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B. That our understanding be enlightened 1:18a

**that we might know the hope of His calling 1:18b

**that we might know the riches of His inheritance 1:18c

**that we might know the exceeding greatness of His power 1:19

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God's Power was wrought in Christ

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**Who is far above all principality, and power, and might and dominion

**Who is above all names in history or in the future 1:21b

B. God has put Him over all things 1:22

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**His body,

**the fullness of Him who fills all. 1:23

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2. Who in the past walked: 2:b
 - **according to the course of this world
 - **according to the prince of the power of the air
 - The spirit which now works in the children of disobedience
3. Among whom (the world) we also had our lifestyle in the past: 2:c
 - **in the lusts of the flesh
 - **fulfilling the desires of the flesh and mind
 - **and were by nature the children of wrath – as others
4. But God . . . 2:d
 - **who is rich in mercy
 - **for His great love wherewith he love us
 - Even when we were dead in trespasses and sins
5. Hath quickened us together with Christ 2:5
 - **by grace ye are saved
6. And hath raised us up together 2:6
7. That in the ages to come 2:7
 - **he might show the exceeding riches of His grace
 - **in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus
8. For by grace are ye saved through faith 2:8
 - **and that not of yourselves
 - **it is the gift of God
 - **Not of good works 2:9
 - **lest any man should boast
9. For we are his workmanship 2:10
 - **created in Christ Jesus
 - **unto good works
 - **which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them
 - And made us to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus

VI. We have been brought near to God by the blood of Christ 2:11-13

A. Wherefore remember that we were in the past 2:11

1. gentiles in the flesh
 - **called un-circumcised by the Jews

2. At that time, we were: 2:12
 - **without Christ
 - **aliens from the commonwealth of Israel
 - **had no hope
 - **without God in the world

B. But Now in Christ Jesus we

1. who were in the past far from God
2. Are made near by the blood of Christ

C. We furthermore are now reconciled to God along with believing Jews through Christ 2:14-18

1. Christ is our peace 2:14
 - **who hath made both one
 - **who has broken down the middle wall of partition
 - **having abolished in His flesh the animosity 2:15a
 - i.e, the law with its ordinances
2. To make of twain one new man (i.e., entity) 2:15b
 - **making peace between Jew and gentile believers
3. That he might reconcile both unto God 2:16
 - **in one body
 - **by the cross
 - **having slain the animosity thereby
4. And He came and preached peace to 2:17
 - **you which were far off (gentiles)
 - **and to them that were near (Jews)
5. For through Him we both have access 2:18
 - **by one Spirit
 - **unto the Father

D. We therefore now are built together as a spiritual temple of God 2:19-22

1. We are therefore no more aliens and foreigners 2:19
2. We are rather are
 - **fellow citizens
 - **with the saints
 - **now of the household of God
3. We are not built upon the foundation of: 2:20
 - **the apostles
 - **and prophets

**with Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone

4. In whom all the building (i.e., the church) is 2:21
 - **Fitted together (finely joined together)
 - **is developing as a holy temple in the Lord
5. In whom (i.e., in Christ)
 - **we (believing Jews and gentiles – the church) are built together
 - **as an abiding place for God
 - **through the Spirit

Chapter 3

VII. Paul's Purpose and Prayer 3:1-21

A. Introductory context 3:1-5

1. For this cause (the uniting of believing Jews and gentile in one body in the church) 2:1
2. Paul was a prisoner of Jesus Christ for believing gentiles
3. The dispensation of the grace of God 2:2
 - **given to Paul for their sakes
 - **which is —
4. The mystery 3:2
 - **by revelation from God
 - **which Paul wrote about in the preceding chapter
5. Whereby they might understand Paul's knowledge of that mystery of Christ 3:4
6. Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men 3:5
7. But has been now revealed unto His 3:6
 - **holy apostles
 - **prophets
 - **by the Spirit

B. Paul's purposes in setting forth the mystery was 3:6

1. That the gentiles should be:
 - **fellowheirs
 - **and of the same body
 - **partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel

(Whereof Paul was made a minister 3:7
**according to the gift of the grace of God
**given to him by the effective working of His power
**unto him who was less than of all saints 3:8a
**was this grace given

2. That he should preach among the gentiles 3:8b
**the unsearchable riches of Christ 3:9a
**to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery 3:9b
(Which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God,
who created all things by Christ Jesus)
3. To the intent 3:10a
**that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places
**(the mystery) might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.
4. According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. 3:11
5. In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him. 3:12

C. Paul's Second Prayer for the Ephesian Church 3:13-21

1. In light of Paul's ministry to preach the mystery described above, he implored:
**Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, 3:13
**which is your glory.
2. For this cause he bowed knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 3:14
**Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, 3:15
3. That he would grant you: 3:16
**according to the riches of his glory,
**to be strengthened with might
by his Spirit in the inner man;
4. That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; 3:17
5. that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,
**May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and
length, and depth, and height; 3:18
6. And (may be able) to know the love of Christ, 3:19
** which passeth knowledge,
7. that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. 3:19
8. The benediction: 3:20
**Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all

that we ask or think,
**according to the power that worketh in us,
**Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus
**throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

Section II Practical Truths

I. Five Injunctions how a Christian Should Walk

A. Walk Worthy of the Lord 4:1-3

1. (Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ)
2. Of our *vocation* (i.e., calling)
3. With: 4:2
 - **all lowliness
 - **and meekness
 - **longsuffering
 - **forbearing one another in love
4. Endeavoring: 4:3
 - **to keep the unity of the spirit
 - **in the bond of peace
5. A parenthetical doctrinal section on unity 4:4-16
 - a. the unity of spiritual entities 4:4-6
 - **one body (the church)
 - **one (Holy) Spirit
 - **one hope of our calling
 - **one Lord
 - **one faith
 - **baptism
 - **one God the Father
 - Who is above all,
 - and through all,
 - and in you all
 - b. The diversity of spiritual gifts 4:7-11
 - ** But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. 4:7
 - ** Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. Quoted from Psalm 68:18 4:8
 - c. A parenthetical thought: 4:9-10

- ** (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?
- ** He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)

d. Gifts to the churches 4:11

- ** And he gave some (churches: apostles; and some (churches), prophets; and some (churches), evangelists; and some (churches), pastors and (some churches) teacher.

e. The purpose of the spiritual gifts to the churches 4:12-16

- **for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry
- **for the edifying of the body of Christ: 4:12 Till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. 4:13
- **That we henceforth be no more children: 4:14 tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.
- **But speaking the truth in love may grow up 4:15 into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.

From whom the whole body 4:16
 fitly joined together and compacted
 by that which every joint supplieth,
 according to the effectual working in the measure of every part,
 maketh increase of the body
 unto the edifying of itself in love.

B. Walk not as other gentiles walk 4:17-29

In the vanity of their mind

Having the understanding darkened, 4:18

- **being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them,
- **because of the blindness of their heart

Who being past feeling have given themselves over 4:19

**unto lasciviousness,
**to work all uncleanness with greediness.

But ye have not so learned Christ 4:20

** If so be that ye have heard him 4:21

**and have been taught by him

**as the truth is in Jesus:

1. That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man 4:22
**which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts
2. (And that ye) be renewed in the spirit of your mind 4:23
3. And that ye put on the new man 4:24
**which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.
4. Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour 4:25
**for we are members one of another.
5. Be ye angry and sin not 4:26
**let not the sun go down upon your wrath
6. Neither give place to the devil. 4:27
7. Let him that stole steal no more 4:28
**but rather let him labour
**working with his hands the thing which is good
**that he may have to give to him that needeth.
8. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth 4:29
**but that which is good to the use of edifying
**that it may minister grace unto the hearers.
9. And grieve not the holy Spirit of God 4:30
**whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.
10. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking,
be put away from you, with all malice. 4:31
11. And be ye kind one to another 4:32
**tenderhearted, forgiving one another,
**even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

C. Walk in Love 4:32-5:2

1. Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children 5:1
2. And walk in love
 - **as Christ also hath loved us
 - ** (as Christ also) hath given himself for us
 - **an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

D. (Walk in moral purity) 5:3-7

1. But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness 5:3
 - **let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints(Our walk)
2. Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting 5:4
 - **which are not convenient
 - **but rather giving of thanks.(Our talk)
3. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man 5:5
 - **who is an idolater
 - **hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.
4. Let no man deceive you with vain words: 5:6
 - **for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.
5. Be not ye therefore partakers with them. 5:7

E. Walk as Children of Light 5:8-14

1. Walk as children of light 5:8
 - **For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord.
2. (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) 5:9
3. Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. 5:10
4. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness 5:11
 - **but rather reprove them.
5. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. 5:12
6. But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light 5:13
 - **for whatsoever doth make manifest is light.

7. Wherefore he saith 6:14

**Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.
(Psalm 60:1-2)

F. Walk Circumspectly 6:15-6:9

1. See then that ye walk circumspectly 5:15

**not as fools, but as wise,

2. Redeeming the time 5:16

**because the days are evil.

3. Wherefore be ye not unwise 5:17

**but understanding what the will of the Lord is

4. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess 5:18a

5. But be filled with the Spirit; 5:18b

**Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs 5:19

**singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;

**Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father 5:20
in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;

6. Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. 5:21

7. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. 5:22

**For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head
of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. 5:23

**Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be
to their own husbands in every thing. 5:24

8. Husbands, love your wives,

**even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; 5:25

**That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word 5:26

**That he might present it to himself a glorious church, 5:27
not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing;
but that it should be holy and without blemish.

9. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. 5:28

**He that loveth his wife loveth himself.

** For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; 5:29

but nourisheth and cherisheth it,
even as the Lord the church:

**For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. 5:30

**For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, 5:31
and shall be joined unto his wife,

and they two shall be one flesh.

** This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. 5:32

**Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself;
and the wife see that she reverence her husband. 5:33

10. Children, obey your parents in the Lord: 6:1

**for this is right.

11. Honour thy father and mother; 6:2

**(which is the first commandment with promise;)

**That it may be well with thee,

**and (that) thou mayest live long on the earth. 6:3

12. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: 6:4a

13. but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. 6:4b

14. Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, 6:5

**with fear and trembling,

**in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ;

** Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; 6:6

**but as the servants of Christ,

**doing the will of God from the heart; 6:7

**With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men:

**Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, 6:8
the same shall he receive of the Lord,
whether he be bond or free.

15. And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, 6:9

**forbearing threatening:

**knowing that your Master also is in heaven;

**neither is there respect of persons with him.

G. Walk in the Strength and Protection of the Lord 6:10-20

1. Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, 6:10

**and in the power of his might.

2. Put on the whole armour of God, 6:11

**that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

**For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, 6:12

but against principalities,

against powers,

against the rulers of the darkness of this world,

against spiritual wickedness in high places.

3. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, 6:13

**that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day,
**and having done all, to stand.

4. Stand therefore, 6:14
 - **having your loins girt about with truth,
 - **and having on the breastplate of righteousness;
 - **And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 6:15
 - ** Above all, taking the shield of faith, 6:16
 - wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.
 - **And take the helmet of salvation, 6:17
 - **and (take) the sword of the Spirit,
 - which is the word of God:
5. Praying always 6:18
 - **with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit,
 - **and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication
 - **for all saints;
 - **And for me, 6:19
 - that utterance may be given unto me,
 - that I may open my mouth boldly,
 - to make known the mystery of the gospel,
 - **For which I am an ambassador in bonds: 6:20
 - that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

III. Conclusion 6:21-24

A. The Sending of Tychicus 6:21

1. But that ye also may know my affairs, and how I do,
 - **Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord,
 - shall make known to you all things:
2. Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, 6:22
 - **that ye might know our affairs,
 - **and that he might comfort your hearts.

B. The Benediction 6:23

1. Peace be to the brethren,
2. and love with faith,
3. from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
4. Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen. 6:24
5. (To the Ephesians written from Rome, by Tychicus — the last line

probably not part of the inspired text.)

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE EPHESIANS

Introduction to Ephesians: The formal title of the book is “The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Ephesians,” thus making clear its authorship. It is commonly accepted that Paul wrote this epistle during his first imprisonment at Rome, perhaps in about A.D. 64. It likely was the first of his prison epistles. Many believe that Paul sent this epistle with Tychicus along with his epistle to the Colossians and Philemon. Though Paul had founded the church at Ephesus, the epistle is less personal than most of his letters. However, it is charged with major doctrine. The first half has particular doctrinal focus with the key concept being ‘in Christ.’ The final three chapters are more practical with the emphasis upon the Christian walk. Moreover, this epistle contains greater truth concerning the church than any other of Paul’s epistles.

* * * * *

Overview of Ephesians 1: After a brief introduction and salutation, Paul launches forth into major truth. The chapter focuses upon the concept of our position ‘in the heavenlies’ and

more specifically in Christ. It concludes with a synopsis of Paul's prayer for them.

