Colossians 1:3-12 and Ephesians 3:14-19. The news from the churches of Galatia (Galatians 3:1; 5:15) and Corinth (I Corinthians 1:10,11) had not been as encouraging to the apostle. What an intercessor Paul must have been! His normal reaction and fixed habit upon hearing of the faith of the saints was to THANK God. The Ephesians were a constant source of joy to the apostle; while the Galatians and Corinthians were a recurring source of worry.

## 2. Paul Prays for the Enlightenment of the Saints - 17,18.

Jehovah God is referred to here as "the Father of glory" characterizing Him by the Shekinah glory (Hebrews 9:5). Paul emphasizes the unique glory of God's Fatherhood as the archetypal Fatherhood. Paul prays that God would give the saved the Spirit, Who in turn, gives comprehensive insight and revelation in the sphere of the accurate understanding of God. Paul wants the saved everywhere to know God in His saving purpose and activity, in His nature and in His work in history (Carver).

It is a truth that no man can fully know God through human revelation. Such knowledge comes only through divine revelation. "If you could understand God by reason you could not worship Him, for that would mean that you are greater than He. So you must be content to let God know some things that you do not know, yet pray all the while that you may have understanding to receive and obey the revelation that He gives" (Hobbs, p. 28).

Knowledge and wisdom may be somewhat different. Knowledge without wisdom can be a menace; wisdom is that insight into the nature of things, that sense of what is fitting which enables one to co-ordinate and use one's knowledge aright (Bruce). The knowledge that Paul speaks of here is superior knowledge; however, it may be revealed to babes (Matthew 11:25), and it may escape the great theologians of our day. Frost says that knowledge "begins with information conveyed to us from without, information which we accept as true by faith in the word of those who communicate it to us (Romans 10:17). This information accepted as true by faith becomes knowledge as it is thought upon, considered, meditated upon, and lived, and so become our very own, no longer simply believed, but actually known to be true" (p. 110).

In verse 18 Paul further petitions God that with an open-hearted clarity all saints may know their significance to God. After all, the correct attitude of soul and heart is the primary condition of complete knowledge of God. The wise man wrote, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction, knowledge of the Holy One is understanding" (Proverbs 1:7; 9:10).

Carver lists three items Paul so earnestly petitions God: (1) the HOPE of your calling - God's calling of no man reaches its final goal in the man but in God. This hope depends on God's

initiative. It is not just a vague and wistful longing for the triumph of goodness; but it is something assured because of the present possession of the Spirit as earnest (verse 14) and because of the faithfulness of the God Who has promised the future inheritance. (2) The WEALTH of the glory of His inheritance in His saints. As men are enlightened by the Spirit of God, Who is Himself the earnest of the inheritance, so increasingly they realize the RICHES of that inheritance, and its glory; that is, its essential quality as life in God forever. And (3) the RESOURCES of God for possessing His inheritance, "the exceeding greatness of his power..." This power is not just an abstract quality, but known according to its working which can be seen and realized. In all these - hope, wealth and resources (power) are for God's glory, yet man is the object of it all (Philippians 2:12,13).

Paul writes of "the eyes of the understanding (lit. the eyes of the heart), " - this is a figure - a metaphorical reference to spiritual sight, not merely intellectual clearness, but moral susceptibility and warmth. The "heart" in Scripture is the seat of intelligence and will, and it is this inward vision which needs to be illuminated by the Spirit if we are to know God and appreciate His revealed truth and His eternal nature. The Holy Spirit removes the mists of ignorance, clouds of lust, selfish and jealous dispositions and imparts sorrow for sin and faith working through love.

### 3. The Power of God Manifested - 19-23.

Paul reminds the Ephesians of the great power of God which was manifested in the resurrection of His Son. in our age of greatness and power, man's power fades into oblivion up by the side of God's power. Paul now pours out a cataract of strong language; he piles synonym upon synonym - power, inworking, strength, and might. "The whole energy of the Divine Being is turned on to our feeble, languid nature, vivifying, purifying, and transforming it, making it wonderfully active where all was feebleness before, as the turning on of steam suddenly wakens up a whole mass of inert machinery" so writes W.G. Blaikie (Pulpit Commentary, Vol. XX, p. 7).

God the Father not only raised Jesus Christ from the dead, but He also seated "him at his own right hand in the heavenlies." Furthermore, God has put Christ at the administrative and constructive head of the growing order of the universe. The operation of the divine power is execution of divine purpose. If the death of Christ is the chief demonstration of the love of God, the chief demonstration of His power is the resurrection of Christ. The resurrection of Christ was but the first stage of His exaltation; God raised Him higher still to share His throne; this fulfills Psalm 16:10; 110:1. Others were raised from the dead (Lazarus, the widow's son), but they died again. The Lord Jesus Christ was the first to rise in the power of an endless life.

Verse 21 says that Christ was raised far above ALL principality, and power, and might, and dominion.." The ALL without the article means every kind of principality (rule) or lordship over all the earth (universe). God's right hand means the place of highest honor and authority. This was a place of privilege (Hebrews 1:13), a place of power (Matthew 26:64), a place of distinction (Hebrews 1:3); a place of delight (Psalm 16:11) and a place of dominion (I Peter 3:22). God raised our Lord above "every name that is named..." The pre-eminence of His Name is to be eternal. It shall never be eclipsed by any other name, nor shall there ever be a name worthy to be coupled with His name. in verse 22, Paul writes, "And (God) hath put all things under (Christ's)

feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church." "To put ...under," means to arrange or subordinate (absolute subjection). Nothing or no one has the power or ability to mar in any way the perfection of God's plan, or hinder or delay its execution. This universal dominion is forthcoming, though He does not exercise it as yet.

Furthermore, the Lord's church will share that universal dominion. "As a military commander, proceeding even through his own country, has power to requisition everything needful for his army, and deal with all property as may be required for military purposes, so Christ has the whole erection at his disposal, animate and inanimate, hostile and friendly," (Pulpit Commentary, Vol. XX, p. 8). There is no limitation to the lordship of Christ. All things from the highest choir of the angelic hierarchy to the least creature of earth, are made subject to the rule and power of Him Who is at once their Creator, Redeemer and Sovereign Lord.

This is the first time Paul used the word "church," in this epistle. He writes that the church is (Christ's) body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all," verse 23). "The church is Christ's complement - as the BRIDEGROOM He is incomplete without the BRIDE; as VINE He cannot be thought of without the BRANCHES; as SHEPHERD He is not seen without His SHEEP; and so also as HEAD He finds expression in HIS BODY, the church," (Hendriksen, p. 104).

The church is the "fullness" of Christ. The word "fullness" has a wide range of meaning in the New Testament. Two examples from Scripture are: the patch which "fills up" the rent in an old garment, and the left over fragments which" filled several baskets after the two miraculous feedings (Mark 6:43; 8:20). A ship's complement means the whole crew, each member which helps to make up the whole. As the "fullness" of God is present in Christ, so the fullness of Christ is present in the church. As the head directs the human body so Christ directs and control-, the church.

### The Way of Salvation Ephesians 2:1-1,0

The Apostle Paul closes out Chapter I in the book of Ephesians with a prayer of thanksgiving for the church member's faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. In fact, in verses 15-23 we have a one-sentence, overwhelming, outburst of praise and thanksgiving for the spiritual condition and illumination of the saints at Ephesus. God has a great stake in His saints for whom Christ died. Only God's children have been given the gifts mentioned in verses 17-19, a wise spirit, enlightened eyes in order to understand, the hope of His calling, the riches of His inheritance and His great power. All of these gifts are results of God's grace shown toward the Ephesians in salvation. Finally the writer exalts the triumphant Savior, alive forever and sovereign over all His creation. "In Christ" the 'palace' of salvation is opened to all - Jew and Gentile. The two groups erstwhile bitter enemies, have become friends because both embraced Christ by a living faith.

#### 1. What We Were - Ephesians 2:1-3.

"And you who were dead in -trespasses and sins..." The original does have the words "hath he made alive." These words are found in verse five; Smith says that "the hurrying rush of thought bears (Paul) away, and the new conception crowds for utterance before that of the one already in

mind is complete" (p. 33). Our text begins with a dead criminal in God's moral universe; before conversion man is dead so far as pleasing God is concerned. Mankind is declared dead so far as his compliance with the moral law of the universe. He is dead, depraved, diabolical and disobedient. He is spiritually inert. He is totally depraved and totally irresponsible to any impulse for good, and he will remain in that condition until he is called by the Holy Spirit.

As the Christian looks back on those former days, in trespasses and sins, he sees -them as unhappy days when he boasted about his freedom and spoke of Christianity as a system of slavery. His behavior conformed to the trends of the world, and in fact, he was enslaved by -the world and Satan, who is the god of this world. It is a black, bleak picture. Man in his unregenerate condition is a total slave, dominated body, mind and soul by forces from within and without to which he is totally subject and over which he has no control. Three words could describe the unregenerate - carnal (concerned with the gratification of fleshly desires and appetites), corrupt (an abandonment to every natural desire) and condemned (children of wrath with a natural disposition to anger, malice, bitterness and hot temper).

The lost person conducts himself in complete harmony with the "spirit of the age" that marks mankind alienated from the life of God. The behavior of the unsaved person conforms to the trends (fashions, ways, mores) of the world. Satan, through his agents (demons), is busily engaged in the hearts and lives of wicked people/the sons of disobedience (II Corinthians 4:4). Verses one through three give us Satan's blueprint for the human race. Man is a total slave, dominated body, mind and soul by forces within or without to which he is totally subservient and over which he has no control (Yeager, p. 211).

## 2. What We Are - Ephesians 2:4-7.

"But God..." (intervened.) This is one of the most significant, eloquent and inspiring transitions in all literature! Because God intervened there is a change from the doom and despair of the valley of death to unspeakable delights of the kingdom of the Son of God's love (MacDonald, p. 42). Man was hopelessly lost - but God in His infinite mercy intervened. Only God could help. Thank God, He did! God quickened man (made him alive) together with Christ. Since God is eternal, it is a completed transaction. When Christ arose from the grave, we arose with Him. Chronology (time) and space apply to us, but not to God (Ephesians 1:4). The destiny of God's elect is already determined by a sovereign, omnipotent God. The GLORY of verses 4-6 is sufficient to dispel the GLOOM of verses 1-3.

What Paul thinks of being made alive in Christ, he cannot contain himself. He bursts forth with the statement, "by grace ye are saved." Or as Carver translates it, "it is by grace that you are in a saved state. The order of words," he says, "and the perfect tense require this rendering" (p. 113). Summers says of this phrase, "by grace you are in a state of having been saved." Paul uses the perfect passive participle and the perfect tense in the Greek speaks of a state of being and exists in that finished state. God shows us both mercy and grace. MERCY pities; GRACE pardons, but it also SAVES all the way, delivering men from everlasting damnation and bestowing upon them everlasting life for soul and body. Being saved BY GRACE is the opposite of being saved BY MERIT. Mercy means we do not get the punishment we deserve; grace means we get the salvation we do not deserve.

In the resurrection Christ is our Representative; therefore. His triumphs are ours and His position is ours. Paul writes of sitting together in heavenly places or literally, "in the heavenlies." Christ's resurrection foreshadows our glorious bodily resurrection and all the subsequent glory later, but it is also the basis of present blessings. Whatever happens to the Bridegroom effects the Bride. The blessings of heaven constantly descend upon us. Heaven's grace fills our hearts. Its power enables us to be more than conquerors. And to heaven our thoughts aspire and our prayers ascend (Hendriksen,- p. 118).

In verse 7 Paul states one of the reasons for God choosing to save the elect. He saved us primarily for His own glory - that is the chief aim. A Roman matron when asked, "Where are your jewels?" called her two sons, and, pointing to them said, "These are my jewels." "And (God's children) shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him" (Malachi 3:17).

Redemption by grace through faith is God's gift. Both have their source in God. God could not be gracious to anyone who is not associated with Christ Jesus. It was His kindness to us that moved Him to associate us with His Son.

### 3. Salvation is by Grace Through Faith - 8-10.

God saved us because of the benefits that are forthcoming (verses 8,9). Salvation is by grace and not of works so that God's love for lost mankind could be made manifest. In the apostle's discussion of the relationship between works and faith in the experience of Abraham in Romans 4:1-5, he indicated that if Abraham had been justified by works, God could have been given no credit for being gracious to him. Salvation is by grace through faith. Grace and faith are "not of us" but are gifts of God so that He can receive the glory and not man. The entire process of salvation must be given to God, so that man is deprived of every reason for boasting. Faith and grace both come from God.

