

# Ephesians 1:1 – 5:17

## A Commentary by David Green

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The subject in this Epistle to the Ephesians and the Epistle to the Colossians is certainly the same, with many similar verses; it is supposed that they were written about the same time so one may expect similar expressions and sentiments.

There are more than a dozen phrases or sentences in this epistle that are also in the Epistle to the Colossians; Both epistles represent the writer as imprisoned for the Gospel, and both address the same general subject. The Epistle to the Ephesians and the Epistle to the Colossians are two letters written by the same person, at nearly the same time, and treating the same subject, and sent by the same messenger/s. The sentiments, order, and wording of the two epistles is what might be expected from one penman addressing two groups at or near the same time.

The leading doctrine of both epistles is the union of Jews and Gentiles in the Christian dispensation; doctrine in both epistles is established by the same arguments, and illustrated by the same similitudes: *one head, one body, one new man, one temple*. The distinction between Jew and Gentile, in both epistles, is declared to be *abolished by His cross*. Beside this similarity between the two epistles we note many of the same expressions, and sometimes whole sentences alike. Such expressions and sentences would be repeated in the second letter while the first was fresh in the author's mind from the writing of the first. Note the following;

**Eph 1:7: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins."**

Col 1:14: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins."

**Eph 1:10: "All things, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in him."**

Col 1:20: "All things by him, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven."

This quotation is the more remarkable because the Apostle connects things in earth with things in heaven; found no where else but in these two epistles.

**Eph 3:2: "The dispensation of the grace of God, which is given me to you-ward."**

Col 1:25: "The dispensation of God, which is given to me for you."

Of these two sentences it may be observed, that the accompanying ideas are similar. In both places they are preceded by the mention of Paul's present sufferings; in both places they are immediately followed by the mention of the mystery which was the subject of Paul's preaching.

**Eph 5:19: "In psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord."**

Col 3:16: "In psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."

**Eph 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."**

Col 4:8: "Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that he might know your estate, and comfort your hearts."

**Eph 1:19-2:5: "Towards us who believe according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead; (and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that which is to come. And hath put all things under his feet; and gave him to be the head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all;) and you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins, (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 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. But God, who is rich**

**in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,) even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ."**

Col 2:12, 13: "Through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead: and you being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of the flesh, hath he quickened together with him."

From the long quotation from the Ephesians, when you remove the parentheses, you have a sentence almost the same as the short quotation from the Colossians.

**Eph 4:2-4: "With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling."**

Col 3:12-15: "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye: and, above all these things, put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness; and let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body."

**Eph 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."**

Col 2:19: "From which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God."

**Eph 4:32: "And be kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another; even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you."**

Col 3:13: "Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye."

**Eph 4:22-24: "That ye put on, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."**

Col 3:9,10: "Seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him."

**Eph 5:6-8: "Because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience: be not ye therefore partakers with them; for ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord walk as children of light."**

Col 3:6-8: "For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience; in the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them. But now ye also put off all these."

**Eph 5:15,16: "See then that ye walk circumspectly; not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time."**

Col 4:5: "Walk in wisdom towards them that are without, redeeming the time."

**Eph 6:19,20: "And (praying) for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the Gospel, for which I am an ambassador in bonds, that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak."**

Col 4:3,4: "Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds, that I may make it manifest as I ought to speak."

**Eph 5:22: "Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands, as unto the Lord; 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. Therefore, as the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife, loveth himself;**

for no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church; for we are members of his body, of his flesh and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and his mother, and 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. Nevertheless, let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband. Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honour thy father and thy mother, (which is the first commandment with promise,) that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest live long on the earth. And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. 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; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men; knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free. 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."

Col 3:18: "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them. Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged. Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God: and whatever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men, knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance; for ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done; and there is no respect of persons. Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal, knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven."

The same truths are applicable to all the children of God and are recorded for us so that we may know how to live before God and in the presence of man for the glory of God. The Word of God loses nothing from being oft repeated.

## **Ephesians**

**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:**

**2. Grace *be* to you, and peace, from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ.**

**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:**

**4. According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:**

**5. Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,**

**6. To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.**

**7. 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;**

**9. Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:**

**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:**

**11. In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:**

**12. That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.**

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,

14. Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

15. Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints,

16. Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;

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:

18. 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,

20. Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*,

21. 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:

22. And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church,

23. Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

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 writer of this epistle is described by his name, **Paul**; by his commission, **an apostle**; by his calling to that work, **the will of God**. It is of the utmost importance that all the ministers of the Lord Jesus Christ, every believer that would do or say something in His name, understand their commission is from God and what is said and done in obedience to Him is the work of the Lord. All the children of God in this present dispensation are expected to be ambassadors for their Lord. It is an encouragement to the ‘ministers’ of Christ, (all believers are in this category) as well to the people they minister to, whether family, friends, neighbours, or church members, that their calling is from God, and not from themselves or of man; that they speak not in their own names or by their own authority but by orders received from the Lord Jesus Christ, whose ambassadors they and we are.

The persons to whom this letter is directed and sent according to the superscription, is to the saints at Ephesus; they were all living at Ephesus or nearby and had an obvious association with the saints who gathered there. By **saints** is meant by real sanctification, by salvation and continuing obedience to the will and Word of God. The members of the visible church are obliged to be saintly in conduct and conversation, as they are the redeemed of the Lord, having been sanctified in Christ Jesus. Every true and real Christian is a true and real saint; no organisation of man can change a sinner into a saint nor make a dead body that of a saint no matter how good and selfless that life was. The salvation of the Lord is the only means of changing a sinner into a saint; and if one is not a saint before death, by being saved through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, then no amount of prayers or activities of man can effect the necessary change.

Paul adds, **and to the faithful in Christ Jesus**, possibly including those throughout all Asia. This points out the duty of believers to be not only holy by name, but faithful in word and life; these two words, **saints and faithful**, designate both our dignity as children of God, and our duty; our dignity as representing God, our duty in being faithful servants, obedient to Him.

The Apostle calls these members of the church, **saints and faithful in Christ Jesus**; suggesting that our holiness is alone in Christ Jesus; that sanctification is motivated and

maintained by power derived from the Lord Jesus Christ. There is a suggestion here that all the saints continued faithful to their Lord, they were encouraged to do so by the Apostles and elders.

**2. Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.** This is the token in each of Paul's epistles; and it expresses the apostle's real desire for the saints, for their spiritual welfare. By grace we understand the free and undeserved love and favour and goodwill of God, and those blessings of the Holy Spirit which proceed from God. By peace we understand that all warring factions of the mind and heart are now resolved, that all other blessings, spiritual and temporal, are the fruits and products of love and grace ministered to us by the Holy Spirit. There is no peace with God without grace; there is neither peace, nor grace for the child of God, but **from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.**

These special and particular blessings proceed from God, not as a Creator, but as a Father; the special relationship He brought into being when He planned the salvation we are blessed with and they come from our Lord Jesus Christ. He who purchased them has the singular right to bestow them upon whom He will and the saints, the faithful in Christ Jesus, are in this category. The best of believers need refreshment, supplies from the Holy Spirit to grow in grace and knowledge and therefore we should pray for ourselves and for one another, that such blessings may be realised and enjoyed by the saints.

The Church meeting you and I attend will become more special and delightful as we pray for the believers we fellowship with, the ministry will be richer and more effective as we pray to that end.

**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:**

**4. According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:**

**5. Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,**

**6. To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.**

**7. 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;**

**9. Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:**

**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:**

**11. In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:**

**12. That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.**

**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,**

**14. Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.**

This passage is presented as one sentence and is best understood in this way; the apostle begins with thanksgivings and praise, and expands fluently and with evident Christian love upon the exceedingly great and wonderful benefits which we enjoy by faith in Jesus Christ.

In general the Apostle blesses, acknowledges, thanks and praises God for spiritual blessings, verse 3, where Paul styles his God as **the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ;** for, as Jesus was the Mediator, the Father was His God; as the Man, Christ Jesus, God was his Father. This portrayal of the Lord Jesus Christ is background to the mystical union between Christ and believers, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is their God and Father in and through Him. All spiritual and practical blessings come from God as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. No good can be expected from a righteous and holy God to sinful creatures, but by the

mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ. **The Father has blessed us with all spiritual blessings.** Spiritual blessings are the best blessings which God can bestow upon us, and for which we are to bless him. We bless God by praising, and magnifying, and speaking well of Him on account of the wonderful blessing of salvation He has given to us.

God blesses with all spiritual blessings; to whom He gives His Son, He freely gives all things; where God blesses with spiritual blessings, He blesses fully with all. They are **spiritual blessings in heavenly places**; that is in the heavenlies, it may be read, in heavenly things, such as come from heaven, and are designed to prepare His children for heaven.

We should seek spiritual and heavenly blessings as the best blessings, with these blessings we cannot be miserable and without these blessings we cannot have the joy of the Lord, or even real pleasure in the company of the saints.. ***Set not your affections on things on the earth, but on those things which are above.*** These blessings we have in Christ; all spiritual blessings are conveyed to us by the Lord Jesus Christ, the Mediator between God and man.