1:1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus. The author begins immediately by identifying himself. As was the custom of that era, the author 'signed' his name at the beginning rather than at the end as is our modern custom. He identifies himself as "an apostle of Jesus Christ." That apostleship was "by the will of God" and quite evidently not Paul's choosing. The epistle was addressed to (1) "the saints which are at Ephesus" and (2) "the faithful in Christ Jesus." The second phrase likely is in apposition to the first.

However, though its immediate readership was the church at Ephesus, its broader scope is directed toward the "faithful in Christ Jesus" down through the ages. Of note is Paul's description of the church as **saints**. The word so translated (ἅγιος *hagios*) literally means 'holy ones.' In as much as the true church are those 'in Christ' and thus holy, it is a general synonym for those who are saved. It particularly refers to those whose lives indeed are holy. Not only is holiness implied for God's people to this day, but also the importance of faithfulness. The foundation of such faithfulness is the privilege of being in Christ Jesus.

1:2 The salutation is simple and typical of most of Paul's epistles. He invoked **grace** and **peace** to his readers **from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ**. Though a common salutation, it should never be taken for granted. Though we indeed have been saved by grace as will be noted later in the epistle, the grace of God is a continuing blessing which is available throughout the Christian life.

The word translated as **grace** (χάρις *charis*), in its narrowest sense, has the idea of 'unmerited favor.' In its broader

scope, it has the panorama of thought ranging from strength to mercy to help. See Hebrews 4:16. To be uninterested in God's imparted grace along the path of the Christian life is a sure sign of spiritual immaturity. His grace can cover and assist every need we have. Likewise, the matter of *peace* is of profound consequence. In this context it likely is a reference to the peace of God. Having the peace of God in our heart is a rich blessing indeed. It is the antithesis of anxiety, fear, discouragement, depression and other untoward emotions. It is the precursor of happiness. Paul invokes these two precious and profound spiritual qualities to his readers then and today. They come as we draw near to Christ.

1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. Having briefly made introductory comments, the Apostle immediately launches into his first major doctrinal truth. He begins by praising "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." The word translated as **blest** (εὐλογητός *eulogetos*) essentially means to 'praise.' He thus invokes that praise to God. For it is He "who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ." As the chapter will soon unfold, the Apostle will rehearse a treasury of spiritual blessings which are available in Christ. Though some lay an emphasis on the "heavenly *places*," the greater contextual emphasis is "in Christ." The origin of those blessings is in heaven where the Father resides. As the following text will show, our manifold spiritual blessings are all rooted "in Christ." Moreover, the apostle will clearly refer to our spiritual position as "in Christ."

1:4 The first of these wonderful blessings is **According he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world.** Clearly implied is the matter of election. That election took

place “before the foundation of the world.” The word translated as **world** (κοσμος *kosmos*) can have a variety of senses, ranging from the society of the unsaved to the earth itself. Which sense is not clearly defined. The author of Hebrews refers to the foundation of the *earth* (Hebrews 1:10), but there the word is (γη) *ghay*. In any event, our election took place in the distant past.

Here is a comment concerning election. The greater scope thereof in the Bible is *corporal* in distinction to *personal*. Just as God chose a *people* in Abraham (i.e., Israel), He also has chosen a *people* in Christ (i.e., the church). Most New Testament references to election deal with the body of Christ rather than individual believers. Jews to this day enter into their election by *physical* birth. We do so by a *spiritual* birth. We further have the open invitation, “whosoever will may come.” The greater truth is that our election (i.e., the church) has been “in him,” that is, in Christ.

It is of further significance that our election in Christ has been **that we should be holy and without blame before him in love**. God chose us (i.e., elected us) to the end we might be holy. The word *holy* may refer to our ultimate positional holiness in Christ while being “without blame” may refer to our day-to-day living. In any event, God has chosen us to be altogether holy, not only positionally, but also personally. That is why He chose us in Christ in the first place. This is His divine purpose.

The final phrase, “in love,” likely refers to God’s great love wherewith He loved us. His purpose was that we might be holy. His motive was His love. From thence has flowed His amazing grace and boundless mercy.

1:5 Paul then adds, **Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself**. This additional statement may not be so much a new thought as an embellishment upon the former thought. The word *predes-*

tinated often holds inaccurate understanding. It does not refer to a fatalistic inevitability or irresistible grace. Rather, the thought is that God in ages past planned ahead of time to adopt us unto Himself “by Christ Jesus.” The word translated as **by** (*δια δια*) may also be rendered as ‘through.’ Hence, our adoption is through Jesus Christ. We touch upon the broader scope how that Jesus is God’s only *begotten* Son. We are His numerous *adopted* sons. Though the basis of our relationship is different, an adopted son is as permanent and a binding proposition as a begotten son. Both enjoy full privileges of sonship.

This whole matter of sonship, election, and even predestination has been **according to the good pleasure of his will**. The thought is that all of this is through the goodness and kindness of His will. The wonderful benevolence of our heavenly Father is in view. All of these blessings in Christ and more are predicated upon the kind and gracious purposes of His will.

1:6 The even greater motive in all of this is that we should be **to the praise of the glory of his grace**. His wonderful kindness and good pleasure toward us redounds to praise the glory of His *grace*. The latter thought, in this context, alludes to His graciousness, love, kindness, and goodness to us. Indeed, it demands praise. It indeed is glorious.

It is thus in **his grace wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved**. The thought blossoms as a fragrant rose. It is God’s grace toward us which has so blessed us in Christ. (The word translated as **made us accepted** {*χαριτωω charitoo*}, in this context, has the idea of being ‘blessed.’ The *beloved* here undoubtedly is Christ.) Hence, all of the profound spiritual blessings being defined derive from God’s grace and are in Christ. Though slightly veiled, the blessing again is *in Christ*.

1:7-8 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence.

The next blessing in Christ is noted via “in whom.” That is “redemption through his blood.” The ransom of our redemption was the precious blood of Christ. Redemption, of course, alludes to how that God through Jesus’ blood has purchased us back from the bondage of sin. To that degree, He became our kinsman redeemer. Moreover, through His shed blood, we have “forgiveness of sins.” As per Hebrews 9:22, the shedding of blood is the necessary requisite for forgiveness. It is the predicate upon which God’s forgiveness rests. Once again, this all stems from “the riches of his grace; wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence.” Therefore, from His grace has emanated not only forgiveness, but also wisdom and prudence.

1:9-10 The complex thought continues. From His wisdom and prudence, God has made known unto us **the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself.** The thought is how the mystery of His will has been made known to us through His goodness which He Himself has determined.

The mystery of His will is **10 that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him.** A specific dispensation is noted, “the fulness of times.” Exactly what or when this dispensation might be is not noted. It may refer to the then present. In Galatians 4:4, Paul referred to the fulness of time in regard to Christ’s birth. It may refer to the millennial reign of Christ which certainly will be the fulness of times. However, the unfolding context of Ephesians would lean toward the former. Ephesians 3:4-6 makes clear, the mystery Paul is expounding is that the gentiles would be one with the Jew in Christ. That thought also is made clear in Ephesians 2:12-18.

The gathering together in one, once again *in Christ*, would appear to be the Jew and gentile in the church. That includes both those which are in heaven as well as on earth. In all cases, it is *in Him*.

1:11 Moreover, *in Him* we also **have obtained an inheritance**. As Paul makes clear in Romans 8:17, we are in fact “joint-heirs with Christ.” That inheritance will be received in full when we get to glory. Paul again mentions that we thus have been **predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will**. Our predestination in this context is related to our awaiting inheritance. In the counsel or purpose of His will, He has predestinated us (i.e., the church) to receive an inheritance in Christ.

1:12 This all is toward the end **that we should be to the praise of his glory**. All that He has done for us, both now and in the future, ultimately is to bring praise to His glory and Himself. This, of course, is all set apart for those **who first trusted in Christ**. That is the entrance to all of these blessings.

1:13 **In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise**. Paul therefore briefly rehearses that *in Him* we trusted after we heard the truth, the gospel of our salvation. *In Him* we thereafter believed and were thus “sealed with that holy Spirit of promise.” Paul had mentioned the sealing of the Holy Spirit in II Corinthians 1:22. Now for the second of three times, he mentions the sealing of the Spirit again. (The third is in Ephesians 4:30.) The thought is that after being saved, God has placed upon us a seal by His Holy Spirit.

In the Roman world, the seal of Rome carried the weight and authority of Rome. Woe be to any who tampered with that

seal. The wrath of the Roman government would fall upon him. Thus, the seal of the Holy Spirit likely refers to the security of our salvation. It is sure. Woe be to Satan or anyone else who would seek to take away our redemption. The final comment concerning “the Holy Spirit of promise,” no doubt, alludes to the promise of the Spirit our Lord made prior to His ascension. See John 14:16-17, 16:7-13.

1:14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory. The Apostle continues to describe that the seal of the Holy Spirit “is the earnest of our inheritance.” The word translated as **earnest** (ἀρραβὼν *arrhabon*) refers to a down payment. The down payment of our promised inheritance is the seal of the Holy Spirit upon us. No one can take our salvation or its promised inheritance from us. It has been sealed by God. The full redemption of that “purchased possession,” our salvation and its promised inheritance, is still to come. But we have already received its down payment. It all adds up for “the praise of his glory.”

1:15 Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints. The next major paragraph of the chapter begins with a *wherefore*. The Greek text literally says ‘because of this.’ The logical progression is thus. Because of all of the blessings we have received in Christ (as detailed in the preceding twelve verses), what is presented next therefore follows.

Paul proceeds. Upon hearing of their “faith in the Lord Jesus” and their “love unto all the saints,” it became the basis of thanks. Two major spiritual virtues are noted. (1) The Ephesian church had placed their faith in the Lord Jesus and (2) they had manifested an evident love for all other believers. As Jesus noted in John 13:35, “By this shall all *men* know that ye are my

disciples, if ye have love one to another.” That evident love was a clear testimony of their relationship to Christ.

1:16 Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers. Paul therefore on that basis ceased not to give thanks for them, making mention of them in his prayers. Insight into Paul’s prayer life is gained. One thing is for sure. He prayed often with much thanks for other believers. That evidenced spiritual maturity.

1:17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him. The Apostle continued giving further insight of his prayer for the Ephesian church. Specifically, he prayed regarding “the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory.” Of interest is Paul’s reference to God as (1) being the God of the Lord Jesus Christ and also (2) the Father of glory. What a beautiful description of our heavenly Father. Of further note is the purposeful title, the “Lord Jesus Christ.” Though any one of those three words might adequately describe God’s Son, the three together form a completed title. He is Lord. He is Savior as the name Jesus denotes. And, He is King as the title Christ implies.

His request for his Ephesian brethren was that God “may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.” The thought is simple. Paul prayed that God would give them not only a spirit of wisdom, but also a spirit of understanding in the knowledge of Him. That need remains for God’s people to this hour.

1:18-19 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, 19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power

to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power.

Continuing, the Apostle requested that the “eyes of their understanding might be enlightened.” The word translated as **understanding** (διανοια *dianoia*) in its most frequent usage refers to the mind. Thus, he used an eloquent metaphor of the eyes of our mind being brightened. The idea is of having light on our minds regarding understanding the things of God.

Specifically, he prayed that they might have enlightened understanding of (1) “the hope of his calling.” The latter likely refers to the great hope we have as Christians. “His calling” likely refers to the greater matter of being a Christian. Thus, he prayed that they (and we) might have full understanding of the great hope included therein.

(2) He also prayed that they might understand “the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.” Similar in nature to the first, he here embellishes further that they and we might understand the wealth and glory of our coming inheritance.

Finally, (3) he prayed that they might understand “what *is* the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe.” Hence, he concluded his threefold request that they might understand the overwhelming greatness of His power which is available on the behalf of all who believe. That power is “according to the working of his mighty power.” There are two words translated as **power** in verse 19. The first is (δυναμις) *dunamis* which has the general sense of ‘unleashed energy’ or ‘power.’ The latter is (κρατος) *kratos* which has more to do with ‘great strength.’ Hence, the spiritual power available to us derives from the infinite strength of our Savior.

1:20 That power and strength was **which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly places.** Implied is that the same power is available to us in our Christian lives. It is the

same power and strength which raised Jesus and set Him at the right hand of God

1:21 That same power also exalted Jesus Christ **far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come.** The Lordship and even Deity of Christ are clearly implied. Noted are four words for both human as well as spiritual authority—principality, power, might, dominion. Implied is not only human government but also Satan’s evil empire. Yet, Jesus Christ has been exalted far above all power and authority in the universe. This is true “in this **world**”—the latter being translated from (αιων) *aion*, which among other things has the sense of ‘age,’ thus this age. But it is also true in the ages to come. He is over all. The reason is simple. Jesus, as God, is part of the Godhead and thus over all.