Smith writes in the American Commentary about the transaction of salvation in this way, "A penitent sinner, truly penitent, comes to God in the name of Christ, exercising that faith to which the promise has been made. The 'grace' of God meets him, accepts him, and 'in Christ' he is made participant of the promised gift of the Spirit, with all which results therefrom in a renewed heart, and spiritual life out of spiritual death. Is not such a one 'saved'?" (p. 38).

Works are rejected as a basis for salvation! "Not the labors of my hands can fulfill thy law's demands." "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in (God's) sight..." (Romans 3:20). All boasting in self is excluded, "Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? Nay, but by the law of faith," (Romans 3:27).

In verse 10 Paul writes that the fruit of salvation is the Christian life. We are His POIEMA "the result of His doing" or (His poem). The Christian is God's epic poem of creation, redemption and fruition. Fruition or good works are the final results of salvation. God takes Satan's blueprint for our lives (Ephesians 2:1-3); He destroys it, and formulates His own blueprint for our NEW LIVES IN CHRIST JESUS (Ephesians 2:10). The order is faith, salvation, good

works and reward. Faith leads to salvation; salvation results in good works; good works are sure to be rewarded by God. God has a blueprint for every life.

God saves us to perform certain activities (good works) for Him. God plants the seed of faith in our hearts, and causes it to sprout and with great care tends it, making it grow. God also in that sense prepared for us good works, for good works are a fruit of faith (Galatians 5:22,23). The Christian is an epic poem of creation and redemption. See Revelation 4:9-11 - praise for creation, and Revelation 5:8-10 - praise for redemption. So Satan's blueprint for our lives (Ephesians 2:3) at salvation is turned into God's blueprint for our new lives in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:10).

### One In Christ Ephesians 2:11-22

In preceding verses the writer traces salvation by grace through faith to individuals whether they are Jew or Gentile. Now he goes a step further and abolishes all former national difference. In Galatians 3:28, Paul states that, "...there is neither (no difference between) Jew or Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."

#### 1. Reconciliation of Jew and Gentile - 11-18.

Hendriksen -thinks Paul was is high spirits when he penned verses 11-18 because the prayer and doxology in chapter three reaches its climax. Paul knew how difficult it was to weld Jew and Gentile into an organic unity of perfect quality. This controversy raged for many decades. Paul defended this principle to the very death (p. 127). In verses 11 and 12 Paul states how the Gentiles were less privileged than the Jews - uncircumcised, unconverted, pagans and heathen. Of course many of the Jews were only circumcised in the flesh and not in the heart (Leviticus 26:41; Deuteronomy 10:16;30:6). Circumcision was more than outward, it should be inward! Just as the Greeks despised those who lived outside of their cities, calling them ETHNE (pagans), so the Jews in their superficial and unspiritual way of thinking (in the flesh), instead of regarding the other nations as those with whom they should have shared their knowledge of God, simply spoke disparagingly of them as ETHNE (Gentiles).

Paul did not disparage circumcision as an institution. It was to him the God-given sign of the covenant; but if the outward sign was not matched by an inward faith and an obedience of life to the covenant, it became worthless and. just a work of the flesh. The circumcision that mattered-, whether or not there was any outward sign, was the spiritual circumcision, a putting off of sin and an obedience to Christ (Romans 2:25-29; Philippians 3:2ff) (Foulkes, pp. 78,79).

The Gentiles' misery was great - Christless; that is, they were groping in darkness, filth and despair of sin. They were stateless - alienated or excluded from many blessings enjoyed by the Jews; no law, no special protection, no prophecies, no promises of Jehovah God. They were friendless - "strangers from the covenants of promise," - no friendship with God. They were hopeless - no solid-firmly anchored assurance of salvation. True hope is in God's most precious gifts. They were godless; that is, they had no true knowledge of Jehovah God although they worshipped gods in vain. "They were like mariners

who without a compass and guide were adrift in a rudderless ship during a starless night on a tempestuous sea, far away from the harbor" (Hendriksen, p. 131). In verses 1-3 the Gentiles' oral and spiritual poverty is described; now, in verses 11 and 12, their religious and institutional poverty are considered.

Gentiles were looked down upon by the Jews because they were considered uncircumcised pagans; they were inferior. Both Gentiles and Jews, however, were in the same pitiable plight. The Ephesian Gentiles were saved despite the fact that they were alienated and far off, as were also the Ephesian Jews but these two cultural groups were united in Christ.

Verse 13 begins with "But now" a contrast and a transition. "In Christ Jesus ye who once were far off are made near by the blood of Christ." The Rabbis had a way of speaking of Gentiles who were far from the privileges of the covenant being "made nigh" as proselytes. But Paul is speaking of a far more fundamental and wonderful way of approach BY THE BLOOD OF CHRIST. Formerly they were "far away," now "nearby", but only through Christ's blood (Acts 2:39). Formerly they were "separated from Christ," now "in Christ." What a change! They had come out of the darkness of heathendom and emerged directly into the radiance and rapture of Christianity. In this verse "the Apostle to the Gentiles" must have received great satisfaction in stating that the Gentiles could be made near to God "by the blood of Christ." The way of salvation is now open to all (Gentile and Jew alike).

Christ Jesus destroyed the middle wall of partition (dividing wall) and made peace between Jew and Gentile and between Christ and both groups. He is our peace in His incarnation. He became the Mediator and universal Savior. The inscription on Herod's Temple read "no foreigner may enter within the barricade which surrounds the sanctuary and enclosure. Anyone who is caught doing so will have himself to blame for his ensuing death" (Hendriksen, p. 133).

The Hebrew Christians and the Gentile Christians became unified in the body of Christ. A new society was introduced - the church of God (I Corinthians 10:32). Jesus said, "other sheep I have which are not of this fold" (John 10:16); did He not mean the Gentiles? "For he is our peace" (verse 14). Yeager says, "our Lord is our peace, ..when there is no war with God there is no worry within. ..The chief reason why people cannot get along with each other is because they have not learned to live at peace within themselves, and this in turn is due to the fact that they are not assured that there is peace (absence of war) between them and God" (p. 229).

Jesus abolished "in his flesh the enmity (hostility) " that existed between Jew and Gentile, and since Christ is both the "seed of woman" and the "seed of Abraham," He could make both the two, one new man (so) making peace between God and man and between man and man (a new humanity). The purpose of Christ is to create out of the two a single new humanity in himself" (NEB). "It is significant that the word for NEW (KAINOS) here means not simply new in point of time but as Barclay puts it "new in the sense that it brings into the world a new kind of thing, a new quality of thing, which did not exist before" (Foulkes, p. 83). The Scribes taught that in order to be saved a man must become a Jew first (accept circumcision, keep the law and obey the commandments), but Christ broke down that wall of separation. This accomplishment is called "reconciliation."

"Through Christ ALL have access by one Spirit unto the father" (verse 18). ALL have access (freedom of approach) to God the Father. "ACCESS" means "introduction." In oriental courts there was a person who brought a visitor into the presence of the king. Jesus was just such a Person bringing us into the presence of Jehovah God. "Through him;" that is, through Christ's agency, Jew and Gentile approach the same God by the same Spirit.

## 2. A Sanctuary for Jew and Gentile - 19-22.

The Gentiles, after conversion, are brought into all the privileges of citizenship. We are no longer stringers or foreigners (tourists, visitors, sojourners), now~Gentiles are citizens with certain rights. We are no longer Gibeonites (who dwelt in the midst of Israel without having obtained full rights of citizens.) The Gentiles were late "bloomers?" salvation came to the Jew first.

All the saved are "housemates" of God, "and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief Cornerstone" (verse 20). The "foundation of the apostles and prophets" means the principles of Christianity promoted by these great men of God. The cornerstone is a part of the foundation, supporting the superstructure, finalizing its shape and placed at the corner at the juncture of two walls. Each member of the building is a living stone (I Peter 2:5). A.T. Robertson says, "(the cornerstone) is the primary foundation stone at the angle of the structure by which the architect fixes a standard for the bearings of the walls and cross-walls throughout (the building)" (p. 528,529). The word "cornerstone" is not found outside of biblical and ecclesiastical writings.

Now Paul likens -the church to the Temple of the Lord (verse 21). "Our Lord is the divine Architect of the universe (John 1:13), but He is also the Architect of His building, the church of Jesus Christ (Matthew 16:18). He is currently engaged in a real estate development in heaven (John 14:2), but He is also building here on the earth. And the building is "fitly framed together" as a cabinet-maker fits joints together snugly, in addition to being the principle of the church's stability and direction, the Lord Jesus Christ is also the principle of its growth.

The Ephesians were God's earthly sanctuary. His dwelling place. His home implying permanence, beauty, close fellowship, protection and love. in association with Christ, the entire building is under construction and each believer is a part. The Temple in Old Testament days was above all else the special meeting-place between God and His people. It was the place of which the glory of God descended, the place of His presence. When Christ came. He made obsolete the tabernacle or temple made with hands. He Himself was the place of the divine dwelling among men, a truth that is expressed particularly in John 1:14 and 2:19-21. That temple is no longer among men, but now God seeks as His HABITATION the lives of men who will allow Him to enter by His Spirit" (Foulkes, p. 88). God also dwells in the church of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul's Ministry to the Gentiles  
Ephesians 3:1-13

The apostle had just finished the subject about the fact that the Jews and Gentiles could be united into one body by the Holy Spirit. There should be no longer the animosity between the two, but God through Jesus Christ had broken down the middle wall of partition that had separated them for so long. The Gentiles now have the privilege of citizenship and have the same rights as the Jews once had. Both of them can become children of God when they trust the same Savior. Furthermore, they can be members of the same body, the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul reminds the Ephesians, however, that he is a prisoner because he has preached to the Gentiles in general and the Ephesians in particular. He has paid a great price for his preaching to the heathen; he is in the Caesar's prison in Rome. "God never does through a miracle what He can do through a man. And to redeemed men, not angels. He gave the privilege and responsibility of propagating the gospel" so writes Hobbs, p. 53. Paul was just such a man whom God used to preach to the Gentiles. He writes, "For this cause I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles—"

#### 1. The Mystery Hidden Until Now - 1-7.

Verse 1 ends with what grammarians call an aposiopesis which means "the leaving of a thought incomplete; usually a sudden breaking off" in conversation. This is denoted in the KJV with a hyphen (--). Before Paul can finish his thought, he immediately digresses to another thought. He seems to take up his subject again in verse 14 where he repeats, "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." "For this cause" means the Gentiles' cause. Paul felt a special mission to go to the Gentiles. He is now in prison for preaching to the Gentiles.

In verse 2 Paul assumes -that the Ephesians are aware of this administration (stewardship) to the Gentiles. If they are not, he wants to inform them of his faithfulness in sharing with them the gospel message. The word "dispensation" has been translated in various ways. Thayer is inclined to translate it "arrangement." Nevertheless, Paul has been diligent and obedient to God's call to preach to the heathen.

He, furthermore, relates to them that his calling was not just his own idea. He received his call by revelation on the Damascus Road when he was stricken by a light from heaven and heard the voice of Jesus Christ whom he so bitterly opposed. This same Jesus had called him to preach the message of salvation to the Gentiles, just as Peter was commissioned to preach to the Jews. When he was arrested "in the way," and probably later in the Arabian Desert, he was informed of the "mystery;" how God would use the church to unite Jew and Gentile. The "mystery," which is some fact that was once hidden but was later made known usually in a supernatural way, was revealed to him. In 1:9,10, Paul writes of the mystery of how God "might gather together in one all things in Christ..." Paul simply means here that he possessed insights about the fact that Gentiles are included in God's kingdom and Christ's church. It is amazing how God used Paul as His spokesman to preach the gospel to the Gentiles.

In Old Testament times the door to the Gentiles was only partially open (see Jonah). But now the gospel is recognized as something to share with all peoples. God's Spirit is the great Revelator - He has made it clear. Also Jesus made it clear that the gospel was for all. When He

went into the regions of Tyre and Sidon, which was Gentile territory. He was confronted with the Syrophenician woman, and He ministered to her (Mark 7:24-30). He ministered to the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well (John 4:5ff). Now in the age of Paul and the Ephesians, the mystery which had been hidden from the Old Testament prophets is now revealed to the "holy apostles and prophets" of the New Testament age

The Gentiles have been granted the privilege of "fellow-heirs" in the same body inhabited by Jews. They have been "partakers of (God's) promise in Christ Jesus." Paul shows his fondness for the "togetherness" shared by all believers. He writes in verse 6, "This mystery is. That through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs TOGETHER with Israel, members TOGETHER of one body, and sharers TOGETHER in the promise in Christ Jesus" (NIV).

