The Book of Ephesians

Overview of the Book of Ephesians

The book of Ephesians is a masterpiece of revelation that bridges the principles of grace and obedience into one solid irremovable form. The fundamental principles of grace and man's responsibility to abide by God's laws are thoroughly revealed in the Old Testament. These principles are reaffirmed by the apostle Paul in clear and concise language in the book of Ephesians.

Introduction

The book Ephesians is written to the Christians who lived in Ephesus. There were apparent race occurring in Ephesus between Jew and Gentile Christians. Paul sets out to prove that God's grace is not distributed unequally based upon a person's race. Those who obey the gospel are recipients of God's grace no matter their skin color. Both Jew and Gentile needed to understand their united front in grace and obedience. Paul exposes those sinful things that militate against God's will for man to walk in obedience and charges the Christian to put on the whole armor of God. Whether one is in the home, church, or place of employment truth must be upheld in obedience. The driving force in man's life that will motivate him to obey the Lord's will is God's rich grace.

The City of Ephesus

A brief history of Ephesus and Bible references to the city will prove profitable in understanding the contents of the book. Ephesus was a world city of the day much like Chicago, Hong Kong, Amsterdam, or New York of our day. Ephesus was located in the southwest corner of Asia approximately 2 to 3 miles from the Aegean Sea. “Ephesus was well situated to become the chief commercial center of western Asia Minor, for it had ideally positioned passes which gave immediate access for trade both N and S to the Hermus and Maeander river valleys... So prominent was the city that during the early Christian period the population of Ephesus probably exceeded a quarter million.”

The temple of Artemis (Diana), one of the seven wonders of the then known world, was located in Ephesus. This temple measured 420’ long and 240’ wide with 117 supporting columns. The height of the temple was 60’. Artemis (Diana) was a multi-breasted female deity that was supposed to represent her fruitfulness and wealth. During the months of March and April people would come from all around the world to celebrate various festivals related to the worship of Diana. There was also a great theater in Ephesus that held more than 24,000 people on sixty-six tiers of seats. There was a sports stadium just to the north of the great theater as well. The main street through Ephesus was made of marble, known as the Arkadiane. This marble road ran NW from the theater to the coast of the Aegean Sea.

Bible References to Ephesus

The apostle Paul's first encounter with Ephesus is recorded at Acts 18. Paul, Silas, and Timothy had left Antioch of Syria on rout to what is commonly referred to as Paul's second tour of preaching. The three travel through Galatia intending to

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1 G. L. Borchert. The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia; vol. 2, pp. 115
make their way into Asia. The Holy Spirit; however, forbids them from entering Asia and instead they travel north toward Bithynia (Acts 16:6-7). The three preachers travel west to Troas and meet Luke (Acts 16:10). The four men cross the Aegean Sea and land at Neapolis of Macedonia and then travel to Philippi. Leaving Luke and Timothy behind in Philippi, Paul and Silas travel further southward until Paul alone comes to Corinth (Acts 18:1). Paul meets Aquila and Priscilla in Corinth and the three become good friends due to a common trade (i.e., tentmakers). Paul, Aquila, and Priscilla travel through the Aegean Sea and land at Ephesus. This is the first reference to the city of Ephesus. The year is 54 AD. Paul's preaching and the obedience of some Ephesians resulted in the church being established there. Paul does not stay long in Ephesus but assured the brethren that he would return shortly (Acts 18:21). Aquila and Priscilla remain in Ephesus continuing their work of tent making and no doubt preaching the gospel. While Paul was away, Aquila and Priscilla meet Apollos, the man mighty in the scriptures, and teach him more accurately concerning the gospel message (see Acts 18:24-28).

The next year, 55 AD, Paul travels back through Galatia and arrives at Ephesus. He immediately baptized twelve men who had known only the baptism of John the baptizer (see Acts 19:1-10). The apostle Paul remains in Ephesus edifying the new church and preaching to the lost for three years (see Acts 20:31). During this time the Lord was greatly magnified by the miraculous works and preaching of Paul as many Jews and Gentiles were obeying the gospel (see Acts 19:11-20). Not all Paul's work in Ephesus was smooth sailing. Demetrius, a silversmith who made his living making shrines of Diana, stirred up the people against Paul and the gospel message. Paul's message had shed light on the vanity and sinfulness of idolatry and thereby Demetrius' trade was in jeopardy (see Acts 19:23-41). The city of Ephesus was filled with wrath and confusion yet Paul continued to preach. Paul pens the first epistle to the Corinthians while in Ephesus and writes, "I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost; for a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries" (1 Corinthians 16:8-9).

Date of the Epistle to the Ephesians

Paul leaves Ephesus after preaching there for three years due to a great need among the brethren in Jerusalem (the year was 57 AD). Paul traveled to Macedonia to collect funds for the needy saints in Jerusalem (see Romans 15:22-25). Paul eventually makes his way back to Jerusalem, after collecting monies from the Macedonian brethren, and one week later is apprehended by the Jews (Acts 21:17-27). He is imprisoned, tried, and taken to Rome for judgment (Acts 22-28).

There are references in the book of Ephesians that point toward a time when the apostle Paul was in prison (see Ephesians 3:1; 4:1). Paul said, "For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak" (Ephesians 6:20). If these prison statements are to be taken literally most believe that he would have written the book of Ephesians from his Roman prison during the years AD 62 – 64. Eight to ten passed between the time a church was established in the city of Ephesus and the writing of this epistle. During these few years the brethren experienced more troubles and were in need of further teaching.

The Purpose of Writing the Book of Ephesians

During these early days of the church the erring teaching of Judaizism was spreading like a wild fire (see Acts 15). Men were teaching that Gentiles must be circumcised and keep the ceremonial feast of the Mosaic Law in order to be saved. Such events was separating the Jewish Christians from Gentile Christians in the Lord's church. The epistle to the Ephesians is primarily written so that both Jew and Gentile would fully understand the magnitude of God’s promise to forgive the sins of all humanity. Both Jew and Gentile needed to understand
that God’s merciful and kind favor to forgive men of their sins had ever been intended for the Gentile as well as the Jew (see Genesis 12:1-3). Paul was commissioned to preach the divine gospel message to the Gentiles because of God's eternal purpose to save all nations of men (Galatians 1:15). When the Gentile heard, believed, confessed Christ, repented of sins, and was baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of their sins they were added to the Lord’s church (see Acts 2:38-42). Once in the body of Christ they stood on equal ground with the Jew who had done the same. Paul's point is that there is no Jewish Christian or Gentile Christian there is simply Christians. All, Jew and Gentile, were now “saints” and “fellow-citizens” in the body of Christ (Ephesians 2:19). Paul refers to Jew and Gentile as "fellow-heirs, fellow-members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel" (Ephesians 3:6).

Another issue dealt with, through this epistle, is man's temptation to walk as the world through disobedience to God's laws (see Ephesians 4-5). Paul refers to the distinguishing characteristic that differentiates the “old man” of sin (Ephesians 4:22) and the “new man” of righteousness and holiness in truth (Ephesians 4:24). This distinction is identified as a “walk” (Ephesians 4:1, 17). Before one becomes a Christian they “walk in the vanity of their mind” (Ephesians 4:17) and are spiritually dead (Ephesians 2:1). The spirit of man is “renewed;” however, when introduced to truth through hearing and learning (Ephesians 4:20-23).

He that “gives place to the devil” is marked by another character, spirit, or mind (Ephesians 4:27). Said individual is governed not by truth but by “the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error” (Ephesians 4:14). The old man of sin walks by the “vanity, lust of deceit, falsehood, thievery, bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, railing, and malice” (Ephesians 4:17, 22, 25, 28, 31). Paul states, “that ye no longer walk...” inferring that the Ephesian Christians did so once walk (Ephesians 4:17). When did the Ephesian Christians walk in craft, deceit, falsehood, etc...? Paul tells us that it was when they walked by the standard of the devil (see Ephesians 2:2). Sons of disobedience are those who follow Satan or the prince of this world. The ways and laws of the devil are opposed to the ways and laws of God (see Isaiah 28:17; 54:8-9; Jeremiah 10:23; Matthew 5:20; Acts 10:35; Romans 1:17 etc.).

Paul defines righteousness in all areas of life in this epistle as well. Whether the Jew or Gentile Christian is at work, home, or play righteousness must accompany their every day life. Within the home, the husband is commanded to be the head of his wife and to love her. The wife is commanded to submit to her husband in obedience (Ephesians 5:22-33). Children are commanded to obey and honor their parents (Ephesians 6:1-2). Those who work for others are to do it as though they were working for the Lord. Those who were over their slaves or employees were commanded to treat them with kindness and fairness (see Ephesians 6:5-9).

Paul sums up the epistle to the Ephesians with a command to put on the whole armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-20). God's people must recognize that the devil is real and he has much at this disposal. Likewise God is real and will deliver all out of the hands of their captors as they call upon His mighty name for help.

Foreword to the epistle to Ephesians

The hypothesis of the book of Ephesians is found at chapter 1:3-7. Paul uses the law of equivalences to establish the inseparable connection between God's grace and man's responsibility to keep His divine laws. These five verses (Ephesians 1:3-7) connect the Christian to being holy and without blemish to the phrase "to the praise of the glory of his grace" (Ephesians 1:6). This phrase is found three times in the first chapter (1:6, 12, 14). Man's objective of being without sin (i.e., living lawfully - see 1 John 3:4) is connected by the law of equivalences to "redemption through the blood of Christ, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Ephesians 1:7). The obedient or redeemed by the blood of Christ receiving the forgiveness of their sins which is equated to God's rich grace.

This obedience is depicted as a "subjection" to Christ at Ephesians 1:20-23. Paul explains that it is not obedience alone that saves a man but rather one's admission of the guilt of sin in their lives conjoined with an honest effort to live lawfully in this life; i.e., "good works that we should walk in" (see Ephesians 2:7-10). The walk of the Christian is to be parallel to God's perfect approach to this life (see Ephesians 5:1). Paul terms such
a perfect walk as, "Worthy of the calling wherewith you were called..." (Ephesians 4:1ff). When the Ephesians heard and obeyed the gospel of Jesus Christ they were taught to live in obedience to Christ's laws rather than in the vanity of their minds (see Ephesians 4:17-24; 5:15). Paul masterfully connects God's grace with His divine laws and leaves both Ephesians and us today with a clear understanding of our responsibilities.

Paul has reaffirmed the Old Testament fundamental principles of law and grace. Consider these examples.

God told Abraham, “Unto thy seed will I give this land;” (i.e., the land of Canaan) (Genesis 12:7) yet from the book of Genesis to Joshua 21 we find bloody warfare on the part of Israel and Canaan over the land. When the wars were over, the Bible tells us, “so Jehovah gave unto Israel all the land which he sware to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein” (Joshua 21:43). Note that during these wars for Canaan, God told Joshua that He had “given into thy hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valor...” yet Jehovah commanded that Joshua and Israel go to war to take the city (Joshua 6:2ff). Later in the history of Israel, God told Namaan that he would heal his leprosy if he would wash in the Jordan seven times (2 Kings 5). Why did Jesus tell the blind man of John 9:7 that he would be healed if he would “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam...”? Could it be that man is justified (forgiven of sins; i.e., is a recipient of God’s grace) through an obedient faith in Jesus Christ? Each case in the Old and New Testament that deals with God and His promises reveals a common factor of an individual being asked to obey God’s commands that he or she may receive His favor. Grace works no different today. Those who truly love truth and God will have no problem complying with God’s instructions and are thereby justified of sins by an obedient faith as was Abraham (cf. Genesis 18:19; 22:18; 26:4-5; Hebrews 11:8).

One of the most informative verses in God's word dealing with the subject of grace, the forgiveness of man's sins, is found at Isaiah 55:3. After speaking of the free nature of God's grace at Isaiah 55:1-2 the prophet writes, "Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live: and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." The "everlasting covenant" is an eternal law that God had foreordained before the foundation of the world to inform man regarding their salvation (see Ephesians 1:3-6 and a multitude of passages such as 2 John 9-11). The apostle Paul quotes from Isaiah 55:3 at Acts 13:34 in relationship to Christ and the forgiveness of man's sins (see Acts 13:34-39). Isaiah thereby makes an inseparable connection between God's grace (forgiveness) and law (the everlasting covenant). Those who follow God's laws will be recipients of His divine grace. The two are inseparably connected.

Paul tells Titus that grace, "Instructs us, to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lust, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world" (Titus 2:12). This is why Paul referred to the gospel message of Jesus Christ as a "law of faith" (Romans 3:27) and the "law of Jesus Christ" (Galatians 6:2). This is why James called the gospel message, "The perfect law of liberty" (James 1:25; 2:12). Those who violate God's laws are in sin (see 1 John 3:4-10). There are erring people today who teach that man can continue in their sinful ways without fear of God rejecting them. Some refer to this as the impossibility of apostasy or once saved always saved. The idea is that God's grace abounds in one's life even though that person continues in sin. Consider what the apostle Paul said to the Romans: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid. We who died to sin how shall we any longer live therein?" (Romans 6:1-2). Those who fail to see the inseparable connection between grace and law will ever learn yet never come to the knowledge of truth (see 2 Timothy 3:7).
Outline of the Book of Ephesians

Chapter 1

I. Salutations (1:1-2):
   A. “Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God, to the saints that are at Ephesus, and the faithful in Christ Jesus.” (1:1).
      1. Paul introduces his epistle to the Ephesians with an affirmation of his apostleship “through the will of God.” Paul did not make himself an apostle, as some false apostles were doing in those days, but rather he was an apostle by God’s will. The Lord had hand picked Paul from his mother’s womb (see Galatians 1:15) to go unto the Gentiles, kings, and household of Israel to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ (Acts 9:15).
   2. The Marshal’s Nestle (NM) text reads, “to the saints being in Ephesus and faithful in Christ Jesus” (NM 758). This one statements gives much detail as to what being a Christian is:
      a. First, a Christian is a “saint” (hagios) = “of persons, holy, pure” (LS 5). “Of human beings consecrated to God, holy... what is holy” (AG 9). “Members of the first Christian communities; pure, righteous, ceremonially or morally; holy” (Moulton 3).
      b. Such a holy one is considered to be “in Christ.” One initially gets into Christ through baptism for the remission of sins (Galatians 3:27) and one remains “in Christ” by abiding in His words (cf. 1 John 2:5) and praying for forgiveness of sins (1 John 1:8-10).
      c. Such an abiding “in Christ” is termed being “faithful.” The word “faithful” is a plural adjective that describes what the saints in Christ are; i.e., faithful to God’s commandments (Friberg 588) (see study # 1; Obedient Faith).
      d. Paul is not addressing the world of sinners and neither is he addressing fallen Christians, he is addressing the true saints of God who are faithful in Christ Jesus.
      e. One must note that most of our New Testament books are written to Christians. The book of Ephesians is not a book that teaches the lost what they must do to be saved; i.e., hear, believe, repent, confess the name of Christ, and be baptized. This book addresses those who have already done these things. Chapter one; however, does explain the Christian's state of being which helps us understand how one becomes a Christian.
   B. “Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” (1:2).
      1. God’s grace is the obtaining of His promises of eternal salvation administered to man through the gospel (cf. Titus 2:11-12). Paul will precisely identify God's grace as the forgiveness of sins and the hope of salvation in a few verses.
      2. Peace with God is equated to fellowship with the Father. To be at peace with God is to have fellowship with God and to have fellowship with God is to be a faithful saint of God (see 1 John 1:3-7).
      3. Paul’s salutation evokes hope and responsibility on the part of his readers.
   II. The Blessings of Redemption (1:3-14):
      A. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.” (1:3).
         1. Paul begins the epistle to the Ephesians with a doxology of praise directed toward Jehovah God who has blessed the saints of God. The NT uses the word “blessed” (eulogeo) in a general way to express honor upon one such as God / cf. 2 Corinthians 1:3; Ephesians 1:3; 1 Timothy 6:15. The Greek word “eulogeo” is used to signify “to speak well of, praise, honor” (LS 327).
         2. Likewise, man is blessed today when he receives the “spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.” To be “blessed” is to be a recipient of God’s promises. Sarah was said to be “blessed” by God when she received the promised son (Isaac) (cf. Genesis 17:15-17).
            a. God has promised that all nations would be blessed through the seed of Abraham which was Christ (Genesis 12:1ff; Galatians 3:8, 16).
            b. Christ’s blessing is that He offers man the forgiveness of sins (the hope of eternal salvation) (Galatians 3:14; Colossians 1:19ff) (see study # 2; God’s Blessing for Mankind).
c. These spiritual blessings of the forgiveness of man’s sins are in “the heavenly places” (heavenlies [NM 758]) (epouranios) = “heavenly in respect to locality... the upper regions of the air... heavenly, in respect of essence and character, unearthly... divine, spiritual” (Moulton 164). “In heaven, heavenly” (LS 309). The Greek word epouranios is found 5 times in Ephesians (i.e., Ephesians 1:3, 20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12). Epouranios is at times used to indicate a spiritual world or world of the unseen and at other times it is used for heaven itself. An examination of the use of the word in these verses leads to conclusive evidence that the word simply means the world of the unseen or spiritual world.

B. “even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blemish before him in love” (1:4).

1. The antecedent to “he” is God of verse three. God “chose” (ezelezato) = “to pick out; to choose, select” (Moulton 125). God “picked out” “us” (saints who are in Christ through baptism and faithful living) “before the foundation of the world.” Here is a statement of fact. Before the world and universe was even created God made a choice as to who would be recipients of His blessing of eternal salvation. Such a statement marks the eternal sovereignty of Jehovah God (see Romans 9:14ff) (see study # 3; The Sovereignty of God).

a. Let us remember that this epistle is addressed to the “saints at Ephesus” who are known as “the faithful in Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 1:1). One gets “in Christ” through baptism (Galatians 3:27). One remains in Christ by being obedient to His words (1 John 2:5) and praying for forgiveness when sin occurs (1 John 1:8-10). The "us" thereby represents non-perfect people who's purpose in life is moral perfection through the blood of Jesus Christ (see Matthew 5:48; 1 Peter 1:15-16; 2 Peter 1:4; 1 John 2:1-2) (see study # 4; The Christians Identity).

b. One would not know about Christ redeeming sacrifice on the cross nor what walking after the Spirit is all about if it were not for the gospel message (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:3). The gospel message “calls” individuals to be a saint (Christian) (one justified or forgiven of sins) (cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:13ff). The apostle Peter writes, “But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” (1 Peter 2:9).

c. The question then is who are the ones called by the gospel message? Is it only a select group of people that God had foreknowledge of by name? Our Calvinists friends believe in what they term “unconditional election.” That is, God chooses specific individuals from the beginning to receive salvation and once you have been chose there is nothing you can do to change God’s choice (see study # 5; Calvinism; God’s Elect Race).

d. One must certainly see that the Bible represents a total different picture of man’s eternal salvation than “unconditional election.” If I am unconditionally elected then there is really nothing for me to do to inherit eternal salvation. Secondly, if I am not one who has been unconditionally elected” then I have no hope whatsoever of ever obtaining God’s promise of eternal salvation.

e. The word of God surely leaves no man or woman out when it comes to salvation. God is not willing that “any” should perish but that “all” should come to repentance (see 2 Peter 3:9). Again, why does the Lord demand repentance of Christians who have sinned if there is nothing one can do to loose their state of “unconditional election?” (cf. Acts 8:22-23; 1 John 1:8-10). If “unconditional election” was in Paul’s mind as he penned the Ephesian letter then why would the same apostle say that the saints in Galatia had fallen from grace at Galatians 5:4?

f. Clearly, Paul is stating that God has always (before the creation of the world) planned that any and all of mankind would have the opportunity to be saved from the consequences of their sins by a conscience choice to obey the voice of God when His Word is presented to them. The Lord always knew that there would be a class of people who would humble themselves in obedience and a class of people who would be hardened in sin.
2. Those who choose to serve God through obedience to His commandments (and thereby recognized as God’s “chosen”) are defined as “holy and without blemish before him in love.”
   a. The Greek word ἀγίος is translated “saint” in Ephesians 1:1 and now as “holy.” We defined the word above as “pure, holy, righteous” (LS, AG, Moulton). To be “blemished” would be to ruin our state of purity, holiness, and righteousness. The inference is clear; I obtain purity, holiness, and righteousness in the sight of God by having my sins forgiven (through baptism and then through repentance, confession, and prayer [cf. 1 John 1:9]).
   b. The entire idea of God’s foreordination (next verse) is defined then as one who has had his sins forgiven because he has heard the word of God, believed it, and obeyed its commands; i.e., baptism for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). Said individual is now holy (clean from the blemishes of sin). Said one continues in said state not through perfect living but through repentance, confession, and prayer to Jehovah God. Jesus Himself said, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:16). Jesus then defines what He means by “believe” in the same chapter saying, “He that believes on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeys not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him” (John 3:36).
   Note that Jesus excludes no man in the opportunity of salvation when He uses the word “whosoever” at John 3:16 (see also Hebrews 11:1ff and Acts 14:1-2 for the connection of faith and obedience) (see study # 1).

C. “Having foreordained us unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ unto himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, which he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.” (1:5-6).
   1. Let us keep the antecedents of the plural pronouns in their context. The pronoun “us” would be the faithful saints (Ephesians 1:1), those who have been blessed with spiritual blessings (Ephesians 1:3), those chose before the foundation of the world who meet the standard of being holy and without blemish (Ephesians 1:4).
   2. Said saints have been “foreordained” (predestined; KJV) (προορίζω) = “to determine beforehand, to predetermine, pre-ordain” (LS 682). What was explained in verse four as saints (those choose to be holy and without blemish) being chosen by God before the foundation of the world is now termed “foreordained” (predetermine). The thought to this point is clear. Those who so choose to seek God’s forgiveness and thereby be holy and blameless are those who God foreordained to be His sons. The scriptures refer to this as an “adoption” process. When a man or woman adopts a child it becomes there own whereas before the adoption the child belonged to someone else. Likewise, when a person is adopted by God they belong to God as a son or daughter. How does this take place?
   a. Consider Romans 8:12-17 (those adopted by God are those who have crucified the fleshly desires of the world and now live by the Holy Spirit’s instructions. Said individuals have been “called” out of worldliness by the gospel; cf. Romans 8:29-30).
   b. Consider Galatians 3:26 - 4:1ff (mankind is in servitude to sin; however, once an individual makes the determination to crucify the fleshly desires (Galatians 5:24) and walk by the Spirit we are no longer servants of sin but adopted as sons of God and made heirs of His promises). The saints are now children of obedience rather children of disobedience (see Romans 6:15-23) (see study # 4).
   3. God’s merciful objective in adopting saints is that His name may be praised and glorified in such holy individuals in the sight of the world of ungodly men (cf. Ezekiel 36:22ff).
   4. All spiritual blessings are in the “Beloved” (i.e., Christ). It is Christ who redeemed us from our sins and made adoption and son-ship possible (cf. Galatians 3:13) (see study # 6; God our Father).

D. “in whom we have our redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace,” (1:7)
   1. Through Christ, “we” (saints, those foreordained; i.e., chose in him before the foundation of the world, and holy without blemish of sin) “have our redemption” (απολύτρωσις) = “a ransoming, redemption by payment of ransom” (LS 102). “To dismiss for a ransom paid, redemption, a
deliverance procured by the payment of a ransom” (Moulton 45). Note that “redemption” is equated to “the forgiveness of our trespasses” (see study # 7; Bible Redemption). So, the saint (those foreordained and clean from sins) have this redemption through the blood of Christ. Please follow the progression of thought so that we may properly understand God's foreordination and grace.

2. Let’s put Christ sacrifice in perspective. Mankind has the opportunity to receive the forgiveness of their sins through the blood of Christ that was spilled on the cross (cf. Matthew 26:26-28). Christ blood was the payment for our ‘deliverance’ from the bondage of sin. When Paul spoke to the Ephesian elders at Miletus he said, “Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood” (Acts 20:28). To redeem someone is to pay a price for their deliverance. Christ blood was the price for man’s deliverance from the bondage of sin. God not only knew of man's foreordination but he foreknew Christ work or part in man's redemption (see 1 Peter 1:18-20) (see study # 8; The Omniscience of God).

3. Consider Galatians 3:13, “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us: for it is written, cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.”
   a. The word “redeemed” used at Galatians 3:13 is a different word than what Paul uses here in Ephesians 1:7 yet is very similar in meaning. The Greek word at Galatians 3:13 is (exagorazo) = “to buy up” (LS 268). “To buy out of the hands of a person; to redeem, set free” (Moulton 143). “To recover ownership of by paying a specified sum. To pay off, as a promissory note. To set free; rescue or ransom (the release of a person or property in return for payment of a demanded price)” (AHD 1027). The word redemption simply means that one has purchased another’s freedom and thereby has rescued, saved, or set the individual free from the state of bondage that they were in.
   b. Again, let us remember what the curse of the law is: Anyone who did not keep the law perfectly was cursed because there was no remedy for the sin committed (cf. Deuteronomy 27:26). The guilty one was often “hung on a tree” and killed for a penalty of breaking the law. They died without mercy (cf. Hebrews 10:28) (see study # 7).
   c. Paul now tells us how Christ redeemed mankind from the curse of the law. Jesus “became a curse for us; for it is written, cursed is every one that hangs on a tree.” The idea of Jesus’ becoming a curse “for” (huper) us is important to note. The word huper = “in behalf of” (Moulton 414). The idea is that instead of man being cursed Jesus was cursed in our behalf. He took upon His own self the curse that was due sinful man i.e., death (cf. Romans 6:23; see also Isaiah 53:4-8) (see study # 7).
   d. Consider the OT passage that Paul quotes from: “And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree; his body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt bury him the same day; for he that is hanged is accursed of God; that thou defile not thy land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee for an inheritance” (Deuteronomy 21:22-23).
   e. Ephesians 1:7 appears to be the theme of the entire epistle. The grace of God is connected to forgiveness of sins and God’s plan to redeem man from the bondage of sin (see study # 4; Grace). So God foreordained people to be forgiven of their sins by his rich grace through the redemptive blood of Christ. The offer is there; however, man must do his part! I like to think of Bible topics, such as grace, as pictures drawn by God in our mind. If we would but connect the dots revealed in God's word we have a complete picture and consequential complete understanding of any given topic. The dots to connect, under the discussion above, are blood of Christ, redemption, forgiveness of sins, and grace. These four dots; however, do not give us the complete picture. I must continue to connect dots. When the apostle Peter preaches that man is forgiven of sins, through baptism and the call of the gospel message and thereby added to the Lord's church, then we have three more dots to connect that our picture comes to be clear (see Acts 2:37-42). A good way of studying the Bible is to draw associations between words. The example above is good. The apostle Paul uses word equivalences between redemption, the forgiveness of sins, and
God's grace. Each of these terms are mutually joined together in equivalence. I know this because of Paul's use of the Greek word *kata* (translated "according to"). *Kata* is defined as "according to (in keeping with or in agreement with), conformably to...after the fashion or likeness of" (Moulton 213). When I look to other passages in the Bible that use these terms I can better understand the meanings by looking to what all passages say about a given word or topic. When I read of God's grace I understand that to mean God's redemption through the blood of Christ through the obedient act of man in baptism (see study # 9; How to Effectively Study the Bible and # 10; God's Grace).

E. “which he made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, making known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he purposed in him” (1:8-9).

1. What “abounded toward us?” Again, the antecedent to the pronoun “us” is the saint of God who is holy, without blemish, redeemed by the blood of Christ, an adopted son of God, one who has been called by the gospel message to live by the Holy Spirit. That which abounds toward the saints is the “riches of his grace” (Ephesians 1:7). God graciously and mercifully provides redemption for those who would so choose to accept it through the obedient act of baptism (Acts 2:38) and remaining faithful all the days of their lives through obedience and repentance (see Ephesians 1:1; 1 John 1:8-10; Revelation 2:10).

2. The idea that God provided redemption through the blood of His Son Jesus is an illustration of God’s wisdom and prudence. “Wisdom” (*sophia*) = “knowledge of, acquaintance with a thing... sound judgment, intelligence, practical wisdom, such as was attributed to the Seven Wise men” (LS 737). “Prudence” (*phronesis*) = “a minding to do so and so, purpose, intention... thoughtfulness, prudence” (LS 872). The Lord exercised ‘sound judgment’ and ‘thoughtfulness’ toward His created being who had sinned and separated themselves from Him. The Lord’s wisdom and prudence is further illustrated in that he “made known unto us the mystery of his will.” Let us trace this out from this chapter:

   a. The mystery is the gospel message that has been revealed by the work of the Holy Spirit to instruct mankind unto righteousness (cf. Ephesians 1:13; 3:4-5).

   b. The gospel message tells us of the riches of God’s grace; i.e., the redemptive work of Jesus Christ so that man may receive the remission of his sins.

3. The whole of man’s redemption is God’s “good pleasure” and so He “purposed (redemption) in him (Christ).”

4. These verses help us understand that it was God’s eternal purpose to redeem man from their sinful state through the blood of Christ. God's grace was made known to man through the gospel.

F. “unto a dispensation of the fullness of the times, to sum up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens, and the things upon the earth; in him, I say, in whom also we were made a heritage, having been foreordained according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his will;” (1:10-11).

1. A “dispensation” (*oikonomia*) = “the management of a household or family, husbandry, thrift” (LS 546). “The manager of a household; a steward... to manage the affairs of any one, be steward... an arranged plan, a scheme (Moulton 284).