1:22 And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church. Moreover, God has “put all *things* under his feet.” This likely is quoted from Psalm 8:6 and is referenced in I Corinthians 15:27. It may be an oblique reference to Genesis 3:15 where Jesus Christ would someday crush Satan’s head with his heel. In addition, God “gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church.” The obvious is stated. Jesus is the head over all aspects of the church. Though the church at Ephesus was indirectly alluded to in the salutation of verse 1, here is Paul’s first direct mention thereof in the epistle. The simple truth is that Jesus Christ is the head of the church.

The word **church** is translated from (εκκλησια) *ecclesia* and literally means, ‘a called-out assembly.’ The term derives from the ancient Greek city/states which were pure democracies. Each adult citizen was a voting member. When city business was to be done, the ‘ecclesia’ was called together

which then voted upon whatever. This term, initially political, was the word the Holy Spirit chose to apply to what we today call the church. Historically it always referred to a local visible assembly. Accordingly, in the New Testament, the usage of the word *church* is almost always a reference to visible local assemblies.

A vast, universal, mysterious, invisible church is not found in the New Testament. The possible consideration thereof is when the collective church assembles in glory someday upon the Rapture as the bride of Christ. Otherwise, its usage in the New Testament is of local rather than universal, visible rather than invisible, and tangible in many locales rather than mysterious. Jesus is its head.

1:23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all. The church “is his body.” Reference is not to his physical body to be sure. Rather, it is the body of believers in each local church. The local church thus is “the fulness of him” in any given community or neighborhood. It is the “fulness of him that filleth all in all.” Thus, in the local church is the potential fulness of Him who can and at His discretion may fill all believers in all places. Again, Jesus is the head thereof.

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Overview of Ephesians 2: Two great truths are found in this chapter: (1) the essence of regeneration by grace through faith and (2) the mystery revealed how both Jew and gentile alike have been united into one in Christ in the church.

2:1 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins. The Apostle begins the chapter with an elliptical thought. The phrase “*hath he quickened*” is not in the

Greek text and does not appear until verse 5. Nevertheless, because the thought is implied and because the flow of thought leading up thereto is complex, the translators inserted the phrase here to help clarify understanding. Their honesty is noted in the use of italics. Further comment on the word will be made in verse 5.

The actual thought begins with Paul's indictment of his readers as well as us. They, and we alike, "were dead in trespasses and sins." The verb *were* is actually present tense with the sense of 'being.' The literal thought is, 'And you, being dead in trespasses and sins.' The word translated as **trespasses** (*παραπτώμα paraptoma*) has the sense to 'lapse' or 'deviate' from truth or righteousness.' It is a general synonym for unrighteousness. The word translated as **sins** is translated from the common word ('αμαρτια) *hamartia*. One definition thereof is to 'miss the mark.' The greater thought is that prior to being saved, we were spiritually dead through unrighteousness and sins.

2:2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.

When this condition existed is noted as "in time past." That refers to before our salvation. At that time we and they alike walked, that is lived, according to three basic influences: (1) "according to the course of this world." The phrase is instructive. The word translated as **course** is (*αιων*) *aion*, which among other things, has the sense of an 'age' or an 'era.' The idea is that before we were saved, we lived according to the eras and fads of this world. As Paul admonished against in Romans 12:2, we at that time were conformed to this world. The word translated as **world** is (*κοσμος*) *kosmos* which has the sense of the 'society and culture of the unsaved.'

Then, the Apostle noted that then we lived (2) “according to the prince of the power of the air.” As will be made clear momentarily, this prince is none other than Satan. The reference to the “power of the air” does not refer to the physical force of the wind. (The word translated as **power** is (ἐξουσία) *excousia* which has more of the sense of ‘authority.’) Rather, it was idiomatic and understood both by Jewish as well as pagan minds to refer to the collective demonic empire which resides in the atmospheric air. Both Jews and gentiles entertained notions that the domain of demons was the atmosphere. The greater thought is that before we were saved, our lives were greatly influenced by the devil. Though his work is mysterious in its operation, it nevertheless is very real in its influence.

The Apostle continues with an appositive, making clear who this prince is. He is none other than “the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.” Insight into the work of the devil is given. (a) He is a spirit. (b) The word translated as **worketh** (ενεργεω *energeo*) can literally have the sense of ‘energizing.’ Thus we are instructed that the devil spiritually energizes the people of the world. Moreover, (c) the world is further noted as the “children of disobedience.” The word translated as **disobedience** (απειθεια *apeitheia*) literally means ‘unbelieving.’ Its secondary sense is disobedience. Indeed, the world is the society and culture of unbelievers.

2:3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

Referring back to the “children of disobedience” (i.e., the world), he recalls, “among whom also we all had our conversation in times past.” The word translated as **conversation** (αναστρεφω *anastrepho*) came to refer to one’s lifestyle or conduct. The time reference, “times past,” refers to before we

were saved. Thus, our lifestyle then was amongst and in step with the world around us.

In that vein, the Apostle touches upon how at that time our way of living was (3) “in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind.” He refers to our old sinful nature, commonly called the *flesh*. Before conversion, the *modus operandi* of regenerate people is to live according to the *lusts*, that is, the desires of the flesh, fulfilling the *desires* (i.e., the will, of the old sinful nature and carnal mind). Insight into how the flesh operates is thus revealed. Its method of operation is of self-directed desires both on a spiritual as well as mental level. Hence, we were “by nature the children of wrath, even as others.” The latter likely refers to the ultimate end of sin which is the wrath of God in hell as described in John 3:36. Thus the Apostle in these three verses sets forth the threefold influences by which unsaved people operate: (1) the world, (2) the devil, and (3) the flesh. Those perverse influences remain unto this day.

2:4 One of the great juxtapositions in the Bible is at hand. With the backdrop of a dark evil world, with its leader, its residents, and its very nature; Paul sets forth a brilliant contrast. It is introduced with a major, *but*. Implicit is a major contrast. That contrast is, **But God, who is rich in mercy for his great love wherewith he loved us.** The brilliance of His glory is evident, shining through the dark clouds of the world, the flesh, and the devil. He is not just merciful, He is “rich in mercy.”

The word translated as **rich** (πλουσιος *plousios*) has the sense of abounding or overflowing. The word translated as **mercy** (ελεος *eleos*) generally has the sense of ‘kindness or good will toward those in miserable estate.’ More specifically, it refers to a willingness to deal kindly with one guilty. That, praise God, is what He has done for us. He is rich in mercy because of “his great love wherewith he loved us.” God’s mercy

emanates from His love. If He is rich in mercy, how much more must be His love.

2:5 This is notwithstanding the fact “we were dead in sins.” **Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved.)** Prior to the regenerating power of salvation, we were dead spiritually. That is, we were dead in our relationship to God. But even then, He “quickened us together with Christ.” Allusion is made to the resurrection of Christ. Though He was dead, nevertheless, God quickened Him. The word translated as **quickened together** (συζωοποιεω *suzoopoieo*) literally means to ‘make alive together.’ Not only have we been given new life spiritually (i.e., regenerated) when we were saved, we were so regenerated along with Christ. The same power that brought Him to life in His resurrection is the power which regenerated us. What a singular blessing. We have been quickened *together* with Christ. The basis for this all is thus noted: “By grace ye are saved.”

The Apostle herein touches upon and begins to develop one of the great truths of the New Testament—the grace of God. It is a broad concept. Here, however, the focus is restricted to God’s grace as it relates to our salvation. The word translated as **grace** (χαρις *charis*) has the sense of good will, loving-kindness, and favor. Perhaps its most succinct definition as it relates to salvation is ‘unmerited favor.’ It derives from God’s love and is the practical outworking thereof. Someone has constructed the acrostic, G-God’s, R-righteousness, A-at, C-Christ’s, E-expense. It is by the grace of God toward us that anyone of us might be saved.

2:6 Returning to the primary flow of thought that God has quickened us together with Christ, Paul continues by noting, **And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in**

heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Two parallel resurrections are in view. Jesus' bodily resurrection is hereto alluded. But our *spiritual* quickening in Christ has allowed us to be seated positionally in heaven with Him, because we are now *in* Christ. Thus, as far as God is concerned, to that degree we are already in heaven. Strongly hinted at is the security and seal of our salvation. As an alternate thought, our physical resurrection may be in view, but in prospect. It hasn't happened yet, but we can rest assured of its promise because we are in Christ Jesus, who already had blazed the way for us. Hence, our seat in heaven is awaiting us.

2:7 The prospect of the future comes into further focus. We have been quickened and raised up with Christ **that in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.** What a fabulous future we have in Christ. Truly there is hope of glory. The prospect is unto the ages to come. Then, in those ages, God will continue to display the boundless riches of His grace toward us. Of interest is that the final phrase could literally and accurately be rendered, 'in kindness on us in Christ Jesus.' Once again, the blessings of the ages to come will be poured out upon us because we are in Him.

2:8 The verse summarizes into one succinct statement the basis for all of the mountain-peak blessings thus described. It is all because of God's grace. **For by grace are ye saved through faith.** The agency through which God's grace is focused is thus noted. It is faith in Jesus Christ. The two concepts are inter-related. Because we are altogether lost, it is only by the grace of God that there is any hope of salvation. Our only recourse therefore is in simple faith to trust Him and His grace. Because salvation is by God's grace, the only means of appropriating it unto ourselves is by turning to Him and trusting in Him.

Hence, it is not of ourselves. It is zero percent of us and one-hundred percent of God. Because of His wonderful grace and mercy, **it is the gift of God**. A gift by its very nature is offered through the grace of the giver. By its very nature, a gift is not earned nor is of compensation. Rather, it is free. It therefore can only be obtained by freely receiving it. The gospel is profound in its simplicity. It is as simple as reaching out and receiving a free gift.

2:9 Moreover, our salvation is **not of works, lest any man should boast**. The word translated as **boast** (*καυχασθαι kauchaomai*) is most commonly rendered as ‘glory.’ The thought is simple. If we could somehow or other merit salvation through some sort of work, then we could claim the glory rather than God. But it is not of works. Therefore, only God can receive glory for saving us.

2:10 **For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.** The verse begins with **for** (translated from *γαρ gar*). It is a leading conjunction. That is, it leads the thought forward to a related conclusion. That conclusion is that “we are his workmanship.” The word so translated (*ποίημα poiema*) has the idea of ‘that which He has made,’ ‘His creation,’ ‘His production.’ He not only saved us, He has made us a new creature in Christ. Thus, we have been “created in Christ Jesus unto good works.” God’s purpose in saving us, in part, was that we might serve Him thereafter. We are not saved by good works. But we surely have been saved to do good works thereafter. God has thus “before ordained that we should walk in them.” God’s will, His predestinated plan, is for us to live our lives in serving Him. Predestination is as simple as that. That is manifoldly clear throughout the New Testament. See I Corinthians 15:58 and Titus 3:1,8.

2:11 Wherefore remember, that ye *being* in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands.

Paul's focus now returns to where he was in chapter 1 and the mystery (1:9). The remainder of the chapter further unfolds and explains that mystery. His readers, which evidently were primarily gentiles, were urged to recall that in the past when they were called "uncircumcised by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands." He alludes to Jews which had accused these gentile believers of being uncircumcised and thus spiritually unworthy. This likely was before they were saved as the next verse will attest. In any event, it evidenced the division and apparent friction which existed between Jewish and gentile believers in the church.

2:12 Continuing, Paul reminded them how at that time they had been (1) **without Christ**, (2) **being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel**, and (3) **strangers from the covenants of promise**, (4) **having no hope**, and (5) **without God** (6) **in the world**. The thought is how that gentiles prior to salvation were not only without Christ and God, but also were outside of the covenant promises made to Israel. The overall thought is how there thus was a disparate gap between Jews and gentiles.

2:13 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. The thought is that in Christ, gentiles who once were separated from God have been made near through the shed blood of Christ.

2:14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*. Moreover, Jesus Christ has become the focal point of reconciliation between Jew and gentile. He has "broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*." The final phrase has

evident symbolism. In the Temple at Jerusalem, there was a wall in the Temple court partitioning off the area in which gentiles were allowed. Paul here alludes, by way of this metaphor, to how Christ has eliminated the barrier between Jew and gentile in the church.

2:15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace. In His own flesh, Jesus abolished the animosity between Jew and gentile, including “the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances.” The latter may refer to the burdensome load of the law. It may refer to the legalistic minutia of the Jewish traditions accumulated on top of the law. In any event, Jesus Christ abolished it all “to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace.” The new man indicated is the new body of both Jews and gentiles in the church. In so doing, He effected peace between both.