The elect Gentiles are joint-heirs with Jews. "And if children, then heirs—heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ—if so be that we suffer with him, then we may be also glorified together" (Romans 8:17). Since both regenerated Jews and Gentiles are joint-heirs, they are joint-heirs with each other (3:6). in Christ the varied particularities rebrought together in peace. ..The Body of Christ is a symphony; not a cacophony," (Yeager, p. 249). Paul "was made a minister (deacon, servant, one who executes the commands of another) according to the gift of the grace of God..." Paul's calling and status were considered a gift of God's grace. This gift had all the potential of divine power behind it. He uses two words to show that potential, "the effectual working of (God's) power. The first word also can mean "efficiency in motivation" and the second word means "strength, ability, power." The transforming power of the Holy Spirit had changed Paul from a proud, persecuting rabbi into an humble persecuted apostle.

## 2. God's Eternal Purpose Fulfilled - 8-13.

The gift of ministry was given to Paul that he might share Christ's unsearchable riches to the Gentiles. Although Paul considered himself "less than the last" or as the RSV translates it, "the very least," God has laid His hand upon him for this ministry. "The essence of this mystery then is that Gentiles, previously pagan, should participate in the riches of Messiah, Who was thought previously to be available only to Jews and that this participation is on the same intimate basis as is that of the Jews." (Yeager, p. 252). What Peter had done in sharing the gospel with the Jews, Paul had done for the Gentiles.

Paul refers -to God's plan of salvation for the Gentiles as "unsearchable riches." "Unsearchable" means not subject to research, discovered or ascertained. Romans (11:33) also speaks of God's ways being "past finding out." Was Paul a student of Job? " (God) doeth great things and unsearchable, marvelous things without number. ..(God) doeth great things past finding out; yea, and wonders without number" (Job 5:9, 9:10) "Unsearchable" can also mean untraceable, such as describing a road which could be traced a part of the way but not back to its point of origin" (Hobbs, p. 58). Or "unfathomable" like riches that cannot be tracker or traced, the illimitable resources of the grace of God in~Christ. His grace is like the ocean depths that can never be plummeted, treasure-stores that are inexhaustible.

Not only does God want Paul to make the Ephesians understand this mystery, but he wants "to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery." Paul's commission was two-fold: (1) to

preach, (2) to explain (teach). In this commission, he was to "turn the light on" for all men to see the grace of God. Jesus spoke of a gradual unfolding of the revelation in His parable of the mustard seed, which can apply to the including of the Gentiles. As Paul preached and taught, God chose to reveal the complexity, the many-sided and comprehensive character of the divine wisdom. "Who is to understand this mystery? Even the administrative powers of heaven. They were to be enlightened as they watched the progress of God's Spirit, moving in history to unite Jew and Gentile in the Body of Christ, the Church, the Building of God" (Yeager, p. 255). Evidently these "principalities and powers," were the angelic beings. The mystery had been hidden even from the angels. When this is learned by the heavenly beings, they will know how to appreciate the wisdom of God. In the Revelation all living creatures can appreciate what God has done and is doing in the entire universe (Revelation 4:9-11; 5:8-14).

Verse II speaks of a plan or "purpose," and how it is all contained "in Christ Jesus, our Lord." God had a plan, a plan for all ages. He devised this plan and is now in the process of accomplishing it. God had a Co-planner in association with the Jewish Messiah, Who is the Lord Jesus Christ. And because of the Messiah's redemptive work "we have BOLDNESS and ACCESS with CONFIDENCE by the faith in (Christ)." "Boldness" here means speaking without reserve, or a willingness to say everything available on a certain subject. The opposite of the word is "silence." Paul will never be silent about the mystery of God, even though he is imprisoned.

Furthermore, since God has a Co-planner and the saved have trusted Him, we have a certain "confidence" or trust in God and His plan for the ages. Paul uses another word to express his faith in God, "access" or approach. When God stands a believer in His grace He gives Him access to the throne. Through Christ Jesus, God's Divine Agent, the believer has a standing before God that provides him with a permanent access to God's unmerited favor. This word is used only by the Apostle Paul (Romans 5:2; Ephesians 3:12).

The result of this boldness, access and confidence for the Ephesians should be that they faint not at Paul's tribulations for (them) and probably their own tribulation when it does come. When we realize that Paul's visit to the Ephesians nearly cost him his life (Acts 19), we are made to understand what tribulation really is. Had Paul not visited them on his missionary journeys, they would not have been saved.

When Paul thinks of tribulation, he immediately uses access to the throne room of God in prayer, see verse 14. Tribulation Paul was "pressed down as grapes or ground like grain." In the human sense it means to be in a tight place with seemingly no way out. "A person not acquainted with the process (crushing the grapes to a pulp) might gain the impression that the grapes were ruined. Such was not the case, they were being pressed into a different form for more effective service...(The same is true) with the crushing of the grain. The flour from the crushed grain is 'transformed into more effective use.'" So tribulation, pressure, difficulty is that such does not ruin. It only puts one into a different form for more effective service to God" (Summers p. 62).

Paul's Prayer for God's Saints  
Ephesians 3:14-21

Paul takes up in verse 14 where he left off in Ephesians 2:2. Ephesians 3:1-13 seem to be a digression. Verses 14-19 consist of earnest prayer and verses 20,21 are a doxology. The apostle gladly endured tribulations and troubles. He gave encouragement to the saints; he was praying for them (and us). To understand this prayer - be prepared for some bold thinking, be prepared for a larger vision, be prepared for deep emotion. The apostle prays a five-fold petition.

Paul calls upon -the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named" (verses 14,15). Although the RSV translates the word "every," it seems the best translation is "whole" or "entire" family. It is the Father's family, some have already gone to heaven and some are still on the earth. "The prayer is addressed to the Father. In a general sense, God is the Father of all mankind, meaning that He is their Creator (Acts 17:28,29). in a more restricted sense. He is the Father of all believers, meaning that He has begotten them into His spiritual family (Galatians 4:6). In a unique sense He is the Father of the Lord Jesus, meaning that They are equal (John 5:18)" (MacDonald, p. 74).

### 1. A Prayer for Spiritual Strength - 16.

Paul prays "that (God) would grant (the Ephesians) according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;" Robertson says of this passage, "Nowhere does Paul sound such depths of spiritual emotion or rise to such heights of spiritual passion as here. The whole seems to be colored with 'the riches of His glory'" (p. 532). God's gifts are in keeping with His ability to give. His gifts are commensurate (in proportion) with His wealth.

There is a difference between the expressions "out of the riches" and "according to the riches." A wealthy person might give a trifling amount; it would be out of his riches, but not in proportion to them. "Paul asks that God will give strength ACCORDING TO the riches of His perfections. Since the Lord is infinitely rich in glory, let the saints get ready for a deluge!" (MacDonald, p. 75).

What does it mean to be strengthened by (God's) might? He gives spiritual strength in the inner man. "Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day" (II Corinthians 4:16). It is the Holy Spirit that makes us strong. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts" (Zechariah 4:6). Spiritual vigor is needed to be mature, stable, intelligent Christians.

### 2. A Prayer for Enjoyment of the Indwelling Christ - 17.

Paul prays "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, (might) be rooted and grounded in love..." To be rooted is to be established and fixed in heart; this expression suggests, two-fold metaphor: that of a tree and that of a building<sup>7</sup> Paul prays that the Ephesians (and that we) will permit both Christ and the Holy Spirit to dwell in our hearts which makes for a victorious Christian.

### 3. A Prayer for Stability in Love - - 17.

Paul wants the Ephesians to have a heart practicing love. Love in action shows up in deeds. A creed without deeds is worthless. Love includes gratitude for God's benefits, admiration for His character and delight in His communion.

#### 4. A Prayer for Comprehending God's Love - 18.

Of course, it is impossible for us to fathom God's love, but Paul writes of the breadth, length, depth and height. The breadth of love extends to all people; it is broad enough to include all men. It covers all sins and compasses all needs. The length of love extends throughout all time; extending from eternity to eternity, forever and boundless. The depth of love is to the lowest condition of human need. It goes deeper than sin. One writer states that the depth of God's love reaches the limitless heights of heaven itself. The heights of His love reaches to the very presence of God and is as profound as the very nature of God. Paul prays - further that the Ephesians may have the ability to perceive the full extent of God's merit - in terms of measurement.

#### 5. A Prayer for Reaching Divine Perfection - 19.

"And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God." To "pass" knowledge means to surpass or exceed. The word originally meant "to throw or cast above or beyond." To be "filled" means completeness, totality or the very essence. We are to strive toward a love that forgives and overcomes sin. We need to empty ourselves of self and yield to God, and He will fill us with His love. How large is your container? A thimble dipped in the ocean is filled with water, but how little of the ocean is in the thimble.

The prayer closes with a soul-stirring doxology. God is the worthy Object of eternal praise. "Now unto (God) who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us..." God can and will do for His children things that will astonish us. Paul uses the words "exceedingly abundantly" meaning way beyond measure; superabundantly. The RSV translates these words, "far more abundantly." God's omnipotence is recognized. Robertson says, "the highest aspiration is not beyond God's power to bestow" (p. 534). The saved are no longer energized by Satan (2:2); we are energized by God Who can do things for us that we never asked or thought of. But we must remember that this ability of God to bless us is contingent upon the degree to which His power is working in us. Some think that verse 20 concludes the theological section of Ephesians. What follows are admonitions to live on a high ethical plane according to our enlightenment.

"Unto (God) be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen I" Most translations give "unto him in the church and in Christ Jesus..." Smith says, "The first member of the clause denotes its outward province, the second the inward and spiritual sphere in which God was to be praised" (p. 57). The church is the sphere of the outworking of God's purpose on earth, and even in heaven it will have the task of proclaiming the manifold wisdom of God (3:10). So, it is never to take glory to itself; its goal is to give praise and glory to God. It is in Christ Jesus Himself, for it is God's purpose 'in Christ' - Christ the Beginning, Christ the Savior, Christ the Source of unity, that has been the apostle's theme in these chapters.

## Unity in Diversity Ephesians 4:1-6

Paul has been called a "therefore" theologian. Someone has well said, "when you see a 'therefore' in the Scriptures, you should ask yourself "what is therefore there for?" "Therefore" means the reader should consider thoughtfully what has gone on before or "for what reason" the following words are written. Paul is saying that his "therefore" prompts the reader to consider the fact that the preceding chapters concern the believer's faith in Christ. Everything that he has said about God's work in and for his readers has a direct bearing upon their lives and works for God. The Christian should BELIEVE the truth, and then BEHAVE according to the truth. Christians ought to live in accordance with the basic facts of our holy faith; their character and conduct should match their creed and confession.

### 1. The Christian's Calling and Conduct 1-3

"Therefore" separated the foregoing theological section from the following practical section. In the light of the great theological truths of the preceding three chapters, Paul writes, "I beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation to which ye are called" or literally, "I therefore beseech you - I, the - prisoner of the Lord." Paul was a prisoner; chains detain his body, but his spirit was free "in the Lord." Sound theology is essential to sound ethics. ..How important it is for Christians to act like Christians. We are saved by the kind of faith that works. (Yeager) Paul uses a "play on words;" "I CALL you to conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of your CALLING by which you have been CALLED." This CALLING is the divine invitation to embrace salvation in the kingdom of God, which is made especially through the preaching of the gospel.

"Worthy" here means "bringing up the other beam of the scales" or "bringing into equilibrium." In other words the Christian's manner of life should be one which balances the scales. The Christian is "to regulate his life" as it "becomes" or "befits" a Christian. In walking worthily Paul states that the Christian's life should be characterized by four graces, "lowliness," "meekness," "longsuffering," and "forebearing one another in love."