2. At a time that was right, by the wisdom of God, He brought the gospel message to man. This gospel exposed God's grace to man. This dispensation is known as the “fullness of times.” The apostle Paul wrote to the Galatians, “*but when the fullness of the time came. God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, that he might redeem them tha were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons*” (Galatians 4:4-5). The context of Galatians 4 suggests that the “fullness of time” corresponds to the “day appointed by the father” at Galatians 4:2. When the child came of age he would be due his father’s inheritance. The coming of age occurs for mankind when “God sent forth his Son” and thereby made man eligible to receive the inheritance of God (i.e., justification of sins and the hope of eternal salvation). Jesus had a mission that was authorized by God (see study # 11; The Work of Jesus). Jesus’ mission was to free man from the bondage of sin. This occurred in the “fullness of time” (i.e., at the time the prophets had foretold [Isaiah 40:3; Daniel 2:1ff] consider Mark
1:15-16; Ephesians 1:9) and a time when man was ripe for seeing his need for one to save them from the consequences of their sin (cf. Galatians 3:24).

3. To “sum up all things in Christ” (anakephalaiomai) = “to bring together several things under one, reduce under one head; to comprise” (Moulton 23). The Lord brought together the things in the heavens and things upon the earth under one head or rule; i.e., Christ authority.

4. Through Christ “we” (the saints who are with no blemish by the grace of God through our obedience) are made a “heritage” (kleroo) = “to appoint to an office by lot... to allot, assign... to deliver an oracle” (LS 436). Not only do saints receive an inheritance but we are assigned unto God by our choice to serve Him. He belongs to us and we belong to Him!

5. Such an arrangement (i.e., the salvation of mankind and a relationship of belonging to the heavenly Father) was in the mind of God before the foundation of the world was formed. He predetermined this arrangement. This was God’s work! Jehovah is not passive in man’s eternal salvation. God had a work just as Jesus had a work (follow the context from Ephesians 1:3; i.e., it is God under consideration regarding the delegated work of Jesus Christ).

G. “to the end that we should be unto the praise of his glory, we who had before hoped in Christ;” (1:12).

1. Three times in this chapter Paul speaks of our salvation (the forgiveness of our sins) in relationship with bringing “the praise of his glory” (cf. Ephesians 1:6, 12, 14). These statements cause us to contemplate our own existence. Isaiah quotes from Jehovah saying, “Everyone who is called by my name, whom I have created for my glory; I have formed him, yes, I have made him” (Isaiah 43:7). Interestingly, when God caused Israel to return to Jerusalem by His mercy it was not for their sakes but for “His name’s sake” (cf. Ezekiel 36:22). We may view God as a Father who has had children. He loves His children and wants the best for them. The children are to give him honor and respect as their Father (creator). God will not share this honor, respect, and praise with any other. Isaiah writes, "I am Jehovah, that is my name; and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise unto graven images" (42:8). Paul is simply saying that Christians are to bring praise and glory to the name of Jehovah God with their every day actions of walking by the Spirit (cf. Jn. 15:10ff) (see study # 12; Praise and Glory belong to God).

2. Again the “we” is equated to the saints who were without blemish and who bring glory, praise, and honor to the name of Jehovah God. These individuals have hope in Christ Jesus.

H. “in whom ye also, having heard the word of the truth, the gospel of your salvation, in whom, having also believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is an earnest of our inheritance, unto the redemption of God’s own possession, unto the praise of his glory” (1:13-14).

1. The blessing of being named a son of God (having my sins forgiven) comes through “hearing the word of truth” (i.e., the "mystery of his will" - Ephesians 1:9). Note that the word of truth and the gospel are equivalent terms. The truth is the gospel and the gospel is the truth. When one “hears” the gospel and “believes” the message he is “sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.” How does God “seal us” and against what are we sealed? To be “sealed” (sphragizo) is to “set a seal on, confirm, stamp with approval; to assure of a thing” (LS 786). The same word is found at 2 Corinthians 1:21-22. Paul said, “Now he that establisheth us with you in Christ, and anointed us, is God; who also sealed us, and gave us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.” When one hears the gospel and complies with the conditions of salvation through baptism (cf. Romans 10:17; Acts 2:38), that person is now assured and confirmed (sealed) as a Christian and all blessings that appertain to the one who would remain faithful. The Christian is to be confident in his salvation and the promises of God! Again, Paul tells Timothy, “Howbeit the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his: and, Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness” (2 Timothy 2:19). Those who have been baptized for the forgiveness of their sins have gained access into God's grace through the redemptive blood of Jesus Christ. Said individuals have been "stamped with approval" (i.e., sealed with the Holy Spirit) or otherwise known of God as a son or daughter.
2. Secondly, this assured, confident, confirmed Christian has an “earnest of our inheritance (of heaven)” by being “sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.” The word “earnest” (arrhabon) is “earnest-money, caution-money, deposited by the purchaser and forfeited if the purchase is not completed” (LS 119); “a pledge” (Moulton 52). God’s ‘earnest-money’ or way of assuring us as Christians that we will receive the promises revealed in the word of God is His word (“the word of the truth”).

3. Once sealed we belong to God (we are His possession). This does not mean that we cannot be "un-sealed" or fall from grace (see Galatians 5:4). Those who are baptized and latter sin will recognize their error and with a spirit of humility confess those faults before God so that forgiveness and perfection may be maintained (see 1 John 1:8-10). The only sin that God will not forgive a baptized member of the body of Christ of is the sin they will not ask for forgiveness of (see 1 John 5:16-17).

III. Paul’s prayer for the Ephesians (1:15-19):
A. “For this cause I also, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which is among you, and the love which ye show toward all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;” (1:15-16).
1. It is probable that Paul had heard of the faithfulness of the Ephesians through his conversations with Epaphras (see Colossians 1:7-8). It is verses like these and others such as Romans 16 that help us understand that the early saints communicated with each other about each other’s welfare and faithfulness without violating anyone’s church autonomy (see study # 13; Church Autonomy).
2. Paul commends the Ephesian brethren for not only being faithful (i.e., obedient to the gospel of Jesus Christ - see Ephesians 1:1; Acts 14:1-2; Galatians 5:22; Hebrews 11:1ff) but for exhibiting “love toward all the saints” (see study # 1 and # 14; Bible Love). Bible love (agape) is defined in four areas of life:
a. The Ephesians exhibited their love for brethren when they restored the spiritually erring (i.e., they cared for each other's spiritual well being) (see Galatians 6:1; 1 John 4:10-11).
b. Secondly, Bible love is exhibited by caring about each other's physical needs (see 1 John 3:17-18).
c. Thirdly, Bible love is exhibited in a man's life through obedience to the word of God (see 1 John 2:5).
d. Fourthly, Bible love is exhibited in applying the 15 characteristics revealed at 1 Corinthians 13 (i.e., being kind to others, patient, selfless etc.).
3. Great qualities such as brotherly love that reside and make up the character of those who are forgiven sinners, saints, and sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise through their hearing and obeying the gospel message are truly qualities worth giving thanks to God. Paul was a praying man who “ceased not to give thanks for you” (see study # 15; The Apostle Paul). Paul was thankful to God for the Ephesians faithfulness and love toward each other. They were living as God would have them live.

B. “That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him;” (1:17).
1. Due to the faithfulness and love of the Ephesians Paul prayed to God that the Lord may grant unto these brethren “a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.”
2. The word “spirit” (pneuma) is not the Holy Spirit but the spirit of man; i.e., his character, disposition (cf. John 4:23; 1 Corinthians 5:3; 6:17 etc.), and his teaching (cf. Ephesians 4:14) (see study # 16; The Character of a Man).
3. Paul’s prayer therefore is that the Ephesians’ character, disposition, and teaching would be of “wisdom” and “revelation” that is in Christ Jesus. “Wisdom” (sophia) = “knowledge of, acquaintance with a thing... sound judgment, intelligence, practical wisdom” (LS 737). The Lord’s “sound judgment” was under consideration at Ephesians 1:8-9 in that He made known unto man the gospel message. Here, man’s knowledge and acquaintance with God’s “revelation” is under consideration. Paul’s prayer is that the Ephesians would acquaint themselves thoroughly with God’s truths and thereby mold their character, disposition, and
teaching. Love for the truth will be the motivation for attaining such a character, disposition, and teaching in this life. The way to do this is diligent Bible study (cf. Psalms 119:105, 130; 2 Timothy 2:15) (see study # 17; Can we Know Truth?).

C. “Having the eyes of your heart enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,” (1:18).

1. Paul defines a “spirit of wisdom and revelation” (vs. 17) as “having the eyes of your heart enlightened.” When one gains knowledge, acquaintance, and then sound judgment in God’s Word then their eyes and heart are enlightened. The Bible heart is usually the mind, will, intellect (character) of a man (cf. Proverbs 4:23; Matthew 15:19). The word “enlightened” (photizo) = “to enlighten, illuminate: to instruct, teach” (LS 878). To have one’s heart enlightened is to therefore have a mind that is instructed and taught (see study # 10).

2. That which the mind or character of a man is taught is:
   a. “What is the hope of his calling.” The idea of “hope” is desire and expectation of receiving the eternal inheritance of heaven (cf. Colossians 1:5). The knowledge of this hope comes through God’s “calling” (i.e., the gospel message; cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:14). Paul prays that the Ephesian saints would mold their lives around God’s glorious promises of heaven.
   b. Secondly, Paul prays that the Ephesians would gain a greater understanding through diligent Bible study of “the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.” The rich blessings through Christ (cf. Ephesians 1:7) lead to eternal heaven.
   c. Thirdly, “and what the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to that working of the strength of his might” (1:19). Paul prays that the Ephesians would gain a greater understanding of the power of God (His strength and might) in that He, through the gospel, can forgive men of their sins (cf. Romans 1:16). Sin is the very thing that can keep one from realizing their life long hope of heaven.

IV. God’s Power exhibited in Christ (1:20-23):

A. “which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and made him to sit at his right hand in the heavenly places,” (1:20).

1. The word “wrought” (energeo) = “to be in action; to operate” (LS 261).
2. God’s “power, strength, and might” (Ephesians 1:19) are put into “action” by Christ in four areas:
   a. First, God put His power into action through Christ in that “he raised him from the dead.” The apostle Paul tells us that God raised Jesus yet the apostle John attributes the raising of Jesus from the dead to God and at John 2:19 when Jesus said, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” Jesus clearly represents deity since both apostles attribute the resurrection to God and Jesus (see study # 18; The Deity of Christ). After Jesus was crucified to give man the opportunity of the forgiveness of sins he was raised by the power of God (cf. Acts 2:32). There were many witnesses to the resurrected body of Jesus (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:3-8). The resurrection of Christ from the dead is thereby a declaration of the power of God (cf. Romans 1:4) and His ability to forgive man of their sins (Acts 2:38) (see study # 19; The Power of God).
   b. The second way God put His power into action through Christ was that He “made him (Jesus) to sit at his right hand in the heavenly places.” Not only was Christ raised from the dead but He ascended into the heavens to be at the right hand of God (a place of authority and power). The account of Christ ascension is recorded at Acts 1:9-10.

B. “far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come;” (1:21).

1. The third way God put His power into action through Christ was to make “all things in subjection under his feet” (cf. Ephesians 1:22). Consider the things subject to Christ's authority:
   a. Christ exercised authority over the devil (see Matthew 4:10) and demons (Matthew 8:16-17).
   b. Over sickness, diseases, epileptic, and palsied (Matthew 4:24; 8:5-10).
   c. Over Peter’s mother-in-law’s fever (Matt. 8:14-15).
d. Jesus exercises authority over the wind, water, and gravity (physical elements) (Matthew 8:23-27; 14:24-25)
e. Over demons and swine (Matthew 8:30-32).
f. Over sin (Matthew 9:2-8).
g. Over men (Matthew 9:9).
h. Over life and death (Matthew 9:23-25).
i. Eyesight (Matthew 9:27-29).
j. Over fish of the sea (animal kingdom) (Matthew 17:27).
k. Over a fig tree (plant kingdom) (Matthew 21:20).

2. So Christ occupies the place of “rule, authority, power, and dominion” over every human being and angel that has ever been and ever will be (cf. Philippians 2:9-10). Indeed all things are “summed up in Christ Jesus” (cf. Ephesians 1:10). Christ reigns as king of his kingdom, the church, having all rule and authority over it (Colossians 1:13). There will never be a name of man on earth or angelic being in heaven that will take over the power that Christ has been given. All things are subject to him.

C. “and he put all things into subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church,” (1:22).

1. The fourth way God put His power into action through Christ was that He made him “head” over all things pertaining to the church. The word “head” (kephale) = “the head of man or beast... the crown” (LS 430). “The head, superior, chief, principal, one to whom others are subordinate” (Moulton 229). Christ has the final word in the church. Jesus is superior to all others in the church as chief. Each and every member of the church is subordinate to Him. His word reigns supreme in the church. So the scriptures often portray Christ as the king of His kingdom:
   a. Prophecy revealed Jesus to be the king (Isaiah 9:6-7; Ezekiel 37:24ff; Matthew 2:1-2).
   b. When Christ came into the world He proclaimed His kingship (John 18:33-38).
   c. Early Christians knew that Jesus was king (cf. Acts 17:7; Revelations 17:14).

2. That which Christ is head or king over is the “church” (ekklesia) = “an assembly of the citizens regularly summoned, the legislative assembly... to call an assembly... an assembly is held... in the NT the church, either the body, or the place. Hence ekklesiazo (to hold an assembly, debate therein, to be a member of the assembly. Hence ekklesiastes (a member of the ekklesia)” (LS 239) (see study # 13; The Church of Christ).
   a. The word “church” is a “noun in the dative case” (Friberg 590). The church then is not an action but a person, place or thing. The church is an assembly of people that Jesus is head over. The church is people who have been called by the gospel message to receive the forgiveness of their sins (2 Thessalonians 2:13-14). Church people are citizens of the kingdom of God (cf. Ephesians 2:19).
   b. The kingdom of God that Christ is head over is a spiritual, as opposed to physical, kingdom (cf. John 18:36; Romans 14:17).
   c. We note that citizens of this kingdom are called to become part of Christ’s church (people who are subject to Christ rule and authority) by hearing and obeying the gospel message (cf. Romans 10:17; 1 Thessalonians 2:12; 2 Thessalonians 2:14). Paul has already identified the gospel as the truth at Ephesians 1:13. Jesus tells us that God’s Word is the truth at John 17:17. The OT reveals the gospel truths to be the Law of this new kingdom that Christ is head and king over (cf. Jeremiah 31:31ff). Jeremiah’s new covenant is the everlasting covenant of Ezekiel 37:26 and the same that is found identified with the gospel truth (a better covenant) at Hebrews 8:6ff. Thereby Jesus came preaching the “gospel of the kingdom” (Matthew 4:23; 9:35; 24:15). Now, those who hear and obey this new covenant law through baptism are supplied an entrance into Jesus’ kingdom (cf. John 3:3-5). When one hears and obeys through baptism then they are added to the church (they are now a citizen of the church) (cf. Acts 2:41). A perpetual assembly does not occur on a world wide scope because when one accepts the teachings and headship of Christ being baptized for the remission of sins they have the kingdom of God within (a spiritual
relationship; a life governed by Jesus’ laws even though we live in a world that does not recognize His headship) (cf. Mark 12:34; Luke 17:21; 2 Corinthians 6:16-18 as quoted from Ezekiel 37:26 then see John 14:23; 1 John 4:12-16).

d. As prophecy revealed Jesus to be king so prophecy revealed the king’s kingdom (cf. Isaiah 2:2ff; Daniel 2:44ff etc.). During the days of Jesus, the Lord proclaimed its nearness (Mark 1:14-15; 9:1). The fulfillment of this prophecy is found in Acts 2 and 3:24-26 (i.e., Christ came into the world, He offers forgiveness of sins, those who accept His offer through obedience are added to the church as a part of His kingdom).

D. “which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all” (1:23).

1. Paul now introduces the unity of the kingdom of God that Christ is head over in that he refers to it (the church) as Christ’s body. The church is comprised of those who hear, believe, and obey through baptism (and continued abiding in Christ's doctrine - see 2 John 9-11) to gain the forgiveness of sins and entrance (as citizens) into the kingdom of God. Christ body is thereby comprised of individuals who have complied with His headship (i.e., authoritative laws).

2. Paul will latter tell us that there is only one body (i.e., church or kingdom of God) (cf. Ephesians 4:4). Christ is not the head of a multitude of kingdoms operating under different systems of law. Christ is the head of one church (one group of citizens who have subjected themselves to His one law). Said individuals meet the criteria for being God’s foreordained saints (those forgiven of their sins) who are subject to His spiritual blessings in the heavenly places (cf. Ephesians 1:3-7).

3. The apostle Paul tells us at Colossians 1:19, “For it pleased the Father that in him (Christ) should all fullness dwell.” It seems apparent that the fullness under consideration is the range of Christ authority mentioned at Ephesians 1:10 (He is over things in earth and the things in the heavens).

Synopsis of Chapter One:

The apostle Paul addresses this epistle to the “saints that are at Ephesus” (Ephesians 1:1). He then moves to explain the blessed identity of the child of God. Before the foundations of the world were created God had foreknowledge of those who would be recognized as His sons (Ephesians 1:4-5). Said individuals would be “holy and without blemish” (Ephesians 1:4), possessors of God’s eternal promise of an inheritance (Ephesians 1:11), and “sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise” (Ephesians 1:13). These foreordained sons came to occupy the state of sainthood because God made known “the mystery of His will” (Ephesians 1:9) which is the “gospel” or “truth” (Ephesians 1:13). God foreknew that there would be a class of people who would gladly receive his gift of grace, the forgiveness of sins through the redemptive blood of Christ, by their obedience in baptism (see Ephesians 1:7 compared to Acts 2:38).

The gospel message tells of the redeeming sacrificial blood of Christ and that man can have the forgiveness of his sins through this blood (Ephesians 1:7). The Ephesians “heard” and “believed” the gospel message (includes obedience / cf. John 3:16, 36; Acts 14:1-2; Hebrews 11:1ff) and therefore were made saints (Ephesians 1:13). Paul also reveals the function of the saint of God in Ephesians 1:6, 12, and 14 to be that of bringing praise and glory to the name of Jehovah God (see Isaiah 42:8).

Paul extols the name of Christ for the authority given to him. Through Christ alone man is granted access into God's grace, the forgiveness of sins (see Ephesians 1:19-20; Romans 5:1-2). Christ has been raised from the dead and ascended into the heavens to sit at the right hand of God. He has been given authority over every name of man that has ever lived or ever will live on this earth (Ephesians 1:21). Christ, in fact, has authority not just over mankind but everything that exist (Ephesians 1:22). He is the sole authoritative figure over the church which is his body (Ephesians 1:22).
Chapter 2

I. Spiritual Life and Death (2:1-3):

A. “And you did he make alive, when ye were dead through your trespasses and sins” (2:1).

1. The antecedent to “you” is the “saints that are at Ephesus” (Ephesians 1:1) who had their sins washed away through baptism (Ephesians 1:4) because they had heard, believed, and obeyed the gospel message (Ephesians 1:13).

2. The antecedent to “he” (who made the Ephesians alive) is Christ (following the context from chapter one).

3. Through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ men are made alive when they were once “dead through trespasses and sins.”

   a. The word “dead” (nekros) = “a dead body, corpse” (LS 527). “Dead, without life” (Moulton 275). James tells us that a body without a spirit is dead (physically) (James 2:26). We understand that physical life and death is not under consideration in this text.

   b. The NT reveals a spiritual life and death condition which is dependant upon one’s actions in this life. Paul told the Colossian brethren, “And you, being dead through your trespasses and the un-circumcision of your flesh, you, I say, did he make alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses;” (Colossians 2:13). Note that being spiritually dead is possible while one is physically alive. The spiritually dead are those who live in sin (one who trespasses against God’s law). Spiritual life occurs when one lives in obedience to Jesus Christ (cf. 1 Peter 4:6) and receives the “forgiveness of trespasses” (Colosians 2:13).

   c. This verse helps us understand that apart from Christ there is no forgiveness of sins. When one lives a life apart from Christ’s instructions said one is in sin, separated from Christ and dead spiritually (cf. 1 John 3:4; Isaiah 59:1-2) (see study # 21; Salvation is through Christ Alone and # 22; Sin Separates One from God).

   d. Note the connection between God's grace and man’s state of spiritual death or life (see Ephesians 1:7) (see study # 10).

B. “Wherein ye once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the powers of the air, of the spirit that now works in the sons of disobedience” (2:2).

1. The apostle Paul defines spiritual death as “walking in sin” above. He now moves on to give more details as to what it means to be spiritually dead.

2. A life of spiritual death is further defined as “walking according to the course of this world.” What is the course of the world? John tells us, “for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vainglory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” (1 John 2:16). The “world” is not the physical earth but rather the inhabitants of the earth. The general practice of the spiritually dead is works of lawlessness.

3. The lives of spiritually dead people is governed by the law of might makes right, if it feels good to do it, and what seems good to me is ok. Such a disposition is often referred to as humanism and is certainly a doctrine of the “prince of the powers of the air.” Who is this prince? He is none other than the devil (cf. John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11). The devil is the “god of this world” (2 Corinthians 4:4).

4. Those who are spiritually dead are those whose lives are governed by the doctrine of the devil (cf. 1 Timothy 4:1).

5. Note the use of the word “spirit” in this verse. The “sons of disobedience” are those who are spiritually dead because they have not the forgiveness of sins that comes through obedience in Jesus Christ. Such a conscience decision of a mode of life is recognized as a “spirit.” The word “spirit” is therefore defined as a disposition, one’s character, teaching, or thinking on a matter (cf. Psalms 51:17; John 4:23; 1 Corinthians 4:21, 2 Corinthians 7:1; 11:4; 1 John 4:1, 6 etc.). Verse three below indicates that the “spirit” of a man has to do with where my “desires” are too.
C. “Among whom we also all once lived in the lusts of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest:” (2:3).

1. Note that the "we" who share in redemption through the blood of Jesus Christ is the same "we" who "all once lived in the lust of our flesh" (see Ephesians 1:7). There is no justification in any Christian looking down their nose at other sinners who have obeyed the gospel. We were all sinners before being forgiven by the Lord's rich grace and mercy. Paul has a point with all this.

2. The life of spiritual death is defined as a life of sin and a mind set against doing God’s laws and now a mind that desires to fulfill various unlawful lusts of the flesh.

3. Such a state of spiritual death is termed “by nature children of wrath.”
   a. The word “nature” has been abused by our Calvinist friends who believe in total hereditary depravity (man is born with a sinful nature). Calvin’s theology has all inheriting the sinfulness of Adam and hopelessly doomed unless you are numbered with those who are unconditionally elected to salvation (see study # 5).
   b. The word “nature” (Greek phusis) = “the nature, natural qualities, powers, constitution, condition, of a person or thing... of the mind, one’s nature, natural bent, powers, character” (LS 876). It seems clear that there is a correlation between the use of “spirit” at verse 2 and one’s “nature” at verse three. A “spirit” of disobedience is equivalent to one’s “nature” of being a “child of wrath.” One’s “spirit” or “nature” is his disposition, character, mindset, teaching, or thinking on a matter that makes him a “child of wrath” (see study # 16).
   c. What is a “child of wrath?” Those devoted to wrath are those who walk after the flesh with a spirit of disobedience (cf. Romans 2:3-9).
   d. To this point Paul addresses the metamorphosis of the saints of God (Ephesians 1:1). The saint is one who was once dead in their trespasses and sins but made alive through the grace of God and the gospel message. Paul explains this metamorphic process to the Colossians saying that God, "delivered us out of the power of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love; in whom we have our redemption, the forgiveness of our sins" (Colossians 1:13-14).
   e. Again, "we" were all sinners and that includes the Jews!

II. God’s Love toward His created Beings (2:4-10):
   A. “But God, being rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace have ye been saved),” (2:4-5).

1. The “mercy” of God is defined by “grace.” Grace is equated with being “delivered out of the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of the Son of his love; in whom we have our redemption, the forgiveness of our sins” (Colossians 1:13-14).

2. The context of Ephesians has taken us from the identification of saints to the blessedness of having one’s sins forgiven and finally an explanation of the transformation that a Christian makes when going from a state of sin and alienation from God (spiritual death) to forgiveness and full fellowship (spiritual life).

3. The individual who is alive spiritually (as opposed to being dead spiritually) is the one who has had his or her sins forgiven. Such a state is termed “saved by grace.”

4. There are a few principles of Grace that are revealed in the NT (see study # 10):
   a. The word “grace” (charis) = “favor, goodwill for or toward another... to confer a favor on one” (LS 882). The favor God has to offer mankind is the forgiveness of sins. God’s grace (the forgiveness of man’s sins) is His promise through His son Jesus Christ that can be traced back to Abraham (Genesis 12:1ff; Acts 2:38-39; 13:32ff; Galatians 3:13-14). The apostle Paul made a clear connection between grace and the forgiveness of man’s sins (justification) at Romans 5:1-2 saying, “Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; through whom also we have had our access by faith into this grace wherein we stand; and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” The Ephesians were therefore recipients of God’s grace (justification or forgiveness of sins) because they “heard” the gospel preached (Ephesians 1:13), “learned” about the saving blood of Christ through the gospel message (Ephesians 4:20-24), “believed” the gospel
message (Ephesians 1:13), repenting of their sins (Acts 2:38; 19:18), confessing the name of Christ (Romans 10:9), and being baptized for the remission of their sins (Acts 2:38; 19:5). The first principle of grace therefore is that grace is God’s merciful favor toward man to forgiven him of sins.

b. The second principle of Grace is found in the method that its benefits are revealed. One may desire the grace of God yet with no understanding of the workings of God’s grace then grace is useless. The apostle Paul tells us that “the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us, to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world;” (Titus 2:11-12). While the result of God’s grace is the forgiveness of sins one must note that it is the process of grace that is delivered in divine revelation; i.e., the gospel message. Not only does the grace of God instruct us to receive the forgiveness of sins but it too instructs us to live godly in this present world. Paul writes to the Romans saying, “as sin reigned in death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 5:21).

c. The Lord graciously saves man whether Jew or Gentile.

B. “and raised us up with him, and made us to sit with him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus” (2:6).

1. Remember, the context firmly established the point that men can be dead while living (spiritually dead). Men can also be alive in Christ while on this earth (spiritual life). Paul speaks of a death having taken place with the spiritually alive and then a resurrection. What resurrection is Paul speaking of? Physical or Spiritual?

2. Paul told the Galatians, “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me” (Galatians 2:20). Again to the Romans Paul said, “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. We who died to sin, how shall we any longer live therein? Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:1-4).

3. The point is that when one makes the decision to be baptized for the remission of sins he has done so through the instructing of grace and now makes a conscience decision to forsake sinful living (killing the old man of sin). Christ raised us up (figuratively or spiritually speaking) from the grave of sin through baptism as we complied with His instructions.

C. “that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus” (2:7).

1. Not only is God rich in mercy but He is “kind” as well. God’s mercy and kindness is depicted in His willingness to forgive sinful man of their trespasses (see study # 23 Characteristics of God).

2. The “ages to come” (aion eperchomai) = “one’s lifetime, life, an age, generation” (LS 25). “Come upon, come suddenly upon,... of conditions, events, etc., to come suddenly upon... to come into one’s head, occur to one... to go through, execute” (LS 285). Paul is saying that throughout the generations and lifetimes of mankind God’s gracious instructions come upon man that he might receive the blessings of salvation.

D. “For by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;” (2:8).

1. It was by God’s “grace” (doing mankind a favor) that He delivered unto man divine revelation which has the power to save men’s souls (Romans 1:16). A mathematical formula then exists. To achieve salvation one must be a recipient of God’s grace and that through faith. Access into God’s gracious favor of salvation comes by faith (Romans 5:1-2).

2. The faith Paul speaks of is not a simple “I believe that Jesus is” (cf. John 3:16, 36).
3. God’s “gift” is His “grace” and His grace involves forgiving man of their sins through the blood of Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:7). Man comes to a knowledge of God’s gracious gift through the gospel message (Titus 2:11-12). That gospel message commands that one be baptized in order to be forgiven of sins (Acts 2:38). Hence, the “gift of the Holy Spirit” of Acts 2:39 is the promise of eternal salvation to all those who obey the words of Jesus (God’s grace) (i.e., be baptized for the remission of sins). Favors can be conditional and favors may be unconditional. I may tell my neighbor that I will do him a favor and trim his trees if he will in return repair my hot water heater. We are both doing each other a favor; however, they are conditional favors. Again, many infomercials advertise a product and offer a "free gift" to anyone who order their product. The gift is free; i.e., not costing us anything; however, the gift is not yours unless you buy the product under consideration. God’s grace is clearly conditioned upon our obeying his command to be baptized for the remission of our sins and remaining faithful (see study # 10).

4. “That not of yourselves” simply means that apart from God’s grace, mercy, and kindness man can in no way receive the remission of his sins. God is the sovereign creator of our world and he sets the rules of our eternal lives (see Acts 17:24-26). There is nothing that I can do, apart from Christ, that will earn me my salvation. I need Jesus. We all need Jesus.