2:16 His goal was to reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby. Christ’s work on the cross, among other things, was intended to evaporate the hostility between Jew and gentile in the church.

2:17 And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. Moreover, in His coming, Christ preached peace to those who were afar off (unbelieving gentiles) and them which were near (unbelieving Jews).

2:18 For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Indeed, through Him both Jew and gentile have access “by one Spirit unto the Father.” For there is none

other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. Jesus is the common denominator for both believing Jew and gentile. This is the mystery Paul alluded to earlier in Ephesians 1:9.

2:19 Paul's comments continue to be directed to the believing gentiles in the church at Ephesus. Because of Jesus Christ, we as gentile believers **are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, of the household of God.** The word *saints* in this context likely refers to the covenant relationship Israel had with God. They were the Old Testament saints. But we are all now of the household of God. The latter literally refers to one's house, in this case, God's.

2:20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone. We, both Jew and gentile believers, have been built together (as a spiritual house) "upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets." The spiritual house thus alluded to is the church. Its basic foundation is the apostles and prophets. The latter likely is a metaphor referring to the Word of God in both the New and Old Testaments. The most important stone in ancient stone masonry was the cornerstone for it determined the trueness of the building in all dimensions. The "chief corner stone" of the church is none other than Jesus Christ. Thus, the foundation of the New Testament church is Jesus Christ as its head. The remainder of its foundation is the Word of God as given through the prophets of the Old Testament and the apostles of the New.

2:21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord. The metaphor of a building continues. This household (house) of God, whose

foundation is Jesus Christ and the Word of God, is **fitly framed together**. The word so translated (συναρμολογεω *sunarmologeō*) is of interest. It has the sense of being masterfully designed and crafted together. It bespeaks a master architect and builder. This divinely designed building, an household of God, was being erected as a holy temple in the Lord. There may be a veiled allusion to the then recently finished Temple at Jerusalem, which was considered one the world's architectural masterpieces. It may have been the basis of Paul's metaphor he herein had constructed.

2:22 The metaphor thus concludes by Him describing how both these believing gentiles in the church as well as their Jewish brethren had been built "together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." The church as a spiritual body has thus become the house of God; not its physical meeting place, but the body of believers itself. This is the mystery that both Jew and gentile would be melded together as one in Christ as the new temple of God in this age.

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***Overview of Ephesians 3:** This third chapter presents two thoughts. First, is Paul's lengthy summary of the 'mystery' he described in the preceding chapter. Then, he presents another eloquent prayer on behalf of the Ephesian church in light of that mystery.*

Summary of Verses 1-10: This abnormally large block of verses is noted together because of the unity, yet complexity of thought set forth by the apostle. Paul, in complex fashion, summarizes the matter of the mystery alluded unto in the preceding two chapters. (It all is only two sentences.) The summary es-

sence might be tracked from Verse 1: “For this cause, I Paul . . . (to verse 7) was made a minister . . . (to verse 8) that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.” Though much more complexity is embellished, that is the essence of these ten verses. Let us look more closely.

3:1 The Apostle continues noting, **For this cause**. He refers to the cause of the unity in the church wherein both Jew and gentile are one. He further identifies himself as **the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you gentiles**. The reference to him being a prisoner is likely both literal as well as spiritual. He was a prisoner in Rome and used that occasion to describe his relationship to Jesus Christ. Moreover, he implies his imprisonment was for the gentile church. Without such, he may never have written the epistles that he did.

3:2 If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you—ward. The sentence continues with a first class conditional phrase, similar to a rhetorical question—its answer is obvious. Indeed they had heard of the “dispensation of the grace of God” which had been given to him for their sakes. Though some might seek to attach this phrase to the dispensation of the church age, a more prosaic sense likely is in view. Its most literal sense is that Paul had been given the administration of the grace of God to gentile believers as the apostle to the gentiles. See Romans 11:13.

3:3 How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words. Paul notes how that his understanding of the mystery of the gentiles being in the same body with Jewish believers was given to him “by revelation.” This may have taken place while he spent time in Arabia. It may have been at others times when God spoke directly to him. In any event, his understanding thereof was by direct

revelation from God at an unspecified time and place. The few words of which he wrote *afore* most likely refers to the last half of chapter two.

3:4-5 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) 5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.

Paul continues to embellish his thoughts on this point. He thus notes again the matter of the “mystery of Christ which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men” as it now had been to him (and other of the apostles and prophets by the Holy Spirit). His mention of *prophets* acknowledges the ongoing use of that New Testament office. It soon would cease according to I Corinthians 13:8. In any event, all such revelation then was through the agency of the Holy Spirit. This mystery was not known in Old Testament Scripture. Indeed, there was prophecy there that the gentiles would someday turn to God. But the fact that they would be united together with Jews in one body was heretofore unknown.

3:6 Here is summarized the distilled essence of the mystery: **that the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel.** That is, the gentiles would now have full concord with all privileges of their Jewish brethren *in the church*. In the church, there would be no distinction between Jew and gentile. They would be united together in one body as one spiritual organism.

3:7-8 Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. 8 Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.

Paul continues how that he thus was “made a minister” toward this end. It was according to “the gift of the grace of God” which had been given him by the effective working of God’s power. Of even greater contrast was that this marvelous ministry should be given unto Paul. In his spiritual humility, he considered himself “less than the least of all saints.” Nevertheless, God had given him this grace. Here the word *grace* is used in the sense of ‘strength.’ God had given him the strength that he ‘should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.” The latter phrase has the sense of being fathomless. There is no end to the discovery of the riches of Christ. Of further interest is the word, **preach** (εὐαγγελίζω *evangelidzo*). Though its more generic sense is to ‘preach,’ more literally it refers to making known the gospel.

3:9 And to make all *men* see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ. Furthermore, the Apostle’s ministry was to “make all men see what *is* the fellowship of the mystery.” That is, Paul considered it part of his purpose to enable all to see the unity, concord, and fellowship there was in the now revealed mystery— “that the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body” with Jewish believers. That mystery “from the beginning of the world” had been “hid in God.” He further adds how that God “created all things in Jesus Christ.” The Apostle made that very clear in Colossians 1:16. He made sure the same truth was found in Ephesians.

3:10 All of this, the revelation of the mystery as well as God’s creative work in Christ, was **to the intent that** (literally, ‘in order that’) **now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly *places* might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.** The thought is that even the angelic leadership

in high places would understand, through *the church*, God's diverse wisdom. What an amazing thought. The church, the mystery hid from ages past, is God's chosen vehicle for the propagation of the truth not only here on the earth, but also for angels. It may be that angels in heaven could not understand the work of Christ or the reconciliation between Jew and gentile. The church is the vehicle of such understanding even for them. Implicit also is that the church is the primary body for the transmission and preservation of the Scripture—the manifold wisdom of God.

3:11 According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. This all was “according to the eternal purpose” God accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.

3:12 Once again, Paul indicates that in Christ, **we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.** Because we are in Christ, we can now boldly come to God (see Hebrews 4:16). Our access is through Him (see John 14:6). Moreover, we have access with confidence through faith in Christ. As we come to God through faith in His Son, we have complete access to Him and therefore can come with boldness.

3:13 Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory. In light of all of this, Paul thus desired that they be not discouraged at the imprisonment he was facing at Rome. Paul had the spiritual maturity to realize it was for the glory of the Ephesian church. Rather than fret over him, he urged them to be encouraged (i.e., glory in him).

3:14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, with all of the preceding in view, from the revelation of the mystery to Paul's incarceration

for their sake, he thus bowed his knees unto “the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” In other words, Paul rather took the entire matter to God in prayer. Lest there be any doubt in the minds of his readers, he eloquently wrote how that God was the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. His full title is presented. He is Lord, Savior (Jesus), and King (Christ).

3:15 Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named. Before launching into the essence of his prayer for them, he also made clear that all in heaven and earth have their origins in Christ. That is made clear in Colossians 1:15,17-18. Though some try to make a special entity out of ‘the family of God,’ the word translated **family** (*πατρία patria*) has the sense of ‘lineage’ or ‘ancestry.’ The greater point is that all, whether in heaven or earth, have their origins in Christ as Creator. This forms the preface of his prayer.

3:16 In Paul’s prayer for the Ephesian church in chapter 1, the focus was upon their understanding of the knowledge of what lies ahead for God’s people. In Ephesians 3, the focus of Paul’s prayer for them is upon them (1) being strengthened and (2) realizing the love of Christ. Therefore, he prayed for them that (a) God would **grant you according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man.** Though not otherwise directly defined, “the inner man” likely is our soul and/or spirit. It is the spiritual, non-physical part of our being. Strengthening of the inner man comes through His Spirit and ultimately from “the riches of his glory.” As also noted in Romans 9:23, Paul speaks of those riches. Thus His glory through His Spirit is always available as a source of strength for God’s people.

3:17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love. This next clause, beginning

with *that*, is not parallel with the *that* in verse 16. There, the word is (‘*iva*) *hina*. Here, it is only implied. The thought is *that* Christ already dwells in our hearts by faith. Moreover, the greater truth is that Christ indeed dwells in our hearts by *faith*. This, incidentally, is the only place in the Bible which expressly speaks of Christ being in one’s heart.

The next major segment of Paul’s prayer is again introduced by a (‘*iva*) *hina*—(b) “that ye, being rooted and ground in love.” Paul prays not only that God would strengthen them, but that they might be rooted in love. How that is needed to this day.

3:18-19 But that is only the introduction to his greater thought. As they were rooted and grounded in love, he prayed that they **may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; 19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.** Paul’s second desire in this prayer was that the Ephesians church might comprehend to the same degree what other Christians (i.e., saints) elsewhere had come to know. That is the full dimensions of the love of Christ.

Of interest is that he notes three and actually four dimensions. Not only is the breadth and length thereof mentioned, but he then uses two degrees to describe the third dimension—depth, implying the depths of the sea. This is along with height implying the height of the heavens. The greater thought is that he prayed they would fully understand the measureless love of Christ to usward. It in fact is infinite love. He notes the same in that it “passeth knowledge.” The word translated as **passeth** (‘*υπερβαλλω* *hyperballo*) has the sense to ‘exceed’ or ‘transcend.’ The love of Christ thus transcends knowledge. It is measureless and infinite.

The third parallel thought is again introduced by (‘*iva*) *hina* (in order that) (c) “that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.” Precisely what “all the fulness of God” is has

not been defined. It may refer to the fulness of the Holy Spirit. It may refer to the fulness of His blessings to us both spiritually as well as otherwise. It likely refers to the full blessing of spiritual maturity and all that comes therewith.

Hence, three distinct thoughts have been introduced by a (‘*ἵνα*’) *hina* clause (‘that,’ or ‘in order that’) regarding Paul’s prayer for the Ephesian church: (1) in order that they might be strengthened in the inner man; (2) in order that they might be able to comprehend the full dimension of the love of Christ; and (3) in order that they might be filled with the fulness of God. Though the three thoughts are grammatically parallel, there also is clearly a logical implication to the word (‘*ἵνα*’) *hina* (in order that). The three thoughts may be a simple threefold parallelism of Paul’s prayer for them. It, however, may be a threefold progression with each thought building upon the former, culminating in the fulness of God. In any event, such is the marvelous intercessory prayer life of the great Apostle for others. What an example not only in its content, but in its intercessory character.

3:20 Whether this final benediction was intended as part of Paul’s prayer or whether it merely is the conclusion to this section of the epistle, it is magnificent in its spiritual eloquence. The focus is entirely upon our Almighty God.

The first phrase in itself is profound, **Now unto him that is able**. God has all ability. He is all powerful which is implied in the word translated as **able** (δυναμει *dunamai*). Moreover, He is **able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think**. His ability is infinite. Nothing is too hard for Him. The only limitation upon God is our inability to ask as we ought. Truly, we have not because we ask not. He is able to do more than we could ever even think, much less ask. Moreover, this potential is **according to the power that worketh in us**. Though not defined, that power likely is by the Holy Spirit.

3:21 Once again the focal point of glory is our blessed God. Moreover, the channel through which that glory has been ordained is “in the church.” The primacy of the local church as the vehicle in this age to glorify the Father is clear. It is unique and exclusive. This glory to God in the church is further “by Christ Jesus throughout all ages.” The latter word (*ages*) literally has the sense of ‘generations.’ The final phrase, “world without end,” literally might be rendered as ‘ages of ages,’ or perhaps, ‘ages unto ages.’ In any event, God has ordained that glory be focused upon Himself in all generations unto the ages through the church of Jesus Christ. It is the church which has willingly turned to and trusted in God’s gracious offer of salvation, thus bringing glory to Him. This first section of the book aptly ends with an *amen*—so be it!

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Overview of Ephesians 4: The epistle now shifts from the doctrinal to the practical. The emphasis is on the Christian walk. In this chapter as well, the Apostle also inserts significant statements concerning God’s gifts of leadership to the church.