The Christian is to walk with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love." This "lowliness" means "one who is not possessed with inordinate pride or haughtiness." "Meekness" is an attitude that submits to God's dealings without rebellion and to man's unkindness without retaliation. It was the influence of the One Who was meek and lowly in heart, operating in His followers, that elevated these terms which had formerly been despicable rather than praiseworthy. A missionary in Jamaica was once questioning the little black boys on the meaning of Matthew 5:5 and asked, "Who are the meek?" A boy answered, "Those who give soft answers to rough questions." (Clerical Library)

"Longsuffering" has to do with patience toward the weaknesses and shortcomings of others. "Forebearance" has almost the same definition of "longsuffering." To be "forebearing" means to make allowances for the faults and failures of others, for differing personalities, abilities, and temperaments. It means positive love to those who irritate, disturb or embarrass. (MacDonald)

Since we are saved by grace we are prompted to be meek and gentle. We are to restrain ourselves. This means that often we do not say or do to others what we are at the moment motivated to say or do. If true love is the accompanying attitude, the other characteristics will be present. Avoid retaliation! (Yeager)

As Christians we should always be "endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." To "endeavor" is "to strive;" "to carefully and earnestly watch for something and promote it" or "diligently watching" to keep the bond of peace. The constraining bond is the bond-that-holds-together is peace. Guthrie says, "Separate the atoms which make the hammer and each would fall on the stone as a snow flake; but welded into one by the firm arm of the quarryman, it will break the massive rocks asunder." We seek to keep ourselves under control because we are always making every effort to maintain unity in the Body of Christ. The source of this unity is the Holy Spirit Who dwells within every believer.

The unity mentioned here does not mean a monochrome, deadpan uniformity, which might be the case if the church were a thing, an inert and static object. He means unity in the church as an organism, pulsating with life and made up of living persons who are responsible for growth of character and personal development, according as they use the gifts that Christ has bestowed. (Martin)

## 2. Unity in Christ - 4-6

Unity is the subject matter of these verses. Paul mentions seven unities to be kept. "One body" has been a bone of contention by interpreters recently and possibly down through the ages. There are those who hold to the local church, and there are those who agree that Paul means the universal church. When we accept the idea that the letter was a circular letter sent to each church with a round-robin effect, each church would view the letter from the concept of unity within each local church. Others, whom I respect as scholars, seem to believe that Paul was referring to the body made up of the redeemed of all ages; a new order of man, made up of both Jewish and Gentile backgrounds. Carver believes that Paul was referring to one all-comprehensive spiritual church, ..its obligation must be carried over into the visible, organized church today, (p. 143)

Probably none would question the spirit referred to here is the Holy Spirit. Although there are many demonic spirits (I John 4:1-3), there is only one Holy Spirit. It is He Who convicts (John 16:7-11), regenerates (John 3:5,6), indwells (I Corinthians 6:19), seals (Ephesians 1:13), baptizes (I Corinthians 12:13, and fills (Ephesians 5:18). The Holy Spirit is the executive of the Godhead thus carrying out all of the legislative mandates of God the Father, Who functions as the Lawmaker, in keeping with the judicial decisions handed down by God, the Son, Who is the Judge (John 5:22). (Yeager) Of course, there is a lack of unity today because we are still carnal Christians (I Corinthians 3:1). We fail to recognize the Lordship of Jesus Christ Who has spoken His final word to us in the New Testament (John 16:12-15; I Corinthians 13:8).

The "one hope" looks forward to the resurrection and the full redemption that is anticipated by mature Christians. This hope stems from the fact that we were called. This kind of "hope" means assurance or confident expectation.

The "One Lord" is Jehovah in the flesh. "For though- there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth (as there are gods many, and lords many), but to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom all things and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him" (I Corinthians 8:5,6). In the Latin, He is Caesar; in the German, He is Kaiser; and in the Russian He is Czar; and in the Greek He is KURIOS.

"One faith" means the belief that is essential to salvation whether Jew or Gentile. "One baptism" has to do with immersion in water by the authority of a New Testament Church for both Jew and Gentile. "Therefore, we are buried with him by baptism into death, that as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

"One God and Father of all, who is above all, and -through all, and in (you) all" (verse 6). The word "you" is not in the original. God is sovereign over all I He is God the Father Who is OVER all; He is the Son Who walks in the MIDST of all; and He is the Holy Spirit Who DWELLS in all. God is above all (Father); "through all" (Son); and "in all" (Spirit) which suggest God's sovereignty and the transcendence as Father, His immanence and presence as Son and His abiding in believers as Spirit. Robinson says that with three Greek prepositions (epi, dia and en) Paul has endeavored to express the universal sweep and power of God in men's lives.

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So Paul has described -the intimate relation between God and His Church, with its ultimate result - the harmonious interrelationship of every component as each associates with the Head. It is a noble ideal. It will indeed be achieved, but only by the sovereign operation of the Head, who is directing every activity of the members of the Body. This is the subject of verses 7-13.

Gifts and Goals of the Christian Life.

Ephesians 4:7-16

This passage defines the gifts of the risen Lord and their purpose in His kingdom work and in the church. Paul had written to the church at Corinth at length concerning gifts and their purpose (I Corinthians 12-14). Now he attempts to convince the Ephesians that the Lord does grant certain gifts to His people. All have a gift and some have many gifts.

#### 1. Distribution of Gifts - 7

In addition to the gift of salvation, God has arranged to give each of us a gift or gifts for our use in serving Him. In these gifts God has equipped each member to perform for Him. "Thus the deacon who has the strength and skill to scoop the snow off the parking lot should be happy to serve the Lord in this way, and forget his ambition to sing in the choir, despite the fact that he is tone deaf and has no sense of rhythm!" (Yeager, Vol XIV, p. 275).

The word "measure" means an instrument of measure, such as determining quantity (dry or liquid) or determining length (foot, yard). It may be translated "in keeping with the extent." Robertson says, "each gets the gift that Christ has to bestow for his special case." Each Christian has "then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us..." Paul mentions prophecy, ministry, teaching, exhorting, giving and mercy as gifts (Romans 12:6-8). He writes of other

gifts in I Corinthians 12:4ff such as the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, faith, healing, working of miracles, discerning of spirits, tongues, and interpretation of tongues.

## 2. Old Testament Quote - 8

Paul quotes Psalm 68:18 from the Septuagint Version, - "When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." The psalm in its deepest sense is Messianic, celebrating the victory of Christ. It is a psalm of triumph, where the placing of the ark on Zion is celebrated as if it had been a great victory. "As in a literal triumph, the chiefs of the enemy's army are led captive, so the powers of darkness were led captive by Christ, ..the spoils of the enemy are made over .to the conqueror, who again gives them away among the soldiers and people, so gifts were given to Christ after his triumph to be given by him to his Church" (Pulpit Commentary, Vol. XX, p. 148). Although the translation is slightly different from the Old Testament, the sentiment is the same; the captivity which Christ led captive consists here of the souls of men whom His victory liberated from the thralldom of death. Paul followed the custom of the Jewish teachers of his day of adapting a text from the O. T. to illustrate a desired effect "He gave gifts to men," Paul changes the person from second to third and the verb from "receive" to "give."

Having won the victory over death, sin and the grave, the Lord Jesus Christ ascended to heaven. His capital city, in triumphal parade, leading behind Him as His captives those things which had held men in captivity. The fact that Christ led captives captive is a Messianic picture of the triumph won in redemption.

## 3. Gifts From the Risen Christ - 9,10

These verses are a parenthesis. Jesus descended from heaven, lived as a man, died redemptively and was raised from the dead, the conqueror of sin, death and the grave. Then He ascended back into heaven as victorious Lord. Paul writes a parallel passage to the Philippians (2:6-11). Jesus "took upon himself the form of a servant?" He "became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." This is the KATABA = the descent of Christ to earth. His incarnation. Then "God also highly exalted him;" this is the ANABA. Our Lord ascended back to heaven from which He came.

Yeager translates these verses thus, "Now what does 'He went up' mean if He did not also descend into the lower part of the earth? The One Who descended is Himself also the One Who ascended far above all the heavens in order (and with the result) that He might fill all things." A parallel passage is found in Romans 10:6,7, "Say not in thine heart. Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above); or. Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring Christ again from the dead)." Bruce says of verse 10, Christ was exalted "that He might pervade the whole universe with His presence from the lowest depths to the highest heights. ..He Who already embodies the fulness of the Godhead (Colossians 2:9) is the One Who now fills the universe."

## 4. Some Gifts and the Reason They Were Given - 11-13

Our Lord provided that some should receive the gift of apostles; that is, those who planted the gospel in pioneer areas. These apostles were called by our Lord and endowed with special powers. They had a special knowledge which was needed to write the literature of the New Testament? They were to guide and establish the early churches in the first century before the New Testament was completed. The second gift was to the prophets; those who went from place to place preaching the gospel with unusual power. They were the forthtellers establishing churches.

Then there were the evangelists that were itinerant missionaries; divinely equipped to win the lost to Christ. The fourth and last gift mentioned here are those gifted to be pastors and teachers. These were overseers, elders, and shepherds of the flock. The pastors/teachers were those whose gift was the explanation of the Scriptures. Jesus said the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep (John 10:11), and He called Himself the Great Shepherd (Protector). All these gifts can be found in one man, though not always. Some have only one gift. The apostle also refers to these gifts in I Corinthians 12:28.

These individuals were gifted especially for the "perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry for the edifying of the body of Christ..." (verse 12). "Perfecting" has been defined in the following ways, "the conforming of something or someone to a given ideal; to equip; to train; to impart knowledge and skill; to restore to usefulness; to mend or repair." When we remember that the work of the false apostles and prophets is to tear down the work of God, we now understand that the true apostles and prophets were in the repairing business as well as the building business.

These gifted ministers were to prepare the saints and direct them for doing the work of the ministry building up the church. The gifts enumerated here do not monopolize the church's ministry; their function rather is to help and direct the church that all the members may perform their several ministries for the good of the whole. Vance Havner said, "Christianity began as a company of lay witnesses; it has become a professional pulpitude financed by lay spectators! Nowadays we hire a church staff to do 'full-time Christian work,' and we sit in church on Sunday to watch them do it. Every Christian is meant to be in full-time Christian service ...There is indeed a special ministry of pastor, teachers, and evangelists - but for what? ..For the perfecting of the saints for their ministry" (MacDonald, p. 92).

The goal in the perfecting the saints according to verse 13 is "the unity of the faith, ..(and) the knowledge of the Son of God." Every individual in the church is to strive for maturity (full, complete growth). No pastor/teacher has finished his work when the sheep fall so far short of the goal. There must be spiritual maturity in the corporate personality of the church; that is, as the membership grows so the church grows. One should keep in mind that the goal is a unity and hence a unanimity that grows out of faith and from the superior knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord.

## 5. The Church United – 14-16

Growth stabilizes the Christian; however, some are content to remain "babes" in Christ all of their lives. They seem to never cut their eye-teeth (Hebrews 5:11-14) and are victims of every

charlatan that comes along. They are carried round, whirled round "by every wind of teaching." In some it is all wind, even like a hurricane or a tornado. If not anchored by full knowledge of Christ, folks are at the mercy of these squalls. Would to God that all Christians were Bereans! "(The Bereans) received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11).

Of course, truth must be inseparably married to love: good tidings spoken harshly are no good tidings. The charm of the messenger is destroyed by the discordant spirit of the messenger. Boise says that the full meaning of the verb SPEAKING is, "to be true, whether in word or act." Oh, that the truth were always spoken in love!

Paul concludes this section by drawing the parallel between the human body and the Church. The enti~febody is put together solidly; each joint fits perfectly dith its - neighbors. There are no misfits among the elect in the Body of Christ. Just as the boy Jesus learned to fit the joints in a table or desk in the carpenter shop so the Lord Jesus Christ can fit every part of the Church Body. Modern knowledge of cell-life in the human body greatly strengthens the force of Paul's metaphor. This is the way the body grows by cooperation under the control of the Head and all in love. Moffatt says "each church is a 'colony of heaven'."

#### A Renewed Nature and the New Life Ephesians 4:17-24

Paul continues his admonition to the Ephesians about their walk and service for the Lord. Especially the Gentile church members had been saved out of a life of idolatry. Paul reminds them of the old life they lived and warns them not to even look back at that old life but to look forward to their new life in the Lord. His argument in the preceding verses of this chapter amply justifies his demand that they walk in a new ethical pathway.