The particular spiritual blessings (some) with which we are blessed with in the Lord Jesus Christ, and for which we ought to praise and thank God, are as follows:

Election, that is being in the Body of Christ, the Church; the plan God in His own sovereign will chose, placing all who have believed and all who will believe in that Body by the working of the Holy Spirit. The Lord Jesus Christ is the head of that body. Predestination, the planned end for all the children of God; God having determined beforehand that all who have a saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ would constitute that body called the Church; to represent Him in the world and to be like Him through eternal ages.

To say God has chosen some to be saved is to make God like man, subject to vanity; it creates confusion between election and predestination. The Elect are the believers of all ages, the Elect is another collective noun for the saints, as is Church. Election, or choice, is in respect to the grace of God in deciding that all who do as He planned, believing in the saving work of the Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross should constitute the Church. Predestination has respect to the blessings designed for the saints; particularly the adoption of 'children' to the place of 'sons', it being the purpose of God that each child should in time take his place in the family as a responsible adult, able to do as the Father desires and in the same way, that is then being His adopted children, and to have a right to all the privileges and the inheritance of sons.

It was **before the foundation of the world**; that God planned an executed His Salvation of man and designed the Church; not only before God's people had a being, but before the world had a beginning; for the saints were chosen in the counsel of God from all eternity. We cannot grasp the magnitude of the love of God, He loved me before there was a world, He planned the Church before there were people to believe, He decided the destiny of the saints and all the benefits that would accrue to them before there were any saints, these blessings are the results of the eternal counsels of God. This magnifies divine love; it secures the blessings to God's chosen people, His Elect, the Church. Romans 9:11 (***For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth; for the purpose of God according to election shall stand.*** He acts in pursuance of His eternal purpose in bestowing spiritual blessings upon His people according to His own purpose and will. He has blessed us, according as He hath chosen us in Him, in Christ **before the foundation of the world.**

The great end and design of this plan is that we, the chosen, that **we should be holy**; not because He foresaw that we would be set apart, (He did know that), but because He determined to make all the believers so. All who are the 'chosen' are called to holiness; to happiness and contentment in Christ, to joy in the Lord; to attain this is the way of sanctification. Sanctification, as well as salvation, is the result of the counsels of divine love. **And without blame before Him** that the holiness of each of the children of God might not be merely external, in outward appearance, so that onlookers will not apportion blame, but internal and real, and what God, who looks at the heart will see as the outcome of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; such holiness as proceeds from love to God and to our fellow man, this love being the principle of all true holiness.

The original word signifies innocence which is evidently not natural to the person, leaving nothing for the onlooker to cavil at

Here is also the rule and the first cause of God's elect, it is according to the **good pleasure of his will**, not for the sake of any thing in the believer, but because it is His sovereign will, and is highly pleasing to Him. It is according to the purpose, the fixed and unalterable will, **of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will**, v11, who will accomplish whatever concerns His elect, for the glory of His own name, and as He has wisely and of Himself decreed. The final objective and design of all is His own glory; **to the praise of the glory of his grace** v6, **that we should be to the praise of his glory** 12, that we should live and behave ourselves in such a manner that His rich grace might be magnified, and appear glorious, and worthy of the highest praise. All is of God, and from Him, and through Him, and therefore all must be to Him, He the centre of praise. The glory of God is His design for Himself and it should be ours in all that we are, in all that is done by us and in all we say.

Another spiritual blessing the apostle brings to our attention is our acceptance with God through Jesus Christ; **wherein**, or by which grace, **he hath made us accepted in the beloved**, v6. Jesus Christ is the beloved of His Father, Matthew 3:17, as well as of angels and saints. It is our great privilege to be accepted of God, which implies His love to us, His taking us under His care, and into His family. We can only be accepted of God, in and through Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour; He loves His people for the sake of His beloved Son.

There is Remission of sins, and there is redemption through the shed blood of Jesus, v7, no remission, no putting away of sin without the redemption price being paid in full. It was by reason of sin that we were captives, and we cannot be released from our captivity but by the penalty incurred being paid in full, the remission of our sins. This redemption we have in Christ, and this remission through His shed blood. The guilt and the stain of sin could not be removed except by the blood of Jesus.

All our spiritual blessings flow to us in that stream, the source of which is the Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross. This great and wonderful blessing which comes freely to us, was bought and paid for by our blessed Lord and Saviour; and it is according to **the riches of God's grace**. Christ's satisfaction to His Father and God's rich grace for the redeemed are consistent in the plan of man's redemption. God was satisfied by Christ as our substitute and guarantee; but it was rich grace that would accept such a surety, when He had every right to execute the severity of the law upon us as transgressors, and it was rich grace to provide such a surety as His own Son, and to freely deliver Him to death; nothing of that nature could have even entered our thoughts. He has not only manifested His rich grace, but has **abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence** v8. Wisdom in contriving the dispensation of grace and prudence in executing the counsel of His own will, as He has done so remarkably. With divine wisdom and prudence both justice and mercy are served without compromise, securing the honour of God and His law, and at the same time ensuring the sinner and his salvation are made sure.

The apostle blesses God for His divine revelation, that **God hath made known to us the mystery of his will** v9, His good-will to men, which had been concealed for a long time, selfishly contained by His earthly people, the Jews, and is still concealed from most of the world's population through unbelief. We owe this revelation to Christ, who, having been with the Father from eternity, came to declare the Father's will to the children of men. **According to his good pleasure**, His secret counsels concerning man's redemption, which He had purposed, and determined, only in Himself, and not persuaded by any thing in man. It is described in v13 as the **word of truth, and the gospel of our salvation**. Every word of it is true. It contains and instructs us in the most important truths, and it is confirmed and sealed by the very oath of God. It is **the gospel of our salvation**; it makes known the glad tidings of salvation, and contains the promise of these blessings to all who believe it. The **Word of truth** points out the way that leads to salvation and the Holy Spirit makes the reading and the ministry of the Word effectual to the salvation of souls.

This is the light shining in a dark place; in each of us it is a reflected light and when we take our eyes off the Lord Jesus Christ then the light does not shine as bright as it should; and when we fail to obey the instructions of the Word of God then the light is obscured.

Our union in and with Christ is a privilege, a spiritual blessing, and the foundation of all other Christian blessings. He **gathers together in one all things in Christ**, v10. All the lines of divine revelation meet in Christ; all truth centres in Him; divine revelation focuses on Him. Jews and Gentiles may unite to each other by being united in Christ. **Things in heaven and things on earth** are gathered together in Him; peace is made, differences settled, between heaven and earth, through the Lord Jesus Christ.

**We have obtained an inheritance**, v11. Heaven is the inheritance; all the riches in the Lord Jesus Christ are the inheritance; eternal blessing is the inheritance; bequeathed to us by the Lord Jesus Christ and secured for us by the ratification of His will. Furthermore it is conveyed to us by the way of an inheritance, being the gift of a Father to his children. **If children, then heirs**, Romans 8:17. All the blessings that we have in hand are insignificant when compared with the inheritance we have in the Lord. Christians are said to have obtained this inheritance, so we have a present right to it, and even actual possession of it in Christ our head and representative and possessor of all, both in heaven and on earth, with the right and ability to distribute as He wills.

The seal and earnest of the Holy Spirit are numbered with these blessings. We are said to be sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, v13. The blessed Spirit of God is holy, and He makes us holy both to God and practically as He reveals to us the will of God and we conform. He is called the Spirit of promise, as he is the promised Spirit. By Him believers are sealed; separated and set apart for God, and distinguished and marked out as belonging to God. The Holy Spirit is the earnest of our inheritance, v14. As the earnest is part payment, down payment, and secures the full sum, so the gift of the Holy Spirit; all His influence and work, as Sanctifier and Comforter, are begun in heaven, and completed in the Church when it is called to be with the Lord forever. The Holy Spirit's illumination in the soul is an earnest, a promise of everlasting light; sanctification is an earnest of perfect holiness; and the comfort of the Holy Spirit is an earnest of everlasting joy and peace to the believer. The Holy Spirit is said to be the **earnest, until the redemption of the purchased possession**. Called in this instant the possession, because this earnest makes it as sure to us, the heirs, as though we were already possessing it; and it is purchased for us by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. The redemption is mentioned because our lives were mortgaged and forfeited by sin; and Christ restores it to us, and so is said to redeem it, alluding to the law of redemption in the Old Testament.

What a gracious promise it is which secures the gift of the Holy Spirit to all who ask in faith for forgiveness, claiming the Blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the promise of God.

The Apostle Paul mentions the plan of God in bestowing all these spiritual privileges and blessings that **we should be to the praise of his glory who first trusted in Christ**. We to whom the gospel was first preached, and who were converted to faith in Christ, and placed our hope and trust in Him.