E. “Not of works, that no man should glory” (2:9).  
1. “Not of works” is the idea of trying to attain salvation by means other than Christ. If I seek justification through works of Mosaic Law then I will fail (cf. Galatians 3:10; 5:2ff). I cannot seek to justify myself in any system that does not offer the forgiveness of sins (cf. Heb. 7:18-19). I will sin from time to time (cf. Romans 3:23; 1 John 1:8-9). When that sin occurs I need help. Christ offers said well timed help to all who would humble themselves in obedience to His will (cf. Heb. 2:18; 7:25). The works here must be my own works for James states, “But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith apart from works is barren?” (James 2:20). There is only one law that saves and that is the law of Jesus Christ (Galatians 6:2). This is the gospel of the kingdom that Jesus came preaching (cf. Matthew 4:23 etc.). This is the only law for man that demands perfection; however, it graciously offers pardon or justification for those guilty of violating its principles (Romans 5:1-2). Those humble enough to recognize that they sinned against God's laws may ask for forgiveness (see 1 John 1:8-10).

2. Following a system of law that does not offer the forgiveness of sins is to glory in something other than Christ. If man could do something about his sinful condition then he would certainly have an area to glory aside from Jesus Christ; however, we know that this is not possible. Peter and John state, “And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved” (Acts 4:12) (see study # 21).

F. “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them” (2:10).  
1. Paul earlier stated that God graciously forgives man of sins “to the end that we should be unto the praise of his glory” (Ephesians 1:12). The Christian’s obedience to God's laws, while living in this life, cause the name of Jehovah God to be glorified (see John 15:1-10).

2. Now Paul states that said Christians are God’s “workmanship” (poema) = “anything made or done; hence, a work, a deed, act” (LS 651). God made us alive as opposed to being dead spiritually by His rich mercy and kindness through His divine favor (i.e., grace).

3. The forgiven sinner is one who is “created in Christ Jesus for good works.” The NT reveals that once one obeys the gospel he is a “new creature” (2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15). Listen to the words of Paul latter in this book, “and put on the new man, that after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth” (Ephesians 4:24). The “creation” of a living, yet spiritually dead, individual in Christ Jesus is to raise one from the grave of baptism to walk in newness of life (Romans 6:4ff). This new created spiritually alive being is brought forth or produced a Christian for bringing God glory through “good works” (i.e., the righteousness and holiness of character mentioned at Ephesians 4:24). This new creature is neither Jew or Gentile, male or female, but one man in Christ Jesus (see Galatians 3:27).

4. “Which God afore prepared that we should walk in them.”
a. First, this clause proves that the Christian’s life is not to be stagnant. The Christian’s life is dictated by righteousness and holiness revealed in the Word of God. Those who would tell us that Ephesians 2 teaches salvation by grace only with no part or responsibility on the individual have seriously missed the meaning of these verses. I bring glory to the name of Jehovah God (my function as a Christian [Ephesians 1:6, 12, 14]) by walking or conducting myself in righteousness revealed in the NT (again see John 15:1-10 and study # 24; How to Bring Glory to the Name of God).

b. Secondly, this clause helps us understand the foreordination of Ephesians 1:5. Those who God has always chose (before the foundation of the world; Ephesians 1:4) to be His servants and recipients of salvation are those who “walk” according to His statutes. Predestined or foreordained members of the body of Christ are those who meet the criteria of wearing the name of Christian; i.e., they conduct themselves as God would have them. God thereby foreordained a type of people (those who would obey His Word) not specific individuals from eternity (see study # 25; Predestination).

c. Paul reveals the first of a multitude of “walk” statements here in the book of Ephesians.

III. A call to the Gentile’s remembrance of their former state (2:11-18):

A. “Wherefore remember, that once ye, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called Circumcision, in the flesh, made by hands; that ye were at that time separate from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of the promise having no hope and without God in the world” (2:11-12).

1. The Jews labeled the Gentiles as the “Un-circumcision” due to their being foreigners and spiritual aliens from God. The “Circumcision” was Jews who had been physically circumcised in the foreskin of their flesh, belonged to God, and were recipients of His promises. Physical circumcision once was a mark of distinction between the people of God and the heathen world. Christ; however, erased this sign with His sacrifice and teachings (cf. Galatians 5:6). Paul is calling upon the Gentiles to “remember” their former days when they were not only aliens in relation to the Jews but alienated from God through their sin. Secondly, and more important to this epistle, the Jews needed to understand that the Gentiles were no different than they when it came to their previous life of sin. A Gentile sinner was no different than a Jewish sinner. The Jews and Gentile Christians needed to know that in the eyes of God there was no difference between the two. Apparently Paul is dealing with various prejudices of the Jews and the Gentiles lack of confidence in what they are in God's eyes.

2. Five conditions that explain the Gentiles are as follows:

a. The Gentiles were “separate from Christ.” The Jews had Christ in their lineage, Christ in their teachings as they grew up, and in fact their whole existence revolved around the hope of Christ. The Gentiles had nothing of the sort. The Gentiles were separate from Christ both physically and spiritually.

b. The Gentiles were “alienated from the commonwealth of Israel.” The idea of a “commonwealth” (politeia) = “the condition and rights of a citizen, citizenship, a form of government... a republic, commonwealth” (LS 654). Israel, as a physical nation, belonged to God. They were a theocracy that was governed by the Laws of Jehovah God. Jews were simply born into this relationship and others that wished to be a part of this theocracy were proselytized by circumcision (cf. Deuteronomy 7:2-4). Gentiles had no part in this society of God.

c. Gentiles were “strangers from the covenants of the promise.” The word “strangers” (xenos) = “any citizen of a foreign state... any one entitled to hospitality, a stranger, refugee... any foreigner” (LS 539). God had made promises to Israel that gave them the hope of the forgiveness of their sins. These promises came in the form of covenants throughout the OT (i.e., God’s promise and covenant with Abraham to bless all nations through him at Genesis 12:1ff). We know that this involves Christ due to Paul’s explanation at Galatians 3:8, 16. Of this “promise” in relation to Gentiles, Paul said “that upon the Gentiles might come the blessing of Abraham in Christ Jesus: that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith” (Galatians 3:14). Paul; however, is here
calling to the Gentiles remembrance that before Christ they were foreigners in relationship to God's revealed covenants of promise.

d. If the Gentiles were separate from Christ, alienated from Israel, and strangers in relation to God's promises they were certainly well described as a people "having no hope." Hope belonged to those who could look to the future of eternity and see their place with God while those with no hope could only see an eternity of separation from God.

e. The last sad state of the Gentiles is that they were "without God in the world." Paul explains the former state of the Gentiles in relation to God at Galatians 4:8 saying, "Howbeit at that time, not knowing God, ye were in bondage to them that by nature are no gods." The Gentiles were without God yet not without gods as pagan idol worshippers.

B. "But now in Christ Jesus ye that once were far off are made nigh in the blood of Christ" (2:13).

1. The Gentile's were separate, alienated, strangers, having no hope, and without God. Paul summarizes said state as being "far off" from any relationship to God.

2. The opposite of being "far off" from God and His promises is to be "in Christ." The Ephesian Gentiles were now "in Christ" as "saints" (Ephesians 1:1), "faithful" (Ephesians 1:1), "holy and without blemish" (Ephesians 1:4), "forgiven of sins" (Ephesians 1:7), having heard, believed, and obeyed God's word (Ephesians 1:13).

3. That which moved the Gentiles from a "far off" state in relation to God and His people was "the blood of Christ."

a. It is by the blood of Christ that man is redeemed from his sinful state to a glorious state (cf. 1 Peter 1:18-19; Revelation 5:9-10).

b. Through the blood of Christ men are cleansed from their sins (cf. Ephesians 1:7; Hebrews 9:14; 1 John 1:7). Jesus redeemed mankind of the consequences of sins having bore our sins to the cross. Paul tells Titus, "who (Jesus) gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a people for his own possession, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14).

c. Note from the above statements that there is a correlation between being forgiven of sins (made nigh in the blood of Christ) and the Ephesians doing their part to be recognized as "in Christ" (that is they heard gospel, believed gospel, repented of their sins, confessed Christ to be the Lord as opposed to their pagan idols, and were baptized for the remission of their sins).

C. "For he is our peace, who made both one, and brake down the middle wall of partition," (2:14).

1. While Jew and Gentile shared animosity toward each other God would bring peace with not only the two races of people but with Him. There was no need for this animosity between the two races of people to continue and neither is their room for racial prejudices today (see study # 26; Racial Prejudice).

2. A wall existed between the Jews and Gentiles and that wall was depicted in the previous verses (i.e., Gentiles were "far off" from the Jews). Through the blood of Christ this wall of estrangement is taken down. The Gentiles have the opportunity of fellowship and citizenship in the kingdom of God just as the Jews. Together they had the opportunity to be fellow citizens in the kingdom of God.

D. "Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; that he might create in himself of the two one new man, so making peace;" (2:15).

1. The word "enmity" means "deep seeded mutual hatred" (AHD 455). The hatred existing between the two peoples was due to what they represented and hoped in. Paul tells us that the source of that enmity was "the law of commandments contained in ordinances." The Mosaic Law was delivered to the Jews and for the Jews. It contained laws and regulations to exterminate Gentiles in the land of Canaan due to their hostility against God. The Law had its purpose of bringing men to Christ through an understanding of sin and its consequences (cf. Galatians 3:19, 24). When that purpose was served, Christ nailed this Law to the Cross and "abolished" it (cf. Colossians 2:14; 2 Corinthians 3:14).
2. When the Law of Moses was abolished and the Law of Christ was initiated the previous division between Jew and Gentile was done away with. That which now indicates unity is a common faith in Jesus Christ (cf. Galatians 3:27-28).

E. “and might reconcile them both in one body unto God through the cross, having slain the enmity thereby” (2:16).
1. What Christ did on the cross (shed his blood for the remission of our sins; cf. Matthew 26:26-28) did two other things: First, His sacrifice “reconciled” Jew and Gentile under one name; i.e., Christian. Secondly, His sacrifice was a dissolving of the old Mosaic system and its ordinances.
2. The “one body” that Christ reconciled both Jew and Gentile in was the one church of Christ (cf. Ephesians 1:22-23 compared to Ephesians 4:4). When both Jew and Gentile adhere to the new principles of Christ (i.e., the gospel; cf. Ephesians 1:13) the two groups are no longer seen as two but one.

F. “and he came and preached peace to you that were far off, and peace to them that were nigh;” (2:17).
1. “He” that preached peace is Christ. Jesus preached the gospel of the kingdom to the Jews (“them that were nigh”) personally (cf. Matthew 4:23) and to the Gentiles (“them that were far off” cf. Ephesians 2:13) through the Holy Spirit (cf. John 16:14ff).
2. The message of Christ was “peace.” Peace with God and man and man with man would come through a mutual understanding and faith in Jesus Christ (cf. 1 John 1:5-7). There was no need nor authority for Jew and Gentile in the Ephesian church to be at odds with one another. They were brethren in the faith though of different backgrounds.

G. “for through him we both have our access in one Spirit unto the Father” (2:18).
1. Through Jesus both Jew and Gentile has “access in one Spirit unto the Father.”
2. Following the context it is easily seen that Paul is saying that man receives the forgiveness of sins (God’s grace) through the blood of Christ by hearing, believing, and obeying (cf. Ephesians 1:7, 13; 2:10). It is through our hearing, believing and obeying those things delivered by Christ (i.e., the gospel of the kingdom) that we have “access” into God’s grace. Note that Paul said, “Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; through whom also we have had our access by faith into this grace wherein we stand; and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God” (Romans 5:1-2). Note that “peace” comes from being “justified by faith” (forgiven of sins) which is found in the “preaching” of Jesus and the apostles (cf. Ephesians 2:17). The gospel message instructs man as to what he needs to do to be forgiven of sins!
3. It seems to me that the word “spirit” here is not the Holy Spirit but rather the spirit (i.e., disposition, mind, character) of man. Recall that Paul had identified the Gentiles previous spirit at Ephesians 2:2-3 as being anti-godly. Now, the Gentile is reconciled to God and other Jews through the gospel message. The two (Jew and Gentile) are now “one spirit” (one mind) unto the Father.

IV. A call to the Gentile’s Remembrance of their Current State (2:19-22):
A. “So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God” (2:19).
1. That which made the Gentiles strangers and sojourners to God and His people was their separation, alienation, having no part in God’s covenant promises, no hope, and being without God in this world (cf. Ephesians 2:12). The fact of the matter was that the Gentiles had no initial part in God’s Jewish theocracy under the Mosaic Law; however, it was always God’s intention to give them a place in His eternal kingdom (cf. Genesis 12:1ff). The Jews lost sight of God's eternal purpose for all humanity that He created and thereby caused troubles for the early Gentile converts. Paul's point is that the Jew is no different than the Gentile when it came to their salvation. Those who obey the gospel are all one man in Christ. Though some Jews may have been making the Ephesian Gentile converts feel alienated Paul was telling them they were fellow saints of the household of God. They obviously needed to hear this.
2. Christ died on the cross to redeem “all nations” not just the Jews (cf. Genesis 12:1ff). This being so we can easily conclude that God is the God of all flesh (cf. Jeremiah 32:27). Now that God’s promise to all nations is available to all races of mankind, the Gentiles are “fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.”

   a. Before Christ the Gentiles had no part of the “commonwealth” (citizenship; form of government) of God’s people.
   b. Now that Christ redeemed all nations from their sins the Gentile has the same opportunities as the Jews.
   c. Citizenship infers a government and government infers a rule or kingdom. The kingdom under consideration is the church (cf. Matthew 16:18-19), the laws or form of government is the gospel of Jesus Christ (cf. Ephesians 1:13), the king of this kingdom (church) is Christ (cf. Colossians 1:13).

B. “Being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone” (2:20).

   1. Individual citizens (Christians) of the kingdom of God (the church) are “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets.” This statement tells us that it is the teachings of the apostles and prophets that distinguish citizens of the kingdom of God from other kingdoms of men. To build is to construct to a completed structure. The structure stands upon a firm foundation. Paul told Timothy regarding truth that, “the firm foundation of God stands” (2 Timothy 2:19).
   2. The apostles and prophets were inspired men who delivered the doctrine of Christ to the world (2 Peter 3:2).
   3. Christ Jesus himself being the “chief cornerstone” in the structure. The “chief cornerstone” (akrogoniaios) = “at the extreme angle; the corner foundation-stone” (LS 30). “Lying at the extreme corner... cornerstone or capstone” (AG 33). The word cornerstone is used figuratively to denote “indispensable and fundamental basis of something” (AHD 325). Paul is saying that the source of apostles and prophets teaching that serve as the foundation of the church is Jesus Christ. All who are built upon this foundation are patterned after that chief stone (Christ). Christ lays the foundation! Paul told the Corinthians, “For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 3:11).

C. “in whom each several building, fitly framed together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord;” (2:21).

   1. The antecedent to “in whom” is the saints of God in the church (God’s kingdom). Both Jew and Gentile who are in Christ are “fitly framed together” in unity. Christ is the “chief cornerstone” that dispenses the truth and lays the foundation upon which the saints rest their faith and unity. The whole English phrase “fitly framed together” is one word in Greek i.e., sunarmologeo meaning “to be fitted or framed together” (LS 769). “Fit or join together... of a building” (AG 785).
   2. When Jew or Gentile come together under the banner of truth in the kingdom of God they are joined together like building materials to make up the church (a temple in the Lord). The apostle Peter said, “ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2:5).

D. “in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit” (2:22).

   1. When the saints of God dwell together in unity God dwells in the church.
   2. The word “builted” in Greek is a present tense verb indicating ongoing work (cf. Friberg 592). Friberg also tells us that the verb is in the passive voice which indicates that God will continue to dwell with the unified saints as long as they continue to build upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets through Christ. The Holy Spirit’s part in God’s indwelling of the church is through the Word of God in which He delivers (John 16:14ff).
   3. God dwells in the Christian when the Christian abides by God’s words (cf. 1 John 2:4-6). God dwells within the church through His Holy Spirit as the church collectively abides in His words. Paul demands his readers to understand that God clearly has a habitation with His church universal that is comprised of both Jew and Gentile. Those individual Christians
scattered throughout the world that comprise His universal church are fitted together with others of like precious faith and together they make up His church universal.

**Synopsis of Chapter 2**

A contrast between spiritual life and death is given at Ephesians chapter 2. The Ephesian Christians are called to “remember” (Ephesians 2:11) the days in which they were “separate, alienated, strangers, having no hope, and without God in the world” (Ephesians 2:12). The days without Christ were days of spiritual death. During this time the Ephesians’ character was marked by disobedience, lust of the flesh, and wrath (Ephesians 2:2-3). The character of God; however, is mercy and kindness (Ephesians 2:4, 7). By God’s gracious favor He saved the Ephesians from the consequences of their sins (Ephesians 2:8). Said state of being is termed spiritual “life” as opposed to spiritual “death” (cf. Ephesians 2:5). Not one forgiven Christian, whether Jew or Gentile, had the right to look at another and think they were less qualified of a Christian.

The apostle Paul never intended for future readers to conclude that God’s grace covers mankind from the consequences of their own sin without meeting personal responsibility in the area of obedience. The context is clear. The transformed Christian is one who has heard, believed, confessed, repented of sins, and has been baptized for the remission of sins. We can say this with confidence due to the connection between grace and the forgiveness of man’s sins (cf. Ephesians 1:7). Peter told those on Pentecost what they needed to do to have access into God’s gracious promise of forgiving man’s sins and that was that all are to be baptized (cf. Acts 2:38).

One becomes a citizen of the Kingdom of God when he / she has been transformed from spiritual death to spiritual life (Ephesians 2:19; Colossians 1:13). Citizenship infers not only a government but a king and kingdom. Jesus is the King of His Kingdom, the church (Colossians 1:13). The government of this church is the word of God (2 John 9-11). Once one is in the Kingdom of God spiritual growth occurs. The Christian is depicted as being a part of a building that is interconnected with other building materials for a unified solid structure (Ephesians 2:21). The foundation that the Christian building rest upon is the apostles and prophets. Jesus Christ delivers law to the apostles and prophets who in turn deliver the message to the world (John 16:13-15; 1 Corinthians 15:3; Ephesians 2:20; 3:1-5).

Paul appears to be addressing an issue among the Ephesian Christians while teaching us much on the process of grace. The chapter brings out an obvious clash between Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians. The Gentile Christians were being made to feel that their salvation was not as valid as the Jews. Both Jew and Gentile needed to hear that there is no distinction with God between the races of man. All have sinned. All need God's grace. God has always intended for both Jew and Gentile to be one man in Christ Jesus. There was no room for prejudice in the kingdom of God. All were to be united in one kingdom under one king with one doctrine.

**Chapter 3**

I. **God’s Promise of Salvation has always involved the Gentiles (3:1-13):**
   A. “For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus in behalf of you Gentiles,” (3:1).
      1. The apostle Paul gives two, “for this cause” statements in this chapter (3:1, 14). Paul has addressed the Gentiles specifically at Ephesians 2:11. Apparently there was prejudicial treatment directed toward Gentile converts and Paul sets out to erase such conduct in the minds of both Jew and Gentile. The apostle had been given a divine directive that included the Gentiles and thereby he was intensely interested in their spiritual well fare (see Galatians 2:7).
      2. Paul speaks of being a “prisoner of Christ in behalf of you Gentiles.” This does not indicate Paul’s Roman prison but rather his being bound to Christ’s will on behalf of the Gentiles. Paul was commissioned as an apostle of Jesus Christ so that he may preach to the Gentiles as opposed to Jews (cf. Acts 9:15; 22:21; Gal. 2:7-8).
3. The point of this verse will be given at Ephesians 3:6; i.e., the Gentiles are intended to receive the forgiveness of their sins (i.e., salvation) and no man can take that away from them.

B. “If so be that ye have heard of the dispensation of that grace of God which was given me to youward;” (3:2).
   1. Note that the “grace of God” is something to hear about. Mankind would have no knowledge of God’s will if it were not for revelation (the gospel message). To this point we have noted two principles of Grace; i.e., God’s grace is equated to the forgiveness of sins (Ephesians 1:7; 2:5) and secondly, we noted that God’s grace is made manifest by the gospel of Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:13-14; Titus 2:11-12). The third principle of grace is in the method it was distributed to mankind (i.e., through the apostles and prophets – see below) (see study # 10).
   2. The grace of God (the forgiveness of sins through the redemptive blood of Christ) was given to Paul to deliver to the Gentiles. God's grace is identified with the message of the gospel.

C. “how that by revelation was made known unto me the mystery, as I wrote before in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ” (3:3-4).
   1. Note Paul's connection between God's grace and the "mystery" which he identifies as the gospel of Jesus Christ. Word associations are important when studying God's word. God did not give Paul grace in a literal sense (i.e., Christ's redemptive blood) but rather He gave the apostle revelation through inspiration and thereby God's grace (see study # 10).
   2. Consider the word “dispensation” (oikonomia) as used in verse 2. Oikonomia is defined as “the management of a household or family, husbandry, thrift” (LS 546). Paul was given, by “revelation,” the gospel message of the grace of God (cf. Galatians 1:11-12). Paul, as an apostle, was entrusted with God’s word that he may distribute it to the world for their eternal benefit. He was a manager or husband in relation to truth as delegated by the Lord (see study # 15).
   3. The gospel message (God’s revelation to Paul that revealed instructions whereby man may benefit from God’s gracious promise of the forgiveness of sins) is termed “the mystery.” The word “mystery” (musterion) = “a mystery, a divine secret, something above human intelligence” (LS 523). No longer is the gospel message of man’s eternal salvation a mystery but rather God has made manifest His message of grace to the apostles through revelation so that “when ye read, ye can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ” (see study # 27; Inspiration of the Bible). Clearly God intends for man to read and understand His revelation concerning Jesus Christ. God’s revelation to man is not too difficult for anyone to understand and apply to their lives (see study # 17).
   4. Paul may have written a previous epistle to the Ephesians or it may be that he is referring to previous words in this epistle when he said, “as I wrote before in few words” (see study # 28; Unrecorded Apostolic Epistles).

D. “which in other generations was not made known unto the sons of men, as it hath now been revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit” (3:5).
   1. Before Christ revealed the heavenly Father’s will to the apostles and prophets by means of the Holy Spirit people only had bits and pieces of information (cf. 1 Peter 1:10). The message remained a mystery because the whole message had not been revealed. Bit by bit and piece by piece the completed revelation was made known to man through miraculous manifestations of the spirit (see Mark 16:20) (see study # 29; The Purpose of Miracles and # 30; The Completed Revelation of God).
   2. Note that it was the Holy Spirit’s work to be the vehicle by which the gospel was to be made known to man (cf. John 16:13-15 and 2 Peter 1:21) (see study # 31; The Work of the Holy Spirit). God revealed His revelation to the apostles and prophets by inspiration (see study # 27).
   3. Paul said that the information that these two classes of individuals received (i.e., apostles and prophets) was the founding principles upon which the church of Christ was governed (Ephesians 2:20).

E. “to wit, that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs, and fellow-members of the body, and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel” (3:6).
1. Verse six brings us back to the thoughts of verse one. Paul preached the gospel message to the Gentiles so that they would understand that they too had a hope of eternal life through the forgiveness of sins (the “promise in Christ”) (see study # 32; God’s Promise to Mankind). The Gentiles held an equal place within the church of Christ:
   a. To be a “fellow-heir” (sugkleronomos) = “a joint heir with” (LS 755). God had ever intended for the Gentiles to be joint heirs with the Jews in eternal salvation; however, He exercised His sovereign choice to bring them about differently than the Jews (cf. Genesis 12:1ff; Romans 3:1ff).
   b. “Fellow-members of the body” (sussomos) = “united in one body” (LS 783). The one body that has already been examined is the church of Jesus Christ (i.e., His kingdom) (cf. Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:16). That which brings two peoples together who otherwise would hate each other is their common faith in Jesus Christ (cf. Ephesians 2:15). Note the togetherness and oneness of all men who are saved by the grace of God through Christ.
   c. “Fellow-partakers” (summetochos) = “partaking with another in a thing, the partner of another” (LS 761). That which the Gentiles were partaking of with the Jews is “the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel” (i.e., the forgiveness of sins by the grace of God [cf. Galatians 2:14]).

2. Note once again the connection with the gospel and God’s grace. The gospel message makes known to the Gentiles all they need to know that they may share with the Jews in having their sins remitted.

3. Verse six reveals another sub-theme of Ephesians. Some Jewish Christians were claiming that the Gentiles had no part in God’s promises made through Abraham due to their physical ancestry. Paul writes these words to counter such thinking and to encourage the Gentile Christians. The Gentiles were "fellow-citizens" being "fitly framed together" with the Jews as both races were built upon the one "foundation of the apostles and prophets..." and thereby no more strangers to each other (see Ephesians 2:19-22). The power of the gospel is that it saves and makes one out of two races that would have otherwise remained separated (see study # 33; The Power of the Gospel).

F. “Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of that grace of God which was given me according to the working of his power” (3:7).

1. Not only was Paul a steward of God’s word (cf. Ephesians 3:2) but he was also “made a minister” in relation to the gospel. The word "minister" simply means servant. Paul was entrusted with the gospel message to serve primarily the Gentiles by delivering the gospel message to them. Paul depicts himself as a common laborer to the Colossians in relation to his work in the gospel (cf. Colossians 1:29) (see study # 15).

2. The “working of his (God’s) power” was seen in Paul through his divinely given ability to perform miracles and confirm truth. When Paul performed such miraculous powers any questions that some may have regarding the validity of his messages was answered (see Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:3) (see study # 27 and # 29).

3. Note again that God’s grace (favor) is a gift (cf. Ephesians 2:8); however, said gift is not given with no conditions to meet (see study # 10).
   a. God’s gift is salvation (i.e., the forgiveness of sins) (compare Ephesians 1:7 with 2:8; 3:7 and Acts 2:38-39).
   b. God’s favor (grace) is His promise of salvation (compare Ephesians 1:7 with 2:8).
   c. God’s grace is made known to man through the gospel message (Ephesians 3:2, 8; Titus 2:11-12; Hebrews 13:9).
   d. God’s messengers (ministers) delivered the message of favor (the gospel) (Romans 10:13-17; Ephesians 3:5) (see study # 34; The Work of the Evangelist).
   e. When men heard the message they had the opportunity to reject or receive the message (Acts 18:5ff).
   f. If they received the message it was because they believed that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God made known through the gospel (Romans 10:17).
Once faith was established they understood sin separated them from God and His promises of salvation. Naturally, they were driven to ask, “What shall we do to be forgiven of sins?” Peter answers this very question on Pentecost by telling the inquirers that they needed to repent of their past sins and be baptized to wash them away (Acts 2:38). The message of God’s favor is clear. God has provided eternal salvation to those who are willing to meet His conditions. We must see that what Paul wrote as divine revelation was in complete agreement with the other apostles (cf. Galatians 2:6-9). When Peter wrote of God’s gift of salvation and referred to it as His “promise” at Acts 2:38-39 he appended the condition of “repentance and baptism” through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Paul and Peter were no more opposed to each other than any other apostles. We must take God’s word as a whole and connect all the pieces of truth together.

G. “Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, was this grace given, to preach unto the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ” (3:8).

1. The humble character of Paul is often brought out in the scriptures. Paul claimed to be the “chief” of sinners when writing to Timothy (1 Timothy 1:15) and identified his struggles with sin by referring to himself as a “wretched man” (Romans 7:24). Again, Paul laid claims to being the “least of the apostles” because he had previously persecuted the church (1 Corinthians 15:9). Paul, with a spirit of humility, advised the Philippians to “count others better than themselves” (Philippians 2:3). These attributes indicated a spirit of bitter hatred toward sin and a disposition of embarrassment and shame over one’s failures in life. Paul was so moved and bothered by sin that he told the Romans to, “abhor that which is evil” (Romans 12:9) (see study # 35; Attitude toward Sin and # 15). Here Paul states that he is “less than the least of all saints” again probably because of his past relationship to the church and his hatred for his own sin.

2. Paul says it is one such as I (i.e., a sinner who persecuted the church, a wretched man who often sins still, least of all apostles and saints) that God gave the power of miracles to confirm his word to the Gentiles so that they might have the forgiveness of sins. Paul's humility, in relationship to God's high calling in his life, is depicted in these verses. Paul would say, " Though it may seem that I may be disqualified to teach such marvelous grace because of my life of sin God chose me to do so." Paul could not and would not deny nor disobey God's will for him in the area of preaching (see Acts 26:19 and study # 15).

3. God’s favor (grace) is thereby made known to the world by the apostles and prophets. God’s grace is not called the gospel here but rather “the unsearchable riches of Christ.” Man alone could never have come up with such a plan.

4. Note again the connection between “grace” and “preaching.” You cannot have grace without preaching the gospel message (see study # 10 and # 34).

H. “and to make all men see what is the dispensation of the mystery which for ages hath been hid in God who created all things” (3:9).

1. Though Paul’s primary objective was the Gentiles he too preached to the Jews (cf. Romans 1:16). The “all men” would encompass Jew, Gentile, male, and female.