4:1 I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called. Again, another chapter begins with Paul referring to himself as a “prisoner of the Lord.” (Of interest is that the phrase, “prisoner of the Lord,” literally is, ‘prisoner in the Lord.’ Implied is more than Paul’s imprisonment at Rome. Rather, his bond to Christ is in view. There is also a *therefore*. It logically and sequentially links that which has been heretofore established—our manifold blessings in Christ, salvation by grace, the mystery of the gospel, and the invocation of glory to God through the church—to its outworking.

The Apostle thus urges and encourages us to “walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called.” The word translated as **walk** (περιπατεω *peritpateo*) literally means exactly that. However, it is used as a metaphor of day-to-day living. The word *live* could aptly be substituted. The word translated as **worthy** (αξιως *axios*) is in fact an adverb with the sense of ‘worthily’ or ‘suitably.’ The “vocation wherewith ye are called” literally has the sense, ‘the calling wherewith ye are called.’ That calling is our salvation. It hearkens back to Christ’s call, “come unto me.” Hence, we have been enjoined to live worthily of the salvation wherewith we have been called.

4:2 Five qualifications of this walk are thus noted: (1) **with all lowliness and meekness**. The first refers to humility. The latter though related certainly is not a synonym. The word translated as (2) **meekness** πραοτης (*praotes*) denotes not only mildness of nature, but being even-natured. It bespeaks discipline of emotions. Thus, the double injunction is both of humility as well as a disciplined temperament.

Moreover, to that is added the injunction (3) **with long-suffering**. The word translated thus (μακροθυμια *makrothumia*) denotes on the one hand steadfastness and perseverance and on the other, forbearance and slowness to avenge wrong. That is coupled with (4) **forbearing one another in love**. In other words, it is putting up with one another in a spirit of love.

4:3 The fifth aspect of walking worthy of our vocation is (5) **endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace**. The word translated as **endeavoring** (σπουδαζω *soudadzo*) is that which is at times otherwise translated as ‘diligent’ or ‘diligence.’ Hence, the thought is of being diligent **to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace**. The thought simply is to be ever so careful to maintain unity and peace amongst God’s people. Thus, walking worthy of our salvation

involves humility, discipline of emotion, endurance as well as putting up with one another. It certainly involves preserving peace amongst God's people.

4:4-6 The Apostle thus illustrates the need for unity by noting that principle in God's working. He thus notes seven examples of unity which God has established. (1) **There is one body**, undoubtedly referring to the body of Christ—the church. (2) There is **one Spirit**—the Holy Spirit. (3) From Him we have been called **in one hope of your calling**. The point simply is that we all have one common hope—the hope of glory which is heaven above. (4) There is **one Lord**. (5) There is **one faith** in Christ. (6) There is only valid **one baptism**. It may be that both physical as well as spiritual baptism are in view. Finally, (7) there is **one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all**. (Notice the four prepositions which Paul used to describe God's relationship to us. He is Father *of* all, who is *above* all, *through* all, and *in* all.) The greater point is that God's working is unified and never disunified. That example is for our benefit to so keep the unity of peace in the church.

4:7 **But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ**. However, with that backdrop of spiritual unity, Paul juxtaposes a contrast of spiritual diversity. He begins to present the various gifts of leadership that God has given to the church for its benefit. He begins by describing how that God has given grace to each of us according to the *measure* (i.e., the degree) of the gift of Christ. The point is, the measure of the gift of Christ is boundless. Hence, God's degree of gifts to us is the same. It is an eloquent way to describe his boundless grace.

4:8 He pauses to illustrate his point by quoting from Psalm 68:18, which when written was prophetic. **Wherefore, when**

he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. David's greater thought was a prophecy of Christ's ascension to heaven during the three-day interval between His death and resurrection. Alluded to is how that those saints of the Old Testament era (captive in Paradise) were led to heaven with Christ. But the salient portion to which Paul refers is that at the same time Christ also "gave gifts unto men." These gifts will soon be described as the various forms of leadership given to the church.

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

Lest there be uncertainty to which he refers, he embellishes further noting that He who ascended (i.e., Christ), "first descended into the lower parts of the earth." This likely refers to Christ's transferral of those in Abraham's bosom to heaven itself. He notes further that this was an ascension "far above all heavens," that is, from the physical heavens all the way to glory itself. It ultimately was "that he might fill all things." The word translated as **fill** (*πληροω pleroo*) is more commonly rendered as 'fulfill.' Thus, this work of Christ was that he might fulfill all things.

4:11 Therefore, in light of all this and our Lord's determination to give gifts to men, **he gave some apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.** The thought is that He gave to *some* the gift of apostleship, to others the gift of being a prophet, to others that of being an evangelist. To others still, He gave the gift of being a pastor. Finally, to others still, He gave the gift of teaching. Though individual *men* were the recipients of these various ministerial gifts, the *church* was the object of the gifts. The

greater thought is that Jesus Christ gave these varying gifts for the benefit of the church, which is the mystery of God.

Of the five ministerial offices noted, only three remain in this day. Let us briefly consider these five gifts. (1) **Apostles** were men directly called by Jesus Christ. The word thus translated (*αποστολος apostolos*) literally means ‘a delegated messenger sent forth with orders.’ In its more narrow definition, apostles were men directly sent by Christ and who had witnessed His resurrection. In its broader sense, other spiritual leaders in the early church were also so noted such as Barnabas, Timothy, and Silvanus. However, the former definition seems to be what is in view here. In any event, the office of apostle died with the apostles. That office ceased to exist after the first century.

The office of (2) **prophets** evidently was similar in nature to that of the Old Testament office by that name. In both cases, God chose to foretell and forth-tell His Word through men so chosen. The gift of prophecy is thus noted in the gifts of the Spirit found in I Corinthians 12:10. However, this gift faded away and failed according to I Corinthians 13:8. The purpose of the gift of prophecy was for God to reveal New Testament truth *verbally* via prophets in the interim between Pentecost and the completion of the Word of God. Thus, when “that which is perfect” came—the completed New Testament—the gift of prophecy along with the other interim gifts of the Spirit ceased.

The office of (3) **evangelists** refers to those whom God has called to a full-time or vocational ministry of assisting churches through specific ministries of evangelism. That office clearly remains to this day.

The fourth gift noted is that of (4) **pastors**. It refers to the God-called and God-ordained leader of local churches. The word so translated (*ποιμην poimen*) literally means a ‘shepherd.’ Thus, the pastor is one who oversees the church. The thought implies not only the individual care of the sheep, but also the oversight of the entire church.

The term is roughly synonymous with the terms ‘elder’ and ‘bishop.’ All three refer to the same individual, describing the various duties of a pastor. The latter two refer more to the organizational oversight of the church.

Finally, God gave (5) **teachers**. Some have been called to specific ministries directed toward full or part-time teaching. These may range from Bible college professors to Sunday School teachers in modern terms. (It should be noted that some have advanced the notion that the two offices of pastor and teacher are a combined or dual office. Though the grammar of the text might imply that, the greater context of the New Testament does not elsewhere refer to pastor-teachers. The two offices are otherwise always noted separately.)

The greater point is that Jesus Christ has bestowed these offices to the church as gifts thereto. They emanate from His grace as noted in verse 7.

4:12 The broad purpose of these various offices are several. First, these varying ministerial gifts are **for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry**. The *saints* noted, of course, are God’s regenerate people in the church, those made holy through the shed-blood of Jesus Christ. God therefore has ordained these various spiritual offices “for the perfecting of the saints.” The word translated as **perfecting** (καταρτισμος *katartismos*) has the sensing of ‘furnishing’ or ‘equipping.’ Whether it be pastor, evangelist, or teacher, they all have been ordained by God to equip God’s people “for the work of the ministry.” Though the comma between *saints* and *for* implies a separate purpose, the thought actually is that the perfecting of the saints is in order that God’s people may be equipped to do the work of the ministry themselves. That word translated as **for** (εις *eis*) has the sense of ‘unto,’ which lends credence thereto.

Of further significance is that “the ministry” is described as just that, “the ministry.” With one exception in the New

Testament, God’s work—the ministry—is always found with an article or adjective. It does not follow the modern fad of referring thereto as simply ‘ministry’ without the article.

An illustration thereof might be how a coach seeks to train his team to go out and win the game. Thus is the purpose of a pastor, evangelist, or teacher. Their ministries are to so equip God’s people that they can do the work of the ministry. The ultimate purpose is **for the edifying of the body of Christ**. The word translated as **edifying** (οικοδομη *oikodome*) has the sense of ‘building up.’ Thus, these various ministerial gifts are for the development of that building noted in Ephesians 2:20-22, the body of Christ, the local church of the New Testament.

4:13 This all is **till** (until) **we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God**. There thus remains a burden of responsibility upon the leadership of the church to see that it comes to a “unity of the faith” along with correct knowledge of “the Son of God.” Implied is the careful teaching and preaching of God’s truth so that there is that unity of truth. He continues in the same vein of the church thus developing **unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ**.

The metaphor now shifts from a building to that of a man and his body. The word translated as **perfect** (τελειος *teleios*) has the sense of ‘complete’ or even ‘mature.’ The analogy of development is continued in how we should thus grow to the same *stature* (i.e., height) of the *fulness* (i.e., maturity) of Christ. The broader sense is that God has ordained these various offices of church leadership (i.e., “the ministry”) that God’s people might fully grow and mature to be like Jesus.

4:14 The leadership of the church has thus been given **that** (ὅνα *hina*—in order that) **we henceforth be no more children**. Paul thus enumerates several degrees of spiritual perils against

which God has ordained these various gifts of the ministry. (1) The first is that we have not the gullible naivete of children, tending to believe whatever they hear. He further uses the illustration of (2) being **tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine**. The analogy is of the instability of wind-driven waves as they toss about during a storm.

He applies the analogy to the winds of false doctrine which often begin softly, but eventually turn into hurricanes of spiritual destruction. These winds of false doctrine originate (3) **by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive**. In this phrase are four descriptives of spiritual deception. (a) The first, “the sleight of men,” has the sense of ‘fraud,’ ‘cheating,’ or ‘deception.’ (b) The second, “cunning craftiness,” has the sense of subtle deviousness, even as the serpent was more subtle than all others. (c) The third, “lie in wait,” has the sense of trickery or ambush. Finally, (d) “to deceive” points to being led astray, particularly into error.

It all speaks of deviousness and deception. It all is in the context of doctrine and specifically false doctrine. The hand of the evil one is clearly visible behind the scenes thereof. For indeed, he is a liar and the father of it. The various ministerial offices of the church have been given by God to protect God’s people from the like.

4:15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ. In distinction, the ministerial leaders in the church have been so ordered to speak “the truth in love.” Truth at times can be cold and cutting. Church leadership and Christians in general are thus enjoined to temper the cold steel of truth with a gracious spirit. The purpose undergirding it all is that God’s people in the church “may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.” Even as Paul had mentioned the stature of the fullness of Christ in verse 13, he now notes that the goal is to thus

grow up unto Him, even Christ. The purpose of God's gift of leadership to the church therefore is not only to coach spiritual maturity and protect from spiritual error, but to enable God's people in the church to grow in Christ to the point we start to be like Jesus.

4:16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

In 2:20, the Apostle used the analogy of a building being "fitly framed together." Now, he uses the same word in the analogy of a body—the body of Christ. Christ is the head. We are the body. Moreover, that body has been appropriately put together by Christ "and compacted by that which every joint supplieth." The thought is that the body of Christ, like a human body, has been properly joined together in its every joint. Moreover, that spiritual body, like our human bodies, has been so brought together "according to the effectual working in the measure of every part." The thought is of the effective degree of interaction of each part of the body. That certainly is so in the human body. Paul describes the same analogy in the body of Christ. Both are masterpieces of God. The greater objective is the "increase of the body." It is God's purpose for the body of Christ to grow unto the "edifying of itself in love." All of the above is for the ultimate goal that the church may be built up in love one for another. This is the collective goal of the various gifts of the ministry which God has given to the church.

4:17 This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind. Therefore, as a result of all of the above, the Apostle Paul directs a second area of the Christian walk. That is

that we ‘henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk.’” The next area of Christian walk is thus introduced. The chapter will embellish upon this thought through verse 29.

To walk not as other gentiles walk is essentially to not live like the world. Though the term ‘gentile’ certainly has primarily an ethnic connotation—one not a Jew, it also on occasions has a more spiritual sense. It is one who is in the world and unsaved. In so many words, Paul admonished his readers to not be conformed to this world. He then proceeds to enumerate a lengthy list of ways in which the unsaved gentiles walk.