Those who were in Christ before me, says the Apostle Romans 16:7; those who have been the children of God for a longer time, experiencing the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ are under more obligations to glorify God. They should be stronger in faith, and more conformed to His image in character and demeanour; but this should be the common goal of all believers. For this we were made, for this we were redeemed; this is the fundamental design of Christianity, and of God in all that He has done for us and has planned for us, **unto the praise of his glory**, v14. He intends that His grace and His power, His love and salvation should by the Church be displayed to the world; that all may be made aware of the grace of God and marvel at His gracious and complete salvation made available to all in the Lord Jesus Christ.

**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:** God has laid a foundation for praise and thanksgiving for what He has done, primarily God's eternal purpose, His everlasting counsel in regard to the salvation of man. Paul breaks into praise exclaiming that God is worthy and that His eternal purposes, now manifest, give lofty views of the character and glory of God. Paul felt



that it laid the foundation for eternal praise; that it presented glorious views of God; that it was the ground of confidence and hope; and that it was desirable that Christians should dwell in this truth and praise God for it.

God is to be praised for all His plans, and it is possible for His children to have such views of the doctrines of predestination and election as to give them a conception of the glories of the Divine character and His plans for mankind and the Church.

Let us also be willing and prepared to accept and know the truth, which is so often obscured by the selfish concepts of man. Let us approach each word, each phrase and each verse in the context of the chapter and overall concept of the book, willing to know what God is teaching, ready to believe all that He has revealed, and so be ready with the apostle to say, **Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ** for all that He has done.

**Who hath blessed us;** God who has blessed us, the believers to whom Paul is writing and therefore we who believe and read this word as the Word of God for us today; we are those who are blessed, we are the blessed ones, the saints, the church. Does Paul mean the entire world? This cannot be the meaning, for all the world is not blessed with all spiritual blessings. Does the Apostle Paul mean the nation of the Jews? For the same reason this cannot be the meaning. Does he mean the Gentiles, in contradistinction from the Jews? Why does he use the word us, including himself, who was a Jew? Does the Apostle Paul mean to limit the blessings to external privileges, suggesting this was the only object of the eternal purposes of God? No, this cannot be the answer for he speaks of **spiritual blessings**; he speaks of the persons referred to as having **redemption**, and **the forgiveness of sins**; as having **obtained an inheritance**, and as being sealed with the **Holy Spirit of promise**.

These divine privileges and blessing are not to nations, nor to individual unbelievers, do not apply to external privileges, or the offers of the gospel, but apply exclusively to true Christians; to persons who have been redeemed. The persons referred to by the word **us**, are those who are mentioned in the first verse of this epistle as **saints, holy and faithful**, believing, or believers. Us, We and Our, are personal pronouns used in this sentence 11 times and as the Apostle is writing to a local church, or gathering of believers, the blessings enumerated are specifically for those addressed, the saints. This is an important observation, because it shows that the plan of God has reference to a specific group of individuals, and not merely to a nation or nations. Some suppose the apostle here refers to the Gentiles, and that his object is to show that they were now admitted to the same privileges as the ancient Jews, and that the whole doctrine of predestination here referred to, has relation to that fact. It is clear that Paul's intention is to write to Christians; to speak of privileges which believers enjoy, privileges peculiar to them and enjoyed by them as individuals and as local gatherings of believers, a local Church or church in a locality.

**With all spiritual blessings**, pardon, peace, redemption, adoption, the earnest of the Spirit, referred to in the following verses, blessings which individual Christians enjoy, and bring unity to the saints and enjoyment and spiritual unity to the local church: **In heavenly places in Christ**, the word places is not in the original. It may mean heavenly places, or heavenly things. God has blessed us in Christ in regard to heavenly subjects or matters. The same phrase occurs again in 2:6; 3:10; and it is remarkable that it occurs in the same form four times in this one epistle, and not elsewhere in the writings of the Apostle Paul.

The translators have supplied the word "places," to denote the rank or station of Christians, of angels, and of the Saviour, to each of whom it is applied. The phrase more precisely means, in things pertaining to heaven; fitted to prepare us for heaven; and tending toward heaven, referring to all that is heavenly in nature, or that is related to heaven, whether gifts of the Spirit or sanctified personal talents. In Christ, through Christ, or by means of the Lord Jesus Christ, God has bestowed all spiritual blessings that are designed to prepare the Christian for heaven, such as pardon for sin, adoption into the family of God, enlightenment by the Spirit of God and those other blessings realised and enjoyed by the saints.

**4. According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:** The importance of this verse calls for a

careful and detailed examination of the words and phrases of which it is composed to determine the mind of the Lord in the matter. The general sense of the passage is that these heavenly blessings were bestowed upon Christians in accordance with God's eternal purpose. God chose all who were in Christ, the saved, believers, **before the foundation of the world**. This is understood by the doctrines of foreknowledge and omniscience. They were not blessings conferred by chance or haphazard, they are the result of God's design and plan for the church, the whole body of believers, the local church and the members of the church. The value of these blessings is seen in the fact that God designed from all eternity to bestow them, and that they come to us as the result of His perfect and unchangeable plan. It was not a plan devised after Adam's fall; it was not an after-thought; it was not a chance, nor was it a whim, it was the result of an eternal counsel. The blessings of the Gospel have all the value, all the assurance of permanence which results from that fact that the plans of God were formulated before the foundation of the world. The phrase **according as** implies that these blessings are in conformity with that eternal plan, and have flowed to us as the fruition of that plan. It is as God has chosen that it should be, and as he has appointed in His eternal purposes.

**He hath chosen us**, the word **us** here shows that the apostle is referring to the individuals that make up the church to which he is writing. It includes Paul as one of the **chosen**, and those whom he is addressing the Gentiles and Jews converted to the Faith, meeting in Ephesus. The only community of which it can be said that it was **chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world** to be holy is the Church. It is not true of the Gentile world as such, nor of any one of the nations making up the Gentile world; neither is it true of the nation of Israel for none but the Church were **chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world**. The word rendered here **hath chosen** means to make a selection or choice, with the idea of favour or love, with a view to bestow important benefits on the chosen. The idea of making a distinction between the chosen and the rest is essential to a correct understanding of the passage since there can be no choice where no distinction is made. He who chooses one out of many makes a separation, or shows a preference, regardless of the ground or reason of his choice. With regard to individuals, communities and nations, it is true that a distinction is made, or a preference given to one over another. For the Saints, Believers, and Christians the choice and favour is:

**In Him**, in Christ; the choice was made by the Father in direct reference to the Son of God for the saving of all who would make up the Church; it was not merely bringing a certain number to heaven; it was with reference to the mediatory work of the Redeemer. It was purposed that the members of the church, should be saved by the Lord Jesus Christ, and share the benefits of His atoning work. The whole choice and purpose of salvation is entirely in the Lord Jesus Christ, and outside of Him no one has eternal life, and **in Him** no one will be lost.

**He hath chosen**, this gives added emphasis to the freeness of the favour, God chose when He had decided to create, **before the foundation of the world**. His book, with the names of all the faithful is a book of love; the reason for God's love is in Himself alone without reference to time, place or person. He has chosen us, all who by faith are reckoned to be in Christ. Before the foundation of the world God made this choice; before time began to be counted, from all eternity. The apostle expressly declares that the saved, the elect were chosen by God to be a holy people to Him; and all this was purposed of God, before the foundation of the world.

God has chosen us in Christ, as The Lamb was slain before the foundation of the world so also all who have a saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ are as chosen in Him. God did not choose us because we were obedient to the Word, we were not yet born so obedience or faith is not in the equation. God did not love us from eternity because Christ was planned to die for us in time, but God because He loved us with an everlasting love; so in the fulness of time God sent His son to be the propitiation for our sins, Christ was sent to die for us so the death of Christ was reason why we could be accepted by God. God did not chose us because we were worthy, but in choosing all who are in Christ He shows His love for His Son and all who have faith in His Son.

**We should be holy and without blame before him in love** holiness is one effect of our salvation; God chose a people from eternity, the church, to be his people, not because they were holy, the members that make up the body are far enough from that, His design being that the

chosen should be holy; initially in His sight by salvation, progressively, sanctified and determinedly holy in this life, by virtue of our faith in Christ, and love to one another and attention to the Holy Spirit and the Word.

God's bestowing all spiritual blessings upon the Church in time is the effect and fruit of His love from all eternity; He has blessed us with all spiritual blessings, according as He has chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world. Such as are holy before God, will endeavour to walk without blame in the sight of man, exercising Christian love, and in the practice of all the duties laid out for the child of God, which are evidences of our sincerity, and a testimony to our profession.

**5. Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,** God has predestinated us. The particular work of predestination was completed at the same time as when we were chosen in Christ. The destiny of the saints, the means of sanctity, the basis for fellowship was all determined before there was a man to enjoy the privileges, the blessings of knowing God in this way. The word the Holy Spirit chose for the Apostle to write is in the past tense, the work of predestination is completed; the benefits of that work are being enjoyed by the saints to this present day and will be enjoyed - through all eternity. The only changing factor is the number of believers in the Church, the Bride, and this number is growing as more are brought to saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The error propounded by various groups over the years starts with a misunderstanding. God has known from all eternity the number of saints there will be in the Body. Please take special note of the tense used by the apostle, the Church was completed when our Omniscient God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world. I was not chosen to be saved but being chosen I am a member of the body God chose before the worlds were formed.