2. God had hand picked Paul to deliver His message of grace to humanity (cf. Galatians 1:15) (see study # 15).

3. God’s gospel message had been hidden from man “for ages.” There is a contrast here between God’s mystery (the gospel) being made known and God’s mystery being hid “for ages.” Though God’s message had been hid for a long time it was not to be ever hid. There would come a day of God’s choosing when all would unfold and the completed revelation made known to mankind for their salvation (cf. Galatians 4:4). This helps us understand how the gospel message has now been completely revealed and thereby there is no more need for miraculous manifestations of the Spirit (see study # 30). There is no more "mystery" in relationship to the saving of man's soul through God's grace and manifest through the gospel.

a. Ages past, God kept His revelation a mystery to man (Ephesians 3:9).

b. “Ages to come” God reveals His favor to man for their salvation because He is kind and merciful (cf. Ephesians 2:7).
4. Because God is the creator of all things He has the right to make the sovereign choice as to when His message of grace is to be fully known. That time had come in the apostolic age.

I. “To the intent that now unto the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places might be made known through the church the manifold wisdom of God” (3:10).

1. The word “intent” (hina) = “in order that” (LS 380). God has made known His grace through the gospel message by the apostles and prophets who are the foundation of the church (cf. Ephesians 1:20) (i.e., the apostles and prophets are not the foundation but the message they preached) ‘in order that’ “now unto the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places might be made known through the church the manifold wisdom of God.” The diverse wisdom of God is made known through the church... no mysteries anymore seeing that the church has been established. The establishment of the church is a sign that God's word has been preached in its entirety and needs no additions of man (see Jude 3) (see study # 29 and # 30).

2. Not only do Jew and Gentile come to know God’s favor through the gospel message but "the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places." Who do these principalities and powers represent? We have already seen that spiritual blessings of the forgiveness of sins have their origins in the “heavenly places” (Ephesians 1:3). We have also noted that when one’s sins have been remitted he/she is “raised up with him, and made us to sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 2:6-7). When we are baptized we are raised with Christ to sit in the heavenly places with him; i.e., we are now in fellowship with Him due to having our sins forgiven. Yet does this mean that the Christian represents the “principalities and the powers in the heavenly places?” After a study of the uses and meaning of “principalities and powers” it seems apparent that some angelic order in the unseen spirit world is under consideration (see 1 Peter 1:12):

a. The word “principalities” (arche) = “the first place or power, sovereignty, dominion, command... a term of office... the authorities, i.e., the magistrates” (LS 121). “A principality (the position, authority, or jurisdiction of a prince; sovereignty), prince, of spiritual existence” (Moulton 53). “Ruler, authority... also of angelic and demonic powers, since they were thought of as having a political organization... rule, office” (AG 112).

b. Consider the use of “principalities” in the NT. There are “principalities” on earth (Jeremiah 13:18; Colossians 1:16; Titus 3:1) and in heavenly places (Ephesians 3:10; 6:12; Colossians 1:16).

3. Apparently the church is used by God to teach the spirit world “in heavenly places” His divine wisdom and the apostles and prophets teach those on earth. Though the church has a specified work that has to do with those of earth, Paul’s point here is that the heavenly or spiritual beings learn about God’s wisdom by watching the church (i.e., the collective body of saints who have been transformed from a world of darkness into the marvelous light of God). The unity of the saints in truth instructs the heavenly beings on God’s wisdom. Some angels do not receive said instructions and are thereby reserved in a pit of darkness for the day of judgment (see 2 Peter 2:4 and study # 36; Angels).

4. Though the Christian is in the heavenly places with Christ Jesus he/she is never referred to as a “principality and powers in heavenly places.”

5. Again, note that the source of divine revelation is God. We know the mind of God because He chose to reveal His divine message to us that we might be saved.

J. “According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord” (3:11).

1. We have noted that in ages past God’s message of grace had been hid yet not out of the mind of God (cf. Ephesians 3:9).

2. Secondly, we noted that God intended for the preceding ages (those times after the gospel message was made known) to exercise mercy and kindness on all those who heard, believed, repented, confessed the name of Christ and were baptized for the remission of sins (cf. Ephesians 2:7).

3. Now we note that whether we speak of times before the completed revelation of God or times after the message was completed and made known it was always God’s “eternal purpose”
(past, present, and future) in Christ to reveal the method of receiving the forgiveness of sins (see study # 37; God's Eternal Purpose to Save Man).

4. God’s gracious purpose to save man of their sins is “in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Through the sacrifice of Christ men gained the opportunity to receive the forgiveness of sins (cf. Matthew 26:26ff).

K. “in whom we have boldness and access in confidence through our faith in him” (3:12).

1. The word “boldness” (parrhesia) = “confidence, assurance” (Moulton 311). The confidence we have in Christ Jesus, in relation to the forgiveness of our sins, is found in our “faith in him.”

God has always helped those who desire his help. The message of the book of Isaiah is that God's will for man is to put their confidence, trust, and faith in him. Isaiah said that this disposition separates the true Zion from those who truly don't care. The true Zion says, "Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid: for Jehovah, even Jehovah, is my strength and song; and he is become my salvation" (Isaiah 12:2).

2. This message has never changed with God. The Lord desires our trust and faith. The author of Hebrews reviews the boldness (confidence / faith) of the Christian in many areas (see study # 38; The Christian's Faith, Confidence, and Trust in God is made Evident by our Obedience to His Divine Will):
   a. We are instructed to make this faith and confidence evident to all through our obedience (see Hebrews 11:1ff).
   b. The hope of salvation is through Christ (Hebrews 3:5-6).
   c. To approach God in prayer for the forgiveness of our sins (Hebrews 4:16).
   d. To approach God in full fellowship knowing that our sins have been forgiven (Hebrews 10:19).
   e. We are told to never cast away this confidence in Christ though the world may persecute us (Hebrews 10:35).
   f. Paul now adds to the Ephesians the confidence each Christian is to have in Christ due to the manifold wisdom that has been hidden in times past but is now revealed. The message itself reveals hope and we can be confident that God will follow through with His promises.

3. Not only does the Christian have confidence in Christ Jesus knowing that our sins are forgiven etc. but we also have “access” into God’s grace by our faith (cf. Ephesians 2:18; Romans 5:1-2).

L. “Wherefore I ask that ye may not faint at my tribulations for you, which are your glory” (3:13).

1. Due to the fact that Paul has been hand picked by God to deliver divine revelation to the Gentiles Paul asks, “that ye may not faint at my tribulations for you.” Paul’s statement is that the hardships he currently experiences, due to his preaching to the Gentiles, is necessary. Paul told the Thessalonians that suffering for the cause of Christ is the Christian’s appointment in life (1 Thessalonians 3:3). Again, Paul told Timothy, “Yea, and all that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Timothy 3:12). No doubt the Gentiles looked at Paul's suffering for preaching the gospel and thought, "I don't want to go through such things" (see 2 Corinthians 11:21-28) (see study # 39; Suffering Persecution because you Stand in Truth).

2. We are not told of any specific physical troubles in Ephesus for Paul within this book; however, he did have to hide himself from an angry mob due to his denouncing idolatry (cf. Acts 19:23ff) and he did face opposition in the form of adversaries in Ephesus (see 1 Corinthians 16:8-9). The Gentile converts obviously noticed or heard of these things and many were obviously moved to stay clear of such a message that brings such affliction in life.

3. Being the case, there was no need for the Ephesians to “faint” (ekkakeo) [“faint-hearted” (LS 239); “to lose spirits, to be faint-hearted, despond” (Moulton 124)] (see study # 40; Never Quit). When one looked to Paul’s tribulation’s we may say to ourselves, ‘its not worth it... look what this man is suffering.’ Paul’s point is that every tribulation he goes through so that the Gentiles may have the opportunity to receive the forgiveness of sins results in their “glory” (i.e., to receive the forgiveness of sins).
4. It seems that Paul understood his role in this life and accepted it. His lot in life was to be kicked around by the ungodly because of a message that convicted their lives as sinful. Paul said of his life to the Corinthians, “I will gladly spend and be spent for your souls” (2 Corinthians 12:15). The souls of men were at stake when it came to preaching and Paul would leave no opportunity wasted (see study # 15).

II. Paul’s Prayer for the Ephesians and Christians the World Over (3:14-20):

A. “For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named,” (3:14-15).

1. Here is the second, "for this cause" statement in this chapter (see Ephesians 3:1). For what cause did Paul pray? The context suggests that Paul now prays due to the fact that God is the God of all flesh (Jeremiah 32:27). Both Jew and Gentile have the opportunity of salvation. God is the creator of “every family in heaven and on earth” and so is worthy of our bowing before Him in prayer (see study # 41; The God of ALL Flesh). The Ephesians obviously had issues other than their worldliness (Ephesians 4-5), family (Ephesians 5), and work relationships (Ephesians 5-6). Their problem that was causing a breach in Biblical unity was their prejudicial issues they were dealing with. The Jews had a faulty view of Gentile converts and it appears that the Gentiles had a faulty view of themselves. A Christian is a Christian no matter the skin color (see Ephesians 2:14).

2. Paul was a praying man. Earlier in this epistle Paul stated that he “cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;” (Ephesians 1:16). Paul did not “cease to pray” on behalf of the Colossians as well (cf. Colossians 1:9) (see study # 15).

B. “that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, that ye may be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward man;” (3:16).

1. Paul prays that the heavenly Father would “grant” (didomi) the Ephesian Christians 5 things. The Greek word didomi is defined as “to grant, allow, bring about” (LS 199). The riches of God's glory should "bring about" characteristics in man.

2. The first thing Paul prays for is that Christians would be “strengthened.” Spiritually strong individuals have understanding and spiritually weak individuals have little understanding (cf. Romans 15:1). Why strength? The Ephesian Christian would need to be able to stand up to prejudices and erring teachings regarding the position of the Gentiles rather than getting discouraged and giving up. The Ephesian Christians would need to stand strong in the face of the ungodliness in the city that had the power of persuading their lives in a negative direction (see Ephesians 4:25 - 5:7). These Ephesians needed strength to stand in the face of persecution (see Ephesians 3:13).

3. The strength the Ephesians were to gain access to would be "power through his Spirit in the inward man."

a. The “inward man” is the inside of man; i.e., what he thinks, stands for, disposition, or character. The only other place this phrase is found in the Bible is at Romans 7:22 where Paul states, “For I delight in the law of God after the inward man.” The inward man of Paul “delights in the law of God.” The concept of delight indicates the ability to choose between things. Some things are delightful to us and some things are not. All may not delight in the same things. One thing that ought to be a part of the Christian’s inner man is the desire to be strengthened by the instructions of the Holy Spirit (i.e., the gospel). This verse helps us understand that the Father delegated the work of distributing truth to the Holy Spirit and He is thereby connected to truth (see study # 31). The inner man is obviously man's heart, mind, or character that has been formed and developed by instruction.

b. We learn that our characters (i.e., inner man) can be molded by the gospel of Jesus Christ. When we have a mind to know God we will be strengthened. Why do we need spiritual strength? There are multitudes of reasons that we need spiritual strength. First, we need strength (spiritual understanding) to handle the trials of life. Without revelation our inward man may not understand that God proves and molds our characters when the going is tough (cf. I Thessalonians 3:3; 2 Timothy 3:12; Hebrews 12:7ff; James 1:2ff). Without spiritual
strength we will give in to temptations of the devil (Luke 4:1-13). Without spiritual strength our families will not be nurtured in the admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4). Without spiritual strength we will not make it to heaven after a while (cf. Revelation 2:10). There must be a spirit of “delight in the law of God” instilled within the inner man of the Christian that we may achieve our heavenly goal and be recipients of God’s precious promises (see study # 42; The Need for Spiritual Strength).

C. “That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; to the end that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,” (3:17).

1. Paul first prays that the Ephesians would gain spiritual strength through study and meditation of God’s word so that they may be able to overcome any troubles life may hurl their way. Secondly, Paul prays that “Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.” Obviously man’s "heart" is the "inward man" under consideration.

2. How can “Christ dwell in your heart through faith?” The NT teaches that not only does Christ dwell within the Christian but the Father and Holy Spirit as well (i.e., God as a whole see 1 John 4:15) (see study # 42; The Indwelling of the Godhead).

a. First, Christ dwells in the Christian through an understanding and obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul told the Galatians that “Christ liveth in me” and then connects this thought with the idea of living in and by faith (cf. Galatians 2:20). Paul had crucified the old man of sin and now lived according to the instructions of Christ (cf. Galatians 2:20). We could stop here and understand from Ephesians 3:17 and Gal. 2:20 that having Christ dwell in one’s heart or having Christ live within simply means that I am following His instructions. Yet let us look further.

b. Secondly, the Holy Spirit dwells in the Christian through the hearing of faith (Galatians 3:2). Paul latter commands the Ephesians to be “filled with the Holy Spirit; speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord…” (Ephesians 5:18-19). Paul makes a similar statement to the Colossians; however, he adds a comment about the gospel message that helps us understand that when the NT speaks of the Holy Spirit, Christ, or the Father dwelling within the Christian that simply means that we have received God’s word and delight therein. Paul said, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God” (Colossians 3:16). Being "filled with the Holy Spirit" is equated to "Letting the word of Christ dwell in you richly."

c. Thirdly, God the Father dwells in the Christian through truth as do the Holy Spirit and Jesus (cf. John 17:19ff).

d. Lastly, God (the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) dwells in the Christian by my acceptance of His truths. Consider what the apostle John said, “Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God” (1 John 4:15). The only way you or I may make such a statement about Jesus is through the word of God! Paul said, “no man can say Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit” (1 Corinthians 12:3). The Holy Spirit reveals the fact that Jesus is Lord. I would not know that Jesus is Lord, or any other gospel fact, lest the Word of God reveals it to me. Therefore to know and live by the gospel is to have the indwelling of the Godhead (cf. John 15:4, 7). The abiding concept that is brought out by the apostle John is of utmost importance to the life of a Christian. When God abides in me through his word I am convicted of sin and directed in this life in the right ways. I do not have the right to guide myself (see Isaiah 48:17; Jeremiah 10:23; Acts 17:26) (see study # 43; Bible Authority).

e. To say that the Holy Spirit dwells in us is no more mysterious than for one to say that they see a child’s father in him. As that child walks, talks, and conducts himself like his dad, people can easily say, “I see that boy’s father in him.” Jesus said the same thing at the Sermon on the Mount, “Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matthew 5:48). Peter quoted God from Leviticus 11:44 saying, “ye shall be holy for I am Holy” (1 Peter 1:16). The apostle John said that we are to walk in the light because God is
Light (1 John 1:7) and that we are to be just as God in this world that we live in (1 John 4:17). At Ephesians 5:1 Paul will say, "Be imitators of God as beloved children." When the Christian conducts himself by God’s standards, people will say, “I see his Father in him.” It is as though one were to look into a mirror and see the Father, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit because one walks precisely by their divine instructions (2 Corinthians 3:18). This is what Jesus saw in the unbelieving Jews when He said, “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do…” (John 8:44). They rejected the Laws of Christ and thereby were the image of their father the devil. Jehovah, as the creator of both this world and mankind, has the sovereign right to command man to live a life of righteousness. Righteousness is his standard and those who do not love him will not conform themselves to his divine will (see Isaiah 28:17). God knows who it is that truly loves him. Many claim to love God yet their works reveal their true identity (see Isaiah 48:1-2; Matthew 7:15-27) (see study # 4).

f. One last thought, consider the fact that as Paul and other Christians were of one mind and of one spirit even though they were miles apart they nonetheless dwelled within one another (read 1 Corinthians 5:3; Colossians 2:5) (see study # 44; Bible Unity).

3. When God’s Word dwells in us to the point that we are strengthened by it the consequences will be that we are “rooted and grounded in love.” To be “rooted” (rhizoo) = “used metaphorically as to be rooted, firmly fixed” (LS 718). To be “grounded” (themelioo) = “to lay the foundation of, found firmly... to have the foundations laid” (LS 361). These words indicate that the Christian is to be firmly fixed upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets (i.e. the gospel of Jesus Christ) (cf. Ephesians 2:20). A Christian will remain faithful to the Lord only when he or she is "firmly fixed" on the foundation of truth. The responsibility of all individual Christians is to grow in truth (see 1 Peter 2:1-6; etc.). When one does not grow spiritually they are not rooted or firmly fixed in truth. When problems, temptation, or opportunities to do things other than Christ would have them do come about they are easily removed from the foundation (see study # 45; Why Do People Fall Away from the Faith? and # 46; Christian's Responsibility to Grow Spiritually)

4. Note now the connection between the indwelling of Christ, the gospel, and now "love." Christ dwells within me through the truth and this simply means that I am to be Christ like. What was Christ like? Jesus, as part of the Godhead, was the essence of love (cf. 1 John 4:8). God’s word is perfected in the Christian when we love as He loves (cf. 1 John 4:12). Consider these three aspects of Bible love (see study # 14):

a. The apostle John is known for saying much about Bible love and is sometimes referred to as the ‘apostle of love.’ The love John speaks of in the book of 1 John has specific meaning that will help us in this study of Ephesians. The love John wrote of was agape love as did Paul here to the Ephesians. This love takes into consideration first of all the spiritual well-being of men. John referred to God as “love” (1 John 4:8, 16) because He provided a way for men to be saved (John 3:16; 1 John 4:9). Those who love God are soul lovers; i.e., those who want to dwell in eternity with Jehovah God. One who does not obey God’s laws does not really love God, brethren, or his own soul (1 John 2:5). Having love for God, self, and others is characterized by lawful living. Lawful living provides fellowship with God and brethren (1 John 1:3-4).

b. Secondly, love is depicted as a care for the physical well being of others (cf. Matthew 9:35-38; 1 John 3:17). Apparently there were some in John's day that were laying claims to being begotten of God, a child of God, and abiding in truth while not exercising a spirit of love toward their brothers (see 1 John 3:10-11). Once again, John explains what true purity and holiness is. Being a child of God means abiding in all his word rather than some of it.

c. Thirdly, we cannot forget Paul's love chapter in this discussion (i.e., 1 Corinthians 13). Considering the 15 characteristics of love given there we see a further identity to Bible love. I must be kind, patient, and selfless when it comes to others.

D. “may be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth” (3:18).
1. Paul first prays that the Ephesians would gain spiritual strength through study and meditation of God’s word so that they may be able to overcome any troubles life may hurl their way. Secondly, Paul prays regarding the Christian being Christ like when the inner man (spirit or nature) accepts Christ words. Said state of mind is evidenced by our exercising love in that we are firmly fixed upon the foundation of truth.

2. Thirdly, once this interest (delight) in the word of God is a part of our being Paul prays that the Christian would “be strong to apprehend...” The word “apprehend” (katalambano) = “to seize with the mind, apprehend, comprehend” (LS 409). Consider also the word “strong” (exischuo) = “to have strength enough, to be quite able to do” (LS 275). Paul’s prayer is that the Ephesian Christians would be able to comprehend the gospel of Christ. So many today are saying that we cannot know some truths due to their being a menagerie of differing beliefs. If I claim to have the truth on a topic and term contradicting ideas to this truth error I am often looked upon as arrogant.

3. Consider the fact that God is confident that we can know all truth (see 1 John 2:20-22). To know truth is to know Jesus (John 14:6). Jesus tells us that truth is ours to have and know (John 8:32) (see study # 17). When we consider the multifaceted aspects of the gospel message one may define it as the “breadth, length, height, and depth” of the things of God. It takes effort to know truth (cf. Hebrews 4:11; 6:11).

E. “And to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge, that ye may be filled unto all the fullness of God” (3:19).

1. To “know” (ginosko) = “to learn to know, to perceive, mark, learn, to discern, distinguish” (LS 165). Christians are to learn of the “love of Christ.” Jesus illustrated His love for man in a variety of ways. First, Jesus performed miracles while on earth to confirm His deity and to help the physically infirmed due to His compassion upon mankind (Mark 1:21-28; 16:20). Secondly, Jesus illustrated His love for man by exposing men’s sins so that they would repent (Matthew 15:10-14; John 6:26). Thirdly, Jesus preached the gospel of the kingdom so that man would have the information needful to receive the remission of their sins (Mark 9:1; Luke 13:3; John 6:44-45, 65). Fourthly, Jesus experienced hostility as He did His labor of love yet never one time quit in his heavenly objective (Isaiah 42:4; 53:3; Matthew 27:1; Luke 11:53-54; John 7:1, 19, 32) (see study # 40). Lastly, Jesus bore our sins to the cross so that we might have the opportunity to receive the forgiveness of our sins (Isaiah 53 all; Matthew 26:26ff, John 19:17ff).

2. Fourthly, Paul prays that the Ephesian's would know Christ love which "passes knowledge" (Greek - huperballo gnosis) “to go beyond, exceed... to exceed all bounds... to go on further and further... to outdo, overcome... to exceed, surpass” (LS 834). Gnosis means “a knowing, knowledge” (LS 167).

3. Putting the first clause all together we get literally ‘learn of the love of Christ which exceeds all bounds of knowledge.’ There is an apparent contrast between the value of a knowledge of Christ and a general knowledge of the things of this world. The knowledge of Christ literally exceeds and goes further than the knowledge of this world. When I have knowledge of Christ’s love for me then I have information to see me into eternity. When I have knowledge of the things of this world I have limited knowledge (that which helps now as opposed to eternal knowledge).

4. Fifthly, when I have knowledge of the love of Christ I am “filled unto all the fullness of God.”
   a. Paul has already mentioned the fullness of God in Ephesians 1:23. When we compare Ephesians 1:23 with Ephesians 1:10 and Colossians 1:19 it seems apparent that the matter under consideration is the authority of Christ. God the Father has given Jesus complete authority (see study # 47; The Fullness of Christ).
   b. At Ephesians 4:13 Paul speaks of Christians having complete and mature measure of knowledge being the issue of “the fullness of Christ.”
   c. Paul speaks of the “fullness of time” at Galatians 4:4 to indicate a ripe (mature) or complete time for Christ to come into the world.
5. Note that the words “ye might be filled” (pleroo) is aorist tense indicating past action without denoting completion or continuation (Friberg 593). Pleroo means “to make full... to be filled full of food... to make full or complete, be completed” (LS 647). The entire thought is that the Ephesian Christians are to continue filling themselves with the knowledge of Christ and to be more and more Christ like in their lives (to have the indwelling of Christ) (see study # 46).

F. “Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us” (3:20).

1. When I know the love of Christ then Christ dwells within me. Christ’s power lies in the fact that he forgives us of our sins when we are moved to seek such through knowledge (Romans 1:16). The “power that works in us” is the forgiveness of sins (i.e., God’s grace revealed through the gospel message). Remember, when I have Christ within I have God’s word as a part of my life. As I abide in truth it convicts me to do works of righteousness. When we err our conscience is severely bothered because it goes against the abiding truth within us.

2. When I ask God to forgive me He does so (1 John 1:9). When I ask God to relieve me or others from pain and suffering He considers it knowing what is best for us (cf. Romans 8:26). When I have the fullness of Christ within God hears my prayers and they are effective (cf. James 5:16). God is in every way a very big part of such a person's life. Such a wonderful relationship causes Paul to break out in a doxology saying, “unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think” (see study # 48; Why Praise God?).

G. “Unto him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations for ever and ever. Amen” (3:21).

1. God has created the universe we live in, all humanity, and provides a way of man’s glory (the forgiveness of sins). Such attributes of God cause the apostle Paul to speak of Him with the descriptive word “glory” (see also Ephesians 3:16).

2. The glory that Paul speaks of in Ephesians 3:21 is not God’s glory but the glory we give Him due to His Glorious state. The very purpose of the Christian is to praise God’s glory as revealed in Ephesians 1 and 2 (cf. Ephesians 1:6, 12, 14; 2:10) (see study # 48).

3. Paul states that this glorying in God through Christ ought to continue “for ever and ever. Amen.” Throughout time without end the saints will praise God in the heavens. God loves and gives man all that we need for eternal existence (see also study # 49; What Will We Do in Heaven?).

Synopsis of Ephesians 3

The apostle Paul has identified the saint of God as those who have been foreordained before the foundation of the world to have their sins forgiven by the grace of God through the blood of Jesus Christ. The gospel of Jesus Christ reveals this message. The power of God is manifest in man through his son Jesus Christ in that He exercises mercy and forgives people of their sins. Those who recognize, through obedience, the authority of Christ are recognized as his body, the church.

The saint of God had not always occupied the clean state of holiness. We were all once identified as dead and sons of disobedience. Yet by the power of God's grace through Christ man is made alive and saved. Whether one is a Jew or Greek matters not.

The epistle to the Ephesians is primarily written that both Jew and Gentile would fully understand the magnitude of God’s promise to forgive the sins of all humanity (i.e., Jew and Gentile) (Ephesians 3:6). God’s merciful and kind favor to forgive men of their sins had ever been intended for the Gentile as well as the Jew (Genesis 12:1-3). The apostle Paul was commissioned to preach the divine gospel message to the Gentiles due to this eternal purpose of God (Galatians 1:15). When the Gentiles heard, believed, confessed Christ, repented of sins, and was baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of their sins they were added to the Lord’s church. Once in the body of Christ they stood on equal ground with the Jew who had done the same. They were now “saints” and “fellow-citizens” in the body of Christ (Ephesians 2:19).
The apostles and prophets were God’s messengers to get the gospel plan of salvation out to the world (i.e., Jew and Gentile). Their teaching was of divine origin and comprised the very foundation of the Christian’s faith (Ephesians 2:20). Paul was one of these messengers as an apostle of Jesus Christ. Paul considered himself “less than the least of all saints” (Ephesians 3:8) due to his past persecution of the church (cf. Acts 8:1; 9:1-2; etc.). Divine revelation illuminated Paul’s mind regarding God’s objective for the church of Jesus Christ (cf. Acts 26:12-18). Paul was made to understand that God is the God of all flesh (Jew and Gentile) (cf. Jeremiah 32:27). Paul too was made to understand that the Gentile had always been in God’s plan to save humanity (Ephesians 3:9-13). All Christians, therefore, may with confidence live out their lives in hope of salvation whether they are Jew or Gentile.

Ephesians 3:14-21 records Paul's beautiful prayer that praises God for the universal truth that saves all peoples of all nations. Paul’s prayer focuses on spiritual growth of the Christian in Christ Jesus. The Christian is to be more and more like Christ each day that passes in this life. Paul’s prayer is the model for the Christian. We should obtain strength to overcome temptation and difficulties, be firmly fixed upon the foundation of the apostles’ and prophets’ teaching through Christ, obtain a complete knowledge of Christ, and maintain a disposition to give God glory in this life. When I am interested in eternity I will be interested in being more and more like Christ.

Whether Jew or Greek all who obeyed the gospel belonged to God as sons and daughters. All who live in faith comprise the foreordained. Paul's primary cause of writing this epistle was to cast out prejudices among the Jews and Gentiles and to prove that all who obey the gospel are one man in Christ Jesus. No matter one's skin color they were to be united in truth. Paul now moves into the subject of unity.

Chapter 4

I. Unity of Baptized Believers is based on there being One God who has Delivered one Doctrine (4:1-7):

A. “I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called,” (4:1).

1. The word “therefore” reaches back to the doctrinal teaching of saints (saved sinners) being a product of God’s divine foreordination through His rich grace, kindness, mercy and love. The blood of Jesus (the Son of God) was spilled so that all men may have the forgiveness of their sins (Ephesians 1:7). The apostles and prophets taught the good news of man’s opportunity to be forgiven of sins (gospel) (Ephesians 3:5). Both Jew and Gentile have the opportunity of salvation (Ephesians 3:11-15). When a man or woman hears the gospel and obeys it they are added to the Lord’s church (His Kingdom) as citizens (Ephesians 3:18-22). Said individuals are encouraged to know Christ and His teachings that they may be “holy and without blemish before him in love” (Ephesians 1:4).

2. With the doctrine of salvation by faith through grace before us, Paul now “beseeches” (parakaleo) the Ephesians to put into application their knowledge of Christ and His word. The word parakaleo = “to call to aid, call in, send for, to call on, invoke... to exhort, cheer, encourage... to comfort, console” (LS 597). That which Paul was encouraging (calling upon) the Ephesian Christians to do is to “walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called.” The NT uses the word walk many times to refer to a manner of life or one’s conduct. The word “worthily” (axios) = “a thinking worthy, a being thought worthy, reputation... a demand or claim...” (LS 85). The “calling” is no doubt the gospel message (cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:14). Paul is saying that the Ephesian Christian is to conduct himself or herself in this life in obedience to the gospel message and thereby the “claim” of sainthood is solidified in one’s daily conduct. One today may explain it by saying, “If you’re going to talk the talk, walk the walk” (i.e., be able to back up your claims). Too many today are claiming to be Christians yet their daily walk of life is anything but Christian. Isaiah said, "Hear ye this, O house of Jacob,
who are called by the name of Israel, and are come forth out of the waters of Judah; who swear by the name of Jehovah, and make mention of the God of Israel, but not in truth, nor in righteousness (for they call themselves of the holy city, and stay themselves upon the God of Israel; Jehovah of hosts is his name)." (Isaiah 48:1-2 see also 2 Kings 17:33-41; Micah 3:11).

The book of Hebrews explains how true faith works at chapter 11. The faith that one must have to please God is an obedient faith (see Hebrews 11:1-6; see also 1 Corinthians 15:1-2; Colossians 1:19-23; Hebrews 3:5-6). Man's obedience in the realm of God's will rather than self will, conviction, or opinions (see study # 1 and # 38).