First is **in the vanity of their mind**. The word translated as **vanity** (ματαιοτης *mataiotes*) is of note. It has the sense, ‘devoid of truth and appropriateness’ as well as ‘perversity.’ The Apostle thus describes the utter depravity of the human mind. It has been so twisted by sin that it is capable of any evil. Though the world may so live, God’s people are enjoined the opposite.

4:18 Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart. He further describes the clouded condition of the sinful human heart as “having the understanding darkened.” The natural mind has been morally darkened by sin. Again, the greater truth is to not so walk. Furthermore, the unsaved gentile world has been “alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them.” Because of the spiritual ignorance which prevails, those in the world are separated from that quickening life of regeneration as noted in chapter 2. Moreover, spiritual ignorance prevails because “of the blindness” of the sinful human heart.

4:19 In further describing the gentile world, he notes how that they are **past feeling**. The idea is of becoming callous and desensitized to sin. It parallels the thought of having a seared conscious (I Timothy 4:2). Those in the world therefore **have**

given themselves over unto lasciviousness. The thought is that unsaved people in the world have given or surrendered themselves to **lasciviousness**. The word so translated (*ασεληγεια aselgeia*) has the sense of ‘unbridled lust.’ It connotes all forms of sexual depravity, wantonness, licentiousness, and sexual shamelessness. They therefore have so given themselves **to work all uncleanness with greediness**. The thought is of endless pursuit of sexual impurity.

4:20-21 But ye have not so learned Christ; 21 If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus.

The Apostle reminds his readers that they “have not so learned Christ.” Indeed, as Christians, we know better and are tacitly thus reminded to not so walk as other gentiles walk. Indeed, as we have heard His Word and been taught thereby, we know this is the truth, even as it is in Christ Jesus.

4:22 That truth is **that ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts**. Paul alludes to how before we were saved, we may have so lived. That is our former **conversation**. The word so translated (*αναστροφη anastrophe*) has the sense of manner of life, behavior, or deportment. He is referring to our “old man.” That indeed is reference to our old sinful nature. He uses an everyday metaphor thereto. To so “put off” the old man is like taking off unclean clothing. We do it everyday. Even so, we need to deal with our old nature at least daily. When we were saved, we received a new nature. The old remains. Even as clothing will become soiled day by day and must be put off, even so must we so deal with our old nature.

4:23 The first step in the solution of this matter is to **be renewed in the spirit of your mind**. (Of note is the distinction

between spirit and mind.) We are enjoined to be renewed in that spirit. In II Corinthians 4:16, the Apostle wrote of the inner man being renewed day by day. See also Romans 12:2. Such renewal comes, in large part, through the absorption of the Word of God along with the fellowship of prayer. As we spend time each day in His presence through the Scripture and prayer, our spirit will be renewed daily.

4:24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Then, in conjunction therewith, we are enjoined to “put on the new man.” The Apostle presents the other side of the matter. Whereas we were enjoined to put off the soiled garment of the old man, and being renewed in the spirit of our mind, now we are directed to reach into the closet of our hearts and put on the clean garment of the new man. The thought parallels Galatians 5:16 where the Apostle directed to walk in the Spirit. Each day (and then some), we as born-again Christians are instructed to put on the new nature which God has given us. The singular alternate is to walk in the flesh which is corrupt.

The inspired author then notes the essence of the new man. It has been “created in righteousness and truly holiness.” The distinguishing characteristics of the new nature are righteousness and holiness. It is a totally different *modus operandi* than the flesh. According to both Ephesians 4:22 as well as Galatians 5:24, the old nature (i.e., the flesh) operates on the level of lusts and affections (i.e., feelings). The new nature operates on the infinitely higher plane of righteousness. That is, rather than considering what we want or feel like, we ask, ‘Is it right? Is it holy?’ It rather is, not my will but Thine be done. To be sure, this is walking not as other gentiles walk.

4:25 Returning to the greater imperative of this section, “Walk not as other gentiles walk,” the Apostle begins to enum-

erate other specifics of ungodly living. Alluding to the analogy of putting off unclean garments, he therefore directs, **Wherefore putting away lying, speak every truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.** Such is basic righteousness, for we indeed are members one of another. It also is the essence of the ninth commandment. The context is within the church, but the greater principle is universal.

4:26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath. We then are enjoined to sin not when angry. Though there certainly is such a matter as righteous indignation, rarely are we so afflicted. Rather, anger usually is a work of the flesh. It commonly manifests sinful reactions such as unrighteous communication, loss of temper, malice, and bitterness. Though incidents over which we have no control may anger us, we are directed to so temper our disposition that we sin not. This certainly is walking not as other gentiles walk. He then offers very good advice in the matter. "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath." There is wisdom in resolving conflict on the day it occurs. To allow it to smoulder only breeds malice, bitterness, and hatred.

4:27 The injunction, **neither give place to the devil,** might be rendered, 'Neither give *a* place to the devil.' The idea is, allow him no place in the concourse of our lives. In ways we do not understand, he is able to influence us through temptation, discouragement, and distraction. Our duty is to be aware of his devices and not allow them.

4:28 The eighth commandment is addressed. **Let him that stole steal no more.** Though people of the world may so do, and we may have done so in the past, we now must resist the smallest temptation to be dishonest. The simple solution for each is, **but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.**

Honest work will not only provide for one's needs, but will allow the opportunity to help others.

4:29 Lastly, the Apostle touches upon a final way to not walk as other gentiles walk. That is, to let **no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth**. The word translated as **corrupt** (σαπρος *sapros*) has the sense of 'rotten' or 'foul.' The word translated as **communication** is the common (λογος) *logos* or 'word.' The injunction is simple. Don't allow a *single* foul word come out of our mouth. That certainly is in contrast to how other gentiles walk. In distinction, we ought rather to speak **but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers**. Rather than uttering a single word of foul speech, our duty is to build up others when we speak. The final thought literally is that we might give kindness to those who hear us.

4:30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. That which follows may in fact be related to the next major *walk* as noted in 5:2, to "walk in love." Rather than prefacing the section with the imperative as earlier, here, the Apostle develops the thought, concluding with its pronouncement. To walk in love first relates to the Holy Spirit. If we would so walk, we will therefore be sensitive to "grieve not the Holy Spirit of God." Again, it is an imperative. To grieve is more than to offend. It is to inflict sorrow and grief upon another. If we love the Lord our God including His Spirit, we will be ever so careful not to grieve Him. Paul quickly reminds us that it is He which has sealed us "unto the day of redemption." The Apostle developed that idea more fully in Ephesians 1:13-14, which see.

4:31 Therefore in the context of walking in love and not grieving the Holy Spirit, we are further enjoined to **let all bit-**

terness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice. Five ugly agents, the antithesis of love, are listed. The whole foul spectrum of bitterness, loss of temper, anger, yelling at another with nasty accusations coupled with ill-will which is so typical of how people of the world deport themselves is thus forbidden. It is the antithesis of love.

4:32 Rather, we are enjoined to **be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.** The antonyms are instructive. They might be described as harsh, hard-hearted, and unforgiving. As God's people in love, we are directed to do the opposite. It is a manifestation of walking in love. God has so loved us when He forgave us for Christ's sake. Insight into the heart of God is thus presented.

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Overview of Ephesians 5: The fifth chapter of Ephesians continues with an extensive listing of the practical outworking of the Christian walk. It culminates with the beautiful juxtaposition of the marriage relationship and the church.

5:1 Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children. The preceding chapter ended on the note that God for Christ's sake has forgiven us. With that setting in mind, we are enjoined to therefore be "followers of God." The word translated as **followers** (μιμητης *mimetes*) has the sense of a 'mimicker' or 'imitator.' The greater thought is that even as God has so forgiven us, we likewise ought to follow in His example. He adds, "as dear children." The literal thought is 'as beloved children.' We are the objects of God's love and now are His children. It is

thus incumbent upon us to allow that love which results in the forgiveness of others to flow through us.

5:2 And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour. The section beginning in 4:30 thus culminates with the injunction to “walk in love as Christ also hath loved us.” This is the third ‘walk’ (mentioned in Ephesians) and certainly consonant with what our Lord so frequently taught (e.g., see John 13:34, 15:12, 17). We are directed to not only love, but to walk in love. The implication is that love ought to permeate every aspect of our daily living. Even as we walk about our daily tasks, we ought to do so with that kind, considerate, thoughtful, helpful, merciful, patient spirit which emanates from *agape*-love. Even as Christ loved us, so ought that love to direct our attitude towards others.

Moreover, the Apostle adds a succinct, illustrative definition of *agape*-love. Its ultimate expression is how that “Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us.” The essential definition of *agape*-love is ‘a giving of oneself for another.’ That Jesus did on Calvary. (See also Galatians 2:20 and II Corinthians 12:15.) He then used an Old Testament illustration familiar to the Jewish mind. The mention of “an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour” likely hearkens back to the sweet-savor offerings defined in Leviticus 1-2. The basic thought is that the several sweet-savor offerings (offered at the Tabernacle/Temple) were pleasing to God. What Jesus did at Calvary was the ultimate sweet-savor offering of which God was well pleased. It also was the ultimate expression of love. If He could so manifest *agape*-love, it ought to be presented by us as well.

5:3 But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh

saints. The next walk is noted in verse 8—“walk as children of light.” However, the Apostle now begins leading up thereto. The antithesis of light is, of course, darkness. He thus begins addressing the moral darkness which then and now permeates the world around us. He notes a broad description of sexual sin which ought not be “once named among us.”

These includes (1) **fornication.** The word so translated (*πορνεία porneia*) in its more narrow sense refers to sexual intercourse between unmarried people. In its broader scope, it refers to sexual immorality of any kind be it adultery, homosexuality, lesbianism, bestiality, or whatever. (2) **Uncleanness** is translated from (*ακαθαρσία akatharsia*) and is more abstract than the former word. Whereas *fornication* refers to immoral sexual acts, *uncleanness* refers to the more or less abstract matters of impure thinking, discussion, jokes, and perhaps pornography. As the word implies, it refers to that which is morally ‘dirty.’ (3) **Covetousness** in this context likely refers to the lust or avarice of the above-mentioned impurity. The greater truth is that these ought not once be named among God’s people “as becometh saints.” The idea is, as saints, we are holy ones and thus it is only becoming to not have such impurity charged to us.

5:4 Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. The inspired writer continues in the same vein. Likewise, there ought not be (4) **filthiness** named among us. The word so translated (*αἰσχροτης aischrotes*) has the sense of ‘obscenity’ or ‘vulgarity.’ To these he adds, (5) “nor foolish talking, (6) nor jesting.” The phrase **foolish talking** is translated from (*μωρολογία morologia*) which literally means ‘moron words.’ In the context, it is clear he speaks of dirty words and their expression. Such ought not be heard from God’s people. Finally, his reference to **jesting** is not an injunction against humor in general.

Rather, the context makes clear the thought is of dirty jokes. In fact, the word so translated (ευτραπελια *eutrapelia*) has the sense of ribald humor. These ought not be uttered by God's people. Rather, we are enjoined unto the **giving of thanks**. Thanksgiving is on an entirely different channel than the preceding and that is the point.

5:5 Paul goes on to remind his readers, **For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.** Before looking into the vocabulary involved, the greater thought is that those involved in such sexual immorality will not receive an inheritance in the coming kingdom. The thought is that such will lose their reward at the Bema seat for such activity. The thought is not that one guilty of sexual sin will lose their salvation. Rather, they will lose reward, that is their inheritance in the kingdom.

Of interest is that this is the only place in the Bible where the kingdom is at the same place called of Christ and God. It simply refers to the day when Christ returns and establishes His kingdom.

The word translated as **whoremonger** (πορνος *pornos*) literally means a fornicator and as noted above is one who participates in sexual sin. The word translated as **unclean person** (ακαθαρτος *akathartos*) refers to one engaged in impure thought, deeds, and lusts. Of note is that Paul defines covetousness as idolatry. One given to sexual lust, as the context clearly alludes, is likened to making a god of the same and as such is an idolater. He says the same in Colossians 3:5. Again, the greater truth is that sexual sin will neutralize reward and inheritance in the coming kingdom.

5:6-7 **Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the**

children of disobedience. 7 Be not ye therefore partakers with them. He warns of being thus deceived. It is for these very things that God's wrath is poured out upon a sinful world. As nations (and individuals) are given to sexual impurity, God very well may deal with them in wrath. Therefore, we are enjoined to be not therefore "partakers with them." The word translated as **disobedience** (*απειθεια apeitheia*) literally has the sense of 'unbelief.'

5:8 For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light. He reminds them that in the past they were in spiritual and moral darkness. The word translated as **sometimes** (*ποτε pote*) has the sense 'in time past.' It refers to *before* we were saved. Though we may have lived that way then, "now *are ye* light in the Lord." The apex of this section is thus arrived at. We accordingly are enjoined to "walk as children of light." It is the fourth 'walk' in Ephesians. Light throughout the Scripture is identified with holiness. It is the antithesis of darkness which universally refers to sin.