The destiny planned for the Church is that all the children should resemble the Saviour in character; without holiness no man shall see the exalted Lord. **Hebrews 12:14 Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.**

None of us are the children of God by nature, not Jew nor Gentile, new birth makes us children, and we are adopted into the family, we become sons as we grow in the Lord and put on, in some measure, the likeness of our Lord and Saviour. We may be recognised as sons when our lifestyle, speech, desires, company and pursuits are primarily designed to holiness, to show forth the Lord Jesus Christ; we will be adopted as sons when the Lord calls us into His presence and we are like Him.

**6. To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.** The glory of His grace or as the Hebrew idiom would render it, His glorious grace. The grace or mercy of God is markedly illustrated and glorified in the plan of redemption by Christ Jesus. By the giving of the Law, God's justice and holiness were displayed and made known as most glorious; by the Gospel, His grace and mercy are made equally conspicuous and glorious. The attribute of God that impressed the apostle, which moved God to execute His plan of adoption was the glory of His grace, the apostle Paul does not mention the beauty of His holiness, the wonder of His Justice, or the glory of His Power, the glory of His power is seen in creation, the beauty of His holiness is revealed in the Law, the wonder of His justice is known as we view the Sacrifice of His Son. **The glory of His grace** is revealed in the pardon of the sinner, in the way the sinner is accepted into His family, in allowing the sinner whose sin has been put away, into His presence; in the transforming work that made a sinner a saint. The fruit of this privilege is our being accepted in Christ the Beloved; He hath made us cherished, precious, and special and delightful, to Himself; we, each Christian, are accepted as His children, the whole *body of believers*, the Church specifically, as the **bride** He has chosen for His Son. The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ accepts all who are the brethren of His Son; all who by faith know Jesus Christ as Lord.

**7. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; In whom,** in the Lord Jesus Christ we have been redeemed; in the foregoing verses, the apostle has listed some privileges which the children of God were made partakers of before time, the blessing promised in the Lord Jesus Christ. Now he tells us some of

the blessings we can enjoy now, purposed by God in eternity; in this verse Paul mentions two of them, **redemption** and **forgiveness of sin**. We have redemption through **His blood**, the privilege itself, redemption; the Redeemer, Jesus Christ; the price paid for our redemption, His blood. The prime benefit of this redemption is the forgiveness of sin; the source of this is the **riches of His grace**.

The whole race of mankind is brought into a deplorable state by sin and no one is able to change his own state without help; we are in a state of slavery and bondage, captivated by sin. Redemption, by the Lord Jesus Christ supposes this; slaves need a redeemer, we are all by nature slaves to sin, to Satan, the curse of the law, and the wrath of God; these ensure we die in the body and soul, the spirit already being dead to the Lord and the grace of God. There is no delivery to be had from this bondage until the right price is paid, redemption is delivery by the payment of the ransom demanded. The price demanded of each sinner is death, **sin when it is finished brings forth death**, and this law of God is immutable, death is the only price acceptable to God. How then can the sinner avoid paying that penalty? The only price that can redeem us from captivity, the execution of the penalty for sin is the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, Christ died for us; **we have redemption through His blood**.

All believers, and only believers, have remission of sins, through the redemption purchased for them by the blood of Christ. The riches of God's grace and the full satisfaction our Saviour Christ made to His Father stand, to make the work of redemption and remission of sin a fact. God has full satisfaction from the hand of our guarantor Christ Jesus; but was it the free grace and the rich mercy of God, **the riches of His grace** to accept a surety, a substitution, when the law did not make provision for one, but demanded that the soul which sinned should die.

**8. Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;** God has shown His infinite wisdom to us, He has manifested to us this grace, not in some miserly measure, but with liberality and abundantly. **In all wisdom and prudence**, giving us, the apostles first and then all the saints, complete instructions in divine things by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit; and at the same time discretionary understanding that we might know when and where to preach the Gospel effectively to the salvation of those who hear it. None but the Spirit of God could teach the apostles how to reach a sinful world; and none but the same Spirit could inspire the saints with that prudence which was necessary every step of their life and ministry.

A wise man is not necessarily a prudent man, and every prudent man is not of necessity a wise man. Wisdom and prudence are expected in one who is being led by the Holy Spirit.

I would suggest **Wisdom** is knowledge gained from experience and used wisely, the wise man judging what are the best results, and the best means to attain them. **Prudence** is discreet, is wisdom in practice, words and actions in agreement and resulting in the best end. Every Christian needs both wisdom and prudence to have the most effective ministry, to have his prayers answered and his ministry fruitful. The wisdom of God is partly seen in the plan of our redemption and in the accomplishment of it. God showed His wisdom in appointing a Mediator that was fit to reconcile man to God, removing all the enmity. The wisdom of God is seen in the design and execution of the Gospel, for it both exemplifies His great love and saves the sinner, it brings honour and glory to God, is the means of salvation of man and the way back to God for the exiled, rebellious and sinful race.

**9. Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:** Paul tells us the preaching of the Gospel, the mystery of God's will, is now revealed and made known to sinful man. The Gospel's method for recovering and saving sinners from an eternity of separation from God is by a Redeemer, this was a mystery, hid where none in the world of mankind could ever have found it, where even angels could not discover it; it was hid in God, in his heart and thoughts; it was hid from angels; even the Church knew it before angels; angels learnt it from the church, 3:10.

**Principalities and powers** know by the church the manifold wisdom of God and as it was hid from angels, so it was hid from the wise men of the world, 1Corinthians 2:8. **We preach the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which none of the princes of this world knew;** the gospel was in part hid from all the saints of the Old Testament, they did not

have a full or clear revelation. The gospel we now have was hidden from them in their day. The obligation we have in this gospel dispensation is to acknowledge what an infinite favour it is from God to us to clearly reveal the mystery of His will, concerning the redemption and salvation sinners by a Mediator, the Mediator being His own Son. God has revealed it, and He desires all may know, receive and believe the revelation of the hidden **mystery of his will**, now revealed in the Gospel of His Son. The obligation we are under is to so live that the Lord Jesus Christ may be seen in us.

The purpose and pleasure of His own good will was the reason for God's making known the **mystery of His will** by the gospel, His enlightening the minds of men to the saving power of the gospel proceeds entirely from Him.

**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:** God having revealed His immutable will to us, v8 now informs us of the time when His purposes will be carried out in full, **in the dispensation of the fulness of times**. The design of God in making known the mystery of His will, in revealing the gospel is seen in His intention to gather into one universal church, both Jews and Gentiles, under Christ their head, and by virtue of that union to initiate a unity with the Father, as the Father and Son are one.

**The dispensation of the fulness of times** relates to the plan which God has for the Church, here it means the dispensation of the Gospel, the plan by which God has provided salvation for a lost world; the plan in which when fully executed, He intends to gather all believers, both Jews and Gentiles, they lose their national allegiance and identity, into one Church with Jesus Christ as their Head and Ruler.

**The fulness of times;** this phrase I understand refers to the Gospel dispensation, which is the consummation of all preceding dispensations, and the final revelation of the Grace and Love of God to fallen race, that shall be afforded to man.

**That he might gather together in one** meaning the gathering together of both Jews and Gentiles, who have believed in Christ, into one Church, one Body of which the Lord Jesus Christ is the head.

**All things-which are in heaven, and which are on earth;** as the Hebrew phrase the heavens and the earth, signifies all creatures, the words in the text are to be understood as signifying all mankind, without discrimination of peoples, kindred's, or tongues, Jews, Greeks, or barbarians. All that are saved of all nations, being saved in the same way, by faith in Christ Jesus, without any distinction of nation or previous condition, and all gathered into one Church or assembly. I believe the apostle is referring to the forming of one Church out of both Jew and Gentile believers, this agrees with what is said, in chapter 2:14-17.

**11. In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: In whom,** in Christ, Jews who were first called by the Lord and His apostles, and who were the first that trusted or hoped in Christ for salvation, before there was any considerable number of converts among the Gentiles, Paul declares that these Jewish believers, he being one of them, had in and through Christ, obtained with all other believers the right to be God's peculiar people. Together with their being God's portion, all the saints have a right to the inheritance; in Christ we have obtained that promised inheritance, an inheritance in the heavenly places in Christ, the inheritance of the saints in light, to this inheritance Paul says the believers have been appointed. God having foreordained that this inheritance should be the portion of all believers, and the consequence of faith in the finished work of Christ, by virtue of that same redemptive we become the sons of God, and all this to the praise of His own glory; that is, to the intent that his glorious attributes of wisdom, goodness, and mercy, love and grace might be acknowledged and praised. **In whom,** Paul answers in Christ Jesus believing Jews and Gentiles have obtained an inheritance, what was promised to Abraham and his spiritual seed, the adoption of sons, and the kingdom of heaven.

