

Ephesians

Greeting

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

Paul identifies himself as an apostle, one sent out on behalf of another. The term apostle has 2 uses in the New Testament: it can be used generally of anyone sent out by another, or it can refer to an individual with apostolic authority to establish the New Testament church during the period that the New Testament was written. Paul defends himself as a true apostle in 2 Corinthians. This letter is to be read in the church as authoritative and as Scripture.

Paul is **an apostle of Christ Jesus**, the Anointed Savior. Paul speaks on behalf of Christ Jesus **by the will of God**. He did not make himself an apostle, but God made him one. Paul calls attention to his office and to the One who gave him the office.

Paul says here that he is writing **to the saints**. All believers in Christ Jesus are saints. Saints are those who have access to the sanctuary. In the Old Covenant, there were very few holy ones, who had access to God's throne and His Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle/Temple. In the New Covenant, all believers have direct access to God through the blood of Jesus Christ. Our position before God allows us to live holy lives.

He says that the saints **are faithful in Christ Jesus**. It is not just that we are faithful *to* Christ Jesus, but that we are "in Christ". For the Old Covenant saints, they were "in the land" of promise. That was the sphere in which they lived. For the New Covenant saints, our sphere of existence is in the body of Christ. We must be faithful in Christ. In the Old Testament, being outside the land was considered a curse. For us, as New Testament saints, being outside of Christ is a curse. We must remain in Christ to be blessed.

Paul wishes them **grace to you and peace**. Grace is God's unmerited favor. Peace has 3 dimensions to it. 1) The primary aspect is **peace with God**. God is angry with us, because we are at war with Him. This is objective peace, in that Jesus Christ obtained our ability to have peace with God. 2) Another aspect is a subjective, psychological peace, inner peace. To have peace with God allows us to be free from guilt and have inner peace. 3) Lastly, due to peace with God we can have peace with our fellow man. Paul tells them that they have **peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ**.

Spiritual Blessings in Christ

1:3-4, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, 4 even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.

Blessing has 3 elements: it combines thanksgiving, praise, and the giving of gifts. Blessing God is thanking Him for what He has done for us. We are dependent on God, and we acknowledge this by thanking Him. When God blesses us, He gives us gifts.

There are 3 aspects to Biblical prayer: we thank God for creation, we thank God for redemption and establishing the kingdom, and based upon what He has already done we ask Him to bring the kingdom into its fullness. Thanking God for what He has already done makes our prayers a memorial. Memorials are found throughout Scripture as a way for us to remind God of what He has already done for us. And based upon what He has already done, we ask Him to bring the fullness of His covenant and kingdom into existence. Paul uses this structure for prayer quite often in his writings, including here in chapter 1.

Paul starts out by thanking God, **Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ**. When God blesses us, He gives us gifts. Paul tells us that the gifts are **every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world**. Spiritual blessings are blessings that come from the Spirit. Remember that the Spirit gives life. In Genesis 2, God breathed the Spirit into the clay and man became a living being. The Spirit also gives structure. In Genesis 1:2 it says that the Spirit was actively involved in the creation and formation of the world. When God gives us **every spiritual blessing**, we have life in its fullness, the abundant life.

We are told that our **spiritual blessing is in the heavenly places in Christ**. In Genesis 1:1 God created the heavens and the earth. Heaven is the blue-print for the earth. Transforming earth into heaven is man's job. We are to keep our eyes on heaven and recreate it on earth. The reason we are **in the heavenly places in Christ** is that we are enthroned with Christ in heaven.

The man who does not live a holy life will not get to exercise dominion and will lose life. Paul says, **even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him, in love**. We believers have been predestined by Him **before the foundation of the world**. God has chosen to save some and bypass others. Because God has chosen us, **we should be holy and blameless before him, in love**. Holiness and blamelessness are given by God, because we lost them when Adam sinned in the Garden.

The church, the bride of Christ, is to **be holy and blameless**. Remember that holiness is access to the sanctuary. Since believers are no longer defiled, we can go into the throne room of God. However, in the Old Testament we see that we and our garments are defiled due to sin. Even sacrificial animals had to be without blemish (Lev 1:3, 10). Believers are made **blameless** through Christ's substitutionary and sacrificial death. Based upon our justification by faith, we are made **holy** through sanctification. Notice that **we should be holy and blameless before him, in love**.

1:5-6, he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.

Because of Adam's sin, we who are all sons of Adam have lost that sonship. Our sonship has been restored in Christ. God has **predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ**. We come into the kingdom by the new birth and are immediately adopted as full sons. Only mature sons can receive their inheritance, so God immediately at salvation adopts us **through Jesus Christ**.

Since **he predestined us**, we are adopted **according to the purpose of his will**. This **adoption as sons is to the praise of his glorious grace**. God bestows **his glorious grace** to His people. God's glory implies His self-revelation as a gracious God (Ex 33:18-19; 34:5-7). Just as Old Testament sons resembled their fathers, so as we mature in holiness we begin to resemble our Father. Since God has **predestined us for adoption as sons**

through Jesus Christ, he has already **blessed us in the Beloved**, Jesus Christ. The term **the Beloved** was used as a name for Israel, and came to be used as a title for the Messiah.

1:7-8, In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the gracious riches, 8 which he lavished upon us,

The word **redemption** is used of getting someone out of slavery. In Scripture, the ways to get someone out of slavery are either to kill the bad slave master or to pay a price for the person. **In him we have redemption.** How are we redeemed? We are redeemed **through his blood**. The author of the Book of Hebrews says, **without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins. Redemption** requires **forgiveness of our trespasses**, which are sins against God. Our sins are forgiven by the payment of a debt. In the Old Testament one would pay a trespass offering to cover the debt for one's sins.

Since we sin against God, we need to pay Him back for our sins. How can we pay God? We use some of **the gracious riches, which he lavished upon us** to pay Him the trespass offering for our sins. What is the payment acceptable to God for our sins? In the Old Testament, when Israel was enslaved in Egypt, the blood of the Passover lamb covered the people. In the New Testament, the blood of Jesus Christ is the only way to pay for our sins, so Jesus Christ's blood is the most important of **the gracious riches, which he lavished upon us**.