B. “with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;” (4:2).
1. The apostles and prophets who taught divine revelation did not leave their hearers ignorant as to how God desired their lives to be lived. The Christian is to have a spirit of “lowliness” (tapeinophrosune) = “humility” (LS 792); “humble minded (1 Peter 3:8)... lowliness or humility of mind and deportment, modesty” (Moulton 397). Paul expressed a lowliness of mind when he said, “I am less than the least of all saints” (Ephesians 3:8). Such a mind considers one’s sinful state, the grace of God’s forgiveness, and the enormity of their guilty. Said individual sees with clear spiritual vision their failures as exposed by the word of God and it bothers them (see study # 50; Humility).

2. Secondly, the Christian is to be “meek.” The word “meek” (praotes) = “meekness, forbearance... gentleness, kindness, benevolence” (Moulton 339). “Mildness, gentleness” (LS 667). “Showing patience and humility, gentle... Easily imposed upon” (AHD 782). Both Jesus (cf. Matthew 11:29) and Moses (cf. Numbers 12:3) are said to be meek. Neither Jesus nor Moses thought too highly of themselves. The idea of being meek is to know your place in this world. We are not divine law makers but rather divine law followers. Such a one knows that they are sinners, they beg God to forgive them, they have deep sorrow over their sins, and they are thereby humbled by the human experience. They realize that all sin and thereby have a gentle and kind disposition toward others found to be in sin. Humanity has a common plight and that is that we sin (Rom. 3:23). The meek have a proper disposition or spirit in this experience. The spirit of meekness comes out in one when a brother is in either a spiritual or physical need. The needs will be met with a spirit of gentleness, kindness, and patience. The word does not involve comforting one who is in doctrinal error but rather a mind to correct the erring brother with a spirit of gentleness and kindness (see study # 51; Meek).

3. Thirdly, The Christian is to have a spirit of “longsuffering” (Greek - makrothumia). Makrothumia means “to be slow towards, be long-enduring; to exercise patience, be longsuffering, clement, or indulgent, to forbear... wait with patient expectation” (Moulton 256). The Christian is of a low mind considering his own sin. With the fact of their own sin lingering in one’s mind one can easily relate to another who has been ensnared in sin and thereby wait with patient expectation that the brother / sister will repent.

4. “Forbearing one another in love” (anechomai) = “To endure patiently... to bear with...” (Moulton 29). When one wrongs me or sins against the Holy Father then I need to help them with a spirit of patience and endurance. We ought to all be thankful that God deals with us through a spirit of longsuffering and forbearance.

5. Let us recall the overall objective of Ephesians. Paul is bringing Jew and Gentile together under one Lord and church. They are fellow citizens in the kingdom of God and thereby they ought to deal kindly and gently with each other.

C. “giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (4:3).
1. Note that the word “diligence” (Greek - spoudazo) means “to be busy, eager, zealous, earnest to do a thing... to be serious or earnest” (LS 741). The Christian is to have a spirit of busyness as opposed to neglect and lethargy in relation to keeping unity in the church. The idea of “unity of the Spirit” takes into consideration the collective group of saint’s walk (conduct). Once again we see the Holy Spirit connected with the word of God so that it is apparent that His work is in the area of distributing the gospel message (cf. Ephesians 3:5). Unity in the Spirit can only mean a collective unity in the truth that the Holy Spirit distributes through the apostles and prophets. Whether one is considering the church universal (Ephesians 3:10) or the church local.
(1 Corinthians 1:1-2) that which unites all saints together is a common love and respect for truth (John 17:14-23) (see study # 44).

2. When all church members are walking in truth there is unity (i.e., oneness of mind). The Corinthian church is an example of brethren who did not experience “peace” because they were following a variety of doctrines rather than uniting on the one divine truth (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:10). The Ephesian church in Asia was apparently having issues with unity due to prejudices between Jew and Gentile Christians.

3. The following discussion over the oneness of all that pertains to God’s spiritual Kingdom indicates an established standard.

D. “There is one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling;” (4:4).

1. There is not a Gentile body and a Jewish body. Today, many believe you can worship at the church of your choice. We find Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Catholic, Mormon, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Lutheran churches throughout our cities. Paul explains; however, that there is only one true body.

2. To demand unity in truth is to claim one divine truth as opposed to many (one set of teachings that were divinely delivered by the apostles and prophets) (Ephesians 3:5). Said standard excludes doctrines dreamed up by men that are not inspired. The one truth delivered by Christ, by means of the Holy Spirit through the apostles and prophets, is designed to promote unity. This truth is thereby depicted in the following ways:

   a. There is “one body.” What body is Paul speaking of? Following the context of this epistle we have been informed that the “body” is that of Christ and referred to as the “church” (Ephesians 1:22-23). Those who would heed to the admonition to be united in one body clearly understand that Christ has only one church (His body) that He is head over (Ephesians 1:22-23). Though some may claim that Christ is the one head of a multitude of bodies that hold to different truths the apostle Paul says differently. There is one church and one head of the church (see study # 20). One church means that there is only one truth.

   b. There is “one Spirit.” Again, Paul writes by divine inspiration stating that the Holy Spirit, whose work it is to distribute divine revelation to the apostles and prophets, is one in number. If the NT revealed more than one Holy Spirit that distributed different messages we would concede that there must be many bodies of truth under the one headship of Christ. Paul did not say; however, that there are a multitude of Holy Spirits with a multitude of truths. Paul said that there is only “one Spirit.” The one Holy Spirit has delivered one truth that reveals one body (the church).

   c. The Ephesians were “called in one hope.” The word hope is often defined as a desire and expectation (of making it to heaven). We have already noted from 2 Thessalonians 2:14 that it is the gospel (truth) that calls one to repentance and obedience to Christ’s teachings. If it is the truth that reveals heaven and the requirements for entering therein and there is but one truth delivered by one Holy Spirit it stands to reason, once again, that there is only one set of teachings as opposed to many teachings that give different requirements for heaven (see study # 52; The Nature of Truth / Standard).

E. “one Lord, one faith, one baptism” (4:5)

1. Continuing to consider the oneness of the church (its unity) we now see that there is only “one Lord.” The word “Lord” (kurios) = “having power or authority over others... authoritative, supreme... the ruling power in a state” (LS 458). It is very clear that Paul is speaking here of Christ. Jesus is the authoritative power over His kingdom the church (see Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:13). Christ’s teachings are what were taken by the Holy Spirit and distributed to the apostles and prophets (cf. John 16:14). If there were more than one Jesus then there would be more than one doctrine; yet, the apostle Paul reveals that there is only one Christ (see study # 52). If there is only one Christ there is only one truth He taught. Those who do not follow His one truth do not truly have God (cf. 2 John 9-11). We begin to see that there is a test of spiritual Christian fellowship (cf. 1 John 4:1-6). One who does not bring or represent this one truth does not share unity with the body of saints who do. If one is a Gentile and another Jew there is oneness while they both hold to the same truth.
2. There is “one faith.” Mans faith is produced by hearing the gospel message (Romans 10:17). One cannot have faith in other unauthorized practices and lay claims to faith in Jesus Christ because Jesus represents only one faith as opposed to many.

3. There is “one baptism.” The truth (gospel) reveals John’s baptism (Acts 19:3), Holy Spirit baptism (Mark 1:8; Acts 11:16), Moses’ baptism (1 Corinthians 10:2), and baptism for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). How can there be “one baptism” when the NT reveals four? Consider the fact that John’s baptism was designed to prepare the way for Christ. Holy Spirit baptism served the purpose of revealing God’s eternal purpose to man through the apostles and prophets (John 14:26; 16:13). Secondly, Holy Spirit baptism was for the purpose of confirming the word of God that the apostles and prophets preached through powerful miracles (Mark 16:20; Acts 1:8; Hebrews 2:3) and lastly Holy Spirit baptism provided witnesses to the resurrected Christ (John 15:26-27; Acts 1:8, 21-22). The baptism of Moses transferred the children of Israel from Pharaoh’s headship to Moses’. This leaves us with “one baptism” and that is baptism for the remission of sins. We are confident in this due to the fact that the purpose of Moses’ baptism, Holy Spirit baptism, and John’s baptism have all been accomplished and there is no more need for these baptisms. The one baptism that lost sinners continue to need, and that which the truth reveals, is the baptism for the remission of sins (see study # 53; Baptism).

F. “One God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all” (4:6).

1. The word “God” is theos in Greek and indicates God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Here, Paul uses God the Father to indicate the unifying father son relationship between God and His people. The prophet Malachi stated, “Have we not all one father? Have not one God created us?...” (Malachi 2:10). Paul tells the Galatian Christians, ”For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:26). The apostle John states, “Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and such we are” (1 John 3:1). This “one God” is the Christian’s Father (see study # 6). Such a relationship is another reason why Christians are to be united as one. We came to be recognized as a son of God through obedience to His gospel. Whether one is a Gentile or Jew we all share the same Father in the faith. Since there is but one gospel message we who have obeyed are of one mind. If there were many gods there would be many gospels and those who received one god over another would have common unity with others of their like faith. The word of God reveals; however, that there is only one true God (Mark 12:32; 1 Corinthians 8:6; 1 Timothy 2:5; James 2:19). Isaiah writes, ”Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me” (Isaiah 46:9).

2. Our one God is “over all.” To be “over” (epi) = “persons in authority” (LS 286). God is the “God of all flesh” (Jeremiah 32:27). Universal authority rest in the name Jehovah God. Every soul is not only created by Him but He is over all whether one wants to acknowledge this or not (see study # 3).

3. Our one God is “through all.” To be “through” all (dia) = “of things, which express the Cause, Reason, or Purpose... one’s will... of preeminence (superior to or notable above all others; outstanding)” (LS 184). There is none other superior to Jehovah God. God the Father delegated preeminence to Jesus (cf. Colossians 1:18-19).

4. Our one God is “in all.” To be “in” (en) is to be “in one’s hands, within one’s reach or power” (LS 257). Though God is superior to all He certainly is within the grasp of all humanity. One need only to seek out God to find Him (cf. Matthew 7:7; Acts 17:26).

G. “But unto each one of us was the grace given according to the measure of the gift of Christ” (4:7).

1. The antecedent to “us” is the Ephesian Christians of 1:1. What “grace” was “given” as a “gift” to the Ephesians? Up to this point in our study we have learned many principles of grace.

a. By God’s grace we (Christians) have been saved (Ephesians 2:5, 8).

b. God “foreordained” a class of people who would be recipients of His gracious gift of salvation (Ephesians 1:5). The “foreordained” would be those who are “holy and without blemish before him in love” (Ephesians 1:4). Those without blemish are those who have
been redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ. God's grace is equated to forgiveness of man's sins which is achieved through baptism (see Ephesians 1:7 compared to Acts 2:38).

c. Grace is connected with the “gospel” message (compare John 17:17 with Ephesians 5:26). Paul was a minister of “the gift of that grace of God” (Ephesians 3:7). Said statement connects God’s gift of grace with His gospel message. The gospel message reveals God’s gift of grace to man (salvation) (Ephesians 1:13). Grace “instructs” one to live godly (Titus 2:11-12).

d. Grace is the “gift of God” (Ephesians 2:8).

e. Grace equals the forgiveness of sins (Ephesians 1:7; 2:5).

f. By faith we have access into God’s grace (Romans 5:1-2; Ephesians 2:8).

g. One may asks, “how is God’s grace ‘given’ as a ‘gift’ if we must do something (i.e., be baptized) to receive His gift?” One may also asks the inquirer, “how is it that God told Joshua that He had ‘given into thy hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valor...’ yet then requested that Joshua and Israel go to war to take the city?” (see Joshua 6:2ff) Again, why did God say that He would heal Namaan of his leprosy if he would wash in the Jordan seven times (2 Kings 5)? Why did Jesus tell the blind man of John 9:7 that he would be healed if he would “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam...?” Could it be that man is justified (forgiven of sins; i.e., is a recipient of God’s grace) through an obedient faith in Jesus Christ? Please read Romans 5:1-2 and see the argument made. As in each case in the Old and New Testament one received a favor from God only after obeying God’s stipulations and so it is today. Many infomercials offer free gifts to those who make orders of the product they are selling. While the gift that accompanies your order for the product is free it will not be yours unless you order their product. Those who truly love truth and God will have no problem complying with God’s instructions and are thereby justified of sins by an obedient faith as was Abraham (cf. Genesis 18:19; 22:18; 26:4-5; Hebrews 11:8) (see study # 1, # 38 and # 10).

II. God has Equipped the church to Attain and Maintain Doctrinal Unity (4:8-16):

A. “Wherefore he saith, When he ascended on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men” (4:8).

1. God's desire is that Jew and Gentile Christians would be united in one mind because there is only one Lord, faith, hope, etc.

2. God has provided everything His people need to be united. To prove this, Paul quotes from Psalms 68:18 where the context suggests battles fought and won by God’s people in times when He was with them. Spoils of captives and gifts were taken by the victors. There were benefits to God’s people during battle when the Lord was with them. When the people of God put their faith and trust in the Lord and obeyed his commands to wage war they were successful and received gifts (i.e., the spoils of battle). Herein is a great principle as to how grace works. Likewise, there are great benefits (gifts) given by God to His people today who obey Him (see study # 10 - Great illustration of how God's grace works).

3. The “measure” of grace given by Christ, through the apostles and prophets, was thereby all that man needed to know to be saved.

B. (“Now this, He ascended, what is it but that he also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things”) (4:9-10).

1. This verse helps us see the eternal existence of Christ. Jesus was with God at the creation (Genesis 1:26) and participated in the creating process (Colossians 1:16). Jesus was in the
heavens of glory before he descended to the earth to live as a man. Jesus left His abode of glory so that mankind would have the opportunity of salvation.

2. Christ descended from glory and then ascended to His former glorious state. Luke records at Acts 1:11, “Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was received up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven.”

3. Why did Christ ascend back into the heavens? Paul states that it was for the purpose “that he might fill all things.” Verse 8 illustrates the fact that when Christ ascended into the heavens He has gifts (spoils) to give to His people. These gifts are not miraculous gifts that we read of in other places of our NT but rather spiritual gifts that will help the individual make it to heaven. Beginning at verse 11 Paul informs the Christian that God’s gift of salvation is made known through further gifts (i.e., apostles, prophets, evangelist, pastors, and teachers). All saints may thereby be united in truth and experience peace by the gifts of Christ (see study # 54; The Ascension of Christ into Heaven).

C. “And he gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers” (4:11).

1. Jesus’ gifts to His people are the “apostles” (apostolos) = “a messenger, ambassador, envoy” (LS 107). The apostles were messengers who represented Jesus Christ and His gospel message of salvation by grace through man’s faith (cf. Matthew 28:18-19).

2. Jesus gave “prophets” (prophetes) to his people. The word prophetes = “One who speaks for a God and interprets his will to man, a prophet...an interpreter, declarer” (LS 704) (cf. Ephesians 3:5).

3. Christ gave “evangelists” (euaggelistes) = “The bringer of good tidings, an evangelist, preacher of the gospel” (LS 322).

4. Christ gave “pastors” (poimen) = “a herdsman or shepherd... metaph. a shepherd of the people, a captain, chief” (LS 652). Elders of the body of Christ are referred to as “pastors” at Acts 20:28 (the equivalent “feed” or “shepherd” is used). Here, the function of the elder is to feed the people of God with His word that they may be strengthened.

5. Jesus gave the church (cf. Ephesians 4:12 for the context of these gifts being directed to the church) “teachers” (didaskalos) = “a teacher, master... to go to school” (LS 198). These men would thereby school members of the church in the teachings of Christ.

D. “For the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ:” (4:12).

1. Why did Jesus give these gifts of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers? First let us answer the question by reaffirming our context of Paul’s command for the saints of God to be unified in truth. Secondly, let us consider what each of these gifts have in common. The apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers have teaching God’s word in common.

2. Paul thereby says that these teaching positions are given to the church (i.e., “the body of Christ”) for “the perfecting of the saints.” The word “perfecting” (katartismos) = “to adjust thoroughly; to knit together, unite completely... a perfectly adjusted adaptation; complete qualification for a specific purpose” (Moulton 220). Paul used the same root Greek word at 1 Corinthians 1:10 saying, “Now I beseech you, brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment.” These teachers were given to unite the body of Christ as one. The necessary inference is that they all taught the same doctrine. Let us continue with why Jesus gave the gifts of apostles, prophets, and so forth.

3. Jesus gave these gifts not only for the perfecting of the saints but “unto the work of ministering.” Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers apparently have the “work of ministering.” The word “ministering” (diakonia) = serve or service. The service of these teaching individuals has to do with uniting the church through the teachings of Christ (the context so demands). Said verse should forever silence those who claim that there is no work for a local evangelist in the church (see study # 34).
4. Lastly, Jesus gave gifts to the church that it might be “built up.” The word “building” (some translate it as edifying) (oikodome) = “a building or structure” (LS 546). “A builder, architect... to build a house; to build... to repair... to advance a person’s spiritual condition, to edify... a spiritual structure, as instanced in the Christian body... religious advancement” (Moulton 284). Note that the service of the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers (gifts from Christ) is the building up of the church upon the solid foundation of truth so that doctrinal unity through faith may exists. It is not the work of the church to teach math, science, sociology, etc (see study # 55; The Work of the Church).

E. “till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (4:13).

1. The work of these teachers must continue “till we all attain unto the unity of the faith.”
   a. “Till” (mechri) = “to a given point... so long as, until” (LS 507). The word “attain” (katantao) = “to come to, arrive at... to reach, attain to” (Moulton 218).
   b. Paul thereby states that the service of the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers will continue until the Christians arrive “unto the unity of the faith.” The object of said teaching, as a gift of Christ, is for unity in the faith. The definite article before the word faith indicates that it is the gospel of Jesus Christ under consideration. It is "the" faith not "a" faith of your choosing. Paul knew that truth could be mutually understood and that when brethren do so unity occurs (see study # 17 and # 44).

2. The work of these teachers must continue till we all attain “the knowledge of the Son of God.”
   a. Again, the service of Jesus’ gifts toward Christians is that they would attain “knowledge of the Son of God.”
   b. Paul had earlier prayed that the Ephesians would “know the love of Christ... that ye may be filled unto all the fullness of God” (Ephesians 3:19). Said knowledge would take into consideration all that Christ did for us in teaching and delivering divine revelation, by hanging upon the cross so that we would have the opportunity to have the forgiveness of sins, and to know the character of Christ (i.e., meek, pointed, strong, humble, kind, compassionate, etc.).

3. The work of these teachers must continue till we all attain the state of being a “fullgrown man.”
   a. The service of Jesus’ gifts toward Christians is that they would attain “fullgrown” status in Christ. To be “fullgrown” (Greek - teleios) = “having reached its end, finished, complete... absolute, complete, accomplished, perfect in his or its kind” (LS 797). Consider Paul’s use of the Greek word teleios at a few other passages: “Brethren, be not children in mind: yet in malice be ye babes, but in mind be men” (i.e. teleios or perfect). “Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, saluteth you, always striving for you in his prayers, that ye may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God” (Colossians 4:12). “But solid food is for fullgrown men, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern good and evil” (Hebrews 5:14). Clearly, God expects His people to come to a state of completion in relation to Bible study. The author of Hebrews terms this state as being able to “discern (between) good and evil.”
   b. I cannot or will not know the difference between things that please God and those things that displease Him if I do not study. The point is thereby clear. Man can come to a state of perfection (completion) in Bible study by understanding the difference between right and wrong (Hebrews 5:14) and “all the will of God” (Colossians 4:12) (see study # 17). A study of Hebrews 6:1 reveals the idea of perfect or complete knowledge in Christ to be somewhat of a disposition (spirit of one). I may not have all the answers to every question; however, I certainly know where to turn to find answers to spiritual questions. There may be areas where no answer can be given (Deuteronomy 29:29) (see study # 56; Bible Perfection). The point being that the Christian is to display a spirit of completeness in Christ. I have such confidence and faith in the will of God that I will turn to the pages of God’s word for all spiritual answers.
4. Lastly, the work of these teachers must continue till we all attain “the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” The idea of the “fullness of Christ” was discussed at Ephesians 1:23 and 3:19 as being complete in the knowledge of God (Christ).

F. “that we may be no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind or doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error;” (4:14).

1. Christians are to understand that there is one God, faith, church, hope, etc. through the ministry of various teachers mentioned above. When said knowledge takes into consideration the will of God, in relation to right and wrong, one is recognized as complete. When complete brethren come together there is unity. The point with Ephesians 4:14 is that we can be complete (perfect) in our knowledge. If this were not the case, then we will be hopelessly children tossed around by every doctrine that comes our way.

2. When complete knowledge exists, not only do we experience unity but the danger of being led astray from the one truth by false teachers is diminished.

3. Error is set in contrast to truth (oneness vs. multiplicity of doctrines). Error is received by spiritual children whereas full grown men (complete in the knowledge of Christ) reject it. Error will do the following four things:
   a. Cause one to be “tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind or doctrine.”
      Doctrines of men can carry one down a different path than that of the one truth. The NT reveals doctrines of demons (1 Timothy 4:1) and doctrines of men (Matthew 15:9). Said doctrines do not represent the one God and one hope of eternal salvation. If I am not complete in Christ, I will be a child in faith (easily swayed from the one truth). How then do brethren fall into error? They fall into error because they are spiritual children and remain so their entire lives (see study # 46).
   b. Secondly, note that error occurs by the “sleight of men.” Error is associated with man not God. The word “sleight” (kubeia) = “used metaphorically as sleight of hand, trickery” (LS 454). When one follows a false doctrine they have been the victim delusion (cf. 2 Corinthians 4:2). The doctrine of demons and men do the persuading. The very poisonous words that fall upon the ears of spiritual children convince and sway one from truth. Man is simply the vehicle of the doctrine. Spiritually weak men were at one point persuaded by some erroneous doctrine and so they try to persuade others often in all good conscience. Remember that it was Paul that said, “I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth” (Acts 26:9). Most erring brethren will not say, “I am teaching a doctrine of demons and men so that with craft and deceit I can manipulate you to follow my ways.” Like our denominational friends, they believe they have the truth and those who disagree with them are the ignorant ones. How can one test whether one represents truth or error? One can turn to the one truth (cf. 1 John 4:1-6). So, if I preach error and try to convince others to follow my destructive ways I exercise trickery, craft, and deceit in relationship to the one truth. Anything opposed to truth is error (see study # 57; False Teachers).
   c. Thirdly, note that error occurs by “craftiness” (panourgia) = “knavery, roguery, villainy” (LS 591). “Ready to do anything; hence, crafty, cunning, artful, wily” (Moulton 300). See above discussion.
   d. The last phrase, “after the wiles of error,” seems to sum up the sleight and craft of men. Nestle and Marshall’s Interlinear Greek text uses the phrase, “craftiness of error” here whereas they used the English word “cleverness” in place of panourgia (NM 767). The Greek word used here (for wiles or craftiness) is “methodeian” = “craft, wiliness” (LS 493). “To trace, investigate; to handle methodically; to handle cunningly” (Moulton 261).
   e. What defines sleight, craft, and wiliness in character? Why would the apostles not be charged with these issues when they went all over the world teaching the gospel? When we compare two groups (i.e., those who teach truth and those who teach error) we find that they both have the same objective and that is to make proselytes. What makes one right and the other wrong? The apostle Paul has already told us that there is only one faith. One faith equates to a standard that must be followed. Those who do not follow this standard
(or pattern) are trying to peddle their own message (cf. 2 Corinthians 2:17). Therefore, their efforts are against the truth and defined by the truth as craft, sleight of men, and wiliness. That which does not meet the standard of God’s Word is error, corruption, and the precepts of men (Matthew 15:9). The words used at 2 Corinthians 2:17 are “corrupting the word of God.” To “corrupt” is to “sell (as in retail), to peddle, corrupt, adulterate.” If I peddle truth it is not corruption; however, if I peddle error I have corrupted the truth. What these notes indicate is that truth distinguishes the character of a man and defines him as either having a bad or good character. Jesus said on the Sermon on the Mount that you can know a man by his fruits (Matthew 7:20) (see study # 16).

G. “but speaking truth in love, may grow up in all things into him, who is the head, even Christ” (4:15).

1. Truth is set in contrast to the “wiles of error.” When one’s life is set on “walking worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called” in truth then that one “grows up in all things into him...” One who sets his heart on error will grow into further error.

2. Paul reiterates the fact established at Ephesians 1:22 regarding Christ being the “head.” The word “head” (kephale) = “The head, superior, chief, principal, one to whom others are subordinate” (Moulton 229). Jesus is the King of His kingdom the church (Luke 1:31-33; John 18:36ff). Jesus is superior to all other faiths because He offers the forgiveness of sins and hope of eternal life with the heavenly Father. Superior growth thereby occurs in truth.

H. “from whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love” (4:16).

1. The “body” is the church (those saints who have obeyed the call of the gospel and are growing in truth) (cf. Ephesians 1:22-23). It is through Christ that each member of the church is “fitly framed and knit together.” The idea of being “fit together” (sunarmologoumenon) = “to be fitted or famed together” (LS 769). “To join together fitly, fit or frame together, compact” (Moulton 386). The idea of being “knit together” (sumbibazomenon) = “to cause to come together; to unite, knit together” (Moulton 382). These two words are building or construction terms. Pieces of wood or metal are similarly fitted together in the construction process that a structure may be sound. That which joins the materials together is the “joint” (apses) = “a fastening; a ligature (that which fastens or bonds... wire, welding, glue, etc.), by which the different members are connected, joint” (Moulton 61). That which fastens members of the body of Christ together in the construction process is Christ through His word delivered by the apostles and prophets (cf. Ephesians 2:20-21). Unity in the body of Christ is sealed by truth (see study # 44).

2. God’s word joins members of the body of Christ together in unity. Each part of the body is bonded together in truth for a strong structure when standing together. Each part of the building (church) comes together in truth and strengthens the whole. What this tells us is that we all must do our own part in spiritual growth that we may be joined in spiritual union with others of like precious faith. A strong church is a group of people who are universally united in the truths of God’s word. A weak structure church is a group of people who are not one minded in truth.

III. The Christian’s Character Defined (4:17-32):

A. “This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye no longer walk as the Gentiles also walk, in the vanity of their mind” (4:17).

1. The “therefore” in verse 17 takes us back to the immediate text; i.e., Christians are bound together through truth and comprise a strong structure (the church) as they help each other grow in truth. The spiritually weak (children in faith); however, accept various teachings and are led astray (Ephesians 4:14). Paul is addressing the “walk” of the Ephesian Christians and infers that they did once walk in vanity of mind when he says, “that ye no longer walk...”

2. Paul testifies to the Ephesian Christians that unity in truth is true strength and hope “in the Lord” (i.e., Paul makes these statements by the authority of Jesus Christ). The Ephesians; therefore, are not to “walk as the Gentiles... in the vanity of their mind.” The Gentile’s reputation was that of following other deities (cf. Galatians 4:8). Paul terms this “vanity”
(mataioteti) of mind.” Mataioteti = “without profit, ineffective, groundless, erroneous in principle, corrupt, perverted... religious error” (Moulton 259). That which caused the minds of the Gentiles to be “erroneous, ineffective, and in religious error” was their “mind.” The Gentiles dreamed up their worship as opposed to Christian’s being divinely instructed to worship God (cf. Jude 8). Please note that the “vanity” of the Gentiles minds are connected to being “tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind or doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error” (Ephesians 4:14). This further helps us identify who false teachers are. They conduct themselves by the vanity of their minds rather than by divine revelation (see study # 57).

B. “being darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardening of their heart;” (4:18).
1. To be “darkened” (eskotomenoi) in one’s intellect (NM 768) is to be “moral or spiritual darkness... obscure” (Moulton 370); “uncertain” (LS 735). The religiously erroneous Gentiles are uncertain in their worship of other deities (cf. Acts 17:22ff).
2. Such a state of uncertainty and obscurity in spiritual matters left the Gentiles “alienated from the life of God.” To be “alienated” (apallotrioo) = “to estrange (to alienate the affections of; make hostile or unsympathetic)” (LS 87).
3. The Gentile’s state of uncertainty regarding God caused them to be estranged (i.e., they had no part or relation to those who represent truth). Their uncertainty is termed “ignorance” and caused by “the hardening of their heart.” The Gentiles certainly saw the signs of God in the creation all about them yet they hardened themselves against the true creator (cf. Romans 1:19-23). Note that when one does not represent truth there is no true unity with either God or His saints.

C. “who being past feeling gave themselves up to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness” (4:19).
1. To be “past feeling” (apalgeo) = “to feel no more pain at a thing... to put away sorrow” (LS 87). The Gentiles left off feeling pain and sorrow over immoral acts such as fornication, lying, stealing, etc. In their ignorance of truth they saw nothing wrong with the actions and so they continued in them. Their conscience had been seared with a hot iron.
2. The Gentiles practiced “lasciviousness” (aselgeia) = “intemperance; licentiousness (lacking moral discipline or sexual restraint... having no regard for accepted rules or standards), lasciviousness” (Moulton 55) (see study # 58; Hard Hearts).
3. Such a state of hardness toward sin and God’s truth led them to participate in “uncleanness” (akatharsia) in a state of want. Akatharsia means “impurity” (LS 25). Their works of impurity were a result of their covetous minds of vanity. They did what they wanted (i.e., whatever felt good or seemed good to do they did it with no reserve) (cf. 1 Corinthians 6:12-13).