**Being predestinated,** God having determined to bring both Jews and Gentiles to salvation, not by works, nor by any human means or planning, but by Jesus Christ; that salvation being

defined and determined before the foundation of the world, determined also the means of carrying out the divine plan according to His purpose. No created being was consulted but it was all planned for the blessing of those. God operates according to the counsel of His own will, is only ever wise, gracious, understanding, merciful and good.

The original reference is maintained in the word **predestinated**, the apostle speaks of obtaining the inheritance, and the saints have come into this inheritance by the death of the testator. The Promised Land was the type and pledge given to the Jews and as that land was assigned to the Israelites by portions and position appointed by God so the salvation now offered to the Gentiles is expressly their lot or portion, as the promised land was that of the people of Israel.

The offer of salvation is not limited to a race or tribe, is not contained within a social group; the grace of God is not measured out to a predetermined class of people.

To be called to faith, brought to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ before others, is a favour and special prerogative which some persons have above others. We who first believed in Christ come into that category. It is an honour and blessing above all others, to be in Christ first but it is not without responsibility. All believers are God's portion, they have equally the right and title to a share in the inheritance which is **incorruptible, undefiled, and that fades not away, reserved in the heavens for them**; the inheritance is ours as we are in the Lord.

Jesus Christ is the Mediator of the New Covenant, is that person in, by, and through whom, believers are made partakers of this inheritance Christ has purchased this inheritance for the saints; He has promised it to them; He has already taken possession, and still keeps possession of it for them; and the saints will it when He issues the rewards.

**The counsel of His own will**; His purpose is determined by what He views to be right, and without consulting His with any created being or conforming to their views. We are reminded that His purposes were decided **before the foundation of the world**. His dealings often seem to us to be arbitrary, random, and illogical. We are incapable of perceiving the reasons of what God does. He saves those we would suppose to have been the last to become Christians; He leaves those who seem to us to be so close to the kingdom, and they remain unmoved and unaffected.

In every instance we believe **the God of all the earth does right**, and though at the moment we do not understand, the day and time will come when we agree fully with the work of our Lord and Saviour.

The phrase **counsel of his own will** is remarkable. It is designed to express in the strongest manner the fact that it is not by human counsel or advice. The determination of God to perform in this way was formed by His own will, totally without influence from any direction or being.

When it is said of man that he forms his own purposes, and acts according to his own will, we are not to infer that he acts without reason, he may have the highest and best reasons for what he does, but he does not choose to make them known to others, or to consult others. So it is of God, and so we should presume it to be for His glory and the best way of realising that. We ought to have such confidence in Him as to believe that He will do all things well. The best possible evidence that anything is done in perfect wisdom and goodness, is the fact that God does it. When we have confidence that God has done it then we may rest in the assurance that it is done in the best possible way and for the best possible reason and the best possible result.

**12. That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.** Why would God do all this? **That we should be to the praise of His glory**; the praise of His glory was to be made evident through the Church, or the praises of God were and are to be magnified in the saints. What has God done? He has made it so that all creation should praise Him, He has so planned the salvation of man that each newborn child of His should praise Him for salvation and associated blessings, for being adopted into His Family, for being a member of the Body, for being in the Church, for His free and gracious dealings with a fallen race, and for all the other blessings which are ours now and the promised blessings we will be sure to have through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.

**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**, both the Gentiles and Jews are saved by the same faith and trust in Christ. **In whom ye also trusted**; as all believers have the same common inheritance, so have they the same common union and faith in Christ.

The faith of the Gentiles came by hearing of the word; Faith comes by hearing the Word; **in whom ye also trusted, after ye heard the word**, after they heard they believed and obeyed; they obeyed as did the Colossians from the very first day that we preached the gospel. Colossians 1:6. What a shame and reproach this is to those among us who have heard the gospel preached and who have been raised by Christian parents all their days, yet never believed the gospel, those who in their apathy or neglect rejected the offer of salvation.

**The word of truth**; a word, a message of the highest and most excellent truth, applied to the Word of God this tells us of the reliability of the Word as it is recorded for us in the Bible. There is no other truth that God attested to but the truth of the gospel. The Law is truth as well as the gospel, but the Law was established without an oath; had it been given with an oath it would be of permanent duration. The gospel is sealed with an oath, and therefore shall never be set aside; nothing can take the place of the gospel.

The privilege which the Gentiles in Ephesus obtained, after they by faith believed the gospel of salvation was their sealing: After they believed, they were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise. The sealing always does and can only follow the act of believing, sealing cannot precede believing. Sealing implies that God has esteemed the redeemed as most precious and valuable to Him. Christians are God's jewels, His special treasure, therefore they are sealed. Sealing also is for safety and security, for selective choice and for confirmation of ownership. The Holy Spirit, by His indwelling us, does mark us out and distinguish us from the rest of the world of mankind, He secures and preserves us, teaches us and guides us, He leads us to an understand of the Word of God and gives us assurance, confirming to us the eternal validity of our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. He also confirms to us our 'hope' of the glorious inheritance.

The Holy Spirit is given to believers in the nature of an earnest, a pledge, a promise, an earnest of glory hereafter; which is the 'down payment' of our inheritance. An earnest, a promissory note, seals the bargain, and is a part of the full price. A seal signifies ownership; the Holy Spirit is the seal and is the assurance that we have a new owner. We have been **bought with a price** so are owned by the purchaser. A seal in the word of God is symbolic of a *finished transaction*, Jeremiah 32: 9-10, the designated sign of the purchaser so *ownership*, Jeremiah 32:11-12, **we are not our own**; and *security*, the responsibility of the owner is to keep what is purchased, to use it for the best purpose and present or display the product in the best possible light. The Church will be presented **faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy**.

We believers should be ever thankful to God for His sanctifying Holy Spirit, not only as He reveals our evils and empowers us to put them away from us, but as the pledge and earnest of a glorious inheritance.

The Holy Spirit of God, is God, to sanctify, to seal, to confirm our faith, these are divine operations; He that does these must be divine. How the Spirit of God is God, and how He proceeds from the Father and Son, is not comprehended by our reason and superficial understanding; sin has so marred the intelligence of man it is impossible for man to view the things of God without a bias.. The doctrine of the Triune God is inexplicable, the nature of God is incomprehensible; our faith must agree to what our reason cannot comprehend, **by grace are we saved, and that through faith**.

**14. Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.** The Holy Spirit is the promise or the down payment and each believer can be assured, knowing God is faithful, in the hope of a complete redemption. Heaven is here called a possession, a purchased possession, purchased by the blood of Christ, the ransom price demanded and the only price acceptable to God. The Holy Spirit in the child of God is the earnest, the promise of a full entitlement of all that is for the Christian, freely bestowed because the Lord Jesus loved us enough to die for us. The Holy Spirit, Himself the seal, sealing the soul with truth and righteousness, is the earnest, foretaste, and pledge of the full

inheritance. And all who have this earnest, this witness of the Spirit within, shall have an abundant entrance into the holiest.

**The redemption of the purchased possession** is the time when body and soul are redeemed from all their miseries, and are with the Lord Jesus Christ. All those who believe in Christ Jesus as their only sacrifice are considered as His peculiar people and property, and to them the promise of eternal glory is given. The Spirit of promise, which is given to us who believe, is a pledge that we shall be raised from among the dead, to eternal blessedness; the Holy Spirit promises this redemption, and is now within each child of God confirming the promise, an earnest or pledge of the complete fulfilment of this promise; which will then be to the praise of His glory, the glory of Christ, who has purchased the believers by His blood.

We who were alienated by wicked works are now reconciled to God by the death of His Son. What we could not do for ourselves has been done by the Son of God, for He took on flesh, being made in fashion as a man for the express purpose of paying the ransom price to redeem us. He who was without sin was made a sin offering; bearing the penalty for the sin of the world and therefore the sin of all who believe on Him. Death is the penalty sin incurs and all have sinned falling short of the standard of righteousness God set. Jesus Christ was sinless therefore able to be a sacrifice acceptable to God; He purchased our redemption by paying the demanded price in full. The Church, all the believers, is His **purchased possession**.

The free gift of God for the saints cost the Son of God everything. Even His Father turned His back on Him when **He bore our sins in His own body on the tree**.

**15. Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints**, with the difficult communication in those times between distant places, more often a lack, perhaps Paul had heard nothing since the time when he farewelled to the elders of Ephesus at Miletus, Acts 20:1-38, until the time now referred to. It would have been a matter of great interest, very encouraging for Paul to hear from them; and when he did hear of the saints going on in the paths of righteousness his anxiety was relieved, and he did not cease to give thanks for what he heard, and commended them to God in prayer.

**16. Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;** The apostle is pleased to tell the Ephesians he is fully satisfied that their conversion is genuine confirmed by their steadiness and continuance, it was to him a continual cause of thanksgiving to God, who had brought them to salvation; and he continued in prayer that they might be preserved blameless to the end.