1:8b-10, in all wisdom and insight 9 making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ 10 as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

Here Paul tells us that God has enlightened us **in all wisdom and insight**, by **making known to us the mystery of his will**. Where is **the mystery** hidden, and why is it given out in the New Testament but not in the Old? We must realize that **the mystery** is in the sanctuary, the throne room of God. So if you can't go into the sanctuary, you can't find **the mystery**. Old Testament saints did not obtain **the mystery**, because they did not have access into God's sanctuary. In the New Testament, all believers have sanctuary access, so we know **the mystery**. All false religions try to barge into God's sanctuary and understand **the mystery**. That is why they were and still are known as mystery religions. But **the mystery** is only given to the saints in the New Testament.

God made **known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose**. God's **purpose** is that **which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time**. So, in God's perfect time, **he set forth in Christ as a plan to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth**. Hence, for Paul, the primary mystery was the way God through Christ brought sinful men and women back into fellowship with Himself. Also, it is the way He restores the fallen universe back into unity with Him.

God gives New Testament saints this **mystery**, so that we can properly administrate God's universe, and help restore the world back to God through Christ Jesus. In order for believers to do this, we must be given Godly **wisdom and insight**, which Paul tells us we have already been given. For New Testament believers, where do we find God's **wisdom and insight**? God's revelation is now only contained in Scripture. The Bible is our only Standard for Truth. Everything must be weighed against Scripture, so only those things which line up with Scripture are true.

1:11-14, In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, 12 so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. 13 In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

We know from Scripture that God gave His revelation to the Jew first, then also to the Gentile. Here, in verses 11-12, Paul is talking about **we** the Jews; while in verse 13, he is talking about **you also** referring to the Gentiles.

So Paul starts out here by saying that in Christ **we** (the Jews) **have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will.** God's purpose here is **so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory.** The primary goal of salvation is not for our benefit! God's ultimate purpose in salvation is for Him to restore a people for His Name, so that believers **might be to the praise of his glory.** The ultimate purpose behind everything we do must be **to the praise of his glory!** When God redeemed the nation of Israel out from Egyptian slavery, it was not simply just so that they could be free. No, it was for the primary purpose that they go and serve and worship Him.

Now Paul goes on to speak about the Gentiles, starting in verse 13. **In him you** (Gentiles) **also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it.** Now the primary purpose for Gentile salvation is also **to the praise of his glory.** Notice that their faith is based on hearing Scripture, **the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.**

Also, Paul says that believers **were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,** and the Holy Spirit **is the guarantee of our inheritance.** The proof of this is that the Spirit was poured out on Pentecost. The indwelling of the Spirit is an objective reality, not a subjective experience.

When do believers receive our inheritance? When we look at the Old Testament, God promised the people of Israel in Egypt that he was giving them full possession of the land of promise, but after they exodus they wandered for 40 years in the wilderness until they entered the land. Then it took them around 400 more years until the time of David before they had full conquest of the land. Likewise, from AD 30 to AD 70 there is an overlap between the Jews and the Christians. The main issue between them was "who are the true people of God?" It was not until after the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in AD 70 that the believers and the church became recognized as God's true people of the kingdom. However, the body of Christ has still not conquered the whole world with the Gospel.

Z

Thanksgiving and Prayer

1:15-23, For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, 16 I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, 18 having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might 20 that he worked in Christ

when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. 22 And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

Paul continues by praying for them, **because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, 16 I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers.** Here we see Paul thanking God for their faith which he has heard about. Based upon what God has already done in them, Paul asks God to bring in the kingdom into its fullness.

Paul asks for specific things for them from **the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory.** Paul prays that God **may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him.** Back in verses 8-9 Paul said that God had given them **all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of his will.** Because God has already given it to us, we can ask God for more of it, so that it comes in its fullness. The phrase, **a spirit of wisdom and of revelation** refers to the Holy Spirit, so it is the Spirit who gives **wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.**

Paul continues praying, that they have **the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you.** That hope is the sure knowledge that **he chose us in him before the foundation of the world** (v 4). The hope of our calling is the security in the fact that He has called us into his kingdom! Next, he prays that **that you may know ... what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints.** Third, he prays **that you may know ... what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe.** When we know the mysteries, we have **the immeasurable greatness of his power.**

What Paul is asking God for is **according to the working of his great might that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.** Christ's resurrection shows God's power. Not only did God raise Christ from the dead, but He **seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places!** And now that He is seated at God's right hand, Christ has **all rule and authority and power and dominion!** Christ is above all of creation! There is nothing created in the entire universe which is above Him!

Also, Christ is **above every name that is named.** In magic, naming something gives one power and control over it. But here we see that Christ Jesus has been given the Name that is **above every name that is named!** Only the Name of Jesus Christ has power! Now this is not only true **in this age but also in the one to come.** When the old age of the Jews was over and the new age of Christ's church began after AD 70, there would still be demons and angels and magic, but Christ's Name would be far above all of them!

In addition, God **put all things under his feet.** Being under someone's feet is a sign of having absolute power. In the ANE, when a king overtook another nation, he would have the king of the conquered nation bow down to him and the victor would place his foot on the conquered king's neck. Saying that **all things** are **under Jesus' feet** means that Jesus Christ has absolute power, even to the point of making alive or killing.

Likewise, God **gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.** Since Christ has absolute power, and we are in Christ, we reign and have dominion over all things! As

long as we are faithful to Christ, the head of the church, we will have dominion. If we are not faithful, then we won't.

By Grace through Faith

2:1-10, And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— 3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. 4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— 6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Paul now moves on to a discussion of our past lives in sin (2:1-10). In verse 1, Paul says that Gentiles **were dead in the trespasses and sins**, and ends verse 10 by saying that **we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works**. Also Paul continues in verses 1-2 that Gentiles **were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked**, and ends the passage in verse 10 by saying, **we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works**.