5:9 (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth). This verse is parenthetical. That is, it is a sidebar to the greater flow of thought being developed. It thus is an adjunct to the primary thought. In the context of light, he refers to the **fruit of the Spirit**. It obviously is the converse of the darkness just elaborated upon. Implied is that the fruit of the Spirit is thus of light. It here is defined as "in all goodness and righteousness and truth." Though the fruit of the Spirit as defined in Galatians 5 enumerates nine elements, here three others are mentioned. Neither list is exclusive. Both are typical. The three elements mentioned here are more generic in nature. They certainly are in contrast to the works of the flesh dealt with in this chapter so far. These three are the opposite of the moral darkness described above.

5:10 The flow of thought picks up where it was left at the end of verse 8. There, we were enjoined to “walk as children of light.” That thought continues with the addition of **proving what is acceptable unto the Lord**. The thought is of testing whatever to see if it is pleasing to God. Thus, we are directed to always be discerning of that which is impure, off-color, and of the darkness which so abounds.

5:11 Moreover, we further are instructed, **And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. But rather reprove them**.

The thought is clear. Have nothing to do with such works of darkness, mentioned above. It is described as unfruitful. Such activities will neutralize the fruit of the Spirit as well as any other kind of spiritual fruit. We rather are enjoined to “reprove *them*.” That is speak against them.

5:12 The doing of such works is not only prohibited, but even the talking about them. The idea likely is of gossip, or unnecessary discussion of such behavior. **For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret**. Though such sin certainly abounds in the world, as God’s people, it ought not be the subject of our conversation.

5:13-14 But all things that are reprovved are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light. 14 Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

The truth is that all such things will be reprovved by God. He indicates that all such sin is made “manifest by the light.” As Jesus noted in John 3:19-20, men living in such sin hate the light of God because it reprovves their sin. Indeed, light makes manifest impurity. He then quotes from the Old Testament. Some think the quotation is from Isaiah 9:2, others 26:19, and

others still from Isaiah 60:2. The passage in question, “Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, an Christ shall give thee light,” may be the composite of the three. Implied is the relationship of darkness and spiritual sleep. Of all people, God’s people ought to be spiritually awake and walk as children of light.

5:15 The next major thought flows therefrom. **See then that ye walk circumspectly.** This fifth ‘walk’ is of interest. The word so translated (ακριβως *akribose*) has the sense of ‘carefully,’ ‘diligently,’ or ‘accurately.’ (Our English word ‘accurate’ derives therefrom.) We thus are enjoined to be ever so careful in our Christian walk. He adds further insight with the comment, “not as fools, but as wise.” In the Greek text, the thought literally is ‘not as unwise, but as wise.’ The greater thought therefore is how we are to walk wisely and carefully in our Christian life.

5:16 Further insight is added with the warning of **redeeming the time.** The word translated as **redeeming** (εξαγοραζω *exagoradzo*) has the additional sense of ‘buying’ in this case, time. The greater thought is of not wasting the time God has given us. Its efficient use is circumspect. It is a function of walking wisely. Moreover, we are reminded of the urgency thereof, **because the days are evil.** Paul, even as we, lived in evil times. Thus, there is urgency in wisely using the time God has given us while we have time. “Only one life ‘twill be soon be past. Only what’s done for Christ will last.”

5:17 The inspired writer thus continues with the logical conclusion, **Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.** There is great wisdom in so ordering our lives by (1) knowing the will of God, (2) understanding it, and (3) doing it.

5:18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit. Part of such circumspect living is being “not drunk with wine wherein is excess.” A careful point of distinction is at hand. The Apostle was *not* saying, ‘don’t drink to excess so that you get drunk.’ Many a compromising Christian has so interpreted this to justify social drinking. Rather the thought is don’t be intoxicated at all which leads to all sorts of excess (i.e., unseemliness). The greater and contrasting truth is that we are to “be filled with the Spirit.” The juxtaposition is not coincidental. Rather than being filled with intoxicating spirits, we rather are commanded to be filled with the Holy Spirit of God. That high spiritual level comes only as we are surrendered to the Spirit of God, have purged sin from our lives, and have had the prayer preparation necessary thereto. God’s will for us is therefore referred to in the preceding verse.

5:19 Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord. Paul proceeds to mention spiritual aspects which are related to being filled by the Spirit of God. These involve “speaking to yourselves in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.” He thus touches upon the greater spectrum of Christian music. The word translated as **psalms** (ψαλμος *psalmos*) literally refers to the playing of a stringed instrument and thus presumes instrumental accompaniment. But here the thought is of *speaking* such which may imply the quoting of the Psalms.

The word translated as **hymns** (ὑμνος *hymnos*) literally means ‘a song of praise to God.’ What clearly is implied is that the focal point of Christian music is praise to God. It is He to whom the music is directed and not human ears.

Then, he also mentions **spiritual songs**. Implied is a spiritual character to Christian music in distinction to a carnal or worldly style. The Apostle then adds, “singing and making

melody in your heart to the Lord.” The phrase “making melody” has the sense again of making praise to God. Hence, Christian music should be primarily addressed to God for His praise and not our religious entertainment. It is directly related to being filled with the Spirit. Moreover, it ought to emanate from our heart which the Spirit of God fills.

5:20 A further matter related to being filled with the Spirit is of **giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ**. The overwhelming object of thanks in the Bible is to God. Moreover, we are enjoined to so thank Him for “all things” and it is to be in the name of Christ. If there is a besetting sin amongst Christian people, it is the lack of thanks to God for His manifold blessings.

5:21 Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. Finally, in the context of being filled with the Spirit, Paul notes another corollary thought and that is how we ought to be *submitting* ourselves one to another in the fear of God. To submit to another is *prima facie* evidence of spiritual maturity. Pride, which is the essence of carnality, resists such yielding. To have a submissive spirit is an attitude related to being filled with the Spirit of God. Moreover, a submissive yielding spirit is related to the fear of God. As we realize His awesome holiness and potential judgment, it ought to so motivate us to yield to one another.

5:22 The Apostle uses the matter of submission as a transition into a new major area of discussion. That is domestic relationships. Through the remainder of the chapter he presents the intricate relationship between husband and wife *vis à vis* the church.

The first element in this juxtaposition is the relationship of the wife to her husband. In one of the most concise yet profound

teachings on the marriage relationship, the Apostle sets forth the basic axiom for a wife: **wives, submit yourselves unto own husbands, as unto the Lord.** The word translated as **submit** (ὑποτάσσω *hypotasso*) is set forth in the imperative mode. It has the sense to ‘submit,’ ‘subordinate oneself,’ and ‘obey another.’ It originally was a Greek military term meaning to arrange troop divisions in a military fashion under the command of a leader. It came to have a nonmilitary sense of ‘a voluntary attitude of cooperating, giving in, assuming responsibility, and carrying a burden.’

The greater thought is not one of male chauvinism. Rather, it is the manifestation of God’s societal order. God has delegated authority to the several basic institutions of society. In the marriage relationship, that authority flows through the husband. A two headed creature is a freak of nature. In God’s sovereign wisdom, He has so ordained the husband to be the head of the home. That does not mean the wife is in anyway inferior. It simply means that the husband is the senior partner in the marriage relationship. Happy are both marriage partners when the wife willingly accepts and obey this truth. It ultimately is “as unto the Lord” as we shall soon see.

5:23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. The sacred author proceeds from this injunction to illustrate a doctrinal truth. For even as the husband is the head of the wife, even so “Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body.” Thus, a two-fold truth is present. The husband is the head of the home and Christ is the head of the church. When such a principle is operative in a marriage, happy is that marriage.

5:24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. The

Apostle reverts back to the marriage relationship. In setting forth the obvious that Christ is the head of the church, and the church thus is subject to Christ, “so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in every thing.” The word translated as **subject** (‘υποτασσω *hypotasso*) is the same as translated ‘submit’ in verse 22. Moreover, the principle of submission is for every area of life.

5:25 The object of discussion now turns to the husband. They are commanded, **husbands, love your wives**. With the prerogative of leadership comes the concomitant responsibility to love one’s wife. Even as the basic biblical injunction for the wife is to submit to her husband, the basic injunction for the husband is to love his wife. Most problems of submission on the part of a wife would be greatly mitigated by a husband who truly loves her. The word translated as **love** is (αγαπαω) *agapao* and has the sense of ‘a giving oneself for the other.’ It is sacrificial on its face. To that end, the Apostle notes **even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it**. Clearly implied is that a husband ought to have the same sacrificial love for his wife. The essential definition of such love is found in how Christ gave Himself for us.

5:26 The focus shifts back to the work of Christ in how He gave Himself for the church **that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word**. The **that** is (‘ινα) *hina*—‘in order that.’ Christ gave Himself *in order that* He might **sanctify** the church. The word so translated (‘αγιαζω *hagiazō*) has the sense to ‘make holy,’ or to ‘purify.’ That sanctification is via His shed blood. See Hebrews 13:12. Moreover, His sacrificial death was to cleanse the church “with the washing of water by the word.”

The word translated as **word** is (ρημα) *rhema*. It refers not so much to the written word but the spoken word. Implied is that

the ongoing cleansing of the church comes through the preaching of the Word. Thus, our ultimate and positional purification is by the shed blood of Christ. But the ongoing, week-by-week cleansing is through the preaching of the Word. That should give some pause for the consideration of faithfulness.

5:27 Another (*ivα*) *hina* appears. Our Lord has planned this all for the church *in order that* **he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing**. The analogy lends itself to clothing which is splendid, clean, pressed, having no stain, and thus glorious. The shed blood of Christ coupled with the ongoing preaching of the Word is God's plan to present a pure bride to His Son—**that it should be holy and without blemish**.

5:28 He thus returns to the duty of the husband. **So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies**. Even as we have an instinctive determination of self preservation, so ought we to love our wives. Therefore, **he that loveth his wife loveth himself**. The imperative of the husband is clearly and simply to love his wife.

5:29 **For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church**. Continuing in the vein of self preservation, Paul notes how that no one hates his own flesh, but instinctively takes care of it. Thus the Lord likewise nourishes and cherishes the church. The tender love and care for the church by our Lord is thus made evident.

5:30 That thought is made personal, **For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones**. The thought clearly is by metaphor. We are part of his *spiritual* body, the church. Reference to his flesh and bones is only by analogy thereto.

5:31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. The thought again returns to the human, marriage relationship describing that for this very cause—the cause of a husband loving and cherishing his wife—does a “man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.” The unity of the marriage relationship is thus based upon the love of the husband for his wife. Moreover, that unity is more than just physical union. It is a union and unity of their entire being. They, as two beings, become one.

5:32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. The thought reciprocates one more time to the relationship between Christ and the church. Paul notes it as a “great mystery” and he makes clear he is referring to the bond between Christ and the church. We, as members of His body, ought therefore take great comfort in the love and care our great Husband has for us both now and forever.

5:33 Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband. The application returns finally to the husband and wife relationship. He summarizes the section by reiterating the command for the husband to love his wife. For the third time (and by implication the fourth time), the command for the husband to love his wife is restated. Its repetition should emphasize its importance. The injunction for the wife is restated in slightly different fashion. She is enjoined to “reverence *her* husband.” The word translated as **reverence** (φοβέω *phobeo*) has the sense to ‘fear’ or ‘respect.’ In this case, it is in the context of obedient submission as noted in verse 21. That notwithstanding, the injunction for the husband to love his wife is stated twice for that of the wife to submit. That is not to diminish the wife’s duty. Rather, it is to emphasize the hus-

band's duty as leader. He will set the tone of the marriage relationship by his love to his wife.

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***Overview of Ephesians 6:** The final chapter of Ephesians presents three major thoughts: (1) a continuation of domestic imperatives; (2) the comprehensive injunction to stand; (3) and concluding comments.*

6:1 As the last portion of chapter 5 dealt with domestic relationships, the Apostle now continues with a universal command. **Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.** Obedience to parents is an obvious virtue. Paul here adds another dimension: it is *right*. Parents will do much to instill the principle of righteousness by seeing to it that their children obey them. A disobedient child is ultimately the result of parents who did not effectively train him.

6:2-3 Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) 3 That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

A second command for children is added. "Honor thy father and mother." Not only is this one of the Ten Commandments (the 5th commandment), it in fact is the first of the ten which has a specific promise connected with it: "that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth." The broad principle is that honor to one's parents is pleasing to God as well as to them. There is wisdom in such honor which will bring the benefit of parental wisdom. Moreover, clearly implied is the special blessing of God for such obedience. Furthermore, God directly promises longevity of life for obedience and honor to one's parents.