#### 1. The Old Way of Life is in the Past - 17-19

We have another "therefore" in verse 17. Because of what has been written in preceding verses Paul proceeds with other admonitions. Since the saved have a new home to which they can look forward, they should walk a new walk. Never should they pattern their lives after the unsaved, nor behave like they did before they were saved. Their status with the Lord is to affect their ethics. The unsaved walk in the vanity of their minds or as the RSV states it, "in the futility of their minds." Yeager translates the latter part of the verse, "in the tragic stupidity of their philosophy." "Vanity" has to do with emptiness, without purpose and without fruit. Bruce says that, vanity in the New Testament is sometimes closely associated with idolatry - Acts 14:15. Of course the "mind" is that faculty of perceiving divine things, of recognizing goodness and of hating evil.

The Gentiles have their understanding darkened and are "alienated from the life of God through ignorance, ..because of the blindness of their heart." "Blindness" is a medical term denoting a cal loused hardness. Their minds are unimpressionable or petrified as a result of heathen ignorance and heathen depravity. This word applied to Israel

in their rejection of Christ (Mark 3:5; Romans 11:25), but it also applies to the heathen (Gentiles) in this message.

The Gentiles in their unsaved and godless condition were past feeling like a person who has callouses is insensitive to pain. They had given themselves over to "lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness" (verse 19). "The more the unsaved man wounds his conscience by rationalizing a position contrary to it, the more calloused his conscience becomes until finally it gives up the fight for morality. Such a man will surrender himself because of the outside pressure of society to the exercise of all uncleanness ... If society, with its existential total permissiveness says, 'Anything goes' the result is that the sinner is free from societal pressure so that he can surrender to the intense internal pressure to commit whatever act his flesh demands, without fear of social disapproval. Paul explained in Romans 1:24-28 how society destroyed itself before the flood when God abandoned the antediluvians and how it will destroy itself again in the end of the church age." (Yeager, Vol. XIV, p. 298).

## 2. Put Off the Old Man, Put On the New Man - 20-24

"But" denotes the contrast between the pagan and the Christian ways of life. To "learn Christ" is to know Him "in all of His offices, and in all of His influence. He who learns Christ appropriates him in the efficacy of His atonement, in the power of His Spirit, in the force of His lessons, and in the spirit of His influence, and finds the whole to be diametrically opposite to the godless world." (Pulpit Commentary, Vol. XX, p. 151). The word "learned" is also found in Acts 23:27 and is translated "understood."

"If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus" (verse 21). "If so be" or "If indeed" can also mean if, as I take for granted. To have heard Christ means to have heard Him with the hearing of faith, to have accepted Him as Lord and Savior. Many have heard about Jesus, but they have not understood what His message is. Christ not only teaches the truth? He is truth incarnate (John 14:6). The Christian is to hear Christ as sheep hear their shepherd's voice and follow him. We are to recognize the voice of the Good Shepherd, a voice to be implicitly obeyed.

In verse 22 Paul uses a figurative expression of "put off" ... "the old man." Like dirty, worn-out garments are taken off, and new, fresh, clean ones are "put on," this is the way the Christian's life is to have changed. In the place of the "old man" put on the "new man." Sin effects the old man in a disintegrating, dissolving way, causing putridity in every case. Old habits of sin are to be "put off" also. The old nature is to be repudiated.

The Christian is to be renewed in mind. Thoughts lead to deeds, deeds lead to habits. Sinful thoughts lead the Christian in the ways of the world and the devil. Paul echoes this in Romans 12:2, "And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the RENEWING OF YOUR MIND that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

"And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (verse 24). The word "created" shows how truly and entirely this work of renewal is of God. "In

holiness of truth" is a phrase antithetical to "lusts of deceit" in verse 22. Robinson calls the saved man a "brand-new man" and calls attention • 2:15. The Christian is a new creation, "Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man, that is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him..." (Colossians 3:9.10).

### A Man Indwelt by the Holy Spirit Ephesians 4:25-32

A new paragraph begins here in the Scriptures, but Paul continued on the same subject - the walk of a true believer. Since he is indwelt by the Holy Spirit, his actions should be different than when he was led by evil spirits and the power of Satan. These Ephesians are the ones who were dead in trespasses and sins (2:1). But now they no longer walk "according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air."

#### 1. Sins of the Old Man - 25-29

Now -the writer becomes more specific in naming the sins from which the Ephesians are to refrain. "Wherefore, putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor; for we are members one of another" (verse 25). "Put off lying," is one full sweep of being rid of it. No doubt Paul recalled Zechariah 8:16 which reads, "Speak every man the truth to his neighbor; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates." Each member of the Christian community should deal with every other in absolute truthfulness in all respects. The Christian's word should be absolutely trustworthy.

Lying here includes every form of dishonesty – shading the truth, exaggeration, cheating, failure to keep promises, betrayal of confidence, flattery or fudging on income taxes. It is as unthinkable for one Christian to lie to another as it would be for a nerve in the body to deliberately send a false message to the brain, or for the eye to deceive the rest of the body when danger is approaching. (MacDonald, p. 101) Lying or falsehood is pre-eminently a heathen vice; it is an attribute of fallen humanity. Lying is Satan's tool to deceive man and sabotage God's redemptive program.

"Be ye angry, and sin not; let not the sun go down upon your wrath" (verse 26). is it possible to be angry and –sin not? We do well to be angry with sin and injustice, but we should never take it out on the sinner. If we do not expect sinners to do things right, we should not be upset when we see them do that which is wrong. Anger is sinful when it is an emotion of malice, jealousy, resentment, vindictiveness or hatred because of personal wrongs; it is forbidden. (MacDonald) Robertson says that the phrase "be ye angry," is a permissive imperative, not a command to be angry.

Yeager gives this illustration. "The spectator at a football game has no prior knowledge as to the outcome. Hence he gets excited. He glories in the completed forward pass, the end run, the long punt return, the recovered fumble, the touchdown and the point after. He groans when the fortunes of the game turn against his team. Now, let him watch a replay of the game on television. He relaxes in complete calm because now he knows that whatever the fortunes of the

game in progress, the victory ultimately is his. The Christian is not witnessing a replay of the struggle between God and Satan, but he has a book that says that God is going to win. Why then does He not relax? Why should he allow his anger to persist until it has him shouting at the poor defenseless slaves of Satan who cannot help behaving as they do since they are only unregenerated human flesh? So Paul says, 'Are you angry? I understand, but cool it!'" (Vol. XIV, p. 308)

"Neither give place to the devil" (verse 27). We are not to give the devil an opportunity to use our aggravated wrath to serve his hellish purposes. The devil should not have living room nor working space in the Christian's life. Unconfessed sins of temper provide the devil with a foothold or a base of operations.

Now Paul writes of another common sin of the unsaved - stealing. Are you in the habit of stealing? Paul says, "stop it!" Hands may be used for stealing or earning, for grasping or giving. Stealing may take many forms - all the way from grand larceny to nonpayment of debts, to witnessing for Christ on the employer's time, to plagiarism, to the use of false measurements, and to falsifying expense accounts (MacDonald). What the Christian must do, instead of living as the thief does by the labor of others, he shows by "working with his hands the thing which is good." Honest industry and a gainful occupation are a worthy calling, and they are a part of Christianity (American Commentary, Vol. V, p. 76). Even unemployment is no excuse for stealing (II Thessalonians 3:10). Furthermore, dishonesty in trade and deceit in business are just as reprehensible. The "old man" may steal, but the "new man" shares.

Another sin is "evil communications" which include such harmful things as profanity, obscenity, off-color jokes, dirty stories, even gossip. Anything that is rotten should not come from the Christian's mouth. The Christian should guard his speech as he guards his actions; he should aim to have his conversation, neither disgraceful or frivolous, but positively suited in some way to benefit those with whom he converses. Only that which is good should be said, good for what? That which is good for edifying others.

## 2. Godly Men are Led by the Holy Spirit -30-32

"And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, by whom ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." Paul says here, "Stop grieving" or "do not have the habit of grieving" the Holy Spirit. To grieve the Holy Spirit distinctly recognizes His personality. An "operation" or an "influence" cannot be grieved. The Holy Spirit indwells every believer as God's seal of ownership. His guarantee to keep the Christian unto full redemption. The Spirit of God is not pleased when He is dwelling in a dirty, foul temple. But He delights to dwell in a pure, dedicated one. This verse is definitely linked with verses 25-29 where various sins surely grieve the Holy Spirit. Robertson points out that the Scripture refers to the Holy Spirit as "Whom" and not "which" since He is a person. Just as grieving a parent heedlessly is a great sin; how much more to grieve the Spirit of God?

Paul enumerates some more sins that can grieve the Holy Spirit. Among these are bitterness, anger, clamor, evil speaking and malice. "Bitterness" is that resentful, harsh attitude expressed in a bad temper; smouldering resentment; unwillingness to forgive. "Clamor" is the loud outcry growing out of wrath and anger; brawling; angry bickering. Of course, evil speaking can include blasphemy, abusive, insulting, slanderous speech which grows out of an evil spirit. The

Christian is admonished to put these away like a dirty, worn-out garment; pick them up and carry them away, make a clean sweep of them. A sure cure for these is to have "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self control which are the fruit of the spirit" (Galatians 5:22).

Over against these sins of attitude Paul places the virtues of kindness, compassion and forgiveness. When the Christian has thoughtful consideration and gentleness toward evil-doers, and when he has tender-hearted compassion and warm sympathetic love, he will have a forgiving spirit. –When we remember how much our Lord forgave us, how can we but forgive others small sins that they commit against us?

From Pollution to Purity  
Ephesians 5:1-13

God has called us out of evil to a progressive holiness. The babe in Christ is to mature into adulthood. Long periods of development are required to grow in God's grace and love. We are to imitate (mimic) God as His beloved children. "Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect," Matthew 5:48. This new order of man should not only believe right, he should also do right. Christ is our Example, our Pattern and our Model.

Paul refers to his readers as "dear (beloved) children." In natural life, children bear the family likeness and should seek to uphold the family name. In spiritual life, we should manifest our Father to the world and seek to walk worthy of our dignity as His beloved children (MacDonald, p. 106). Each day the Christian should be able to say, "I am a better Christian today than yesterday, but not as good as I expect to be tomorrow. "Imitate" Christ. Alexander carried the Iliad about with him in a casket studded with jewels, and his military life greatly sprung out of his imitation of the warriors of Greece and Troy. Ours is a nobler ambition by far than that which delights in battles; we desire to imitate the God. of peace, whose name is love. (C.H. Spurgeon)

"To walk in love" denotes the whole of our conduct should be characterized by love. We should give ourselves for others. F.B. Meyer wrote of Christ's sacrifice, "in LOVE so measureless, so reckless of cost, for those who were naturally so unworthy of it, there was a spectacle which filled heaven with fragrance and God's heart with joy." Herein Paul writes of Christ's offering and a sacrifice to God. "Offering" means that which is brought forward to the altar. "Sacrifice" refers to the VICTIM which is laid upon the altar. In Christ the offering and sacrifice are one. As our High Priest, Christ brought the offering to the altar, then He became the Sacrifice. Furthermore, it was "a sweet-smelling savor" or "an odor of sweetness."~ Just as the smell of animal sacrifices of the Old Testament were a pleasing aroma to the nostrils to God so the sacrifice of Jesus Christ was well-pleasing or acceptable to Him.

### 1. Avoid Pollution of Body - 3-5

God is holy and He expects holiness in His people. To be holy means to be "set apart" for God's service. The Bible speaks of holy days, holy vessels and holy people (saints).

Many of the Ephesians were saved out of idolatry, and they were prone to remember the old days. In their pagan culture there were pitfalls of evil. Paul cites three - fornication, uncleanness and covetousness.

Pagan cultures of Paul's time deified sex; there was perversion on every hand, much of it connected with pagan religions. The Gentile Ephesian would have a tendency to regress to the sordid pagan evils of his day. Fornication has to do with sex relations with prostitutes and any kind of illicit sex including homosexuality (Romans 1:24,26,27). All "uncleanness" is to be shunned. To know God's attitude toward fornication and adultery we need to read Genesis 19:24,28 where God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah with fire and brimstone, in Numbers 25:1-9 24,000 Israelites were slain in one day. "Covetousness," of course, is the desire for more or an insatiable greed whether it is money or sex. It is "unbecoming" for a saint to be sensual or covetous. Man says immorality is a sickness; God calls it sin.