Now we need to unpack this passage a bit. Paul starts out in 2:1; **you** Gentiles **were dead in the trespasses and sins**. In the Old Testament we learned that **trespasses** consider our rebellion against God as debt. When we commit a **trespass**, we acquire a debt. So as we continue to **trespass**, our debt to God continues to grow. Remember that in Chapter 1, Paul explains to us it that it is out of the riches of Christ that we pay God the debt that we owe.

Paul goes on here to tell us that **you** Gentiles **were dead in ... sins**. When the Old Testament made a distinction between **trespasses and sins**, **sins** refers to uncleanness. The sin offering in the Old Testament was to take care of uncleanness, just as the trespass offering was to take care of debt. So as we sin, we become more and more unclean. In the Old Testament, the more unclean a person became, the further they were from the sanctuary. So we see that there are stages of uncleanness, and that the more unclean one is the further one is removed from God. Remember that to be a New Testament saint means that the believer has sanctuary access. In the Old Testament, the people furthest from God were the unconverted Gentiles. In the Old Testament the unconverted Gentiles remained outside the land, converted Gentiles could only enter the Court for the Gentiles, the Jews could only enter the Inner Court, the priests could only enter the Holy Place, and only the High Priest on the Day of Atonement could enter the Holy of Holies. So our **sins** as unconverted Gentiles take us very far away from God. So we need help in order to draw near to God.

To be **dead** was to be under judgment. God told Adam not to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, or he would come under God's judgment and be **dead**. So Adam and Eve trespassed and incurred a debt, and became unclean and were driven out of the Garden of Eden into the Land of Edem. And their sons, **the sons of disobedience**, sinned even more and acquired even more debt to God and were driven even further

out from God's presence. Cain was kicked out of the Land of Eden into the land of Nod, the land of wandering. So to be away from God is a form of death, and death is progressive.

Paul continues telling us that we constantly **walked** in this debt and uncleanness, based on our **trespasses and sins**. Paul continues telling us that this death we walked in was **following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience**. Here Paul is speaking about a cosmic pattern of rebellion to God that unconverted Gentiles all followed.

This worldly pattern was set up by **the prince of the power of the air**. When God created mankind in His image, He gave mankind dominion over the world. However, mankind sinned and handed over dominion over to Satan and his demons. This lasted until Christ Jesus was resurrected and ascended into heaven, and took dominion over everything. Remember that the word for **air** here is the same as "firmament" in Genesis 1. When God created the firmament, He called it heaven, which is the earthly representation of the upper heavens. And this is where Satan and his demons were given dominion by Adam. But now Christ Jesus has taken dominion and has taken us out from under the dominion of Satan and his demons (vv 4-7).

Now (v. 3) Paul picks up the history of the Jews, **among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh**. Paul does not say that the Jews walked by the pattern of the world, since they were taken out of the world and placed into the Holy Land. When speaking about the Jews, Paul is talking about their inward corruption, **the passions of our flesh**. The Jews showed evidence of living **in the passions of our flesh, by carrying out the desires of the body and the mind**. Paul now equates the Jews with the unconverted Gentiles by saying that they **were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind**.

Now that we have acquired tremendous debt to God, how will we pay off the debt? That is explained in verses 4-7. Paul begins by reminding us that **God is rich in mercy**. We need His riches in order to pay off our debt to Him. This takes care of the trespasses. Now Paul goes on to tell us about **the great love with which he loved us**. God's love now takes care of our sins. Why? Because when you love somebody, you bring them near to you. Remember that our uncleanness from sin separated us further and further from God. Now God's love takes care of our sins and allows Him to draw us near to Him!

So now that God took care of our debt with his riches and drew us near to Him by His Love, what did He do? Paul tells us that **even when we were dead in our trespasses, God made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus**. Since we were dead, God resurrected us and **made us alive together with Christ**. We must always remember that it is **by grace we have been saved**. And not only did God give us a new life, but He **raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus!** Just as Christ ascended far above all rule and power of Satan, so we have been raised up and seated with Christ in heaven! We have now been given dominion and are now **the princes of the power of the air** by being in Christ.

Why did God resurrect us and give us dominion through Christ? We are told that it is **so that in the coming ages, the church age and the eternal age, he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus**. Not only are we drawn near to God, but we are made kings and queens. Not only our debts paid off, but we are given **immeasurable riches** to work with.

Predestination is a mystery that only God can comprehend. That our salvation is completely a gift from God is discussed in verses 8-10. **For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it**

is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. Salvation is **by grace ... through faith, not your own doing**. Salvation is **the gift of God, not a result of works**. Some people have misinterpreted this to mean that faith is a gift of God, but this is incorrect. It is the entirety of salvation that **is the gift of God**, and not just faith. The reason salvation is completely a gift from God is **so that no one may boast**. The boastful man is proud and self-sufficient, while the man of faith is dependent upon God and thankful.

Paul goes on to say that **we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works**. We are a new creation, **created ... for good works!** The person who has become a new creation by God has been re-created not for trespasses and sins but **for good works**. As a new creation **in Christ Jesus** we are **created ... for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them**. No longer are we to walk by the pattern of this world, but we are to walk on a path **which God prepared beforehand**.

One in Christ

Paul now returns to the issue of Jew versus Gentile. If there is still a difference between them, then Christ's work is not completed. Christ came to make us one people without distinction. In the Old Testament, the Jews were to offer sacrifices in behalf of the Gentiles. In the Feast of Tabernacles, the Jews would offer 70 bulls for the Gentiles (remember the 70 nations in the Table of Nations in Genesis 10). So the Jews were the representatives of the world to God. However, in the New Testament there are no longer any representatives. We are each held accountable for ourselves.

2:11-22, 11 Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands— 12 remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. 14 For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility 15 by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, 16 and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. 17 And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. 18 For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. 19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. 22 In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

In the Old Testament, the Gentiles, **"the uncircumcision,"** were kept far away from God. The circumcised, the Jews, were made priests and were to minister to others, especially to the Gentiles. The Jewish people were to be a light to the nations. If the circumcised pervert this calling and make themselves better than the others who are uncircumcised, they are acting like the Pharisees. And if those called to be priests to the nations reject their calling, then their sign of the covenant, circumcision, becomes only something **which is made in the flesh by hands**.