D. “But ye did not so learn Christ; if so be that ye heard him, and were taught in him, even as truth is in Jesus” (4:20-21).
1. The antecedent to “ye” is the Ephesian Christians (whether Jew or Gentile). The Christian is not one who walks with uncertainty of mind through ignorance of truth doing whatever the flesh so desires. The Christian has rather learned truth in Christ by hearing and being taught.
2. Christianity (and its growth) is a learning, hearing, and being taught process (cf. John 6:44-45). Truth reveals that Christians are to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts (Titus 2:11-12).
3. This verse helps us understand that the Ephesians heard and learned from truth that they may become Christians (i.e., forgiven of their sins; Ephesians 1:7) (see study # 59; What must I do to be Saved).
4. Note that truth is equivalent to the gospel (Ephesians 1:13) so that we understand Paul to be saying that the Christian is not ignorant of the gospel message but rather studies, learns, and knows it. The Christian’s life is governed by truth as opposed to human reason.

E. “that ye put away, as concerning your former manner of life, the old man, that waxeth corrupt after the lusts of deceit” (4:22).
1. Before the Christian heard, learned, and obeyed the gospel he/she was governed by principles other than that which Christ represents. The days of one’s life, before becoming a Christian,
are considered the “old man.” The old man “waxeth corrupt after the lusts of deceit.” The idea of “deceit” (apate) = “a trick, fraud, deceit... a stratagem... guile, fraud, deceit, treachery” (LS 89). The desire of the “old man” was the ways of deceit yet now Paul calls upon the Christians to thoroughly put these things away.

2. The devil is the father of all lies. Jesus said of those Jews who lust after the devil’s doctrines of pleasure and self will that “ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and stands not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own: for he is a liar, and the father thereof” (John 8:44). The work of the devil is “fraud, trickery, stratagem, deceit, guile” (cf. 2 Corinthians 2:11) (see study # 60; The Work of the Devil). Again, this verse helps us to understand that if one is not in truth they are in error. If one is in error he/she is of their father the devil (one who is deceptive, treacherous, filled with guile, fraud, and trickery). The character of man is defined by who he follows in life (cf. 1 John 3:10) (see study # 16).

3. Paul’s admonition “in the Lord” is that the Ephesian Christians “put away” the former unlawful conduct. The worst thing a Christian can do is go back to the former days of enjoying sin.

4. “and that ye be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man, that after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth” (4:23).

1. The statement “spirit of your mind” helps us to understand that one’s character, disposition, teaching, mind, and overall inner man is under consideration here (see study # 16).

2. The character of one before becoming a Christian is one that is governed by a doctrine that the truth defines as that of craft, deceit, guile, fraud, stratagem, treachery, trickery, etc. Said character traits belong to the devil who is the father of all liars. It stands to reason then that if I live after these wicked precepts then this is what I am. The truth defines my being as one who is governed by craft, deceit, guile, fraud, stratagem, treachery, trickery, etc.

3. The Christian’s mind; however, is to be “renewed” (ananeoo) = “to renew; to be renewed, be renovated, by inward reformation” (Moulton 24). The Christian has had a renovation and reformation occur with their thinking. The old acts of craft, deceit, guile, fraud, stratagem, trickery, etc. has been done away with and a new mind (spirit) of “righteousness and holiness of truth” has replaced the corruption. A contrast of characters is given (truth and error). The standard of God’s word exposes the real character of a man or woman (cf. Hebrews 4:12-13) (see study # 16).

4. Paul refers to this process as a “transformation” at Colossians 1:13. A mind that once served the lusts of our flesh now serves Christ in a disciplined and learned fashion. These verses help us understand that when an individual is not walking in truth he or she is ignorant of the true status of their ways. They are conducting themselves in craft and deceit and are oblivious to their own destructive ways. Once introduced to the truth they are enlightened and thereby (if they so choose) are renewed in their minds.

5. “Wherefore, putting away falsehood, speak ye truth each one with his neighbor: for we are members one of another” (4:25).

1. Paul seems to draw a conclusion to his Jewish and Gentile audience who were obviously having problems in unity due to their race. Since we have made a transformation from walking in our own lusts to walking as God would have us walk, we are now determined to “put away” the former days of the old man of sin.

2. The Christian is to put away “falsehood” (pseudos) = “a falsehood, untruth, lie... to cheat by lies, beguile... to be deceived, mistaken in or about a thing... untrue statements” (LS 901). This tells us that at one point in our lives we were like those who lie, beguile, deceive, and tell untruths. When truth was preached to us our minds were enlightened to the deceptive work of the devil and his influence over us and we rejected falsehood and received truth. One must admit that there are not various forms of truthful living that accepts a little untruth. One is either walking in truth or falsehood. We cannot, thereby, protect a false teacher under the guise that his “character” is not false. Clearly, the apostle Paul defines the false character to be one who is not in Christ due to the lust of their covetous ways. What one does, says, teaches, and thinks defines the character. One either represents Christ and truth being defined as the “new
man” or one represents the devil and a lie (even though honestly “mistaken”) and defined as the “old man.” No middle man can be found between old and new. One either represents truth or error. One’s spirit is either a good character or a bad character (see study # 16).

3. Christians ought to speak truth to one another because we are all “members of one another.” Remember the building process mentioned at Ephesians 2:20-21; 4:12, and 4:16 whereby members of the body of Christ (church) are joined in unity through truth. The joining together in truth makes us “members of one another.” The close union makes us one in purpose (cf. John 17:20-21). I will not nor would ever want to speak lies to one so close. Here we see that not only do we have the indwelling of the Father, Son, and Spirit but there is a dwelling within (as regards purpose) between Christians (cf. 1 Corinthians 5:3; 1 John 1:3-5).

H. “Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath.” (4:26).
1. In my former days (the old man) I would be happy to participate in sin; however, now I am to be angry at sin. Again, these verses help us to see a total transformation of character, mind, teaching, etc. that takes place when one becomes a Christian. I cannot be moderately angry with sin (no such state exists as defined by truth). Paul tells the Romans to "abhor that which is evil" (see Romans 12:9).
2. Interestingly, Paul tells us that the spirit of “wrath” and “anger” is sinful at Ephesians 4:31 yet in relation to sin he tells us to exercise it. Anger (orgizo) = “anger, indignation, wrath” (Moulton 291). The Christian’s “indignation” is to be directed at sin rather than worldly things that may anger us. I ought to be filled with wrath when I or a brother sins. Yet Paul tells us that even this righteous indignation ought to be controlled when he said, “let not the sun go down upon your wrath.” Harboring feelings of anger toward self and or others will do no good. I must be willing to help rather than expressing anger alone. Far too many brethren in the Lord's church are good at expressing their indignation at another brother; however, they offer no help except to turn their nose up at them (see study # 61; Exposing Error in other's Lives).

I. “neither give place to the devil” (4:27).
1. To “give place” (topos) to is to give “a dwelling place, abode, mansion, dwelling, seat... opportunity” (Moulton 407). Paul gave place to Christ alone in his mind (Galatians 2:20).
2. As mentioned above, the devil is the father of lies, deceit, trickery, etc. Those who walk by his doctrines give place to him (see Matthew 12:43-45).

J. “Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing that is good, that he may have whereof to give to him that hath need” (4:28).
1. Another character trait that is to be put away from the Christian is stealing (taking things that do not belong to you).
2. Rather than stealing, the Christian is to work with his hands for two reasons:
   a. Labor produces wages that can be used to help self (2 Thessalonians 3:10-12).
   b. Secondly, I can help others when I am making wages.

K. “Let no corrupt speech proceed out of your mouth, but such as is good for edifying as the need may be, that it may give grace to them that hear” (4:29).
1. Another character trait of those who give place to the devil is “corrupt speech.”
2. What is the Christian’s speech supposed to do?
   a. The Christian’s speech should “edify” its hearers (see Colossians 4:6). The building process of the body of Christ occurs by teaching and preaching (cf. Ephesians 4:12).
   b. Secondly, the Christian’s speech is to “give grace” to its hearers. Consider the facts of grace that was mentioned above; i.e., grace is associated with salvation (Ephesians 3:8) and the forgiveness of sins (Ephesians 1:7). What Christian’s language should do is to help others not only grow spiritually but to help some obey the gospel and others to maintain their salvation through the forgiveness of sins.

L. “And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, in whom ye were sealed unto the day of redemption” (4:30).
1. To “grieve” (lupeo) = “to give pain to, to pain, distress, grieve, vex, annoy... to cause pain or grief...” (LS 480). The Christian is to be taught and learn truth (Ephesians 4:20-21). The more truth one learns the stronger spiritually they become (i.e., edified) (Ephesians 4:12). One’s 45
position toward truth determines whether they are spiritually minded (Ephesians 4:14-15, 22-24). The Holy Spirit’s work was to distribute truth through the apostles and prophets that God’s gracious promise of salvation may be realized (Ephesians 3:5). The context illustrates to us that “grieving” ( vexing and causing pain) the Holy Spirit has to do with rejecting truth and walking in the vanity of mind as do the Gentiles (cf. Ephesians 4:17). This tells us about the personality of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit can feel pain and sorrow over those who cast away truth for human reason and pleasure (see study # 62; The Holy Spirit).

2. Ephesians 1:13 dealt with the idea of being “sealed with the Holy Spirit.” To be “sealed” (sphragizo) is to “set a seal on, confirm, stamp with approval; to assure of a thing” (LS 786). The same word is found at 2 Corinthians 1:21-22. Paul said, “Now he that establisheth us with you in Christ, and anointed us, is God; who also sealed us, and gave us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.” When one hears the gospel and complies with the conditions of salvation through baptism (cf. Romans 10:17; Acts 2:38), that person is now assured and confirmed (sealed) as a Christian and all blessings that appertain to the one who would remain faithful. The Christian is to be confident in his salvation and the promises of God. Again, Paul tells Timothy, “Howbeit the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his: and, Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness” (2 Timothy 2:19).

3. Note that Paul adds here in chapter four the idea of being sealed “unto the day of redemption.” The word “unto” (eis) = purpose (as in Acts 2:38). Paul states that the Christian is assured of their redemption through the work of the Holy Spirit.

M. “Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and railing, be put away from you, with all malice;” (4:31).

1. Again, more emphasis is placed upon what the walk of the child of God should be as opposed to “giving place to the devil.” The Christian is not to be filled with “bitterness” (pikria) = “to be embittered (resentful; indignation or ill will felt as a result of a real or imagined offense), to grow angry, harsh... bitterness of spirit and language, harshness” (Moulton 324). The Jew and Gentile Christians may have been developing such dispositions toward each other.

2. The Christian is not to exercise “wrath” (thumos) = “a strong passion or emotion of the mind; anger, wrath... swellings of anger... enraged” (Moulton 197).

3. The Christian is not to exercise “anger” (orge) = “anger, indignation, wrath” (Moulton 291).

4. The Christian is not to exercise “clamor” (krauge) = “an outcry for vengeance... vociferate (to cry out in protest)” (Moulton 239). With these words before us it is obvious that Christians today who protest government positions are not displaying a meek and lowly position.

5. The Christian is not to exercise “railing” (blasphemia) = “calumny (a false statement maliciously made to injure someone... slander), railing (to condemn or attack in bitter, harsh, or abusive language)” (Moulton 71).

6. The Christian is not to exercise “malice” (kakia) = “badness in quality.... cowardice, sloth... moral badness, wickedness, vice... evil repute” (LS 393).

N. “and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you” (4:32).

1. Paul admonishes Christians to put away sin and be “kind” (Greek - chrestos) means “in a moral sense, good... a good man and true; generally, good, honest, worthy, trusty... of good citizens” (LS 895). The word seems to indicate the character of one who does as he should toward others.

2. The Christian is to be “tenderhearted” (eusplagchnos) = “compassionate (sympathize, sharring in the suffering of others)” (LS 333). Jesus was a compassionate man (cf. Matthew 9:36).

3. The Christian is to be “forgiving.” Jesus said, “For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (Matthew 6:14-15). Peter once asked Jesus, “Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?” Jesus answered saying, “I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven” (Matthew 18:21-
22) (see study # 63; Forgiving Each Other). We are thankful that God forgives us, why not forgive others when they wrong us and ask? (cf. Matthew 18:15ff).

4. Note that all three of the above character traits belong to Christ. Paul’s prayer for the Ephesians is that they would “know the love of Christ” (Eph. 3:19). Again, in chapter 4, Paul explains to the Ephesians that Christ ascended into the heavens and gave gifts of apostles, prophets, pastors, evangelists, and teachers so that they would have a “knowledge of the Son of God” (Ephesians 4:13). Christ was compassionate, kind, and forgiving and so should the Christian be.

**Synopsis of Ephesians 4**

The unity of the church and man’s character is under consideration in Ephesians chapter 4. The saints, though diversified in race, had all come to be "fellow citizens" (Ephesians 2:19), "fellow-heirs," "fellow members of the body," and "fellow partakers of the promises of God" (Ephesians 3:6). Their collective divine directive was to walk in truth to attain "unity of faith and knowledge of Christ" (Ephesians 4:13). Paul reiterates that all the body, Christ's church, was knit together and was thereby to grow in love (Ephesians 4:16).

Both Jew and Gentile was to share the same character as a unified body. The word character is defined as “the combination of qualities or features that distinguishes one person, group, or thing from another” (American Heritage Dictionary page 259). Paul refers to the distinguishing characteristic that differentiates the “old man” of sin (Ephesians 4:22) and the “new man” of righteousness and holiness in truth (Ephesians 4:24). This distinction is identified as a “walk” (Ephesians 4:1, 17). Before one becomes a Christian they “walk in the vanity of their mind” (Ephesians 4:17) and are spiritually dead (Ephesians 2:1). The spirit of man is “renewed;” however, when introduced to truth through hearing and learning (Ephesians 4:20-23). Let us compare and contrast the two characters of the old and new man as does Paul in Ephesians chapter four.

Paul begins the chapter by commanding the Ephesian Christians to walk in accordance with truth (Ephesians 4:1). Paul confirms his command by revealing the fact that there is only one church, hope, faith, baptism, and God (Ephesians 4:4-6). Oneness in God’s spiritual kingdom equates to a standard to be followed. Let us remember that the power of the gospel (truth) is that forgiveness of man’s sins are found therein (Romans 1:16; Hebrews 7:18-19). One who walks in truth is spiritually mature (Ephesians 4:13), kind, tenderhearted, and willing to forgive others (Ephesians 4:32). The Christian’s language is “truth in love” (Ephesians 4:15).

He that “gives place to the devil” is marked by another character, spirit, or mind (Ephesians 4:27). Said individual is governed not by truth but by “the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error” (Ephesians 4:14). The old man of sin walks by the “vanity, lust of deceit, falsehood, thievery, bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, railing, and malice” (Ephesians 4:17, 22, 25, 28, 31). Note that Paul states, “that ye no longer walk...” inferring that the Ephesian Christians did so once walk (Ephesians 4:17). When did the Ephesian Christians walk in craft, deceit, falsehood, etc...? Paul tells us that it was when they walked by the standard of the devil (i.e., the vanity of their minds) (see Ephesians 2:2).

Remember, character is defined as “the combination of qualities or features that distinguishes one person, group, or thing from another.” Paul referred to the Corinthians as being “sanctified” from the world through their position to truth (1 Corinthians 1:1-2). Paul made a judgment on the Corinthians based upon his knowledge of their stand in truth. Interestingly, many want to judge the world yet they will not judge their beloved brethren. Truth knows no partiality (James 2:9). Truth divides the true disciple from the pseudo and there is no middle man of indifference with God (1 John 3:10). One cannot represent some truth and some error and claim to have a godly character. Paul’s admonition to the Ephesians was to “be angry” at sin (Ephesians 4:26) and to the Romans he said to “abhorr” sin (Romans 12:9). What spirit or character do you represent?
I. Let the Christian Mind be determined not to Sin (5:1-21):

A. “Be ye therefore imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, even as Christ also loved you, and gave himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for an odor of a sweet smell” (5:1-2).

1. The book of Ephesians is like a classic English paper that one would write in school. The thesis of the book is that the Ephesian Christians are “spiritually blessed” (Ephesians 1:3) by having the “forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace” (Ephesians 1:7). Paul then takes that thesis and expounds upon it. The foundation of said salvation is God’s grace (Ephesians 2:8). Paul takes the Ephesians back to a time before God’s grace had been applied to them. The Ephesians were "separate from Christ, alienated, strangers, having no hope and without God” (Ephesians 2:11ff). Now; however, access into God’s grace through faith has given them citizenship in the household of God (Ephesians 2:18ff). Those Ephesians with said spiritual blessings have “heard” the gospel message delivered by the apostles and prophets through the eternal purpose of God (Ephesians 3 et. all). Whether Jew or Gentile all who obeyed the gospel and lived faithfully had hope. Chapter four begins with the word “therefore” which brings us back to salvation by grace through faith. God provides the remedy for sins; however, man must do his part to be a recipient of that grace. Paul thereby begins a discussion on one’s “walk” in life (cf. Ephesians 4:1, 17). The Christian is not to go back to walking in a state that identified them as being separate from Christ, alienated, with no hope etc. Paul states that such living is not what they “learned” (Ephesians 4:20). The Christian is to live a life of righteousness, holiness, truth, honesty in labor, purity of language, kind, tenderhearted, and willing to forgive one another of wrongs (cf. Ephesians 4:24-32).

2. Again, Paul begins this new chapter with the word “therefore” (so the book builds upon itself; see Ephesians 1:15; 2:11; 3:1, 14; 4:1, 17; 5:1). Due to the fact that you have been saved from the consequences of your sins you should walk as God would have you walk. Now, Paul clearly states that the Christian’s conduct is to be an “imitator of God.” The word “imitator” (mimetes) = “an imitator, copyists... one who represents characters” (LS 513). Note that it is character under consideration here and not state of being. We know that God is “the God of Salvation” (Psalms 68:20), “judge” (Psalms 75:7), a “consuming fire” (Hebrews 12:29), and to be “greatly feared” (Psalms 89:7). I cannot be these things and neither can any other man or woman. There are; however, character traits of God that I can copy. We are told that God is holy (Psalms 99:9) and that we are to be holy (1 Peter 1:15-16). God is perfect and we are thereby to be perfect (without sin) (Matthew 5:48; 1 John 1:5-7). God is love (1 John 4:8) and we are to therefore love (1 John 4:7). God is merciful (Psalms 116:5) and so we are to be merciful (Matthew 5:7). Every word of God is pure (Proverbs 30:5) so the language of the Christian is to be pure (Ephesians 4:29; Col. 4:6). God is righteous in all his works (Daniel 9:14) and so the Christian is to be (Ephesians 4:24). God is not a respecter of persons (Acts 10:34) and neither is the Christian to be (James 2:9) (see study # 56).

3. Paul tells us that as the Christian imitates the character traits of God he/she “walks in love” (Paul had earlier said that the Christian is to “speak truth in love” [4:15]). Note the connection between Christ and God at Ephesians 5:1-2. Christians are to walk as God “even as Christ also love you...” The deity of Christ cannot be denied (He is certainly part of the godhead) (see study # 18). How did Christ illustrate His God like character? Christ died on the cross so that man may be redeemed by His blood receiving the forgiveness of their sins (Ephesians 1:7). Again, Paul is not saying that Christians should be willing to die on a cross for other sins but rather that we ought to be willing to do what ever it takes to help others receive the forgiveness of their sins (see 1 John 4:9-11).

4. When I imitate God in my life it is as though I were making sacrifices upon an altar whose smoke rises unto the heavens where the Lord takes note of and is well pleased.

B. “But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as becometh saints” (5:3).
1. There are actions that are not even to be named in the same sentence with the saints of God. The Christians should never be guilty of violating God's laws. The "walk" of the Christian continues to be examined.

2. Paul lists many sins:
   a. "Fornication" (Greek - porneia) = "fornication" ("sexual intercourse between a man and woman not married to each other" AHD 526) (LS 662; Moulton 337). God teaches us that sexual intercourse belongs to married couples alone (see Hebrews 13:4).
   b. "Uncleanness" (akatharsia) = "impurity" (LS 25) (see use at Ephesians 4:19).
   c. "Covetousness" (pleonexia) = "some advantage which one possesses over another; an inordinate desire of riches, covetousness" (Moulton 328).

C. "nor filthiness, nor foolish talking, or jesting, which are not befitting: but rather giving of thanks" (5:4).
   1. "Filthiness" (Greek - aischrotes) = "deformed, used metaphorically as indecorous (lacking propriety or good taste), indecent, dishonorable, vile, indecency" (Moulton 10). "Ugliness, deformity" (LS 23).
   2. "Foolish talking" (morologia) = "silly talking" (LS 524). "Foolish talk" (Moulton 274). Our words to each other ought to be measured carefully rather than being silly and foolish.
   3. "Jesting" (eutrapelia) = "jesting, ribaldry [vulgar or lewd humor]" (LS 334).
   4. "Befitting" (aneken) = "fit or proper" (LS 69).

5. Paul tells us that it is not fit or proper for Christians to participate in indecent acts or language. The Christian's language ought to be filled with giving thanks for the wonderful spiritual and physical blessings as well as words of edification (see Ephesians 4:29 and 1 Thessalonians 5:18) (see study # 64; Worldliness / Bad Language).

D. "For this ye know of a surety, that no fornicator, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God" (5:5).
   1. Paul had delivered clear teaching to the Ephesians regarding a prescribed way of life. Paul had clearly outlined the consequences of living in such a way that contradicts the teachings of Christ. So Paul could say, "this ye know of a surety..." (see study # 65; Statements that indicate unrecorded teaching).

2. Paul reiterates the list of verse three and then adds "who is an idolater." An "idolater" (eidololatres) = "an idol worshipper" (LS 227; Moulton 117). Idolatry may come in various forms. Man may idolize money, fame, wisdom of the world, kids, recreation, and of course other gods such as Buddha. One concept of worship is to "love or pursue devotedly" (AHD 1392). The Word of God is clear regarding the consequences of one who would "love and pursue" entities that do not represent the one true God and His prescribed way of life (see 2 Corinthians 5:7; 2 John 9) (see study # 66; Modern Idolatry).

3. Those who do pursue a course of life that does not correspond to the one way delivered by God (i.e., the standard - cf. Ephesians 4:4-6) are said to have no "inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God."
   a. Jesus is the head of the church (the kingdom of God; see 1 Thessalonians 2:12 and Ephesians 5:23). The kingdom of God can refer at times to the existing church on earth and at other times it refers to the eternal heavenly kingdom (i.e., heaven). Whether the idea portrayed is the kingdom of God in heaven or earth matters not because the two are eternal and the same. Those truly in the kingdom of God on earth are those who belong to the eternal kingdom. The only difference between the two is that while we are living Satan has the opportunity, through apostasy, to take one from the kingdom of God (see Galatians 5:4). No such thing will be able to happen once one has died in their faith.
   b. When all of the Lord's enemies are put under His foot, He will deliver the kingdom over to God the Father (1 Corinthians 15:24ff). At that point, judgment will occur for humanity and those found righteous will go on into heaven for eternity (their inheritance). Those who have lived ungodly shall spend eternity in hell (outside the kingdom of God) (Revelation 20:10ff).
E. “Let no man deceive you with empty words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the sons of disobedience” (5:6).

1. “Empty (kenois) words” = “hollow, fallacious, false” (Moulton 228). Words that do not equate to divine truths will not save anyone. Erroneous words, in relation to religious practices, were once a part of all before coming to Christ (Ephesians 4:17). Unfortunately, even those who come to Christ go back to old ways and teachings of error (2 Timothy 4:9). Said words will only “deceive” (Ephesians 5:6). If a man’s words do not represent truth they deceive (how much more simple can it be?). The deception is in the area of salvation. By this verse we can easily see that men who teach error (no matter how good they may appear) are deceiving their hearers in relation to salvation. When the standard is not upheld men are led astray from that standard. A false teacher is clearly marked then as one who does not meet the standard, one who teaches another doctrine, one whose words are by proxy of the truth deceptive due to the fact that they lead people away from the one true standard. Deception is thereby identified as a means whereby men (or women) are led away from truth rather than into truth. Note that Paul gives an apostolic command that Christians be not deceived by false teaching. The inference, thereby, is that I should constantly be on guard against said teaching (see study # 57).

2. Those who do not represent nor live in truth are identified as the “sons of disobedience” (cf. Ephesians 2:2) (again, note that this is a character). The erroneous teaching identifies the teacher as “deceptive” because his words do not lead to God’s eternal kingdom! When one follows these deceptive words (untruths) they subject themselves to the “wrath of God” (see Romans 2:5-9).

F. “Be not ye therefore partakers with them;” (5:7).

1. The word “partakers” (Greek - summetochos) = “partaking with another in a thing, the partner of another” (LS 761).

2. “Ye” are Christians and “them” are the “sons of disobedience.” Christians are not to participate in sinful actions with other sinful men. Rather than participating in sin the Christian is to be angry (Ephesians 4:26), abhor (Romans 12:9), and hate (Jude 1:23) sin because it will cause one to loose their soul in hell (Ephesians 5:5). We are rather commanded to be like God in this world we live in (see Ephesians 5:1) (see study # 35; Attitude toward Sin).

G. “For ye were once darkness, but are now light in the Lord: walk as children of light” (5:8).

1. Here again we are informed of the Christian’s past relationship before coming to hear, believe, repent, confess, be baptized, and walk in newness of life (see Ephesians 2:3, 14; 4:14, 17, 22; 5:8 for more information on the life of one before coming to Christ). The idea of spiritual “darkness” was discussed at Ephesians 4:18. “Darkness” (skotos) means “blindness... metaphorically, to hide in darkness... dark and uncertain” (LS 735). Darkness is put in contrast to walking in “light” (phos) “light” (LS 878). “The light of divine truth, spiritual illumination” (Moulton 432). Clearly the use of the Greek word phos, at verse eight, indicates spiritual illumination through study and knowledge of truth. This spiritual illumination is “in the Lord” and thereby Paul commands that Christians “walk as children of light” (i.e., understanding). Said light identifies one as either sincere or insincere in their teaching and manner of life. The gospel message is the light that exposes a man for what he truly is. Consider this definition of the word sincere at askjeeves.com, “Today's definition of the root word, 'sincere,' is 'honest and genuine'. But you have to go all the way back to the original Greek word to learn its fascinating origin. The original word for 'sincere' is a composite of two other words: 'helile' (meaning "the sun's rays") and 'krino' (meaning "judged by sunlight"). The two words come together to form a new word - 'eilikrines' – meaning 'tested as genuine.' In ancient cultures it was common for pottery to be sold at market. Occasionally the pottery cracked and was worthless. Some merchants would try and hide or disguise the cracks by filling them in with wax. The pottery would look fine until filled with a liquid. Only then would the unsuspecting buyer discover the cracks! For this reason it became a common practice when buying pottery to hold the piece up to the sun while looking into it. If the pottery had any cracks they would immediately become visible. Even if filled in with wax, the sunlight would shine through the cracks. The pottery was literally 'judged by sunlight' and 'tested as genuine!'” Though man
may claim to know God, love God, and speak truth it is the actual truth that acts as the sun and exposes one as either a false teacher or teacher of truth (see study # 16).

2. The existence of such a command; i.e., “walk as children of light” suggest that one may come out of darkness to light yet not continue in the light. The walk of the sons of disobedience can thereby occur not only when one is a non-Christian but as an erring Christian as well (cf. Ephesians 5:6).

H. “(for the fruit of the Light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth), proving what is well pleasing unto the Lord” (5:9-10).

1. A tree bears fruit as its product. A Christian is to bear fruits of the light (that which gives light [spiritual illumination and understanding]) is truth.

2. When I, as a Christian, walk in truth and exercise goodness and righteousness I am “well pleasing unto the Lord.” Jesus tells us that the Christian bears the fruit of goodness and righteousness when abiding in His words (see John 15:7-10; see also Galatians 5:22-23).

I. “and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather even reprove them;” (5:11)

1. The whole phrase, “have no fellowship with” (NM 771) (sugkoinoneo) = “to have a joint share of a thing, to take part in, have fellowship with” (LS 755). If we consider “fruitful” works to be defined by truth moving one to produce goodness and righteousness we may deduce that “unfruitful works of darkness” are those deeds done that oppose truth and are exercised due to a mind being in a state of spiritual darkness (i.e., religious uncertainty or rebellion).

2. Paul is telling the Christian that one cannot maintain a “well pleasing unto the Lord” state while taking part in sin. Sin has always separated man from God (see Isaiah 59:1-2).

3. Instead of having fellowship in sin with sinners the Christian is commanded to “reprove” those who walk in darkness. The word “reprove” (elegcho) means “to disgrace, put to shame, to put one to shame... to censure, accuse... to be convicted... of arguments, to bring to the proof, to disprove, confute... to bring convincing proof” (LS 249). “To detect, lay bare, expose” (Moulton 131).

4. The Christian should not only abstain from sinful works but also expose the sinful actions of others that they may be moved to shame and repent. The Christian does not stand by carelessly while the world goes to hell. When Joseph was presented the opportunity to commit adultery with Potiphar’s wife, he not only refused the sin but exposed her error. Joseph said to her, “thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?” (cf. Genesis 39:8-9) (see study # 67; Individual Christian Responsibility).

J. “for the things which are done by them in secret it is a shame even to speak of” (5:12).

1. It was shameful for women preachers to be preaching in the Corinthian churches (cf. 1 Corinthians 14:35). It is shameful for one to have little knowledge of God’s word (1 Corinthians 15:34). It is shameful for one to uncover their nakedness in public (Revelation 3:18; 16:15).