6:4 Paul now directs his attention to the father and his role in the training of his children. It is significant that the focus is upon the *father*. Though the mother may spend more time with the children, the ultimate leader for their training is their father. God squarely places the responsibility upon him. Two important considerations are addressed. (1) **And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath.** The thought literally is to not exasperate your children. The greater thought is of consistency and maturity. A wise father will not by carnality or immaturity provoke his children through unjust, unkind, or foolish use of authority.

(2) Then the Apostle adds, **but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.** The word translated as **nurture** (παιδεία *paideia*) literally refers to chastening. But in its broader thought, it has the idea of discipline in general and self-discipline in particular. The word translated as **admonition** (νουθεσία *nouthesia*), in this context, has the sense of ‘training of the mind.’ Coupled with the final phrase, “of the Lord,” *fathers* are enjoined to train and rear their children in the discipline of the Lord as well as the training of the Lord. Two powerful principles are thus addressed: instilling the discipline of righteousness into our children as well as the spiritual training of the Lord. Together, they form a powerful combination for training children to turn out righteous.

6:5-6 Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; 6 Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.

The focus now turns to the servant/master relationship. The thought parallels the modern employee/employer relationship. Servants (and employees) are commanded to be obedient to their masters (employers). Not only is the provision for social order and the delegation of authority in view, there also is the

matter of testimony. Thus, he adds that such obedience to masters in the flesh ought to be with respect (i.e., fear) and as necessary trembling. But the greater principle is that such a relationship ought to be ‘in singleness of heart, as unto Christ.’

The word translated as **singleness** (‘απλοτης *haplotes*) has the sense of ‘sincerity’ or the ‘absence of pretense.’ Thus, our duty on the job ought to be honest and sincere because our ultimate Master is Christ. He continues warning against “eye-service, as menpleasers.” The thought is of doing right in front of the boss, but goofing off as soon as he turns his back. Such an attitude is being a *menpleaser* which is hypocrisy. The boss soon figures that out. Not only is it wrong, it reflects upon our testimony. Our greater motivation ought to be “as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.”

6:7-8 With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: 8 Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether *he be* bond or free.

Our service to those in authority over us ought to be with good will “as to the Lord, and not to men.” Moreover, whatever good we do, even for our employer, the Lord will so reward regardless of our social standing (“bond or free”).

6:9 And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him. Paul now addresses masters, enjoining them likewise to do good with good will toward those under them. He warns against threatening. Furthermore, masters are reminded that they have a Master in heaven who has no respect of persons. Though human society may be partial, God is not. God cares little what rank or position any may have. All are equal before Him whether master or servant, employer or employee.

6:10 The final section of the book is at hand and the Apostle directs attention thereto with **Finally, my brethren**. There are several imperatives in this last portion of the practical section of the book. However, the foremost one noted in verse 14 is to “stand therefore.” The several injunctions preceding this lead to that conclusion.

The first imperative on the list is (1) **be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might**. It is part and parcel of standing. Of interest are the several related words used by the sacred author. The word translated as **strong** (ενδυναμοω *endunamoo*) has the literal sense of being empowered. By extension, such empowering results in strength. Notice further the source of such empowered strength is “in the Lord.” Throughout the book of Psalms, it is clear that the Lord is not only the source of strength, He is strength. By extension, His power strengthens us. We thus are enjoined to draw upon that power.

The second phrase, though grammatically a parallel thought, is almost in apposition to the first. The word translated as **power** (κρατος *kratos*) is the converse of strength. Here, the idea is the source of our power. The thought is more of strength and the power which results therefrom. That power derives from **his might**. The word thus translated (ισχυς *ischus*) again denotes strength, culminating in might. The greater truth is the injunction to be strong in the Lord, deriving spiritual power from His infinite might. Every nuance of strength no doubt is herein implied, be it spiritual, mental, emotional, intestinal, or even physical. Isaiah 40:31 certainly is an Old Testament parallel.

6:11 The second imperative is (2) to **put on the whole armour of God**. With strength for the battle comes need for the spiritual armor which only God can provide. The word translated as **whole armour** (πανοπλια *panoplia*—or panoply) has the literal sense of ‘all the armor.’ Clearly implied is the thought of putting on *all* the armor of God, not just a portion thereof. A

soldier is protected by his armor only to the extent he has it *all* on. To go minus a helmet, for example, or a breastplate, or some other vital protection, only invites the attack of the enemy against the vulnerable area.

The purpose in seeking God's strength and putting on all His armor is **that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil**. The word translated as **wiles** (μεθοδεια *methodeia*) has the sense of 'trickery' or 'deviousness.' It should be apparent that the English word *methods* derives therefrom. The composite thought is of the deviousness methods of the devil. He is clever, devious, and slick.

6:12 The Apostle continues to note the spiritual struggle every believer faces. **For we wrestle not against flesh and blood**. The battle every Christian faces is not physical but spiritual. The following text makes clear who the enemy is. We rather find a struggle against **principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places**. These four descriptives, while referring collectively to satanic power, are of note individually. Implied is the vast, and highly organized satanic empire which pervades this world.

The word translated as **principalities** (αρχη *arche*) can among other things refer to spiritual creatures such as angels or demons. The latter is clearly in view. It is germane to the thought at hand that the devil is referred to as "the prince of the power of the air" in Ephesians 2:2. Implied is a hierarchical order and command structure in Satan's empire. In similar fashion, angels are referred to as princes in Daniel 10:13. Moreover, in that same passage, reference is made to "the prince of the kingdom of Persia" which clearly is a satanic spirit (i.e., demon).

Then also in Satan's realm are **powers**. The word so translated (εξουσια *exousia*) has the sense of 'authority.' Implied is another level in Satan's empire.

Then, Paul mentions “the rulers of the darkness of this world.” The word translated as **rulers** (κοσμοκρατωρ *kosmo-krator*) has the literal sense of ‘world rulers.’ The word rendered as **world** (αιων *aion*), though it can have the sense of ‘world,’ has as a more literal sense of an ‘age.’ Hence, the greater thought is of ‘the world rulers of the darkness of this age.’ Though there no doubt is a connection to wicked, human rulers, the greater context is satanic. Clearly implied is the satanic influence and working of high-level demonic spirits upon the darkness of human leaders and the affairs of the age. Insight is thus given into the wickedness in government which seem to prevail. Moreover, a clear reason to pray for our leaders is evident what withal the satanic influences assigned thereto. Further implied is the worldwide evil empire, intent on imposing spiritual darkness in every way it can.

Finally, the Apostle refers to “spiritual wickedness in high places.” The word translated as **high places** (επουρανιος *epi-ouranios*) literally means ‘heaven’ or ‘heavenly.’ The Scripture refers to three degrees of heaven though which is not noted here. It may refer to the domain of the devil and his forces in the atmospheric heavens. Indeed, he is referred to as “the prince of the power of the air” (Ephesians 2:2). It may conceivably even refer to the apparent access the devil has to the third heaven (God’s abode) as “the accuser of our brethren” (Revelation 12:10). The former sense however likely is what is in view.

All in all, a complex description of Satan’s vast spiritual empire is in view. It clearly is highly organized. It is hierarchical. There is little question as to the impact it has on human society and government.

6:13 In view of all of this, the Apostle therefore enjoins for the second time, **Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand.** The word translated as **withstand**

(ανθιστημι *anthistemi*) has the more basic sense to ‘resist.’ But the greater goal is to stand against the attack of the devil. The day in which he lived is described as *evil*. It certainly remains so to this day.

6:14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness. The over-arching imperative of this section (3) is to “stand therefore” against the deceptive onslaught of the evil one. The Apostle therefore presents, by way of metaphor, the various components of the spiritual armor needed to stand. He uses the figure of a typical Roman infantryman. The important point is not the metaphors of Roman armor, but rather the spiritual principles thus illustrated.

Accordingly, the Apostle lists six (or seven) elements of the complete armor of God. (1) The first is *truth* which is likened to the girth or belt used to snug the tunic of the soldier. It kept everything else in place as truth does. (2) The second element is *righteousness* which is likened to a breastplate. In I Corinthians 6:7, Paul wrote of the “armour of righteousness.” Indeed, righteousness is profound protection from temptation as well as the debilitating results of sin. Even as a breastplate protects the vital organs of the body, righteousness safeguards from a multitude of evils.

6:15 Element number three (3) is And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. The thought is of being prepared to take the offensive. Even as an unshod soldier is not prepared to join the battle, a Christian unready to present the gospel is likewise unfit for the battle. Indeed, often the best defense is a strong offense.

6:16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. The

fourth element of spiritual armor is (4) *faith* which is likened unto a shield. The devil is skilled in shooting his flaming arrows of doubt, discouragement, despair, distraction, division, not to mention other temptations of all sorts. To live by faith, trusting God against every such flaming arrow, becomes a shield deflecting such attack.

6:17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. The fifth element of armor (5) is “salvation itself.” Inasmuch as the epistle is directed to believers, what may be in view is assurance of salvation. Even as the head is the most important part of the body and a helmet protects the head, indeed our salvation and the assurance thereof is therefore of crucial importance. He concludes this section with the sixth portion of Christian armor which is “the word of God.” It is likened to a sword.

The word translated **word** is again (ῥῆμα) *rhema* which refers to the spoken word. Implied is preaching of the Word and attendance thereto. It certainly gives spiritual protection. Of significance is that of the various elements noted, a sword is both a defensive as well as an offensive weapon. Not only can it parry the blows of the adversary, but it can also be used to go on the offensive which in itself is protective.

6:18 Some have thought the following is the final or seventh part of the Christian armor. It likely is. (In any event, it is crucial “to withstand . . . and having done all to stand.”) This is (7) **praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit**. The phrase translated as “praying always” could literally be rendered ‘praying in all times.’ Implied is continual prayer—prayer without ceasing. Two synonyms thereof are noted: “prayer and supplication.” The former is translated from the word (προσευχη) *proseuche* and technically refers to prayer addressed to God. The word translated **supplication** (δεησις

deesis) relates to needs and necessities. The former thus refers to praise, thanks, and worship addressed to God Himself, whereas the latter refers to our requests to Him. The greater truth however is to be praying *always*. He adds the qualification “in the spirit,” perhaps to note the distinction to the vain repetition of many Jewish and pagan prayer practices.

Moreover, the Apostle continues with **watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints**. The word translated as **watching** (αγρυπνεω *agrup-neo*) literally has the sense of being ‘sleepless’ as a soldier on watch duty. Implied may be praying into the night. However, the broader thought likely is diligence thereto. He adds further focus noting *perseverance*. The second reference to *supplications* is in the context of “for all saints.” The thought clearly is of intercessory prayer. Hence, the Apostle has taught ongoing prayer, spiritual prayer, persevering prayer, and intercessory prayer. It provides the spiritual dynamic to stand and having done all to stand.

6:19 And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel. Paul additionally requested prayer for himself that he might be able to preach and witness as he ought. The word translated as **utterance** is the familiar (λογος) *logos*. The thought is that he requested prayer that God would give him the word or words to say that he might do so boldly. He implies the often difficult task in communicating the gospel by noting it as a mystery.

6:20 For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak. He poetically and eloquently thus refers to his ministry as “an ambassador in bonds.” Lest there be any question, he mentions again his prayer request regarding the gospel, “that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.” The word translated as **speak boldly** (παρ-

ρησιαζομαι *parrhesiazomai*) has the sense of freedom and confidence in speaking.

6:21 But that ye also may know my affairs, *and* how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things. The Apostle now begins his concluding remarks. He makes comment that he has sent this epistle with Tychicus that they might know Paul's affairs at Rome. Tychicus was the same one who delivered the epistle to the Colossians and may have done so on the same journey. Here, he is described as a "beloved brother and a faithful minister in the Lord." Implied is that Tychicus was not only a servant of the Lord, but also of Paul. In any event, Paul had only the highest regard for him. He was given charge to describe Paul's situation at Rome to the Ephesian church.

6:22 Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs, and *that* he might comfort your hearts. Paul notes further how his sending of Tychicus was not only to deliver the epistle and report on Paul's situation, but also to comfort the hearts of the Ephesian brethren. The word translated as **comfort** (*παρακαλεω parakaleo*) has the more modern sense of 'encourage.' Thus, there is always need to encourage the heart of God's people.

6:23 His benediction is as profound as it is eloquent. **Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.** What a blessed triple invocation: peace, love, and faith. Its source is none other than "God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

6:24 He concludes the epistle with the benediction: **Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.**

Of interest is the word translated as **sincerity** (αφθαρσία *aphtharsia*) which has the sense of ‘purity’ and ‘incorruption’ as well as sincerity. To those who thus so love our Lord is the invocation of grace. The epistle ends on the ubiquitous yet appropriate benediction of **Amen**.