Paul continues by reminding the Gentiles that they were outsiders, they **were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise**. There was all of this distance between them and God. There was a wall in the Temple which separated the Court of the

Gentiles from the Inner Court where only Jews could enter. Because of this distance from God, they had **no hope and were without God in the world**. However, **now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ**. So the blood of Christ breaks down this wall of separation.

Now Paul explains how the blood of Christ brought the Gentiles near to God. **For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility**. So Jesus Christ has taken Jew and Gentile and created them into one new humanity. Christ Jesus accomplished this by breaking **down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility**. How did He break down this wall? He did it **by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two**. And what was the outcome of taking Jew and gentile and forming one new humanity out of them? He made **peace** so that He **might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility**.

Where did the hostility come from? It came from the law. But we thought the law was good. Well, it is. The law kept a safe distance between sinful humanity and God. If mankind would get too close to God, His wrath would destroy us. So the law was good in establishing all of these divisions. This enmity was symbolized by the wall in the Temple between the Court of the Gentiles and the Inner Courts. This wall symbolized the real wall, which was the law.

It is important to understand that we are no longer under the law the way it was written. Jesus is the incarnation of the law and was born under the law. When He died on the cross, the law was nailed to the cross and died (Col 2:13-14). Just as the Old Covenant died with Christ and was resurrected as the New Covenant, so the law of the Old Testament died and was resurrected with Christ. We believers are no longer under the system of law as it is written. Instead, the law is transformed by Christ into wisdom. Remember that everything in the Old Testament spoke about Christ, so now everything in the Old Testament is relevant for us New Testament believers.

So Paul is saying that the death of the law cancelled the wall of hostility that separated Jew from Gentile. Because the wall of hostility was abolished, **he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near**. This is a quotation of Isa 57:19. Peace is preached to the Jews who were near and also to the Gentiles who were far away, because through Christ Jesus we believers now all have complete access **in one Spirit to the Father**.

The result is that **you Gentiles are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints** (Old Testament believers) **and members of the household of God**. This **household of God is built on the foundation of the New Testament apostles and prophets**. So the foundation of the New Covenant Temple is built upon New Testament **apostles and prophets**. The New Testament Temple starts at Pentecost and is built from the raw material from the rubble of the old. It is the stones from the Old Covenant Jerusalem that are used to build the New Jerusalem. There is continuity between the Old and the New in that they are both built from the same raw materials, but there is discontinuity in that the Old Covenant Temple is torn down in order to build the New Covenant Temple.

The household for God is being built and **Christ Jesus himself is the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord**. Paul concludes **in him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit**. So the New Testament apostles and prophets

are the foundation, Jesus Christ is the cornerstone, and all believers are being used to build the **dwelling place for God by the Spirit**.

What does the cornerstone determine? First, it sets the direction for the walls of the building. Second, it determines the location of the building. Thirdly, the cornerstone determines the size of the building. Jesus Christ is the chief cornerstone and the remainder of the foundation is built by the New Testament apostles and prophets. The remainder of the building is made up of believers, we being living stones (1 Pet 2:5).

The Mystery of the Gospel Revealed

3:1-13, For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner for Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles— 2 assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God’s grace that was given to me for you, 3 how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly. 4 When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, 5 which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. 6 This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel. 7 Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God’s grace, which was given me by the working of his power. 8 To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, 9 and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things, 10 so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. 11 This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, 12 in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him. 13 So I ask you not to lose heart over what I am suffering for you, which is your glory.

Paul in verse 2 interrupts himself before he continues his prayer in verse 14. From Verse 2 through verse 13 he speaks about being a prisoner. Paul in verse 1 says that he is **a prisoner for Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles**. Why is he a prisoner? Because of his message that Jew and Gentile are one body. His imprisonment is discussed in Acts 21:27ff. The Jews accused Paul of bringing Gentiles into the Temple within the Inner Courts of the Jews. Paul is in prison for something that is at the very heart and core of the Gospel.

Paul continues in verse 2, **assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God’s grace that was given to me for you, 3 how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly**. Now some people think this refers to another letter written to the Ephesians, which has been lost. But most likely it refers to chapter 2 here in this letter. By revelation from God, which Paul discusses elsewhere, God made clear to him **the mystery**. And Paul explained **the mystery** in the previous chapter: Jew and Gentile as one people of God in Christ Jesus.

In verses 4-5 Paul says, **4 When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, 5 which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit**. So although **the mystery** was made known to other generations, it was not as clear as it now became to the New Testament **apostles and prophets**. Also, it has now been revealed to them **by the Spirit**.

In verse 6, Paul explains the mystery. **This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel**. In verse 7, he continues, **Of this**

gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God's grace, which was given me by the working of his power.

Continuing in verse 8 Paul says, **To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.** The word **unsearchable** describes a path that cannot be walked. The idea is that the **riches of Christ** can never be exhausted. Since God is infinite, there will always be something new to learn about God. So Paul is saying that the **riches of Christ** cannot be walked out. This takes us back to chapter 2 where Paul talks about the old pattern that Satan created is the one we once walked before our salvation. Now we are created for salvation in Christ Jesus for good works.

Paul continues in verse 9 by discussing that the grace given to him also included that he was **to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things.** Since the mystery is no longer hidden, Paul was to proclaim it to everyone. The purpose is **so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places** (v. 10). Remember that the leaders of false religions and the mystery cults have always been trying to break their way into the sanctuary to obtain the mystery. Now, God has created a path so that all believers could enter the sanctuary and obtain the mystery!

The **manifold wisdom of God** is now **made known** through the church **to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.** Who are these people? There are 3 possibilities. 1) It could refer to believers who are in heavenly places (1:3). 2) It can mean proclamation to angelic powers. Angels learn about the Gospel through the church. 3) It most likely refers to human rulers, symbolized by the heavenly powers. Remember that symbolically, earthly rulers are seated in the heavens (sun, moon, stars in Genesis chapter 1). In the Old Testament, Joseph, Daniel, and many other Old Testament saints made God's wisdom known to earthly rulers who were symbolically seated in the heavens.