2. Shameful things done in secret places where no one sees but the omnipresent and omniscient God are clearly actions of sin (compare to Ephesians 5:11 [i.e., if we are to shame the sinner then shameful things are sinful actions]). There is nothing concealed from the all seeing and all knowing God (cf. Jeremiah 23:23-24).

K. “But all things when they are reproved are made manifest by the light: for everything that is made manifest is light” (5:13).

1. What are the “all things?” Paul has discussed a “walk” of life in Ephesians (cf. 2:1, 10; 4:1, 17; 5:2, 8). Apparently the “all things” are various walks of life. Some walk as the “sons of disobedience” (Ephesians 2:2; 5:6) others “walk as children of light” (Ephesians 5:8). Because the idea of “reproved” is used we understand the “all things” to be sinful works (unfruitful works). The word “reproved” (elegcho) was defined at verse 11 as “to disgrace, put to shame, to put one to shame... to censure, accuse... to be convicted... of arguments, to bring to the proof, to disprove, confute... to bring convincing proof” (LS 249). “To detect, lay bare, expose” (Moulton 131). Shameful things are thereby under consideration.
2. That which determines a well pleasing to God life is the “light.” What is the “light?” We discovered, from Ephesians 5:8-9, that “light” is the illuminating power of divine truth. The truth sheds light on error and spiritual fruitfulness of goodness and righteousness.

3. Furthermore, God is identified as "light" rather than "darkness" (see 1 John 1:5). Paul is saying that every walk of life is measured by the standard of truth and found to be acceptable or unacceptable (i.e., light or dark) (see study # 52; The Standard of Truth).

L. “Wherefore he saith, Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee” (5:14).
1. The exact quote of the above statement is no where found in the Bible although similar statements are found in the book of Isaiah 51:17; 52:1.
2. Paul is calling upon the spiritually dead (Ephesians 2:1) (“thou that sleepest”) to arise from spiritual death through hearing, understanding, and obeying the illuminating message of truth.

M. “Look therefore carefully how ye walk, not as unwise, but as wise;” (5:15).
1. The Christian is to pay careful attention to the way they conduct themselves in this life. Those who are disobedient to the standard of God’s word have no real hope of salvation (Ephesians 5:5) (see study # 1).
2. The “unwise” are identified with the fornicator, impure, covetous, filthy mouth people, idolaters, and false teachers (Ephesians 5:3-6). The “unwise” bear no spiritual fruit (Ephesians 5:9-11). The “unwise” are darkened in their understanding (Ephesians 5:8). The “wise” are “children of light” (Ephesians 5:8). The wise seek to bear fruit unto goodness and righteousness through divine truth (Ephesians 4:24; 5:9).

N. “redeeming the time, because the days are evil” (5:16).
1. The wise not only seek to bear fruit unto goodness and righteousness but they are “redeeming the time.” The word “redeeming” (exagorazo) means “to buy up” (LS 268). As each moment is precious in life so is how one spends their time. Solomon had once said, "Buy the truth and sell it not..." (Proverbs 23:23).
2. The idea is that man would see the great value in truth, as opposed to evil, and do all within their power to invest time and energies into being right.

O. “Wherefore be ye not foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is” (5:17).
1. The Christian is “wise” when bearing fruit of goodness and righteousness and not participating in sin. The “unwise” and “foolish” are those who bear no fruit and sin. Jesus gives the parable of the wise and foolish builders at Matthew 7:24-27 saying that the wise not only hears but understands and does the will of God.
2. Note that if the Lord commands Christians to “understand what the will of the Lord is” then certainly we must all have the ability to understand truth! What truth is there that we can have differing opinions over? The fact of the matter is that God gave us His light (truth) to make manifest His will. If God’s word is so confusing and subject to every man’s interpretation then why does Paul command unity in truth (Ephesians 4:3)? Why did Jesus pray for unity in truth if it impossible for all to understand truth alike (John 17:19-23)? Truth’s power is to save the souls of men (Romans 1:16); however, if God’s people cannot understand it alike how can we all be assured of our heavenly home? Jude tells us to “contend earnestly for the faith....” however, if we cannot truly know truth what is there to argue about (Jude 1:3)? What truth are you willing to say that one cannot understand (cf. Deuteronomy 29:29)? These statements indicate a standard that is set in stone, unchangeable, complete, and not to be altered. Man can know truth but it takes effort (2 Timothy 2:15) (see study # 17 and # 52).

P. “And be not drunken with wine, wherein is riot, but be filled with the Spirit” (5:18).
1. Paul continues to discuss the wise and fruitful walk of the Christian as oppose to the unwise and unfruitful walk of the sinner. The wise should “be not drunken” (methuskesthe) “to make drunk, intoxicate, inebriate” (LS 493).
2. When one is drunk with wine “riot” exists. The word “riot” (asotia) = “prodigality (squander, reckless) wastefulness” (LS 127). The drunkard is foolish and will recklessly waste his wages on more wine, women, and pleasures.
3. This verse no doubt has in mind the individual who has drank an intoxicant to the point of becoming drunk (he is filled with wine). While this passage teaches the wise not to drink to the point of a drunken stupor where reckless living occurs there are other Bible passages that condemn the drinking of alcohol all together (see Proverbs 23:26-35; 1 Peter 1:13; 4:7; 5:8). Paul tells the Thessalonians, “So then let us not sleep, as do the rest, but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that are drunken are drunken in the night” (1 Thessalonians 5:6-7). Paul contrast “sleep” and being “drunk” with “watching” and being “sober.” To sleep and be drunk is to be oblivious to one’s surroundings. To be on watch is the complete opposite of sleeping. To be “sober” (Greek - nepho) means “to drink no wine... to be sober, dispassionate” (LS 532). There is an important analogy between these two passages (i.e., Ephesians 5:18 and 1 Thessalonians 5:6-7). Paul states that drunkenness is compared to sleeping (unaware of one’s surroundings) where as being sober is compared to watchfulness so therefore do not even take a sip of intoxicants. At Ephesians 5:18 Paul again makes a play on words saying that being filled with wine can only result in wasteful living while being “filled” with the Holy Spirit will lead to wisdom, light, and no sin. Wine is associated with sin and foolishness whereas being filled with the Spirit through truth is equated to wisdom (see study # 68; Worldliness / Drinking Intoxicants).

Q. “speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord” (5:19).

1. Being filled with the Spirit equates to walking in light and wisdom that produces fruits of goodness and righteousness. Furthermore, such a walk of wisdom dictated by the light of the gospel will move Christians to “speak one to another in psalms...”

c. The word “speaking” (lalountes) means “to talk, chat, prattle, babble... generally, to talk, say... to speak” (LS 463). The Greek lalountes is a verb in the present tense and active (Friberg 598). The command is to therefore continue to actively speak to each other in the various songs mentioned below.

d. The words “one to another” is translated “yourselves” by NM 771. The Greek word is eautois and means “of himself, herself, itself...” (LS 219).

e. The Christian is to speak to others in “psalms” (psalmos) “a twitching or twanging with the fingers, of a bow... mostly of musical strings: to sound of the harp... later, a song sung to the harp, a psalm” (LS 900). “Impulse, touch, of the chords of a stringed instrument; in NT a sacred song, psalm” (Moulton 441). This word is found at 1 Corinthians 14:26 in relation to the first day of the week worship service. Interestingly, the Greek Septuagint translates the Hebrew word mizmor to the Greek psalmos and is the title for the Book of Psalms “meaning either ‘song’ or ‘instrumental music.’”

2. Apparently singing songs was a part of the first century church’s worship (see study # 69; Musical Instruments in Worship). Note that the Greek word psalmos is a noun (Friberg 598). A noun is a person, place, or thing. The “thing” under consideration then is a song (whether that song is sung with an instrument or with the voice alone matters not as far as the Greek word is concerned). If the Greek word were a verb then the action of playing an instrument or singing a song would be under consideration. Since the noun is under consideration the subject is the song as opposed to the action of singing.

f. Christians are to speak to each other in “hymns” (humnos) as well. Humnos “a hymn, festive song or ode, in praise of gods or heroes” (LS 829). “A song; a hymn, song of praise to God” (Moulton 413). “Christian hymns are reflexive and expressive of gratitude to God for all that He has done for the world’s reconciliation.”

3. The hymn appears to be a song of praise (see Matthew 26:30; Acts 16:25; Hebrews 2:12 for the use of humnos in NT). Again, the Greek word humnos is a noun (Friberg 598). The “thing” under consideration is the song or ode.

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g. Christians are to speak to each other in “spiritual songs” (pneumatikos odes) “of spirit, spiritual” (LS 649). Odes means “a song, lay, ode, lyric poetry... song, singing” (LS 904). “An ode (a poem intended to be sung by a chorus at a public festival or as part of a drama), song, hymn” (Moulton 443). Once again, the Greek word odes is a noun (Friberg 598) with pneumatikos being the adjective that describes the noun. These songs are spiritual as opposed to carnal.

3. The command is to speak to one another in one of three kinds of songs (i.e., a psalm, hymn, or song (ode). The Christian is to speak to other Christians by these songs. The inference as to the understandable nature, teaching, and admonishing qualities of these songs can be seen by looking to Colossians 3:16 where Paul states, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God.” The Christian is to speak to others through these three modes of songs by means of “singing” (ado) “to sing... then of any sound, to twang, of the bowstring... to whistle... to sing, can... songs to be sung... to sing, praise” (LS 14). The Greek word ado is a verb in the active voice and present tense (same as my “speaking”) (Friberg 598). At this point, we see that the Christian’s speaking to others in understandable words for teaching and admonishing through songs is to be done by actively singing one of three types of songs (i.e., a psalm, hymn, or ode). I am to speak by singing these types of songs by “making melody in my heart to the Lord.” The word “melody” (psallo) means “to touch sharply, to pluck, pull, twitch... to twang the bow-string, to send a shaft twanging from the bow... a carpenter’s red line, which is twitched and then suddenly let go, so as to leave a mark... to play a stringed instrument with the fingers, not with the plectron... to sing to a harp, sing” (LS 899). “To move by a touch, to twitch; to touch, strike the strings or chords of an instrument; to play on a stringed instrument; to sing to music; in NT to sing praises” (Moulton 441). Again, this Greek word is a present tense active verb just as the word “speaking” and “singing” above are (Friberg 598).

a. Note the connection between psalmos (psalms) and psallo (melody). Both of these words have to do with plucking strings and singing. Whether that plucking be a musical instrument, carpenters chalk line, or singing songs the words have to do with plucking strings. As noted above the psalms, hymns, and odes may be sung with the instrument or voice. So the Greek word psallo (melody) can mean to play the instrument or use the voice to sing. The “melody” of one of the three types of songs is accomplished by either singing or playing an instrument.

b. The question to answer is whether or not singing in worship is to be done with the voice alone, singing with an instrument alone, or singing with the instrument and voice when it comes to Paul's command here. Paul tells us that it is the strings of the “heart” (i.e., the mind, will, and spirit of man) that is under consideration. The plucking of the strings is done “with the heart” (mind).” A physical instrument is not under discussion here. The only instrument that we are commanded to sing with is the heart. I can only sing songs of psalms, hymns, or odes with the heart by my voice. Paul is not authorizing the use of musical instruments within the church.

R. “Giving thanks always for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father;” (5:20).

1. Christians are to allow the light of the gospel message to direct their paths in life (Ephesians 5:8). No fellowship (sharing) in the area of sin ought to occur but rather the Christian is to expose the sinful deeds of man (Ephesians 5:11).

2. The Christian is to be wise (Ephesians 5:15), knowledgeable of God’s word (filled with the Spirit) (Ephesians 5:17), not a drinker of alcohol (Ephesians 5:18), and always singing songs of praise with the voice to one another (Ephesians 5:19).

3. Furthermore, the Christian is to “give thanks always.” It is God’s will that we give Him thanks for all that we have (1 Thessalonians 5:18). When we learn to be content in this life with such things as we have we will not hesitate to give God thanks for those things (Philippians 4:11ff).
Not only is the Christian to be thankful for physical blessings but we ought to be very thankful for our spiritual blessings (see Romans 7:25).

S. “Subjecting yourselves one to another in the fear of Christ” (5:21).

1. I have heard, in years gone by, brethren contending that wives are not to be anymore subjective to their husbands than their husbands are to be to them based on this verse. Such a thought has the motive of placing the husband and wife on an equal plain as far as roles in the family go. Let us examine how Christians are to “submit” to each other as opposed to how Christ intends for the husband and wife to be submitting.

2. The word “subject” (hupotasso) = “to place or arrange under... to post under, to subject... to be obedient” (LS 848). The very definition paints a picture of one who looks to others as being over them, greater or in a better position than self. Look to these various teachings that help us understand that our self view is to be lowly and others great:

   a. “But whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister; and whosoever would be first among you shall be your servant even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:26-28). Here we find that Jesus intends His followers to have a mind to serve rather than be served as some great one.

   b. The apostle Paul writes, “Doing nothing through faction or through vainglory, but in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself; not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others” (Philippians 2:3-4).

   c. The apostle Peter said, “Likewise, ye younger, be subject unto the elder. Yea, all of you gird yourselves with humility, to serve one another: for God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble” (1 Peter 5:5).

   d. In the realm of personal conscience and scruples (areas of indifference) Paul said, “if meat causes my brother to stumble, I will eat no flesh for evermore, that I cause not my brother to stumble” (1 Corinthians 8:13). Again, “For if because of meat thy brother is grieved, thou walkest no longer in love. Destroy not with thy meat him for whom Christ died” (Romans 14:15). There are areas, such as personal conscience and interests, that I am to subject myself to others and not force my way because I know that I have a right to practice certain things. I may often have to abstain from a certain lawful practice for the sake of my brother’s spiritual welfare.

3. This attitude of humility is done in “the fear of Christ.” The word “fear” (phobos) means “Panic fear, such as causes flight... fear, terror, properly of the outward show of fear... to strike terror into one... an object of terror, a terror” (LS 867-868). Why should we “fear” Christ? Jesus said, “And be not afraid of them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matthew 10:28). The author of Hebrews said, “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Hebrews 10:31). We ought to submit to each other in all humility because our souls depend upon having such an attitude. The Christian is to greatly fear God’s power to save and His power to condemn.

II. Husband Wife Relationship (5:22-33):

A. “Wives, be in subjection unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord” (5:22).

1. Paul has given admonition to saints regarding our relationship to other saints. Now the apostle moves to more intimate relationships; i.e., the husband and wife. Just as there are instructions as to how I am to conduct myself around other saints even so we are given instructions regarding the relationship between a husband and wife.

2. The wife is commanded to be in “subjection” to the husband. The word “subjection” (hupotasso) was defined at verse 21 as, “to place or arrange under... to post under, to subject... to be obedient” (LS 848). Moultan defines the word hupotasso as, “To place or arrange under; to subordinate” (419). While all Christians are to mentally arrange themselves under other Christians the family has its own organizational structure. Note that if every Christian is to be subject to each other there would be no real roles under consideration (all occupy a state of humility toward each other). The fact that the wife is said to be in subjection to the husband in the marriage relationship indicates roles in the home. The word roles is defined as, “proper or
customary function; the kind of action or activity proper to a person, thing, etc. the purpose for which something is designed or exists” (AHD 1068). The proper function and design of the wife in the home is that God intends for her to “be arranged under and obedient” to her husband.

3. Paul carries this out further by stating, “as unto the Lord” indicating that as one obeys Christ they are to obey their husband. Consider the fact that Jesus said, “if a man love me, he will keep my word: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him” (John 14:23). We may likewise say that if a woman truly loves her husband she will voluntarily be obedient to him.

a. To be a godly wife one must truly be of a humble mind. Said woman has the ability to view her husband’s words with great respect and submission while realizing that the both of them stand on equal ground as far as their souls are concerned (see Galatians 3:28).

b. The wife accepts her lot in life. She is familiar with God’s desire for all wives in that God said, “thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee” (Genesis 3:16).

c. The wife accepts the fact that she was created as a “help meet” for the husband. Moses records, “And Jehovah God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him” (Genesis 2:18). The Hebrew word for "help meet" is ezer. Ezer is found 21 times in the OT and is usually translated “help” (i.e., “to give assistance to; aid” [American Heritage Dictionary 604]). What did the man need assistance and aid doing? The man needed assistance in keeping God’s laws (Genesis 2:16), replenishing the earth through reproduction (Genesis 1:28), subduing and having dominion over animal life (Genesis 1:28), and tending the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:15) that they may eat food (Genesis 1:29). She was to be his partner in this work. The Lord never intended for the man to do everything in the home. God’s arrangement was for there to be a man and woman working together with the man being the head of the home.

B. “For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, being himself the savior of the body” (5:23).

1. The duty of the wife is to voluntarily arrange herself under the man and be obedient to him as his helper. The husband too has a part to play in the home. The apostle Paul states that the husband is “the head of the wife.” Consider these definitions of the word head (kephale):

a. “Superior, chief, principal, one to whom others are subordinate” (Moulton 229).

b. “Denotes superior rank” (AG 430).

c. “The one who holds the position of leadership and authority” (ISBE; Vol. 2; pp. 640).

2. Understanding Christ’s headship of the church will help us understand the husband’s headship of the wife. How is Christ head of the church? Consider the fact that the church is the kingdom of God (1 Thessalonians 1:12) and that Jesus is the king of that kingdom:

a. Prophecy revealed Jesus to be the king (Isaiah 9:6-7; Ezekiel 37:24ff; Matthew 2:1-2)

b. When Christ came into the world people proclaimed His kingship (John 18:33-38).

c. Early Christians knew that Jesus was king (Acts 17:7; Revelation 17:14).

3. As king, Jesus exercises authority and rule over the kingdom. His word reigns supreme (2 John 9). The husband is a type of king in the home. His word is to be treated with respect and is to be adhered to. Along those lines Peter records, “For after this manner aforetime the holy women also, who hoped in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection to their own husbands: as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord...” (1 Peter 3:5-6). Our homes are as a mini kingdom. Each home has a king (husband) and those who are under him (wife and children). The husband is to thereby hold the position of leadership and authority as Christ does toward the church:

a. Christ loves the church and even gave His life for it as the “savior of the body.” The husband will do what ever necessary to make sure his family makes it to heaven.

b. Christ teaches the church and so the husband is to teach his wife and children (John 8:12).

C. “But as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives also be to their husbands in everything” (5:24).
1. Here again we find the word “subject” (hupotasso). Paul states that the church is “subject” to Christ (i.e., arranged under and obedient to) as the wife is to be arranged under and obedient to the husband.

2. Note that now Paul states, “everything.” As Christ has complete authority in the church even so the husband has complete and final authority in the home. Everything that goes on in the home (i.e., the children’s education, extracurricular participation, whether or not to have a dog, hair cuts, new car, new house, remodeling, going to worship, moving, etc. etc.). The husband has the final say in all things that pertain to life (both physical and spiritual).

D. “Husbands love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it” (5:25).

1. Husbands are commanded to “love” (agapao) their wives. The Greek word agapao means “to treat with affection, to caress, love be fond of... to be well pleased or contented at or with a thing” (LS 4). The use of the word agapao in the NT indicates a love one’s spiritual (cf. Ephesians 5:2) and physical well being (1 John 3:17-18; James 2:15-16). This love also is kind and patient (see characteristics of love at 1 Corinthians 13:1ff). Jesus had this kind of love. He loved mankind so much that He voluntarily went to the cross that man might have the opportunity to be forgiven of their sins and have a hope of eternal life in heaven (Isaiah 53 all; John 3:16; Acts 20:28). Jesus also had compassion on the poor and sick and so He often healed and fed them (cf. John 6:1-15).

2. The husband is to be so fond of his wife that he would be willing to do what ever necessary to see her into heaven and care for her physical well being while acting kind and patient toward her.

E. “that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word” (5:26).

1. The giving of Christ on the cross was so that He would “sanctifying it” (i.e., the church). To “sanctify” (hagiazo) “separate from common condition and use... hallowed; pure, righteous, ceremonially or morally; holy... to separate, consecrate; cleanse, purify, sanctify” (Moulton 3). Consider the fact that Jesus said when instituting the Lord’s Supper, “for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many unto remission of sins” (Matthew 26:28). Sanctified people (Christ’s church) are thereby those who have had their sins forgiven through the blood of Christ (i.e., they have been baptized into Christ for the remission of sins [Acts 2:38] and when they sin again they are forgiven when they asks the Lord to forgive [Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9]).

2. The word “cleansed” (katharizo) means to “clean, pure, unsoiled... clean from guilt, ... to cleanse from filth... to cleanse from sin Hebrews 10:2... to cleanse from sin, free from the influence of error and sin” (Moulton 206). Note that the Greek word hagiazo and katharizo are very similar so that What Paul is saying is that Christ cleansed the church through the forgiveness of their sins “by the washing of water with the word.” Paul was told by Ananias to, “Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on his name” (Acts 22:16). Acts 2:38 helps us further understand that it is the initial act of baptism that gives one the forgiveness of sins. The very quoting of these verses indicates a connection with the Word of God and Baptism. The word of God instructs one to be baptized for the remission of sins. If one truly loves Jesus they will submit to such requirement. Jesus said, “sanctify them in the truth: thy word is truth” (John 17:17). This verse clearly connects truth (John 17:17; Ephesians 5:26) with baptism (Acts 2:38), God’s grace (Ephesians 2:8), and the forgiveness of sins (Ephesians 1:7). How can one be sanctified apart from the truth? Again, how can one be sanctified apart from baptism? How can one be baptized apart from truth? (see study # 53; Baptism).

F. “that he might present the church to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish” (5:27).

1. Not only did Christ give himself up on the cross to sanctify and cleanse its members through the act of baptism, which is revealed in His word, but also that “he might present the church to himself a glorious church.” To “present” (paristemi) = “To set side by side, to come to the side of another, come over to his opinion... submit... to bring forward, produce... to bring to one’s side... win over... generally, to dispose for one’s own views or purposes” (LS 609). The Greek word paristemi is aorist tense indicating past action without denoting completion or
continuation (Friberg 598). When Christ died on the cross He made the forgiveness of sins a possibility. Those who have their sins forgiven are in fellowship with Christ (i.e., stand side by side with Him having given self desires up and rather following His will). At present, those who would be baptized and cleansed of sins are those who would comprise the "glorious church" i.e., those who stand side by side with Christ having left a world of darkness and come into the light of the gospel (1 Peter 2:9-10).

2. Those washed by baptism and cleansed of their sins are without “spot or wrinkle.” To have a spiritual “spot” (spilos) = “spot, stain, blemish... to stain or soil” (LS 740). To have a “wrinkle” (rhutis) = “a fold or pucker in the face, a wrinkle” (LS 721). “a wrinkle; met. A disfiguring wrinkle, flaw, blemish” (Moulton 361).

3. Christ’s death on the cross enabled man to be clean, without spot or blemish, and having no spiritual flaws. These terms help us to realize that when we are forgiven of our sins we are completely forgiven and made to be perfect in His sight (see Hebrews 7:18-19) (See study #56). So Paul terms the glorified church “holy” (hagios) meaning “of persons, holy, pure” (LS 5). “Of human beings consecrated to God, holy... what is holy” (AG 9). “Members of the first Christian communities; pure, righteous, ceremonially or morally; holy” (Moulton 3). This term is translated “saint” at Ephesians 1:1 and identifies the Christian as one who is thoroughly cleansed from sin. The child of God is also “without blemish” (amomos) = “without blame, blameless” (LS 50). There is no sin on this individual's soul. Such a one is "unreprovable" (that is, without blame of sin) (see 1 Corinthians 1:8).

4. Apparently Paul has the universal church (the saved of all areas) in mind. Christ’s glorious church, as a whole, is comprised of forgiven sinners who are clean, without spot or wrinkle, holy, and without blemish. The contrast clearly indicates the soiled unclean spiritual state to be that of one walking in sin and apart from Christ while being clean and holy represents one whose sins are forgiven. The Bible tells us that those who are baptized into Christ receive the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16). The Word of God also tells us that we all sin from time to time and must asks God for forgiveness even after baptism (1 John 1:7-9).

G. “Even so ought the husbands also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his own wife loves himself: for no man ever hated his own flesh; but nourishes and cherishes it, even as Christ also the church; because we are members of his body” (5:28-30).

1. The husband wife relationship has been compared to very high standards. First, Paul compares the wife’s subjection to the husband as being subject to Christ’s laws (Ephesians 5:22). Secondly, Paul compares the headship of the husband to the wife as Christ is head over the church. Thirdly, the husband’s love is compared to the love that Christ illustrated for the church in that He gave His own life up for it for the betterment of the members. The husband is to love his wife because he cares about her spiritual and physical well being. The husband is to be kind, gentle, and patient with his wife.

2. Paul now compares the husband’s body to the wife. The husband is to love his wife as he loves his own body. I will do all that I can to take care of my body (i.e., keep it physically and emotionally healthy, fed, and spiritually sound). As the husband cares for the emotional, physical, and spiritual well being of his wife then he has loved her as he loves his own body.

3. The fifth comparison is more of an illustration. Christ love the church (holy, clean, and sanctified people) because they are His body (Ephesians 1:22-23). The saint is a part of Christ and Christ is a part of the body. The two function as one through a mutual purpose (i.e., truth). Likewise the husband and wife are as one body (two functioning together as one).

H. “For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh” (5:31).

1. Paul, Like Jesus in Matthew 19:4-5, turns back to God’s original intention for marriage found at Genesis 2:24. Before this statement was made, God had made woman from one of man’s ribs. The man then exclaims, “This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man” (Genesis 2:23). God’s intention for marriage was to be between “male and female” (Matthew 19:4) and “for this cause” the two would leave parents, cleave to each other, and be one.
2. The word “cleave” (proskollao) helps us understand the oneness of the marriage bond. To “cleave” means “to glue on or to: to stick or cleave to” (LS 693). “Adhere closely to, be faithfully devoted to, join” (AG 716). It is God that does the “joining” (i.e., “to yoke together, couple, pair together in marriage” [LS 757]).

3. Marriage is depicted as two individuals (male and female) joined as one in a yoke by God. The two now pull together in the struggles of life (they are one in that they are joined together in life’s pursuits). They are one in that they take care of each other, patient with each other, and are kind to each other.

I. “This mystery is great: but I speak in regard of Christ and the church” (5:32).
1. The mystery regards Christ’s relationship to the church (His great love wherewith He loves it). Paul is revealing these mysterious relationships so that they are no longer hidden but rather made manifest.
2. Christ’s loves the church so much so that He gave himself for it. He teaches, nourishes, and cherishes the church. The church is as His own body!

J. “Nevertheless do ye also severally love each one his own wife even as himself; and let the wife see that she fear her husband” (5:33).
1. Though the thrust of these verses have to do with Christ’s relationship to the church we are informed of the husband wife relationship.
2. The husbands are commanded to love, nourish, and cherish his wife as he does his own body. The wife is commanded to be in subjection and “fear” (phobeo) her husband. Phobeo is “to stand in awe of, dread, fear” (LS 867). We ran into the word “fear” at Ephesians 5:21 in relation to man’s fear of Christ. Clearly the wife is to view the husband with great awe, fear, and respect. The husband is God’s ordained head of the wife and she, being a lover of truth, will voluntarily cherish her God appointed position in the marriage.

Synopsis of Ephesians Chapter 5

Both Jew and Gentile were involved in some form of prejudicial treatment toward each other. The first four chapters of Ephesians concentrates on their equality and unity in the one body of Christ. Another problem among the saints in Asia was their creeping back into the sins of the world.

The character and walk of Christian life remains under consideration in chapter five as it was in chapter four. Paul contrast the old man of sin with the new man of righteousness in Ephesians 4 (cf. 4:22-24). Chapter four revealed the “walk” of the Christian to be dictated by truth (Ephesians 4:1) as opposed to religious error (Ephesians 4:17). Paul contrasts the "sons of disobedience" (Ephesians 5:6) with "children of light" (Ephesians 5:8) in Ephesians 5. Chapter five reveals the Christian’s walk to be “in love” (Ephesians 5:2), “as children of light” (Ephesians 5:8), and in “wisdom” (Ephesians 5:15).

The Ephesian troubles did not end with prejudice and worldliness. Paul discusses obvious failures in the marital relationships in Ephesus. Apparently women were attempting to overtake men in the home and many men were growing bitter toward their wives. The apostle compares Christ's relationship with the church to the husband’s relationship to the wife. The husband is to be head of the home as the wife voluntarily lives in subjection to him (Ephesians 5:22-24). The husband is commanded to not only be the head of the wife but to love her as his own body (Ephesians 5:25ff).

We are given another piece that helps us understand the subject of grace in Ephesians five. Speaking of the church Paul said, “that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word” (Ephesians 5:26). To be clean is to be forgiven of the spots of sin in one’s life. One is forgiven of sins when baptized (Acts 2:38). Now notice that the Christian’s sanctification is associated with the forgiveness of sins and truth (both of which are directly connected to God’s grace; see Ephesians 1:7). Jesus connects sanctification to grace and grace to truth when in His prayer to the Father He states, “Sanctify them in truth: thy word is truth” (John 17:17). The conclusion is obvious. God's grace is revealed to man through truth.
I. Admonition regarding the Parent and Child Relationship toward one Another (6:1-4):

A. “Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right” (6:1).

1. Paul has examined the husband wife relationship with the Ephesians and now he looks to children in the home.

2. The command that children obey their parents suggest two things. First, that children are reading and knowing God’s Word. Secondly, that parents are instructing their children in truth.

   a. “Children” (teknon) = “the young” (LS 797).

   b. The young are to obey their parents “in the Lord.” Doing something “in the Lord” is equated to doing something that is “right” as opposed to wrong (see Proverbs 1:8-9; 6:20-22 etc.).