Paul also condemns filthiness, foolish talking and jesting. "Foolish talking" is characterized by a moronic or stupid speech; a light, bantering, jesting kind of talk. Many times it is a nimbleness of wit or quickness in repartee (buffoonery, ribaldry, scurrility); it can be the telling of dirty stories or using vulgar language. It is dangerous to jest with God, death or the devil; for the first neither can nor will be mocked, the second mocks all men at one time or another, and the third puts an eternal sarcasm on those who are too familiar with him. (J. Beaumont) Furthermore, it is always dangerous to jest or joke about sin; sin is a serious matter with God, and it should be with His people. Foulkes relates a quote from Plutarch, "foolish talking is that which comes from a drunken man, words without sense or profit." "Our tongues were made to bless the Lord," as Isaac Watts reminds us. All forms of sin are utterly incongruous with Christian ideals and impossible in the kingdom of the Christ and God.

## 2. Avoid Pollution of Mind 6,7

Only a few people can contaminate an entire society; only one sin can poison an entire personality. We are informed by chemists that one grain of iodine will give color to seven thousand times its own weight of water. One indulgence in bad company is enough to communicate much to its contagion to your moral being. If you handle pitch with your bare hands it will adhere for days and weeks, so the connection which you may form with bad company, will pollute you in a way which a whole life may not suffice to remove. (John Bate)

Our age is an age where liberty has become a license, -traditional moral standards are defied as being puritanical, and the Ten Commandments are like ten suggestions and have no meaning. When God is defied, characters are ruined, and those who are ensnared are not LIBERATED, but are enslaved by passions which hurtle them to ruin (Hobbs). "Vain words" here mean empty words; without reality or substance. In our culture there is a multiplication of words; speech is cheap. Since God is a holy God He cannot but look with disfavor upon any sin or uncleanness. God's "wrath" is His abiding opposition to evil (Ephesians 4:26; Romans 1:18). It is not an emotion of God which flares up and soon subsides (like man's anger or wrath). It is God's law in operation. Defy the laws of gravity and/or health and you pay the price. The same is true of God's moral and spiritual laws. Thus the wrath even a God of love takes its toll. No mercy is forthcoming.

"Be not ye therefore, partakers with them" (verse 7). To be a "partaker" means to share or be partners with those who sin. Let your spiritual instincts recoil from partnership in sin.

### 3. Avoid Pollution of Spirit 8-13

The Apostle Paul reminds the Ephesians that they at one time lived in darkness. They walked according to the prince of the power of the air (2:2). Apparently even those who were now saved were not living like saved people ought to live. Some were participating in immorality with the unsaved and living like the unsaved. Now that they are saved, they are to live like saved people should. We are sure that they were unhappy in their sinful condition, for God makes His people miserable when they sin. They cannot be lovers of the light and walk in darkness. Yeager says, "When a pig falls into the mud he loves it and is loath to leave because it is the nature of a pig to love mud. When a sheep falls into the mud he gets out as quickly as possible and seeks to rid his wool of the mud, because it is his nature to hate mud. Christians are sheep, not pigs" (Vol. XIV, p. 324).

There are so many scriptures which indicate that God's Son is the Light, and those who are saved are to shine forth as lights as well. The Eternal Word, agent of God in the first creation, is the very embodiment of heavenly light and shines in His incarnation as the light of the world; "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12). Some of the Ephesians were more than being IN darkness. They were, in that old heathen state, as if transformed into the very nature of the element in which they lived. "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" means that there is not even a speck of darkness in God, and He cannot tolerate darkness in His people (I John 1:5).

In verse 9 Paul shows that the fruit of light (not Spirit) is goodness, righteousness and truth. A tree is known by its fruit, and the fruit of light is moral excellence, integrity in all dealing with God and men and honesty, equity and reality. This verse echoes what Paul writes to the Galatians (5:22,23). When the Christian has the true Light and walks in the light as Jesus is the Light, "we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:7).

As the Christian walks in the light, he PROVES to the world that he is true to his calling, and his life is acceptable to the Lord. To "prove" something is to put it to a test, like a coin, to determine whether it is true or false. Then the Ephesians are admonished to "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness but, rather, reprove them" (verse II). Every area of life comes under God's searchlight - our conversation, standard of living, the clothes we wear, the books we read, our business, our pleasure and our friendship.

Even the company we keep is a barometer of our conduct. "Bad company is like a nail driven into a post, which after the first or second blow, may be drawn out with little difficulty; but being once driven up to the head, the pincers cannot take hold to draw it out, but which can only be done by the destruction of the wood." (St. Augustine) Darkness produces unfruitful works; unfruitful as far as God and men are concerned. These works produce no goodness, give rise to no satisfaction, to no moral results that are "a joy for ever" or, if fruit they have, it is shame,

remorse and despair. These are the kinds of works that belong to the world of dim lights, drawn drapes, locked doors and secret rooms.

If we would be the kind of witnesses that we should be we need to turn on the Christian light and let it shine for God and His cause. Often the preacher is the only man brave enough to turn the light on the private sins of men and women or even those of the community.

Live in the Light  
Ephesians 5:14-21

in this passage Paul continues to admonish the Ephesians to mind their walk as believers; they are God's dear children. The life of the believer should always be preaching a sermon; in fact, the life one lives is the best funeral sermon that one can preach. His life should always be extending the invitation to unbelievers. They should "awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light (shine upon thee,)" (verse 14). Doubtless this is a quotation from Isaiah 60:1. Possibly this is the voice of light speaking to those who are sleeping in darkness and living in spiritual death. The light calls them to life and to illumination. If they answer the invitation, Christ will shine upon them and give them light.

Carver, however, states that this could have been an early Christian hymn already known in Paul's time. In poetic form it would read like this: "Rise, thou who art sleeping,  
And stand up from among the dead  
And the Christ will gleam forth upon thee."

#### 1. Christians Who Walk the Walk - 15-17

"See, then, that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise" (verse 15). The word translated "circumspectly" is an adverb meaning diligently, carefully or thoroughly, in Acts 18:26 the word is translated "perfectly" in connection with Aquilla's and Priscilla's instruction to the novice Apollos. Paul is admonishing the Ephesians to conduct their daily walk as wise men and not as fools.

"Life is a voyage in a frail boat upon a dangerous sea, a sea washed by mighty currents, liable to awful storms, torn with sunken reefs, bound by iron shores. If the captain be wise and watchful, if his crew be under due control, if his anchors be strong, his chart correct, his compass true, his vessel taut, he may safely ride out the hurricane, and safely reach the haven where he would be. But, ah! if he leave her to drift with mutinous sailors, false chart, damaged compass, rent sails, untended helm, what shall be the end but a dismantled hulk upon the surging waters, or a desolate wreck upon the lonely shore? If life, with all its tremendous realities, a thing less dangerous? If the fool's ship will not be ruled by the rudder, must it not be ruled by the rock?  
(Archbishop Farrar)

"Redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (verse 16). Opportunity is the golden spot of Time. If time is a ring of gold, opportunity is the rich diamond that gives it both its value and glory. (J. Flavel) "Redeeming" is a term used like the Greek going to the marketplace, searching out bargains and buying them. The walk of wisdom calls us to redeem the time or buy up the opportunities. The Christian should never let an opportunity go by without allowing the light of

his Spirit filled behavior to impact upon the prevailing evil of every moment of every day between Calvary and the Second Coming of Christ. "Wherefore, be ye not unwise but understanding what the will of the Lord is" (verse 17). "Unwise" here is senseless; without reason; without moral intelligence. "Understanding" means that one must make a wise choice where conduct is concerned. "Wisdom is a principle thing; therefore, get wisdom; and with it get understanding," so the wise man wrote (Proverbs 4:7). "if the mountains were pearl, if every sand of the sea were a diamond, it were not be comparable to wisdom. Without wisdom, a person is like a ship without a pilot, in danger to split upon rocks. The price of wisdom is above rubies. The ruby is a precious stone, transparent, of a red fiery color. It is reported of one of the kings of India, he wore a ruby of that bigness and splendor that he might be seen by it in the dark; but wisdom casts a more sparkling color than the ruby; it makes us shine as angels. (J. Watson)

## 2. The Spirit-filled Believer - 18-21

"And be not drunk with wine, in which is excess, but be filled with the Spirit" (verse 18). One of the gods worshipped by pagans was Bacchus, the wine god, so drunkenness was a normal part of pagan life. Rather than an artificial life (spirits give) the Holy Spirit gives a permanent, inner glow of life which is reflected, in true Christian personality. (Hobbs) Evidently some of the Ephesians were getting drunk on wine, which was a common beverage during that time so Paul writes, "Do not continue to get drunk..." The word "excess" mean riotousness; debauchery; dissoluteness. Although there may be a parallel between "spirits" and the Holy Spirit there is nothing in the character of the Holy Spirit of God to contribute to damage, like there is with drunkenness with wine. One cannot get too much of the Holy Spirit; He wishes to fill all of us. So Paul gives the Ephesians (and us) the imperative to betotally filled up with the Holy Spirit.

MacDonald quotes from an unknown source, "Give yourself up, morning by morning, to be led by the Holy Spirit and go forth praising and at rest, leaving Him to manage you and your day. Cultivate the habit all through the day, of joyfully depending upon and obeying Him, expecting Him to guide, to enlighten, to reprove, to teach, to use, and to do in and with you what He wills. Count upon His working as a fact, altogether apart from sight or feeling. Only let us believe in and obey the Holy Spirit as the Ruler of our lives, and cease from the burden of trying to manage ourselves; then shall the fruit of the Spirit appear in us as He wills to the glory of God."

Then Paul writes, "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (verse 19). The first two Greek words in this verse may be translated, "Addressing one another," or "communicating with one another." The PSALMS were Old Testament poems set to music, the HYMNS were distinctly Christian in nature while the spiritual SONGS were usually based upon some spiritual experience. It is interesting that PSALLO from which our word "psalm" comes means a sacred song sung to musical accompaniments plucked with the fingers. Music is not a part of worship service necessarily for music's sake, but if rendered properly (from the heart and with genuine emotion) can bring glory to God. "Making melody" originally meant plucking the string of a lyre or similar instrument; however, it should not be limited to a stringed instrument.

Then Paul adds, "Giving of thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (verse 20). The Christian ought to make it a rule to thank and praise God for everything that happens to him. God the Father is the proper Object of thanksgiving, as of prayer generally; the thanks are to be given in the NAME of Jesus Christ. Of course, this is a New Testament doctrine; no where in the Old Testament was a saint admonished to pray in any one else's name. Jesus said to His disciple\$, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, 'Whatever ye shall ask the Father ',in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name; ask, and ye shall receive that your joy may be full'" (John 16:23,24).

"Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God" (verse 21). Yeager translates this verse, "Deferring to one another because of reverence for Christ." No Christian should seek a place of higher honor or authority than that of any other. In other words, mutual recognition of each other's right and of our obligations to serve them. "Submitting yourselves" is an old military figure "to line up" or "arrange ones self" under a commander.

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"From the pollution of paganism as seen in sinful indulgence, strife, evil and filthy speaking, Paul calls his readers to walk in purity, love, harmony and praise to God."  
(Hobbs)

Applied Christianity  
Ephesians 5:22-33

The greatest test of one's Christianity is indeed within the family circle. "For the first time in human history men and women, in the religion and the Church of the Christ were put on a basis of equality in worth, in grace, in privilege, where each according to fitness and spiritual gifts was to find and fill the appropriate and effective function for the growth of the Body of Christ" (Carver, pp. 166,167)., Jesus came into the world that subordinated, depressed, degraded and exploited women; He had a clear-visioned estimate of all humanity.

#### 1. A Word to the Wives - 22-24

Verse 22 literally reads, "Wives, ..one's own husband as to the Lord." A verb is missing in this verse, however, for a verb we look back to verse 21 - "submitting." Grammarians look at verse 22 as an echo of verse 21. "Wives are not "commanded" to accept subjection to husbands, but enjoined to "subject themselves." The initiative, the autonomy and the practice are all left with the wife. It would have to be so in the Christian economy. How could it be otherwise in a religion founded by Jesus?" Wives, in the autonomous responsibility for their own conduct under God, are expected to order their lives in voluntary adjustment to their husbands as rightful head of the family.

Paul wrote in Galatians 3:28, "there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." Peter also wrote, "in like manner, ye husbands, dwell with (the wife) according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers be not hindered" (I Peter 3:7).