Paul continues in verses 11-12, **This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, 12 in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him.** To what do believers in Christ have **access**? Believers in the New Testament have **access** to the sanctuary. New Testament saints can pray boldly since we have direct access to God through Christ Jesus.

He concludes this section by saying in verse 13, **So I ask you not to lose heart over what I am suffering for you, which is your glory.** Paul's tribulations are for their glory.

Prayer for Spiritual Strength

3:14-21, 14 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, 16 that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. 20 Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, 21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

In Genesis, Joseph prayed and became 2nd in command under the Pharaoh in Egypt. Daniel prayed on his knees and ended up 3rd in command under the king of Babylon. The customary position for prayer by the Jews was always standing. So when Paul starts out this section in verse 14 by saying, **For this reason I bow my knees before the Father**, he is most likely alluding to Daniel. Since Joseph and Daniel were imprisoned prior to their exaltation by God, then Paul is saying that his imprisonment is proof that God will glorify him! If you want to proclaim the Gospel to kings, you can expect to first end up in prison.

Paul continues, **before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named**. This refers to both Jew and Gentile. Everybody is equal before Christ, so everyone is equal before the Father. Paul prays **that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God**. May we all pray this prayer!

Paul now concludes his prayer by saying, **20 Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, 21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen**. So this power **to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think is at work within us!** Power in the New Testament usually refers to the Holy Spirit.

Unity in the Body of Christ

We now arrive at the second major section in Paul's letter. The first 3 chapters dealt with Truth, which we are called to believe whether we completely understand it or not. Then, the effects (applications) of those facts are given in the last 3 chapters.

4:1 I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, 3 eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Paul refers to himself as a **prisoner for the Lord**. Remember that it is a privilege to be a **prisoner for the Lord**. He urges **you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called**. What is the calling by which you have been called? Everything we have learned in this letter so far.

If you truly understand and believe the privileges, you will have no problem being humble and gentle, and patient, and tolerant. Those who are not humble and gentle are those who are not confident in their position. Arrogance is a sign of insecurity and immaturity! **Patience** is the essence of saving faith. If we have **humility and gentleness, with patience** we will have unity. We must also bear **with one another in love** (see 1 Cor 13).

These are the keys to dominion. The more we grow in these virtues, the more capable we are in conquering the world for Christ. By growing in these virtues we show we are **eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace**.

4:4-6, 4 There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

True unity comes from God. At the Tower of Babel, the people tried to create unity by themselves and wanted to build a tower all the way to heaven. As all false religions, they wanted to create a name for themselves and storm into heaven and obtain the mystery. However, God came down and judged them and dispersed them throughout the world, no longer being of the same language or religious belief. The New Testament church has unity because God has given unity to His body.

4:7 But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift.

The measure of Christ's gift is infinite; therefore, we have been **given** infinite **grace**! What is interesting here is that although **each one of us** gets an infinite gift, each gift is different. This must be accepted by faith.

4:8 Therefore it says, "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men."

This is a partial quotation from Ps 68:18. In the Old Testament, captives were taken to Jerusalem to give gifts to the king and then to be put to death. Remember that it is always spoken of as "going up" to Jerusalem. Now we all know that Jerusalem is not on the highest mountain in that area, but Jerusalem is God's Holy City located on the mountain of God. Therefore, anyone going to Jerusalem was said to be ascending (going up) to Jerusalem.

In the New Testament, Jesus led the captives up, not to their death but He converted them. So the captives are taken up, ascended, not to their death, but to be given salvation. New Testament believers, saints, ascend to heaven to sit with Jesus! Also, rather than giving gifts to the king, Jesus gives gifts to us!

4:9-10, 9 (In saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth? 10 He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.)

By saying that Jesus **descended into the lower regions, the earth**, he is referring to Christ's humiliation and death, when He went into Sheol (the realm of death). But Jesus didn't stay there. No, He **also ascended far above all the heavens**! Jesus ascended to the upper heaven to take dominion **that he might fill all things**.

4:11-12, 11 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,

Paul refers to 4 groups of people here: 1) **the apostles**; 2) **the prophets**; 3) **the evangelists**; and 4) **the shepherds (pastors) and teachers**. This is clear in the original Greek. Remember that the apostles and prophets lay the foundation for the New Testament church. We no longer have the authoritative office of apostle and prophet, although we still send people out (apostles) and have council members (prophets). The Bible now rules the church. It is unclear what the original New Testament **evangelists'** role was, and whether or not it is similar to today. However, the elders of the local churches were **the shepherds (pastors) and teachers**. It is not that some are called to be pastors and others are teachers. No, the elders of the local churches were called to be both **shepherds (pastors) and teachers**, even though some shepherd the flock of the church more while others teach the flock more.

Why do we have these officials? We are told that it is **to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ**. Their entire purpose is to be humble and serve others. They are **to equip the saints**. The result of their service is that **the body of Christ** be built up. Now we know that all believers are to perform acts of service, and these also **build up the body of Christ**. That is why **shepherds** (pastors) and **teachers** are to teach the saints God's Word and to lead them in worship, so that all believers will be equipped to take the kingdom of God to the world.

4:13-14, 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, 14 so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.

All of this is done for the purpose that **we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God**. We are to become completely unified in the faith. And we are to strive to attain **the knowledge of Jesus Christ**, which is limitless. This is also done **to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ**. Maturity takes time. We are first youth, then we are mature and work, and then we mature to the point of being wise and become elders. We are to mature until we attain **the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ**, and that is impossible. This means that we will never stop growing! Heaven will never be boring, because there will always be new things to learn and grow into.

We are to be equipped by the pastors/teachers so that we can mature **so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes**. This is why it is so important to study God's Word and to always strive to continue to learn more and more about God and Christ Jesus. We grow by staying in His Word and remaining in His body, the church.

4:15-16, 15 Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

Paul is mixing his metaphors, mixing bodies with buildings. When looking at the Tabernacle, it was built like we today build prefabricated buildings. It all fits together before it can stand by itself. Similarly, the human body is made up of many parts that are put together in such a way that the body can then stand up and function. Paul is saying that building up the body of Christ is similar. All the various pieces do not take away from the unified whole, but rather fit together in a particular way to come together and build up one unified body.