3. Note that Paul tells the young among the Colossians “Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing in the Lord” (Colossians 3:20). When the Child obeys his parents in all things he or she is acting in a well pleasing manner “in the Lord.” Two things to note here. First, children are to obey in "all things" as the wife is to obey her husband "in all things" (see Ephesians 5:24). Secondly, let us consider the "in the Lord" statement. At Colossians 3:18 we are told, “Wives, be in subjection to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.” Again at 1 Thessalonians 3:8 we are told, “for now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord.” John writes, “And I heard a voice from heaven saying, Write, Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth” (Revelation 14:13). The phrase “in the Lord,” as used in these verses, indicates one’s willingness to obey God’s instructions; i.e., live faithfully to all God’s commandments. It is the idea of doing things as God authorizes.

4. There are other usages of the phrase “in the Lord” in the NT such as indicating spiritual fellowship with God (1 Corinthians 9:2; Philippians 1:14; Philémon 1:16), receiving another due to their being “in the Lord” (i.e., a faithful Christian) (Romans 16:2, 8, 11, 22; 1 Corinthians 16:19; Philippians 2:29), and speaking by the authority of Christ (Acts 14:3; Ephesians 4:17). Other uses of the phrase, “in the Lord” include spiritual labor (Romans 16:12; 1 Corinthians 9:2; 15:58; Ephesians 6:21; Colossians 4:7), having spiritual understanding (Ephesians 5:8), having one over you in spiritual matters (i.e., elders) (1 Thessalonians 5:12), being faithful (1 Corinthians 4:17), called (1 Corinthians 7:22), and married (1 Corinthians 7:39). Out of all the usages of the phrase, “in the Lord” it seems apparent that the thrust of the concept is that an individual is being compliant with the instructions of God (truth or gospel). Such a one is going to find authority or a “thus saith Jehovah” for all that they practice (see Colossians 3:17) (see study # 43).

B. “Honor thy father and mother (which is the first commandment with promise)” (Ephesians 6:2).

1. Paul quotes from Exodus 20:12 to further explain God’s desire for the children’s obedience to their parents. Here is an example of an OT commandment being brought over to the NT and made part of the new covenant in Christ Jesus (see study # 70; Old Testament Laws brought into the New Testament and made Binding).

2. The word “honor” (timao) = “hold in honor, reverence... to be held worthy of honor... of things, to hold in honor, value, prize” (LS 807). The word “parents,” of verse 1, is now defined as the father and mother. Children are to look to their parents as those of high value. The child who loves God and his parents will look to their parents with reverence and respect. When the parent speaks, the child listens knowing that the message of the parent is important to them. When the parent asks the child to do something the child gets to it due to their love, respect, and overall high view of their parents.

3. The commandment to “honor thy father and mother” is not the first of the Ten Commandments but rather a commandment that indicates the promise that the days of the obedient child will be long and well pleasing to God.

C. “that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth” (6:3).
1. The twofold promise of the child honoring his or her parents includes first the idea of it “being well with thee.” When God is well pleased with me then certainly all is well in relation to my soul (cf. Colossians 3:20).
2. Secondly, those who are living in a fashion that is well pleasing to God are promised to “live long on the earth.” There are always consequences to living godly and ungodly as to length of life (cf. Proverbs 10:27). Obviously it is a good thing to live long on this earth.

D. “And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord” (6:4).
1. To “provoke” (parorgizo) = “to provoke to anger, irritate, exasperate” (Moulton 310). Consider the fact that Paul stated, “Fathers provoke not your children, that they be not discouraged” (Colossians 3:21). The father who irritates, exasperates, and provokes his child to anger will have a discouraged child.
2. Rather than exasperating our children with unreasonable demands that only discourage them we fathers are to “nurture” the child. The word “nurture” (paideia) = “the rearing of a child... training and teaching, education” (LS 584). The father is commanded to teach, train, and educate his child in the Lord’s teachings (i.e., truth). There is a difference between teaching a child and provoking a child. Rather than moving a child to anger let the fathers move their children to faith, love, patience, and godliness.

II. The Master and Servant Relationship toward each other (6:5-9):
A. “Servants, be obedient unto them that according to the flesh are your masters, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ” (6:5).
1. Paul now moves to the slave master relationship. We may draw some application to this in the work world (i.e., employee and employer).
2. A “servant” (doulos) = “a born bondman or slave, opp. To one made a slave; then, generally, a bondman, slave” (LS 210). To the surprise of many the NT does not state that being a master over another (slave) is sinful. To the contrary, Paul simply gives regulations to both slave and master that they both may be pleasing to the Lord. One such NT example is the relationship between Philemon (the master) and his slave (Onesimus) (see book of Philemon). Before escaping from Philemon, Onesimus was a “do nothing” slave (Philemon 1:10-11). Paul sent Onesimus back a changed man; i.e., not only did he obey the gospel but he was now profitable to Philemon as his personal slave. Clearly, having obeyed the gospel did not change the fact that Onesimus was a slave that belonged to Philemon.
3. During the NT days there were those of means who had slaves (such as Philemon). Paul gives instructions to both these classes as to how they are to walk in love toward each other. The servant was to be obedient to the master in comparison to being obedient to Christ’s laws or teachings. This is not a call to return slavery to areas of the world that no longer participate in slavery it is simply rules to govern those in said situation. Neither is this verse a call to abolish slavery but rather simple regulations that when followed all may be pleasing to the Lord.
4. The slave's service to the master was no different than the wife to her husband and children to their parents. These individuals were to be obedient to those over them "as unto Christ." The Lord is setting forth order and roles in the mind of the saints.
B. “not in the way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers; but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart” (6:6).
1. This verse gets to the attitude of the servant while working for his master. The servant is to work hard “not in the way of eyeservice” (ophthalmodouleia) = “service rendered only while under inspection” (Moulton 296). Such service would be to conduct oneself as a “men-pleaser” (anthropareskos) = “desirous of pleasing men” (Moulton 30). The slave that rendered services to the master only when he was looking was working only to please men rather than God.
2. The slave that works when the master is looking and when he is not works to please God. Honesty of work and a solid work ethic is God’s desire for His people (2 Thessalonians 3:7-13) (see study # 71; Work Ethic).
3. The servant ought to follow the master’s instructions as though he were following the Lord’s instructions. Such labor will thereby be “from the heart” rather than because someone is
looking. Sometimes we say that one’s heart is not in their work... If I view my work as following out the instructions of God my heart will always be in my work. The Christian at the work place ought to never be spoken of as one who is lazy and will not pull his share of the load. The Christian should never hide from duties at work.

C. “with good will doing service, as unto the Lord, and not unto men.” (6:7).
   1. The servant’s attitude while working is under consideration. The slave is not to work only when the master is looking and slouch at all other times because God would not have him do so. The Christian is to have a work ethic that takes into consideration the fact that God desires that we work rather than hide and try to get out of doing things.
   2. Such a work ethic is defined as “with good will” (*eunoia*) = “good-will, favor, kindness... out of kindness or good-will... feelings of kindness” (LS 329). According to this definition it would be unkind and not of good will to work in a lazy, hiding, or slothful kind of way. When I work hard as though I were obeying Jesus’ commandments then I am being kind to my master (or employer). The same principle certainly applies to today’s work ethic. There are business owners and there are employees. The employee should work hard at all times knowing that his labor is as unto the Lord and that in doing so he is being kind to the employer (a character trait that God so desires in His people) (see study # 71).

D. “knowing that whatsoever good thing each one doeth, the same shall he receive again from the Lord, whether he be bond or free” (6:8).
   1. When the servant / employee does good at work (i.e., works hard at all times being kind to his master / employer) the servant can expect to receive good from the Lord (likewise with the master / employer).
   2. What good can come out of obeying God at all times? John tells us that those who are faithful till death will receive the ultimate crown of life (i.e., a heavenly home) (cf. Revelation 2:10).

E. “And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, and forbear threatening: knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no respect of persons with him” (6:9).
   1. The master/ employer have commandments to follow as does the servant / employee in the working arrangement.
   2. As the servant is commanded to be kind and fair to the master even so the master is to be kind and fair to the servant. Cheating one of a day’s wages or exercising partiality toward others due to special friendships, gender or race would be sinful.
   3. Note that God is no respecter of persons and thereby we are not to be (cf. Acts 10:34; James 2:1, 9).

III. The Battle field of life and the Ancient Foe Identified (6:10-13):
A. “Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might” (6:10).
   1. The word “finally” indicates not only a closing of a discussion but a summation. Paul has thoroughly dealt with the Christian’s “walk” of life in the past three chapters. Their walk toward each other as saints whether Jew or Gentile is in view. The Ephesians walk in this world with all the opportunities to sin are in view. Their walk at home and work is also under consideration.
      a. The Christian once “walked according to the course of this world” (Ephesians 2:2).
      b. The Christian is created to “walk” in “good works” (Ephesians 2:10).
      c. The Christian is to “walk worthy of the calling wherewith ye were called” (Ephesians 4:1).
      d. The Christian is to “no longer walk as the Gentiles also walk, in the vanity of their mind” (Ephesians 4:17).
      e. The Christian is to “walk in love” (Ephesians 5:2).
      f. The Christian is to “walk as children of light” (Ephesians 5:8).
      g. The Christian is to “Look therefore carefully how ye walk, not as unwise, but as wise;” (Ephesians 5:15).
   2. The word of God governs every aspect of the Christian’s life (i.e., his walk in the church, home, society, and at the work place). One comes to know God’s governing truth through giving diligence in Bible study (2 Timothy 3:15). The more one comes acquainted with God’s
word the “stronger” one may be “in the Lord” (i.e., His instructions and doing things strictly by the authority of the Lord / see notes at Ephesians 6:1). The strength of Christ is illustrated in his:

a. Dealing with temptations to sin (Matthew 4:1-11) (He never one time sinned [Hebrews 4:15]).

b. God’s grace is the strength of Christ (2 Corinthians 12:9).

c. God’s salvation is the strength of Christ (Romans 1:16; Revelation 12:10).

3. To be strong in the Lord thereby means to have understanding of His will as a current recipient, through hope, of His gracious offer of salvation from the consequences of sin.

B. “Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil” (6:11).

1. Whether in the church, world, home, or work the Christian is to arm themselves to stand against Satan.

2. Understanding the “wiles” of the devil will help us better understand the “whole armor of God.” The word “wiles” (methodeia) = “craft (skill in evasion or deception; guile / AHD 336), wiliness (a deceitful stratagem or trick / AHD 1382)” (LS 493). “To trace, investigate; to handle methodically; to handle cunningly (shrewd or crafty in manipulation or deception / AHD 349)” (Moulton 261). The apostle Paul tells the Corinthians that the devil’s “devices” (2 Corinthians 2:10-11) are “craft and deceit” (2 Corinthians 4:2). The word “Satan” means adversary and Matthew refers to him as the “tempter” (Matthew 4:3). Our ancient foe seeks to bring us down with his devices of enticement (James 1:13ff) (see study # 60).

3. The “armor of God” will thereby keep me from being deceived by Satan’s devices of craft and deceit found in false teaching (cf. Matthew 7:15-23) and thereby being “tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine” (Ephesians 4:14) (i.e., fiery darts of the evil one) (see study # 72; Fight the Good Fight of Faith).

C. “For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual host of wickedness in the heavenly places” (6:12).

1. To “wrestle” (pale) = “to swing round, sway backward and forward... wrestling; struggle, contest” (Moulton 299). “Battle” (LS 587). The Christian’s “battle” is not against “flesh and blood” but is rather a spiritual battle (i.e., the theme of the book of Revelation).

2. Christians are in battle against “principalities” (arche) = “the first place or power, sovereignty, dominion, command... a term of office... the authorities, i.e., the magistrates” (LS 121). It seems that in this context the “principalities” are not “flesh and blood” rulers but rather beings in the spirit world. Jude writes, “And angels that kept not their own principality (arche), but left their proper habitation, he hath kept in everlasting bonds under darkness unto the judgment of the great day” (Jude 6). At Ephesians 3:10 Paul writes, “to the intent that now unto the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places might be made known through the church the manifold wisdom of God...” It may be that the spirits under consideration are demonic angels of authority (indicates rank). Note that Jude refers to Michael as the “archangel” (Jude 9) (archaggelos) = “chief angel” (Moulton 53). Said term indicates rank among the angels in the heavenly places. As there are angels in heaven with various rank even so the devil has demonic angels of rank that assault the Christian (cf. Matthew 25:41) (see study # 36).

3. Christians are in battle against “powers” (Greek - exousia) “Power or authority to do a thing... an office, magistracy... the authorities” (LS 276). Again, at Ephesians 3:10 those in heavenly places are not only “principalities” but “powers.” Paul states that there are angels of various ranks “in the heavenly places” that have left off following God and joined up with Satan and they have power to wage war against the saints of God.

4. Christians are in battle against “world-rulers of this darkness” (Kosmokratoras tou skotous) meaning “Monarch of the world; in NT a worldly prince, a power paramount in the world of the unbelieving and ungodly” (Moulton 238). “Skotos” means “a realm of moral darkness” (Moulton 370). Keep in mind that Paul is not discussing “flesh and blood” world rulers but rather those in the spirit world (i.e., the devil and his angels). The devil is known as the ruler or
prince of this world (cf. John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; 2 Corinthians 4:4) (see study # 73; Identity of Satan).

5. Christians are in battle against “the spiritual host of wickedness in the heavenly places.” The word “spiritual” (pneumatikos) = “a bodiless spirit... spiritual, pertaining to the soul, as distinguished from what concerns the body... pertaining to the nature of spirits, evil spirits at Ephesians 6:12” (Moulton 331). Diagramming the sentence may help here. The Greek word pneumatikos is a plural adjective describing the noun “wickedness” (person, place, or thing) (Friberg 600). The wicked person under consideration is spiritual beings in heavenly places. The wicked beings are spiritual in the “heavenly places” (i.e., spirit realm of the unseen / cf. Ephesians 1:3).

6. Ephesians 6:12 reveals the spiritual nature of the conflict the Christian is in against the devil. The devil is depicted as one who walks to and fro in the earth ever watching for weak moments in individuals lives that he may gain advantage (Job 1:7; 1 Corinthians 7:5; 1 Peter 5:8; 2 Corinthians 2:11). The object of the devil’s wrath is the saint of God and the Lord’s church (cf. Revelation 12:17). Clearly the devil has a host of wicked servants to help him in his work of tempting mankind known as demons (cf. 1 Corinthians 10:20; 1 Timothy 4:1; James 2:19; Revelation 16:14) (see study # 74; Demons).

7. Satan’s Work is to tempt the ungodly that they may remain ungodly and to cause the fall of faithful Christians from God’s grace (see study # 60):
   a. Satan uses the devises of lusts (1 John 2:16; 1 Corinthians 7:5).
   b. Pride (1 John 2:16).
   c. Covetousness (1 Thessalonians 3:5).
   d. Craft and deceit (Genesis 3:1-6).
   e. Humanism (Man’s dependence upon his own reason for direction in life) through self delusion (1 Corinthians 4:6-13) and heeding to false teaching (2 Thessalonians 2:9-10).

8. Consider James 1:13-15, “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no man: but each man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed. Then the lust, when it hath conceived, bears sin: and the sin, when it is full grown, brings forth death.” The word “tempt” (peirazo) = “to make proof or trial of... let trial be made... to try or tempt a person, put him to the test... to be sorely tempted, to be tempted to sin” (LS 616). James defines the word tempt to mean “drawn away by his own lust, and enticed.” The word temp in English is defined as, “to entice someone to commit an unwise or immoral act, esp. by a promise of reward” (AHD 1252). God is not enticing man to sin. The devil is the tempter (see Matthew 4:3). The devil and his demonic angels are thereby enticing mankind to violate the Biblical principles of self control so that one may gratify his selfish desires (see Romans 7:7-25).

9. The next few verses are designed to give the Christian hope against our foe the devil and his demonic host. The Christian must wage war against these foes using the word of God as his armor and sword. The battle field has been set, the fight is to the death, the contestants are man and the devil, and the winner will take all. God has equipped the saint for victory but He will not do the battling for us (see study # 75; Battle for the Souls of Men).

D. “Wherefore take up the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand” (6:13).
   1. We have identified the enemy as the devil and his demonic host. We have examined the devices of the devil against mankind. The battlefield is now set. Where I spend eternity is at stake in this battle. This is a must win situation.
   2. God’s instructions for Christians in this battle are to “take up the whole armor of God.” The word “armor” (panoplia) means “the full armor, i.e., shield, helmet, breastplate, greaves, sword, and lance, a full suit of armor, panoply” (LS 590). Our English word panoply means “the complete arms and armor of a warrior. A magnificent, shining array that covers or protects” (AHD 898). We often sing the song, “Soldiers of Christ, Arise” in worship. The Song states, “but take, to arm you for the fight, the panoply of God” (Hymns for Worship, pp. 231).
3. The “evil day” is the day of temptation (the battle). When times of temptation come the Christian is enticed to act in some unwise or immoral way. The enticing is by the devil and his demonic host. The Christian is commanded to “withstand” (anthistemi) = “to set against, to set up in opposition... to stand against, esp. in battle, to withstand, oppose... to make a stand” (LS 70-71). The clear command is to do battle with the devil and his host of demonic beings when they try to entice you to make unwise and immoral choices.

E. These verses shed light on the process of our daily fight against sin. We are continually assaulted by the devil and his wicked host. There are times when we fail in this battle and give in to unwise and immoral choices. We are defeated. Here is where God comes in. God, through His Son Jesus, enables us to be forgiven of sins (cf. Acts 2:38; 8:22; 1 John 1:9). The Christian is thereby like a super warrior. The devil and his host may slay us time and time again and we have the power, through Christ’s forgiveness and our humility of spirit, to be forgiven and given new life. This helps us understand better the statement God made at Genesis 3:14-15, “And Jehovah God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, cursed art thou above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: and I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” When Jesus was crucified on the cross he was bruised on the heel by Satan; however, at the same time Satan’s head was bruised (much more sever). Christ enabled man to receive forgiveness of sins and this indeed bruised the devil’s head of power. The author of Hebrews said, “Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, he also himself in like manner partook of the same; that through death he might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and might deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Hebrews 2:14-15). The death of Jesus on the cross served as a sacrifice which supplied the antidote to sin. This death was the crushing of the power of Satan mentioned at Genesis 3:15.

IV. The Christian is commanded to Arm self to the Teeth with God’s Armor (6:14-20):
A. “Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness” (6:14).
1. Let us now define what it means to “stand” (Greek - histemi) means “stand still... stop, stay, check... metaphor. to stand firm” (LS 385). The Christian is to stand rather than be moved off of God’s standard of truth when assaulted with false teaching and temptation. So Paul states that we are to stand “therefore.” The “therefore” gives us cause to take a stand. The devil and his demonic angels are in an all out battle against the saint. The everlasting soul is at stake. The Christian is to therefore be armed to the teeth as a soldier readied for the battle (see 2 Timothy 2:3-4). Let no man discourage you when you watch, warn, convict of sin, and contend for truth.

2. Consider the depiction of a soldier (below). During Paul’s day, the Roman Empire was a world power. Roman soldiers had a wide spread reputation for being prepared for the day of battle. It is likely that Paul had this soldier in mind when penning these words. We shall, with Paul, arm the soldier with God’s instructions. The first piece of armor is “having girded your loins with truth.” The “loins” (osphus) means “the loin (the part of the side and back between the ribs and the pelvis... the region of thighs and groin) or loins, the lower part of the back” (LS 574). Paul admonishes the Ephesian Christians to “gird” (perizonnumi) this area with the “truth.” To “gird” is to “gird round oneself, gird oneself with... put him on as a defense” (LS 626). “Truth” (the gospel message; cf. Ephesians 1:13) is to be the armor wrapped around the soldiers lower back, waist, and thighs. Here is the foundation and strength of the soldier’s armor. Damage to the area of the loins is fatal and thereby must be protected. There is only one truth that saves and is thereby to be the soul’s greatest point of strength (Ephesians 4:2ff; Jude 3). A knowledge of truth will help us defeat Satan’s demons as they tempt and hurl darts of false doctrine our way. Note that “truth” (Greek aletheia) is a noun (Friberg 600). Truth is what I am and defines my character as a Christian.
3. The soldier’s breastplate is to be “righteousness” (dikaiosune) meaning “righteous, just” (LS 202). Note that the Greek word dikaiosune is a noun (indicating a person, place, or thing) (Friberg 600). The person of the Christian is righteous (i.e., right, lawful, just, real, genuine, true). Righteousness is the standard God has set for His saints (see Isaiah 28:17). The breastplate identifies the individual’s character (qualities, will, and purpose in life). When my strength of character is found in truth and righteousness I am a man of purpose. My character is defined by God’s revelation because of the hope I have in Christ Jesus.

B. “and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace” (6:15).

1. To “shod” (hupodeo) = “to bind or fasten under... to under-bind, i.e., to shoe, because the sandals or shoes were bound on with straps... put on shoes” (LS 842).

2. The shoe of the Christian is the “gospel of peace.” Paul states that the Christian soldier is to put on shoes with the “preparation” of the gospel... The idea of “preparation” (hetoimasia) means “to make or get ready, prepare, provide... to cause to be prepared... to prepare oneself” (LS 321). When the Christian puts on the gospel of peace he is a prepared one. What is he to be prepared for? The context suggest the day of battle. A soldier with no shoes is an unprepared soldier. The shoes of the Roman soldiers often had cleats or spikes to help them have a firm footing when engaged in hand to hand combat. So the Christian should be ready for the day of battle with adequate footing. Shoes are important in sporting events. Runners, football, and basketball players, soccer players and so forth wear the appropriate shoes to help them perform at their greatest potential. When the Christian has shoes of the gospel we are able to wage effective warfare to the best of our abilities.

3. Note once again that the armament of the shoes (i.e., the gospel of peace) is a noun (Friberg 600). Again, this indicates the character of the soldier. We are to go into battle as one who represents the gospel of peace.

C. “withal taking up the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil one” (6:16).
1. The word “faith” is a Greek noun too (Friberg 600) and so defines who I am as a soldier of Jesus Christ. My faith in Jesus Christ and His truth is evidenced in my obedience to His commandments (see John 3:36; Acts 14:1-2; Hebrews 11:1ff). I obey Jesus because I love and believe that He is my redeemer (cf. John 14:15).

2. Satan and his demonic angels may hurl darts of false teaching and vices of temptation toward me; however, my character is built on truth and my desire is to please the heavenly Father. During the time of spiritual warfare I will raise my shield when the devil tempts me rather than lowering it and giving in to false doctrines and temptation. To lower the shield is to commit spiritual suicide.

D. “And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:” (1:17).  
1. The Christian is in warfare with spiritual host of wickedness. Said one is to be armed with spiritual armament such as truth, righteousness, gospel of peace, and shield of faith. The helmet of the soldier is now considered. All armaments to this point have helped us understand that the Christian is to be ready for the day of battle. The helmet is another piece of readiness. Our goal is salvation from the consequences of sin. The helmet is a piece of our equipment that illustrates purpose as did the rest. My character is molded by my desire to receive salvation. When the devil hurls his battle axe of false teaching and temptation at my head my helmet of purpose will protect me. The prophet Isaiah wrote of those redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus saying that, "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of Jehovah, and their righteousness which is of me, saith Jehovah" (Isaiah 54:17).

2. The last piece of armament that the Christian is to be equipped with is the “sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." The work of the Holy Spirit was to deliver divine revelation to the apostles and prophets (John 16:13ff; Ephesians 3:3ff). Paul connects the word of God and the Holy Spirit together with the illustration of a “sword” due to the closeness of each other in the Spirit’s work. The “word of God” is the Christian’s offensive weapon to deliver a death blow to Satan by saying, “it is written” (see Matthew 4:1ff).

E. “with all prayer and supplication praying at all seasons in the Spirit, and watching thereunto in all perseverance and supplication for all the saints,” (6:18).  
1. As the Christian puts on the whole armor of God (i.e., purposing not to sin because we believe by faith that God’s promise is sure) he / she is to “pray at all seasons in the Spirit.” Verse 18 helps us see that the Christian is not alone in his fight against the devil. We are to “pray” (Greek proseuche) meaning “to offer prayers or vows, to address him in prayer... to offer prayers, to worship... to pray for a thing” (LS 690). We are to offer “supplication” (deesis) meaning “an entreating, asking: a prayer, entreaty” (LS 175). These two words; i.e., pray and supplication, are very similar and illustrate the communication that exists between the saints and the Lord. We may offer praise to God and asks Him to help us defeat the devil in our battles.

2. There is never a time when prayer is non-effective in a faithful Christian's life. The Christian prays in “all seasons.” Whether we are being tempted or not let us pray to God and meditate continuously on His holy word. Paul said, “pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

3. The Christian is to prayerfully “watch” (agrupneo) meaning “to lie awake, be watchful, to pass a sleepless night... metaphor. to be watchful” (LS 9). The context is clear as to what the Christian is to be watching for. We are to watch, be alert, and on guard against false teaching and the tempting vices of the devil. Note that our watching is directed toward “all the saints.” The Christian is to watch out for other Christians and not only ourselves. When false teaching and sin invade my brother’s life let me love and care for him and expose the error (cf. Ephesians 5:11). The apostle Peter said, “Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king” (1 Peter 2:17) (see study # 13 and # 76 Watchmen).

F. “and on my behalf, that utterance may be given unto me in opening my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel,” (6:19).  
1. Paul asks the Ephesians to consider him in their daily prayers and supplications. Paul desired to give “utterance” of the gospel message to all who would listen. The word “utterance”
(logos) means “the word or that by which the inward thought is expressed... the inward thought itself... that which is said or spoken: a word, words, i.e., language, talk... speech, discourse conversation...” (LS 446-447).

2. Paul is simply asking for prayers that he may have boldness to speak when opportunities present themselves. We all need such prayers.

G. “for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak” (6:20).
   1. An “ambassador” is one who represents another. Paul was an apostle of Jesus Christ (i.e., he represented Christ when he spoke). Paul was in “chains” while writing this epistle and thereby we suppose the epistle to be written from Rome approximately 64 – 65 AD (see introduction to this study).
   2. Paul knew what he “ought to speak;” however, like many of us today we lack the courage to do so. Paul’s request to the Ephesians was that he would “speak boldly.”

V. Paul’s Benediction (6:21-24):
   A. “But that ye also may know my affairs, how I do, Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things: whom I have sent unto you for this very purpose, that ye may know our state, and that he may comfort your hearts” (6:21-22).
      1. Apparently Tychicus has brought this letter from Paul to the Ephesians. Paul intends for Tychicus to inform the brethren of all the current events in his life that would not meet the objective of the current epistle.
      2. Tychicus is mentioned in Acts 20:1ff as being one of the traveling companions of the apostle Paul. He is mentioned at Titus 3:12 and 2 Timothy 4:12 as being associated with Paul. Colossians 4:7-9 appears to point to Tychicus as the bearer of epistles to Philemon and the Colossians as well.
      3. The objective of Tychicus, aside from delivering this epistle, was to inform the Ephesians of Paul’s welfare and to comfort them in their time of spiritual warfare.
   B. “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 with a love incorruptible.” (6:23-24).
      1. Peace, love, and faith belong to those who fear God and keep His commandments.
      2. Grace (God’s conditional gift of eternal salvation) belongs to all who love the Lord.

Synopsis of Ephesians 6

Three sins have been exposed in the lives of the Ephesian Christians living in Asia. First, the Jewish and Gentile Christians displayed a spirit of prejudice toward each other (see Ephesians chapters 1-3). This prejudice was destroying the unity in the body of Christ. Paul effectively proved that there is one faith and one church that is comprised not of Jew and Gentile but fellow citizens in the household of God.

Secondly, the Ephesian Christians were obviously slipping back into the world of sinful living (see Ephesians chapters 3-5). Paul counters this error by commanding them to be imitators of God (Ephesians 5:1).

Thirdly, the Ephesians were apparently having marital issues. Wives were not submitting to their husbands as God ordained and husbands were growing bitter against their wives. The apostle reminds the married of Ephesus that their relationship is compared to that of Christ and the church.

Paul continues his admonition of roles in the home and society by addressing God's will for children in the home and servants when working for their masters.

After completing final admonitions regarding the Christian’s walk in life (i.e., children, parents, servants, and masters), Paul encourages the Ephesians to put on the whole armor of God. The Christian is in a battle. The enemy is the devil and his demonic angels (Ephesians 6:12). The soul of man is at stake in this war. The Christian is admonished to arm themselves with the whole word of God.
The Christian’s life is one of purpose. The Christian’s character is molded by truth so that when false teaching or tempting vices come their way they can with purpose say, “get ye behind me Satan.” Though we are armed with truth we always need God’s strong arm to lean on for comfort. Paul admonishes the Christian to pray fervently to God making known our request in the daily battles of life. Lastly, effective warfare involves not only our selves but other brethren. We should watch, warn, and expose the sins of others so that their hope of heaven may remain.