In the prosperity of the church at Ephesus had the deepest Christian interest and their welfare was ever before him. The duties of prayer and praise, of supplication and thanksgiving ought to the desire and duty of the saints in the local church and for those who have taken the Gospel into other parts.

We should never pray for more blessing without first giving thanks for blessings received, either for ourselves or others. Sanctified thanksgiving is an evidence of the love of God in us. What happens in our lives, with family, employment, in the Church and in the home will make us supplicants, but the grace of God in salvation only makes us give thanks, creates an attitude in us of thanksgiving.

**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:** This is no blanket prayer by the Apostle, he is specific so is able to praise when the prayer is answered. The Apostle prays that **the God of our Lord Jesus Christ**, God who has sent the Lord Jesus into the world, and appointed Him as the Mediator between Himself and man, he prays that they might be more closely acquainted with their Redeemer and Lord, and be enlightened in regard to the great work which the Lord Jesus came to do and completed to the satisfaction of His Father and our God. Jesus Christ, as man and mediator, has God for his Father and it is in reference to this that He says; **I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God;** John 20:17.

**The Father of glory**, the author and giver of that glory which we expect at the end of our Christian race, the Lord Jesus prayed concerning this glory, this splendour and magnificence, John 17, He has it and wants His brethren to share it. John 17:22, **And the glory which thou**



**gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one.** The Father of Glory is in Himself infinitely glorious; to Him all glory is and ought to be ascribed, and He alone is able to give this glory to another so the Son has this glory and the church has this glory and will be glorified with the Son. As all our prayers and requests are and ought to be directed unto God, so in order to have access to God with assurance in prayer, it is our duty to humbly approach Him as our Father, as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, as our Father for we are reckoned to be in Christ, with this realisation our faith is strengthened and we are more likely to pray in faith and receive the answer to our prayers. Even the best of Christians need to be prayed for: and, while we hear well of our Christian friends, we should think ourselves obliged to intercede with God for them, that they may abound and increase yet more and more

Paul prays for the Ephesians, not that they might be spared persecution from the antagonists to the Christian faith, nor that they become affluent or honourable citizens, he prays for their understanding of things spiritual, enlightenment and that their knowledge might increase and abound; not general, practical knowledge but rather their knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ and the way He would have them walk. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the comfort of the Holy Spirit are communicated to us, awakening the understanding to spiritual truths. Evil takes hold in a person by taking possession of the senses and passions, the person giving in to the lusts of the flesh and the mind; the Lord Jesus Christ will have control of our lives when with the understanding we follow Him.

Knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ and understanding of Him will come as we dedicate ourselves to knowing the Word of God and are obedient to the teachings contained therein.

**18. 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.** What the eye is to the body, the understanding is to the soul; the eye is not light in itself, and cannot discern without light shining on the object and reflecting into the eye, so the understanding of man cannot discern spiritual truth of or by itself, but is influenced, enlightened by the Spirit of wisdom and revelation; without the influence of God's Holy Spirit no man became wise unto salvation, even as no man ever saw an object without the light revealing it.

The eye is the instrument by which we see, the understanding the faculty by which we perceive truth. Paul not only wished their hearts to be right, but he desired their understanding to be right also. The understanding has been blinded by sin; the views which men contemplate of themselves and of God are narrow and wrong. The mind weakened and perverted by the practice of sin and living with sin. The mind is limited in its operation being unable to clearly understand the case, and because the unregenerate mind cannot fully comprehend the truth relating to Divine order and government. One of the first effects of salvation is on the understanding; it opens the eyes to see the truth, it gives a true concept of God. True Christianity sheds light on the mind, restoring to the damaged intellect a true perspective and right proportion of things, and with the help of God's Word and the Holy Spirit a true knowledge of God.

Without faith it is impossible to please God, without the Holy Spirit it is impossible to know the true meaning of the Word of God. The Holy Spirit sheds light on the Word of God enabling the child of God to see the truth contained therein and have all the guidance needed for a walk that will please his Saviour.

The hope of the Christians calling as taught by the Apostle is that the saints may clearly discern the glorious and important object of their hope, the enjoyment of which God has called us to. The full import of the hope to which He has called and invited us to by His Spirit and His promises is to be known by Him and experience the blessed relationship of a child with a loving Father as we enjoy the new life we have in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is an invaluable privilege to have the benefits of the Christian hope, to understand what Christians have a right to expect in the future with their Lord. This is a fundamental thing which the apostle desires they should fully understand. The saints in Ephesus were in a deplorable state before conversion, they were without hope; they left their hopeless condition by embracing Christianity, they were born again to a living hope of glorious things which before conversion they were wholly ignorant of, and

strangers to. A Christian's happiness and joy consists not in what he has of material things, but what and who he has his hope in.

**The riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints**, besides the heavenly inheritance prepared for the saints, there is a present inheritance in the saints; someone has said, "Grace is glory begun, and holiness is happiness in the bud". There is a glorious richness in the inheritance, richness of glory, making the Christian more excellent and more honourable than all about him and it is the will of God that we know this in our experience. The present enjoyment of spiritual blessings is in knowing and living by the principles, and being guided by the Holy Spirit. Let us endeavour, by reading the Word, meditation, prayer, and Christian fellowship to know as much about our Lord as we can, desiring and longing to be in heaven with Him.

Another thought is equally belonging to this phrase; He, the Lord Jesus Christ, has as His inheritance, inheriting through the death He died, the Church, every believer is placed in the Body in such a way as to bring most glory to Him. He inherits the Church. He died for it and lives for it; He is building it and decorating it with His beauty and glory.

Most understand this as a description of heaven, here called an inheritance, a rich inheritance, a glorious inheritance, with the saints in heaven; they possess what the saints on earth have their hope and expectation in.

Heaven is the saints' inheritance; an inheritance is what belongs to children, to all the children of that union, and only those. It is an undeserved inheritance for no child earned it yet it is a sure and certain possession for it is promised by the Creator/Possessor of heaven and earth.

The God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ is said in scripture to make heaven sure to His saints by all the means a man can use to make an inheritance sure to his child. It is ours by promise, it is ours by purchase, it is ours by gift, it is ours written into the will; it is given by bequest to the children He has redeemed.

No thing is surer, or by more ways made secure to any person, than this inheritance is to the servants of God, the saints. The apostle calls it the riches of the glory of his inheritance; that is, a very rich and exceedingly glorious inheritance. Heaven is a glorious inheritance, a glorious place, glorious company, glorious employment, and the glory of the Lord on each of us.

**19. And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, And** adds the third blessing the saints have in Christ, the Hope, the Riches, and the Power. The **hope** is the certainty of being with the Lord; the **riches** being the wealth all the saints have in the Lord Jesus Christ and the **power** the same as that exercised by God when He raised Christ from the dead. The great power of God is displayed most effectively in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ; the power used to create is less than the power that was needed to bring back from the dead the crucified Saviour. Tremendous power is needed to give life to the dead and we who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ receive this power, it changes us from sinner to saint; it opens blind eyes to see beyond this present scene, it gives spiritual life to the spiritually dead, in total this power takes a sinner from the brink of death and damnation and gives eternal life and hope.

This Power can bring life out of death, it can give eternal life to the living, it can impart eternal life to a dying sinner, it can open the eyes of the blind to see eternal issues and things with clarity. It is the power of God to us who believe.

**20. Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,** This display of power is there for all to see who will look at the Word of God with an open mind. History tells the same story and the experience of all who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation knows the truth of the resurrection personally. We are not of those who saw the Lord after the resurrection with our physical eyes, we are those who have a stronger confirmation that our Lord and Saviour lives. Each child of God can talk with the Lord Jesus; whether aloud or silently is of no import, and the conversation is a blessing for the redeemed unequalled in any other realm. This display of the power of God is assurance to His children that all the promises made by the Lord will be fulfilled. Romans 8:11 **But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwells in you.**

Romans 8:32 **He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?**

This practical belief in the all-sufficiency of God, and of the omnipotence of God, is absolutely necessary to a close walk with Him. It is necessary to know experimentally the mighty power of the grace of God carrying on the work of faith in our lives. It is a divine work to bring a person to believe in Christ, the Holy Spirit uses believers and the Word of God to make the righteousness of the Lord known and to open blind eyes to see beyond this earthly scene. It is nothing less than the almighty power of God that will do this work in us and then through us as we live with Him and witness to Him.

**Set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places;** God raised Christ from the dead and took Him to glory, caused Him to be seated, seated at His right hand, and at the right hand of His Father. This is the place of honour and the place occupied by the one who is trusted to do all the will of the one whom in this instant has raised Him from the dead. The Father has given to the Son, as mediator between God and man, the highest honour and dignity, Philippians 2:9; in which high state of exaltation He transacts all the affairs of His Church, and rules the universe. The right hand is the place of friendship, honour, confidence, and authority.

The world has a saying "Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely" but the world does not know the Lord or the Purity and Power of the truth as revealed in the Son of God, He who is now seated at the right hand of the Father.