The New Life

4:17-18, 17 Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. 18 They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart.

Believers are **no longer to walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds**. Unconverted Gentiles are **darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God**. Due to their alienation from God they are ignorant **due to their hardness of heart**. People do foolish things due to **their hardness of heart** to God. That

is why we are not to trust human reason and wisdom, but must rely on God's wisdom that He reveals in His Word.

4:19 They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity.

Due to their alienation from God because of their hardened hearts, the unconverted Gentiles **have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity.**

4:20-24, 20 But that is not the way you learned Christ!— 21 assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, 22 to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, 23 and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, 24 and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

Thankfully, God didn't leave believers there. Paul says that **you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus.** They heard the Gospel and learned **to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires.** Satan has deceived the world and all who walk in the path of the world. However, Paul says that believers are **renewed in the spirit of your minds** for the purpose of putting **on the new self.** This new creation is **created after the likeness of God**; therefore, it is **in true righteousness and holiness.** So the believer, the new creation is to live a life of righteousness, holiness, and Truth.

In order to describe this life **in true righteousness and holiness** Paul will now describe this life by going through a number of the Ten Commandments, especially those dealing with our relations with our fellow man.

4:25-27, 25 Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. 26 Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, 27 and give no opportunity to the devil.

This is reminding us of the 9th commandment, **"You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor."** (Ex 20:16). These Old Testament passages all have to do with deceptive language against our neighbor. In Zech 8:16-17 we read, **These are the things that you shall do: Speak the truth to one another; render in your gates judgments that are true and make for peace; 17 do not devise evil in your hearts against one another, and love no false oath, for all these things I hate, declares the Lord.**" This is in the context of a law court. So believers are not to allow others to come to harm by speaking untrue things against them or by withholding true information. Since **we are members one of another,** we **speak the truth with our neighbor.**

Although many interpret **be angry and do not sin** as dealing with murder, the context of Ps 4 is dealing with the tongue and true versus false witness. Psalm 4:2-5 says, **2 O men, how long shall my honor be turned into shame? How long will you love vain words and seek after lies? 3 But know that the Lord has set apart the godly for himself; the Lord hears when I call to him. 4 Be angry, and do not sin; ponder in your own hearts on your beds, and be silent. 5 Offer right sacrifices, and put your trust in the Lord.** David in this Psalm is saying that when one's enemies attack us with false words, we are to get angry and not sin by keeping our mouths shut and talking about it directly with the Lord. By dealing with the problem with the Lord before we go to sleep, we **do not let the sun go down on your anger.** Also, if we only speak to God about the problem and not to others, we **give no opportunity to the devil.**

4:28-30, 28 Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need. 29 Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. 30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

These verses deal with the 8th commandment, “**You shall not steal.**” (Ex 20:15) Paul starts out by talking about actual stealing, and then applies that to using the tongue to steal another’s good name. He says, **let the thief no longer steal.** And the way to cure that tendency is to work hard, to **labor, doing honest work with his own hands.** But he is not to work hard just for himself but he is to earn an honest living **so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.** So the cure for stealing is to work hard and share with others in need.

We can either use **corrupting talk** to tear someone else down, or we can use our tongue for edification, **for building up** the other person. This is why Paul says, **Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up.** In the old life we tended to take every opportunity to cut others down. But now, as a new creation, we are to **give grace to those who hear** by **building up** the name and reputation of others.

To tear down, or steal, someone’s name and reputation is to **grieve the Holy Spirit of God.** And this should not be done by believers. Remember that **the Holy Spirit of God** is the one **by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.**

4:31-5:2, 31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. 32 Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. 5:1 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. 2 And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Paul now discussed the application of the 6th commandment, “**You shall not murder.**” (Ex 20:13) This law not only includes murder, but death and harm by carelessness. The Hebrew here actually says, “You shall not kill.” Remember that Jesus likened anger and hatred to murder. Paul says that for the believer **all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander** must **be put away from you, along with all malice.** We tend to be **bitter** to people close to us. **Wrath** is the initial outburst of **anger**; while **anger** is the settled fury. A clamorous person has to tell everybody that he/she got hurt. **Slander** is using the tongue to tear someone down. **Malice** is holding on to evil feelings against another person.

If we remember how God in Christ has forgiven us, then it is easier for us to **be kind to one another, tenderhearted, and forgiving** of **one another.** Even in the Old Testament law, the reason given for the laws was always that they were to remember how God redeemed them.

But that is still not so easy. So Paul continues with other ways for us to overcome the tendency to want to kill other people. The best way to not kill others is to kill oneself. Believers are called to **be imitators of God, as beloved children.** Then Paul tells us to **walk in love, as Christ loved us.** And how did Christ love us? Christ **gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.** So the best way to keep from killing others is to die to oneself and become a living sacrifice to God.

5:3-4, 3 But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. 4 Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving.

Paul now moves on to the 7th commandment, **“You shall not commit adultery.”** (Ex 20:14) Believers are to stay so far away from these sins that Paul can say that **sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints.** A person who is satisfied with his wife is not going to be seeking anything else. Believers are not to use the tongue for **filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking;** but the tongue of the believer is to be used instead for **thanksgiving** to God!

5:5-6, 5 For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. 6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.

Now Paul moves to the 10th commandment, **“You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor’s.”** (Ex 20:17)

The **covetous** man covets something more than Christ. Since this person is more interested in something other than the kingdom of God, which believers have already been given, and then he/she **has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.** Paul has explained to us what we already have in Christ in the first 3 chapters. If a believer truly believes that he/she already has everything that Christ have given us, then that person won’t covet.

Paul ends this section by reminding believers that we are not to be deceived **for because of these things** (violations of God’s laws) **the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.**

Theology of Light versus Darkness

This theme of darkness and light goes through the entire coming section. In Genesis 1 we learn about darkness and light. Genesis 1-5 says, **1 In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. 2 The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. 3 And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. 4 And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. 5 God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.**

When God created the heavens and the earth, **darkness was over the face of the deep** (the waters). The picture here is that darkness has dominion over everything, and everything is dark. However, not only was darkness over the waters but, the **Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.** The Spirit of God brings God’s glory and brightness over the waters. Now there is a conflict between darkness and light. In the remainder of Genesis chapter 1, the Spirit creates light and pushes out the darkness.