Every well ordered society rests on two supporting pillars - authority and subjection. Subjection never implies inferiority. God ordained human government and authority; the absence of government is anarchy, and no society can survive under anarchy. (MacDonald) It is the duty of the wife to be subject to Christ, so also to her husband.

"A man's home is a real fortress in a warring world, where a woman buckles on her husband's armor in the morning as he goes forth to the battles of the day, and soothes his wounds when he comes home at night. As has been said, an architect or a good carpenter can build you a house. But it takes Christ to make the home." (R.G.Lee)

The Lord is not a tyrant, but a loving Protector, so the husband should be the protector for his wife. Of course, the husband is to be "worthy" of his wife's subjection; the wife is not a chattel. The Lord as the Head of the Church, is also the Savior of the Body. He loves. He guides and leads, He preserves. He provides. He protects and He cares for His church. So the husband should do the same for his wife.

Christianity lifts the wife above the pagan concept; she is not a mere chattel. Jesus elevated womanhood more than any other has ever done, whether he is a religious leader:- or a layman. To treat one's wife as a slave or a chattel does as much damage to a man's own personality as to hers. Nothing could more exalt the role of the wife than comparing it to the role of the church as the bride of Christ, in any normal relationship of life, the wife is to obey her husband, even if he is an unbeliever. God's will is paramount over all; the duty of the wife is to take the three wills in the proper order - God's will, the husband's will and the wife's will (her own).

## 2. A Word to the Husbands - 25-27

The example set by Jesus Christ and also Paul is the pattern of love. "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything" (verse 25). The husband's love is to match in intensity Christ's love for the church which led Him to Calvary. This love was a self-sacrificing love, which, if necessary, involves the surrender of his life in her behalf. "The difference between selfish and unselfish love is seen here: a selfish lover cares for his wife in his own interest – like Samson, desires to have her simply because she please him, and, in his converse with her, thinks, not of her good, but of his own enjoyment; but the love of an unselfish lover constrains him to seek her good, to do nothing that will hurt her and damage her in any manner of way, but to do everything that he believes will advance her well-being, especially in the highest sense." (Pulpit Commentary, Vol. XX, p. 212).

This is the wonderful new point not found in Colossians 3:19 that lifts this discussion of the husband's love for his wife to the highest plane, if it seems hard for the wife to be in subjection, the spirit of love, Christ-like love, on the part of the husband makes the duty easy. Christ's love for the church is presented in three majestic movements; in the PAST by redemption - giving Himself for her; in the PRESENT - sanctifying her (verse 26), and in the FUTURE - glorifying her (verse 27).

Verse 26 reads, "That (Christ) might sanctify and cleanse (the church) with the washing by the word." What does "the washing (bath) by the word" mean? Yeager points out that it is possible

to connect this passage with John 13:1-11, with particular reference to verse 10 (which reads, "He that is washed needeth not except to wash his feet, but is entirely clean; and ye are clean, but not all of-you)." He further states that the washing of water by the word can mean the daily Bible reading of the Christian by which he cleanses his "feet" from the defilement of his walk in this evil world which is often used to refer to the life style of Christ" (Vol XIV, p. 344). Robertson says, however, the reference here (washing, cleansing, a bath) seems to be the baptismal bath (immersion) of water.

Jesus desires to present -to the Father "a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (verse 27). The fact that Jesus wants His church to be glorified indicates the great interest that the Head feels for every member of His Body. The Body perfectly free from blemish, is typical of a soul perfectly delivered from sin - of a character perfected in all grace and goodness.

### 3. Christ and the Church as Examples - 28-33

"So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself" (verse 28). The husband cares for his own body (self-preservation). In like manner, he should care for his wife as himself. The word "own" is used over and over stressing monogamy which has always been God's plan throughout the ages.

"For no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church; for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones" (verses 29,30). To hate one's wife is as irrational as to hate one's own flesh. The word "cherish" here and in I Thessalonians 2:7 primarily meant to warm, to foster with tender care and to bring to maturity. Since the Christian wife and her husband are both members of the Body of Christ, the husband is careful to avoid harming and neglecting his wife, as he is careful to care for himself. When one Christian inflicts pain upon another it becomes a form of spiritual masochism.

Christ cares for the Church, His Body by providing food and warmth. What man, who is rational, ever starved himself or deliberately exposed himself to the cold? (Yeager) Paul now quotes from Genesis 2:24, (since the woman was taken out of man) "therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh." Just as Eve came from the opened side of Adam, so figuratively the Church springs from the pierced side of Jesus. Husband and wife relationship supersedes (goes beyond) the parental relationship; the husband has a higher loyalty to his wife. Husband and wife become ONE; a real union of two persons. This will eliminate in-law troubles or the one hand and marital strife on the other. Our Lord quoted the words of Genesis 2:24 in Mark 10:7,8 to show that marriage is a lifelong union; Paul quotes them here to show the vital unity into which the marriage bond brings husband and wife.

"This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church" (verse 32). Literally translated you have "the mystery the great." A mystery is a truth heretofore hidden but now revealed in Christ Jesus. To the pagan a husband loving his wife and giving her the same tender care he gave his own body was a mystery indeed. The mystery, however, refers to that spiritual union of Christ with His church. Paul means to say that the comparison of marriage to the union

of Christ and the church is the mystery. Carver translates this phrase, "This divine ideal is great: yet I say, up to Christ (on the part of the husband) and up to the church (on-, the part of the wife)". He says, "concerning" is not the (English) equivalent of the Greek preposition EIS here. "Mystery" equals "God's revealed ideal!"

"Nevertheless, let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife, see that she reverence her husband" (verse 33). So Paul goes to great lengths to develop the analogy between Christ and His Church and the husband and wife relationship thus supporting his ethical teaching as it relates to husband and wife.

### Applied Christianity Ephesians 6:1-9

Paul continues writing about relative duties of the Christian. He first wrote to the wives admonishing them to submit to their own husbands. Then he gave instructions to the husbands in their loving relationship to their wives. Now, he writes to the children and to fathers and mothers, and then to servants. Each group was instructed as to how they should conduct themselves as Christians.

#### 1. Obedient Children From Loving Homes - 1-3

The first duty of children is to obey their parents "in the Lord." The duty rests upon the first principles of morality - "for this is right." Paul takes for granted that the children are raised in Christian homes. Obedience is a fundamental duty, however, whether the parents are Christians and whether the children are Christians. The parent-child relationship was ordained for all mankind, not just for believers. Only when their parents order them to sin are the children not obligated to comply. In that case they should courteously refuse and suffer the consequences meekly and without retaliation.

Paul gives four reasons children should obey their parents: (1) it is the right (fit, becoming, just) thing to do, verse 1a, (2) it is scriptural - Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16, verse 2, (3) without obedience the child is personally miserable and socially intolerable, verse 3a, and (4) it promotes a full life, verse 3b. (MacDonald) Paul cites "disobedience to parents" among the sins of paganism (Romans 1:30).

"Honor thy father and mother (which is the first commandment with promise), that it may be well "with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth" (verses 2,3). Honor is higher than obedience; it is due regard for those in authority, by Divine appointment. Fathers and mothers are due the respect of their children. The only exception is when obedience to the parent means disobedience to God. Where obedience to parents is found, there is usually found along with it temperance, self-control, industry, regular ways of life, and other habits that tend toward prosperity and longevity. It is not necessary, however, to take the promise in an individual sense, or as a literal promise of longevity. When the bonds of family life break up, when respect for parents fail, the community becomes decadent and will not LIVE LONG.

Mr. Moffatt, the African missionary, tells of finding a poor woman under a tree; she was a mere skeleton, and the blood-thirsty wolves were howling around her! She said her children had got tired of her because she was sick; they had been gone some days, and she must sit there till she died. (J. Bolton) This woman's children will have to answer to God in the day of judgment for how they treated their mother. This incident is sad even in a pagan country! We wonder if this could happen and does it happen in a civilized country? "And ye, fathers, provoke (goad, NEB) not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (verse 4). Fathers, and mothers, could be included here too. Children are irritated or provoked when parents lose their tempers, become violent and when they are inconsistent in their discipline. Unsteady treatment and unreasonable demands are other ways of provocation. When a lady once told Archbishop Sharpe that she would not communicate religious instruction to her children until they attained the years of discretion the shrewd archbishop replied, "Madam, if you do not teach them the devil will!" (J. Whitecross)

Children are "a heritage of the Lord" (Psalm 127:3). Susannah Wesley, the mother of seventeen children, including John and Charles, once wrote: "The parent who studies to subdue self-will in his child, works together with God in the renewing and saving of a soul. The parent who indulges it, does the Devil's work, makes religion impractical, salvation unattainable, and does all that in him lies to damn his child, soul and body forever." (MacDonald, p. 132)

## 2. Duties of Servants and Masters - 5-9

Paul does not set out to abolish slavery, rather he takes the institutions of society as they stand, and defines the duties of those who acknowledge the authority of Christ. He teaches that the State is a Divine institution as well as the Church. Political government is necessary to the existence of human society. A bad government is better than no government at all. (R.W.Dale) There were many slaves and slavemasters in the early churches. And many a Christian slave is said to have won his pagan master to Christ by the way he lived and obeyed. Slaves are to see the Christ in the human master, or else, if -that cannot be, -to look beyond the master and see the real Master, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The principles apply to servants and employees of all types. Employees are: (1) to obey, (2) to be respectful, (3) to be conscientious and (4) their work should be "as unto Christ." There need be no real distinction between the secular and the sacred. Even the most menial and commonplace tasks in life are ennobled and dignified when they are done for the glory of God.

"Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers, but as the servant of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, with good will doing service as to the Lord, and not to men, knowing that whatever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free" (verses 6-8). To do eyeservice meant to work only when the owner is watching and slacking off when he is not present. Servants (and employees) should always be diligent, not only when the boss is watching, but conscious that our Master is always looking. Eyeservice and menpleasers have reference only to what will pass muster in the world; Christians must go deeper. God looks on the heart (I Samuel 16:7).

"Christ is always watching since the Holy Spirit lives in the body of the slave (I Corinthians 6:19), just as He lives in the body of the master, both of whom, as Christians are associated with Christ (John 17:21). Hence, what the servant does is done as the will of God. He is working for the Lord, not for his master, just as his master also is working for God" (Yeager, Vol. XIV, pp. 360,361). Even for the slave the hope of reward is future - it is at the Lord's coming that he, too, will have his reward. Our Lord notes all the jobs, pleasant or disagreeable, that are done for Him and He will reward each worker.

"And, ye masters, do the same -thing unto them, forbearing threatening; knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with, him" (verse 9). Masters should be fair, kind and honest never using abusive or threatening language.

Masters like Philemon had their obligations, as had slaves like Onesimus. Onesimus's heavenly Master is Philemon's Master as well, and Philemon is responsible to Him for his treatment of Onesimus. The Christian master, therefore, must not adopt a hectoring or browbeating attitude towards his slaves, but treat them fairly, rendering to them that which is just and equal" (Colossians 4:1). (Bruce) The Earl of Chesterfield left, by his will, legacies to all his menial servants, equal to two years' wages each, considering them "as his unfortunate friends, equal by birth and only inferior by fortune." (Baxendale's Anecdotes)

The greatest test of one's Christianity is indeed within the family circle. "Husband, how do you treat your wife? Wife, how do you treat your husband? Parents, how do you treat your children? Children, how do you treat your parents?

Employee, how do you treat your employer? Employer, how do you treat your employee?

The Glorious Warfare and Victory of the Called  
Ephesians 6:10-17

Paul writes, "finally," as though he has reached his last passage of the epistle. He is now addressing all the family of God. Christ is the source of all spiritual strength which through faith is communicated to all His people. "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might" (verse II). To be "strong" is our duty; to be weak is our sin. The Christian is "in the Lord" and in His service as He carries on his warfare against all that is evil. "Paul is about to sum up his argument on the victorious life. We must be strong in the spheres of our association with the Lord and our service to Him. We must depend upon His sovereignty which has its source in God's strength" (Yeager, Vol. XIV, p. 365).

When we remember Jehovah's preparation of Joshua (1:1-9), we are encouraged. God told Joshua, "go over this Jordan, ..every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that HAVE I GIVEN unto you. ..there shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life. ..only be thou strong and very courageous... be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed for the Lord thy God is with thee wherever thou goest. "

"Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (II). Satan is the arch-enemy of the child of God. He has various stratagems - discouragement, frustration, confusion, moral failure and doctrinal error. He knows our weakest points and aims for them. If he cannot disable us by one method, he will try another. He has his methods, his plan of campaign, his strategies, his tricks. In warfare, the general makes full use of all resources - anticipating the enemy's plans. The marks of the highest generalship are readiness and knowledge of the enemy.