**21. 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:** Some think the Apostle Paul is referring to the different orders among good and evil angels; saying the Christ is superior to all the good spirits and rules all the bad spirits. Others apply this to earthly governments; and as principality signifies the most sovereign and extensive kind of dominion; and lordship signifies the lowest degree of authority; hence we are to understand that all are brought under the dominion of our Lord, in His human nature, and are subjected to Him. The Apostle may have in mind all the dignitaries of the Jewish economy; and by what is named in the world to come, all the dignities that should be found in the Christian Churches, both true and false Christian gatherings.

Power, suggesting all who have authority to propound, expound, persuade, convince, and refute all the teachings that at the time obscured the truth, mainly Judaism but all others also.

Might, signifying all the classes of teachers whose office it was to expound the law, and teach the people generally from the various religions and doctrines prevalent at that time.

Dominion, implying persons with higher rank, some kind of ruler; Paul is aware that Jesus Christ called fishermen, publicans, and men from the lowest social orders to the work of the ministry, and after His resurrection made them His means of confounding and overturning all the Jewish rulers, philosophers and doctors.

In the world **which is to come**, the era of Christianity, the Lord Jesus should be exalted above all powers and authorities which the world, flesh or devil bring into the Church; such as the Roman Catholic church does with popes, cardinals, archbishops, bishops, and other denominations with deans, and canons etc.. The reformers were men of little or no note when compared with the rulers of the established religions, the power of Christ worked in and by them, confounding the power and authority of the religious rulers. The Lord Jesus Christ is not only above, but far above, **all principalities, and powers, and might, and dominion and every name that is named.**

The human nature of Jesus the Christ, and His glorified body, by virtue of that unspeakable, inexplicable union between the two natures of Christ, his Deity and Humanity, is so highly dignified and exalted in heaven, that all the glory of heaven and earth, of kings and rulers, of sun, moon, and stars, is nothing to it nor may be compared with it.

Christ now sits in heaven, in glorified humanity inseparably united to His glorious Deity; that body which hung on a cross bloodied and ridiculed, vilified, maligned and slandered now shines brightest in the kingdom of His Father. All this honour, and reverence, glory and praise,

dominion and power, is due to the Lord Jesus Christ our Redeemer, and as the reward of His sufferings; God hath set Him at His own right hand, far above all principalities and powers.

Although the kingdom of which Christ is the Mediator shall cease at the last day, 1Corinthians 15:28 **And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.** As to the way in which He now administers it, by ruling in the midst of His enemies, whom He shall have subdued and destroyed; yet His kingdom, as God, will never end, but continue in the world to come.

These words, **not only in this world, but in the world to come**, show the duration of Christ's kingdom and government, and that He is King for ever and ever, that His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom and His dominion will endure through eternal ages.

**22. And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,** All beings and things are subject to the Lord Jesus Christ, whether they be thrones, dominions, principalities, or powers, Colossians 1:16-18; 2:10; for He, God the Father, has given to His Son to be head; chief, supreme, over all, to the Church. The Church having no ruler but Jesus Christ; others may be delegated by Him but let no one take to himself the rule over God's elect; in His Church He alone is head and supreme.

As the Lord Jesus Christ is head of the whole creation in general, so He is head of the Church, which is His body in particular.

Christ was given this position by the Father; to be the Church's head this is permanent and irrevocable. This metaphor implies several things; the Lord's eminence above all the members of the body even as all the members of the body is ruled from the head. This position places the Lord Jesus Christ as the supreme authority over the church; even as the head governs all the members as best suits the intellectual wisdom and understanding of the head. This figure of speech shows the body and head are of one nature. It implies a strict, intimate, and close union between the Lord and his church, as between head and members of one body. The union between Christ and the members of His body, the Church, is a mystical, spiritual, supernatural, and indissoluble union.

This metaphor of a head, applied to Christ, implies He communicates to all His members gifts for the benefit of the whole body, that He exerts His influence of spiritual life to all the members of the body, that He has the sole right to direct and control the body, true believers, whether members of a local church or not; and each local church.

The wonderful glorious dignity of the least believer is more precious, greater than the highest angel. The Eternal, Almighty God has placed each believer in His Son; with Christ in the heavenlies each child of God is much higher than the angels; **they are all ministering spirits sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation**, Hebrews 1:14 As good servants do willingly and obediently the expressed will of their master so the angels delight to obey the Lord in service to the saints, and all the other duties assigned to them.

**23. Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.** As the Lord is Head over all things, He is Head to the Church; and this Church is considered as the body of which He is especially the Head; and from Him, as the Head, the Church receives light, life, intelligence and guidance.

The Lord Jesus Christ especially manifests His power, goodness, grace and truth through the Church, He fills the entire world with His presence, He fills all the members of His mystical body, the Church, with wisdom, goodness, truth, love and holiness, in a special manner. The Christian Church is filled by Him, whose fulness fills all His members, with all spiritual gifts and grace sufficient to make the love of the Lord obvious to all. John in the Gospel says, 1:16, **and of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.** And with what is said by Paul, Colossians 2:9, 10 **Ye are complete in him;** or *ye are in him filled full*; with gifts and grace sufficient to make Him known in His power and saving grace.

How the Church can be said to be the fulness of Him, who fills all in all, is difficult to say. However, as Jesus Christ is represented to be the head, and the Church the body ruled by and subservient to that Head, the individuals being so many members in that body; and as it requires

a body and members to make a head complete; so it requires the Church, or general assembly of believers, to make up the body of Christ. When the Jews and Gentiles are brought into this Church they lose their identity, become one in the Lord; the body is complete and Christ has His visible fulness upon earth, then Church may be said to be the **fulness of Him that filleth all in all**.

It seems probable that the church is the completion or filling up of His power and glory, without which His dominion would not be complete, He has control over the angels and over all creation, but His dominion would not be complete without the control over His Church. The word **fulness** here means a great number or multitude; a multitude without the confines of a specified territory, widespread and covering various regions.

The church constitutes the complete body of Christ; a body is complete when it has all its members, parts and limbs in proper proportions and in the right places, those members may be said to be the completion, or the filling-up, or the fulness of the body or the person. The church sustains the same relation to Christ which the body does to the head. It is needed to form the entire person, the one is not complete without the other, and the body is dependant on the head for direction in all areas of existence.. When the body has all its members in due proportion, and is in sound and vigorous health, the whole person then is complete and entire. So it is to be in the kingdom of which the Lord Jesus Christ is the Sovereign. He is the head and the redeemed Church is the body, the fulness, the completion, the filling-up of the entire realm over which He rules.

## **Ephesians 2**

- 1. And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins;**
- 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:**
- 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.**
- 4. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,**
- 5. Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)**
- 6. And hath raised *us* up together, and made us sit together in heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus:**
- 7. That in the ages to come 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; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God:**
- 9. Not of works, lest any man should boast.**
- 10. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.**
- 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;**
- 12. That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:**
- 13. But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.**
- 14. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*;**
- 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;**

**16. And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:**

**17. And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.**

**18. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.**

**19. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God;**

**20. And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;**

**21. In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:**

**22. In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.**

This chapter illustrates the subject which was begun in the previous chapter, 1:19 the greatness of the power of God, evidenced in the salvation of a number of people to make up the Church, a Bride for His Son. The awesome manifestation of His power has been displayed in raising the Lord Jesus Christ from among the dead. The apostle follows that by emphasising their resurrection from the death of sin. The resurrection of the Lord involved the exercise of great power; a similar power is needed to impart new life to a sinner.

To illustrate this basic truth the apostle observes v1, that God has quickened, given spiritual life, to those who once were dead in trespasses and sins, and proceeds, in verses 2, and 3 to show the condition which we were all in before our conversion. He then observes, in verses 4-7 that God, of His infinite mercy, when we were dead in sin, has quickened us together with Christ, and has raised us up to sit with Him in the heavenlies. Paul then asserts this was not by human power, but was the work of Divine power, and that Christians are the workmanship of God, 8-10. The remainder of the chapter 11-22 is occupied with a statement of the privileges resulting from the mercy of God in calling us into His kingdom. The apostle would impress us with a sense of the mercy and love and power of God in calling us to Himself. He reminds us of our former condition, being without God, without hope, and that we are now brought nigh by the blood of Christ, 11-13. He states that this was done by one, the Lord Jesus Christ, who came to break down the wall of partition between the Jews and Gentiles, and who has now made of both one, 14-18. He compares the believers to a temple raised for God, to be a dwelling place of God on the earth, 19-22.

This should give us a sense of obligation, and lead us to devote ourselves to God who has raised us up from among dead, and had seated us with His Son in the heavenlies.

**1. And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;** Unregenerate souls are dead in trespasses and sins. All who are unredeemed are in their sins, are dead in sin; dead in trespasses and sins, which signifies all manner of sins, sins from bad habits and committed sin as the law of God is broken, sins of the heart, mind and of life. Sin is the death of the soul; **the soul that sins, it shall die.** Wherever sin prevails there is a deprivation of all spiritual life. Sinners are in a dead state, being destitute of the principle and power of spiritual life; and are cut off from God who alone can give life, both physical and spiritual, who is the fountain of life. All who are dead in law, that is have sinned and are not redeemed by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ are considered dead; as a condemned murderer is said to be dead when the sentence is passed and before it is carried out.