So the first thing God says is **“Let there be light.”** Then we read that **God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness.** So God establishes light for dominion. Then we read, **God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night.**

We read that when God created the earth it **was without form and void**. During the 1st 3 days of creation, God adds form to the earth and fills the earth with plants, taking care of the problem of the earth being **without form and void**. In the 2nd 3 days, God creates other beings to take dominion over the darkness, starting with the sun, moon, and stars and climaxing with the creation of mankind.

So the dominion of darkness has been pushed way back, and mankind, being created in the image of God, has been given dominion over the earth. However, when Adam sinned, the dominion was handed to Satan and darkness.

We read in John 1:1-5, **1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. 4 In him was life, and the life was the light of men. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.** So we are back to dealing with the dominion of darkness and the dominion of light. When Jesus comes in His incarnation, the dominion of darkness is pushed back. Now it tries to overpower the light, but it can't. Now Jesus, the Light, shares His light with all of His people. John 1:9 says, **The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.**

When believers become enlightened, we become lights to the world, reflecting the Light of Christ. Jesus says, **"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.** (Mt 5:14-16). Believers can now make judgments on all situations.

Walk in Light

5:7-10, 7 Therefore do not become partners with them; 8 for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light 9 (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), 10 and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord.

Paul tells believers to separate from the unconverted Gentiles who break God's laws. He does not say that at one time believers were in darkness, but that **for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord**. We were reproducing darkness in the dominion of darkness and Satan. But now believers are light and shine forth the light of God.

Believers are told to **walk as children of light**. So what do we shine forth, being children of light? **The fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true**. So these are the virtues that should beam out of us! Now as believers go through the world, we are to push back the dominion of darkness, because we reflect the Light of Christ. When believers do these things, we prove **what is pleasing to the Lord**.

5:11-12, 11 Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. 12 For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. Now Paul begins to speak about sin. Talking about the evil and wicked things that people do does not change the world. In fact, **it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret**. There is no grace in this. Believers are to **expose them** by the light. So as we go through the world bringing **goodness and righteousness and truth**, we push back the dominion of darkness. When believers are faithful and do this, people doing evil things in darkness are either pushed away or are converted.

5:13-14, 13 But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, 14 for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, “Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”

If someone **becomes visible** that means he becomes converted, because **anything that becomes visible is light**. If he is not visible, he just runs away into further darkness.

5:15-17, 15 Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, 16 making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. 17 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

Believers are exhorted to **walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil**. Paul is speaking about walking wisely so as to make the most out of all opportunities. And Paul ends by saying to believers, **do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is**.

5:18-20, 18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, 19 addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, 20 giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,

Paul has just shed insight into the laws of God and he has also reflected on how Christ’s Light causes us to live moral lives. He now gives a rather oblique reference to the golden calf incident in Exodus. He exhorts believers **do not get drunk with wine**. The reason for this is that drunkenness **is debauchery**. Believers are to be disciplined and focused.

We are to worship God by being focused and by diligently studying God’s Word. Worship based upon physical and emotional stimulation is similar to worshipping at the golden calf. Instead, believers are to **be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart**. The Biblical Psalms are the foundation for our worship, our orientation in the world, and our conversations. When **psalms and hymns and spiritual songs** are internalized in us, then we can be a light to the world. Believers are also to **sing and make melody to the Lord**. Both in our lives as believers and in our worship, we are to have a God-ward orientation, by **giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ**.

Mutual Submission

5:21 submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Paul is about to speak to wives and husbands, children and parents, and slaves and master about submission. However, we are not dealing with the pagan concept of submission. Believers are to submit to others **out of reverence for Christ**. Although there is not equality of position, there is equality of service. The only proper way to rule is by being a servant.

Wives and Husbands

5:22-24, 22 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. 24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

Wives are to **submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord**. So they are to submit in everything, **as to the Lord**. However, it also means that wives are only to submit in Christ, so they are never to do anything sinful. Paul continues saying that **the husband is the head of the wife** in everything, **even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. As the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands**. Just as the church complains to God in prayer about things, so the wife is to bring her complaints to her husband.

5:25-33, 25 Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, 26 that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. 28 In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, 30 because we are members of his body. 31 “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” 32 This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. 33 However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

Since Adam sinned, while Eve was deceived (Gen 3), so Paul spends much time addressing husbands. To begin with Paul says, **Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her**. So husbands are to give themselves for their wives. Husbands are to love their wives with the same aggressive, sacrificial love the Christ gives his bride, the church. Men have a tendency to become estranged from women. As a man treats his wife, so he will treat the bride of Christ, the church.

Just as Christ provides for us and glorifies us, without giving us what our sinful nature wants, so are husbands to be to their wives. This is the cleansing aspect. Husbands are to help their wives learn God’s Word. The unconverted men do not love themselves. But believers are to love themselves and take care of themselves. And as husbands, men are to love their wives and care for them as they would care for themselves.

Quoting Genesis 2, Paul says that when a couple gets married, the man leaves his parents. The nuclear family is the Christian form of the family. There is not to be any clan structure, or patriarchy. Here Paul takes it one step further in that as the bride of Christ, we are to leave Adam and Eve and marry Christ. Paul summarizes this by saying, **let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband**.

Children and Parents

6:1-4, 1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 “Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise), 3 “that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.” 4 Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

The secret for a long and happy life is for children to obey their parents **in the Lord**. At what point do you stop obeying your parents and doing everything they say? We read in Genesis 2:24, **a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh**. It is when a person gets married that they are no longer under the authority of their parents.

Parents are told **not to provoke your children to anger**. In Colossians 3:21 it says, **21 Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged**. The way to discourage your children is to not pay attention to them and love them. If you don't show interest in them, they will lose heart and **become discouraged**. Instead parents are to do 2 things. 1) Children are to be brought up in **discipline**. 2) They are also to be given the **instruction of the Lord**.