Chained to a Roman soldier, the apostle's mind would go naturally to the subject of armor and warfare. The Christian's armor is to protect all the body except the back which is provided no defense, to show that we are never to quit the field, but to face the enemy. John Bunyan notes that the armor with which the Christian was fitted out in the House Beautiful included no protection for his back, so that in his encounter with Apollyon he could not turn back, but had to stand and face the foe. (Bruce) Without Go'd's mighty power man can do nothing; unless man put on the whole armor of God, God will do nothing. (William Gouge) God supplies everything that one needs to prepare for combat; offensive as well as defensive equipment.

Verse 12 gives some idea of the enemy and his forces. We "wrestle" denotes that our enemies aim at us personally; they are near at hand and there is a severe struggle. To "wrestle" means "to throw," "to swing;" it is a contest between two until one hurls the other down and holds him down. Two monarchs of old fought a duel, Charles V and Francis, and the stakes were kingdoms, Milan and Burgundy. We fight with sin, and the stake is heaven or hell. (Dr. Talmage) We fight against the "god of this world," and his demon-possessed subjects who have been elevated to positions of great world power. "World rulers" denotes the extent of the dominion of these invisible foes; they are united in federation.

This warfare is not a matter of contending against godless philosophers, crafty priests, Christ denying cultists or infidel rulers. The battle is against demonic forces, battalions of fallen angels and evil spirits who wield tremendous power. We are constantly surrounded by unseen wicked spirit beings. They oppress and harass the true believer. (MacDonald) "Flesh and blood" are symbols of weakness; we are the weak ones without God's help. Our opponents are not weakling mortals but powers of a far more formidable order. We see only "flesh and blood" ranged against us - that is, a world system of hostile kings' rulers, sinners and evil men. God is claiming the earth for His dominion, and Satan is seeking to usurp the authority of God.

In the armies of our great nations, while desertion is punished with heavy penalties, retirement is allowed under certain conditions. There is an army, however, in which retirement is never sanctioned - not ever in the case of the oldest veteran; and, addressing the soldiers of that army, the apostle writes, "having done all, to stand. Stand therefore." (S. Martin) Weymouth translates this phrase, "able to stand your ground." We are to stand victors in complete possession of the field.

Watchman Nee says, there is a great truth hidden in this passage: "It is not a command to invade a foreign territory. Warfare, in modern parlance, would imply a command o'march." Armies march into other countries to occupy and to subdue. God has not told us to do this. We are not

to march but to stand. The word "stand" implies that the ground disputed by the enemy is really His, and therefore ours. We need not struggle to gain a foothold in it" (p. 43).

## 2. The Panoply of God 14,15

Verses 14-17 spell out -the various parts of the armor: girdle (belt), breastplate, hobnail shoes, shield, helmet and sword. The only weapons worn by the Roman soldier that Paul does not mention are his greaves, shielding the shins, and a spear, which the soldier did not need within the confines of the garrison; these were needed only on the field of battle. The girdle seems to have been intended for three purposes: (1) to bind the garments which were of a loose and flowing description, (2) to give support to the loins amid the fatigues of war or toil, and (3) to defend the heart. (J. Burns) Possibly the girdle would hold the scabbard for the sword also.

Paul refers to the girdle of TRUTH. Truth meaning reality, that is, sincerity of character; soundness and correctness of doctrine; and veracity of tongue and uprightness of life. The next part of the armor is the breastplate of RIGHTEOUSNESS. Every part of the body exposed to a frontal attack is protected by some Christian asset. Midriff, breast, feet, sides and head are protected by truth, righteousness, gospel of peace, faith, salvation, and the word of God. This righteousness is derived from Christ - imputed, infused and imparted (II Corinthians 5:21; Isaiah 59:17). Righteousness guards the vital parts - a breastplate of iron or brass.

Verse 15 cites another part of the armor: "And (have) your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace." Although the apostle does not mention the greaves or leg-harness which would have protected the soldier's shins, he probably means the legs as well as the feet. They embrace the soldier's shoes or boots. "Preparation" suggests preparedness or readiness to go forth with the good news of peace. "The idea seems to be that the mind is to be steadied, kept from fear and flutter, by means of the good news of peace - the good news that we are at peace with God; and 'if God be for us, who can be against us?'" (Pulpit Commentary)

## 3. Further Armor and Encouragement - 16,17

FAITH is the next piece of armor and is likened to a shield (an oblong, door-like, four-cornered protection). "Above all" probably means to "make sure" you put on this piece. "Like the Spartans, every Christian is born a warrior. It is his destiny to be assaulted; it is his duty to attack. (The shield) sometimes signifies a door, because their shields were as large as a door. They covered the soldier entirely." (C.H. Spurgeon) The Christian must have FAITH in God as our Father, in Christ as our Redeemer, in the Spirit as our Sanctifier and Strengthener. The shield is able to quench the fiery darts of the wicked. Before the days of gunpowder and the producing of lead projectiles, the Romans and Greeks used arrows tipped with inflammable materials; firebrands.

"And take the helmet of salvation..." SALVATION is the Christian's "hard-hat." Paul wrote of this "helmet as the hope of salvation" (I Thessalonians 5:8). Next, "and the SWORD of the Spirit, which is the word of God." The sword is SUPPLIED BY the Spirit, the Word being inspired by Him and employed by the Spirit. "Edward VI had a high esteem for the Scriptures. At his coronation, the swords were delivered to him, as King of England, France and Ireland.

Upon receiving these swords he asked, "There is yet another sword to be delivered to me. I mean the sacred Bible, which is the sword of the Spirit, and without which we are nothing, neither can we do anything'." (W. Graham) What a testimony by a human monarch!

The following words concerning the Bible is contributed by Martin Luther:

"And let the prince of ill  
Look grim as e'er he will,  
He harms us not a whit,  
For why his doom is writ;  
A word shall quickly slay him."

We need look no further than Luke 4:1-13 to know how much importance our Lord and Savior placed upon the Word of God. Every time Satan confronted Him, He answered with a "thus saith the Lord." The writer of Hebrews said of God's Word, "(It) is living, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (4:12). Isaiah wrote, "(God) shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked" (11:4).



"Every Christian knows on entering the service of his Master that great trials are appointed for him; that the rightful and only entrance into the kingdom of heaven is through the gate of tribulation; and that, though his Master has given him armor enough to protect him against sin, he has given him no armor to ensure him against suffering. Again, it is to the sword of the Spirit we must look to preserve us from all false guides, false influence, false dependence, whether the example of the world, the persuasion of friends, the fear of men, or the dominant tendencies and desires of our own heart." (D.Moore)

"Thus girded, thus clad, thus shod, thus guarded, thus covered, thus armed, the Christian might well meet his foes. He was, indeed, more than a match for them, and might calmly await their onset." (Canon Liddon)

#### Principles of Prayer and Final Words Ephesians 6:18-24

The apostle Paul had already mentioned the subject of prayer in an earlier passage (1:15,16). He wrote, "Wherefore, I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not to GIVE THANKS for you, making mention of you in my PRAYERS; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him..." Paul interceded for the Ephesians on many occasions. Here he prayed for their enlightenment. He even petitioned God that with an open-hearted clarity all saints might know the significance of God.

#### 1. Prayer - A Necessity for the Christian - 18-20

The Apostle Paul could not finish his epistle without including an admonition to encourage his readers to pray. Prayer is always in order; when we can do nothing else, we can pray. We should do nothing else, until we have prayed. "Praying always" is an attitude; ever in touch with God. It is not true prayer unless by the Spirit the heart is filled with heavenward longings and aspirations, changing our cold form to heartfelt realities. Watching for an answer; persistence - prayer triumphant!" (Pulpit Commentary) Possibly Paul would include all kinds of prayer - public and private, deliberate and spontaneous; supplication and intercession; confession and humiliation; praise and thanksgiving. Prayer requires keenness, alertness and concentration. Watchful against drowsiness, mind-wandering and preoccupation with other things can hinder prayer. (MacDonald)

Someone has written that "Satan trembles when he sees the weakest saint on his knees." "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit..." The RSV continues this verse translating it thus: "To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplications for all the saints."

Paul also requests of the Ephesians, "and (pray) for me that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in bonds; that in this I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak" (verses 19,20). Paul was dependent on the prayers of others, and so are we. He felt in his preaching that every instance of right utterance was a GIFT. The Pulpit Commentary reads thus: "And (pray) for me," saying, "we should mark the unpriestly idea of Paul. So far from Paul having a store of grace for all the Ephesians, he needed their prayers, that out of the one living store, the needful grace might be given to him."

Paul wanted the Holy Spirit to give him something to say every time he opened his mouth. He asked God to give him the grace to speak boldly the mystery of the gospel message. A minister, without boldness, is like a smooth file, a knife without an edge, a sentinel that is afraid to shoot his gun. (W. Gurnall) Paul did not want the Ephesians to be timid in sharing the gospel message, even in the midst of severe persecution.

Paul considered himself an ambassador, a representative of the Lord Jesus Christ. The root word for ambassador comes from "presbutros?" - an elder, one who is experienced and diplomatic. Paul, however, was an ambassador "in chains." Governmental ambassadors are generally granted diplomatic immunity from arrest and imprisonment. Most countries will tolerate anything better than they will tolerate the gospel representative. So Christ's representative was "an ambassador IN BONDS." He was chained around his wrist, probably handcuffed to the soldier who guarded him at all hours of the day and night. The soldier would be relieved every four hours or so; but there was no relief from his chain for Paul, only a change of soldiers. (Bruce) He wore his chain as a DECORATION or a BADGE of his office; he was God's ambassador.

"Paul is now an old man (Philemon 9). He had spent most of his adult life in preaching that message which brought him only persecution. Now he felt the need for special strength that in his last days, he will not lose his courage, but fulfill totally his commission to preach the mystery (Ephesians 3:4-7) to the Gentiles." (Yeager, v91· XIV, p.380).

## 2. The Mission of Tychicus - 21,22

"But that ye also may know my affairs, and how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things; whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs, and -that he might comfort your hearts." Paul is now sending Tychicus from Rome -to Ephesus to let the saints know how he was getting along. He commends Tychicus as a beloved brother and faithful servant in the Lord.

Through the years Tychicus has been a trusted servant who had accompanied Paul and others on his third missionary journey (Acts 20:4). He was Paul's messenger to deliver his letter to the Colossians (4:7), and he was with Paul when he wrote his second letter to Timothy (4:12), and when he wrote to Titus (3:12). The two-fold mission of Tychicus was to inform the saints concerning Paul's welfare in prison and to encourage their hearts, allaying any unnecessary fears. "Obviously the Ephesian saints were concerned about Paul, whom they loved very much, (Acts 20:36-38) because he was in prison and there was a possibility that he would be put to death" (Yeager, Vol. XIV, p. 382).

## 3. Final Words of Peace, Love, Faith and Grace - 23,24

in conclusion Paul writes, "Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God, the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen." Paul prayed that "peace would garrison their hearts in every circumstance of life, love would enable them to worship God and work with one another. Faith would empower them for exploits in the Christian warfare." (MacDonald)

There are depths in the ocean which no tempest ever stirs; they are beyond the reach of all storms which sweep and agitate the surface of the sea. There are heights in the blue sky to which no cloud ever ascends, where no tempest ever rages, where all is perpetual sunshine. Each of these is an emblem of the soul which Jesus visits; to whom He speaks His peace, whose fear He dispels, and whose lamp of hope He trims.

The Roman prison has long since given up its noble inmate. The great apostle has entered into his reward and seen the face of his Beloved. But the letter is still with us—as fresh and alive as the day it came from his heart and pen. In the twentieth century it still speaks to us words of instruction, inspiration, conviction and exhortation" (MacDonald, p. 143).

H.W. Webb-Peploe says of the book of Ephesians, "There is perhaps no writing in the Book of God so majestic and so wonderful: and therefore, how impossible it is for any man, as a messenger even from God Himself, to do justice to it in the space allotted to us. I hope we may draw nigh to it, simply seeking for teachings upon holiness, teachings by which we may be sent forth to live a nobler and higher life than hitherto, and by which we may be enabled to glorify God."

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