Slaves and Masters

6:5-9, 5 Slaves, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ, 6 not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, 7 rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man, 8 knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free. 9 Masters, do the same to them, and stop your threatening, knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with him.

Paul does not say that becoming a believer in Christ brings equality. Instead he says, **slaves, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling**. Also, slaves are to obey their masters **with a sincere heart, as you would Christ**. This shows all of us believers that we are to be **with fear and trembling** before Christ.

He continues that slaves are to obey their masters **not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart**. If one's master makes this difficult then the slave is to ask God for the ability to **render service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man**.

This is to be done **knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free**. Do to sin, most people in authority are very hard to deal with. That makes it hard for most believers to have a good attitude towards their boss. The answer is prayer. Prayer allows the believer to have a different attitude towards those in authority over him/her.

The reason that it is important to have the right attitude toward submission is that being under authority teaches believers the key principle required in leadership and dominion. The key principle in leadership and dominion is the ability to relate and understand to one's subordinates.

The Whole Armor of God

6:10-20, 10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. 14 Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. 16 In all circumstances take up the shield of

faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; 17 and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, 18 praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, 19 and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak

John 1:12-13 says, **to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.** Ephesians 6, verse 12 says that **we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.** So when Paul speaks about **flesh and blood**, he is not speaking about people in general but about the fallen humanity. Believers struggle against fallen humanity.

Paul could be referring to earthly rulers here, but most likely he is referring to angelic rulers. When Adam fell, he gave dominion to Satan and his demons and to **this present darkness**. When Jesus came in His incarnation, He fought Satan and defeated him at the cross, taking control of the dominion of this world. Jesus really applied this in AD 70 with the destruction of Jerusalem.

So Paul is warning the believers that Satan is about to receive a decisive blow, most likely referring to the events in AD 70. However, believers today still suffer attacks from the dominion of darkness. So Paul exhorts believers to **take up the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day**, once again most likely referring to AD 70. Paul exhorts the believers that **having done all, to stand firm**.

In Isaiah 59:15-17 it says, **15 Truth is lacking, and he who departs from evil makes himself a prey. The Lord saw it, and it displeased him that there was no justice. 16 He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no one to intercede; then his own arm brought him salvation, and his righteousness upheld him. 17 He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation on his head; he put on garments of vengeance for clothing, and wrapped himself in zeal as a cloak.** So the armor Paul tells the believers to put on is the armor of Yahweh! Yahweh is the Holy Warrior in the Old Testament, preparing Himself to do battle.

In the Garden, Adam, acting as a priest, was expected to defend the Garden and his wife from the attack of Satan. This is the same attack which believers are all called to prepare for. Believers are called to fight Satan as a priest and defend the bride of Christ and defeat him through the power given to us by Christ Jesus. Isaiah 61:10 says, **I will greatly rejoice in the Lord; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.** Here we see that the believers are to adorn themselves **like a priest**.

Paul says that believers are to **take up the whole armor of God**. This is God's armor. First he tells believers to **fasten on the belt of truth**. The high priest wore a belt, which held everything together. Without Truth, you can't have anything else. Everything depends on having Truth. Truth is Jesus Christ Himself!

He then says to **put on the breastplate of righteousness**. The high priest wore a **breastplate**. The exercise of **righteousness** is sound judgment.

Now it is time to put on **as shoes for your feet ... the readiness given by the gospel of peace**. Believers are to proclaim **the gospel of peace** to the world. If they reject it, they will get judged.

Next the believer is to **take up the shield of faith all circumstances, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one**. Satan and his demons shoot flaming arrows, which are extinguished with the shield. By Paul calling it **the shield of faith**, he is referring to God being our shield. After Abraham had defeated the kings of the east (Genesis 14), he was afraid of retaliation. In Genesis 15:1 we read, **the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: "Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; I am your great reward."**

In 1 Kings 10:17 we read that Solomon **made 300 shields of beaten gold; three minas of gold went into each shield. And the king put them in the House of the Forest of Lebanon**. What were they used for? In 2 Samuel 8:7 we are told that these shields were used in royal ceremonies. Gold shields were obviously not taken into battle, but mean that the battle has already been won.

After Solomon sins and his son Rehoboam makes things even worse, **25 in the fifth year of King Rehoboam, Shishak** (probably known to us as Thutmoses III) **king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem. 26 He took away the treasures of the house of the Lord and the treasures of the king's house. He took away everything. He also took away all the shields of gold that Solomon had made,** (1 Kings 14:25-26).

Getting back to Ephesians, Paul says, **take the helmet of salvation**. In Exodus 28:36-37, we learn that the high priest had a golden plate on his forehead with the words 'Holy to the Lord.' In 2 Chronicles 26:19, we read that King **Uzziah was angry. Now he had a censer in his hand to burn incense, and when he became angry with the priests, leprosy broke out on his forehead in the presence of the priests in the house of the Lord, by the altar of incense. So the helmet of salvation** protects us from the wrath of God.

The last piece in the armor of God is **the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God**. In Joshua 5:13, Joshua saw the commander of the army of the Lord **standing before him with his drawn sword in his hand**, ready to conquer the land of Canaan. In Revelation 19:15 we see Jesus and **from his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations**. When believers go out into the world, we are to conquer the world with the sword, which is God's Word.

Paul ends this section stating that when believers go out into the world ready to do spiritual battle, we are to **pray at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, and also for me**. Prayer is what enables believers to go out and conquer the world. Paul ends by asking for prayer for himself **that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak**. Paul asks for boldness to preach **the mystery of the gospel**. Remember that prison is the prelude to the throne.

Final Greetings

6:21-24, 21 So that you also may know how I am and what I am doing, Tychicus the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord will tell you everything. 22 I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage your hearts. 23 Peace be to the brothers, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 24 Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with love incorruptible.

In the Old Testament angels were the messengers. Now in the New Testament church angels are no longer used as messengers, rather believers are the messengers. Since believers are one body in Christ, it is important for mutual communication to take place. Then Paul ends wishing peace and grace on all believers.

Soli Deo Gloria!