They were dead in relation to that to which they afterwards became alive to, as are all who do not know the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour. This does not mean that they were in all respects dead, physical life continued; there was no contact with the Lord God, no spiritual life. The Apostle is not saying they had no animal life, so that they did not breathe, walk and act or interact with fellow man. Nor does it mean that they had no intellectual or mental powers, nor does it suggest the unbeliever is incapable of any activity while in that state. It simply asserts the fact that in relation to real spiritual life they were, in consequence of sin, like a dead man, totally

unresponsive to all objects and influences which are around him. A corpse is insensible. It does not see, hear or feel nor are any other of the senses able to stir it.

The sinner in regard to the spiritual and eternal world, sees no value, nothing to be desired in Christianity; he is deaf to the call of God; is unaffected by the message of the death of the Saviour; he has no interest in eternal verities. Such is the condition of all the inhabitants of this sinful world. There is life and energy and motion; there are extensive plans and projects, the world of man is intensely active. In regard to the Christian faith all are dead; the sinner sees no beauty in the Lord Jesus Christ, sees nothing to be desired in having sins forgiven and no human power can arouse him to acknowledge and live for God

The same power is needed in the conversion of a sinner which was needed in raising Christ from among the dead; each demonstrate the omnipotence of Him who alone can give life to the dead.

**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:** A state of sin, the unregenerate man, is a state of conformity to this world. In verse 1 the apostle speaks of the internal state, the heart and mind, in this verse of their lifestyle; walking voluntarily in the lusts of the flesh, you lived in trespasses and sins, in time past you lived and behaved as others, without the Saviour.

**According to the course of this world**, conforming to the customs and manners of the world at large. There was no difference between them, the saints at Ephesians and others, and that all the difference which now exists has been made by the grace of God in saving them.

**The course of this world** means age, spirit of the age, used to signify the present world, with its cares, temptations, and desires, calamities and woes, the pressures of society, families' culture, all those things that will distract us from following the Lord. Particularly meaning the men of this world and the ungodly influence they have on all around them. The Ephesians had formerly lived as other men lived following the course of the men of this world walking in trespasses and sins. This implies the abundance of sin that was in them, committed by them resourcefully and with ease, with satisfaction and pleasure, regardless of the effect on others or the end of their manner of life.

Walking is a motion, a voluntary motion, a progressive motion, and a pleasant and delightful motion natural to men. Unregenerate man will walk in sin with some sort of delight and pleasure; it is the pleasure of the animal, and not of the man, a sensual, and not a rational, intellectual satisfaction.

The guides which the unsaved follow are said by the Apostle to be the world and Satan. The world, meaning the corrupt course and sinful customs of the men of the world, whose minds are blinded, not able to see beyond the pleasures of the flesh. These are living according to the time and place and customs of the present. Though the customs and fashions of the world change in various cultures and climes yet it is still the world; the unregenerate part of mankind will always walk, can only walk, according to the **course of this world**.

The second guide which the Ephesians followed, was Satan, called by the Apostle a prince, having in mind the mighty power which the devil has in and over the men of the world. The **prince of the power of the air** has this name because he exercises his power, by God's permission, in the lower regions, of the air. When God gives him permission he can command the fire, the water, the winds, the storms; all the powers that are in the air he can command, and therefore he is called their prince. Satan is the prince of the air only; his kingdom shall cease altogether when he is cast into the **lake of fire**, his power is only at the discretion of the Lord God Almighty.

Satan is prince of the air but Christ is prince of heaven and earth, and all else of creation. Satan can neither intercept our prayers nor hinder our going to be with the Lord when we cease to communicate on the earthly level. Christ, when he ascended into heaven, went through the air, this kingdom of demons, He spoiled principalities and powers; He entered heaven and led them all captives in his triumph. Satan has no kinship with the redeemed, he has no power over the

redeemed, the souls of the Lord's people are kept by the Lord and none can keep those souls from being with their Lord.

The devil works in the children of disobedience. Satan's way of working in and upon obstinate and impenitent sinners is powerful and efficacious. They are led by Satan at his will; they walk according to the **prince of the power of the air**; according to his guidance, according to his mind and will. Unbelievers are encouraged by Satan, they are deceived into thinking the way they take is a good way. Satan deceives in ways that appear good as in the hearts of Ananias and Sapphira, their action was not wrong but their deceit was; Satan put into their hearts to lie to the Holy Spirit. He put a lie into their hearts, and they promoted it with their mouths and actions.

Christians should remember that Satan is a defeated foe, he was defeated at Calvary and the proof the Lord Jesus Christ had the victory over Satan and all his forces is in the resurrection. From this we may infer that the Holy Spirit of God will always work in the hearts and minds of the saints; the Holy Spirit will work with the saints and the tool He uses to fashion the saints is the Bible and the power for that tool is the exercise of faith.

**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.** We who are by birth Jews, as well as you Gentiles, lived in transgressions and sins; this was the course of our life and from it we could not deviate, we lived in sin, walked in sin, it tarnished each mood, polluted every sense, and self was the centre of our lives. The mind was polluted and deceived by the lusts of the flesh, the thoughts were self-centred and both joined to produce acts of unrighteousness. We did not do the will of God, nor even considered it; we were motivated by the will of the **flesh and of the mind**. All the good we did may well have benefited family, friends and neighbours but the deeds of the flesh are never sufficient to purchase our salvation.

**And were by nature the children of wrath.** Nature signifies one's birth and education, Galatians 2:15: **We, who are Jews by nature**, also men's natural reason and conscience, Romans 2:14: **The Gentiles who have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law**, also the general sense and practice of mankind, 1Corinthians 11:14: **Doth not even nature itself teach you, that if a man have long hair**. The apostle refers to the sinful habits of unbelievers; the Ephesians acted from their originally corrupt nature even as we all did before the Lord Jesus was made relevant and real to us. They were, by their habitual behaviour, or second nature, **children of wrath**, condemned to a lost eternity, because of the impurity of their hearts and the wickedness of their lives, being unrepentant, unsaved..

The expression **children of wrath** is the same as saying sons of perdition, sons of death, persons on whom God's displeasure rests because of their sins. The doctrine that men without faith in the Lord Jesus Christ are the children of wrath, Paul fully explains and defends in the first three chapters of his epistle to the Romans where he teaches that conscience, the Law and creation testify to the reality of a holy and righteous God who will not countenance sin in any form in any person.

**Children of wrath** are directly opposed to the children of God; the first group are destined to eternal damnation while the children of God are sure of eternal blessing with the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul disclaims for himself, and for his fellow-labourers, all the carnal policies which distinguish the men of the world and their effort to reach what they suppose is heaven.

It is the curse of this church age and the bane of Christianity that human reasoning and plans are resorted to, it is proof that spiritual life is ebbing and that the flesh is becoming dominant. Any individual or group that feels that his purposes are best accomplished by carnal means and policies should conclude, if the word of God is read and believed, that his plans are wrong, and abandoned them and reassess the situation. Unfortunately we do not evaluate ourselves by closeness to the Lord Jesus Christ but rather by the numbers in the congregation or the fervency of participation, the gatherings today are often of a mixed multitude.

**4. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,** is a beautiful expression. God is rich in mercy, overflowing, abundant compassion, pity, clemency, understanding and benevolence. Mercy is the riches, the wealth of God. Men are often rich in



possessions, and take pride in their possessions, and bank balance; **God is rich in mercy.** In mercy He abounds; and He is so rich in mercy He is willing to impart it to others; so rich that He can make all his children rich in the same grace.

Both Jews and Gentiles were dead in sins, and children of wrath; the Apostle Paul sets forth their deliverance from that woeful estate, by the rich mercy and free grace of God; **God is rich in mercy.** The author of our deliverance is God; and the motivating cause of it is His rich mercy and great love. The object of mercy is a creature in distress and misery as we were when dead in trespasses and sins.

The love which God bears to the children of men is a **great love**; and the mercy is **rich mercy**; His love so great, that it can never be expressed or fully explored; His mercy so rich, that it can never be fully comprehended; rich mercy is abundant mercy, inconceivable mercy, inexhaustible mercy, sure mercy.

The wonderful effects and fruits of this great love and rich mercy of God towards the Ephesians, and all Christians, is in quickening them when dead, in saving them when lost, in doing all that He does for them when they had ruined themselves; **God, who is rich in mercy, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ.** Sinners need all the riches of mercy that are in God, in order to know regeneration and salvation; it is the riches of mercy that will save us.

**5. Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved ;)** dead in our souls; dead towards God; dead under the Law; and with a sentence of eternal damnation. Then God **quickened us together with Christ**, God has given us a complete resurrection from the death of sin to a life of righteousness, our resurrection is the same as the body of Christ had in being delivered from the tomb, from the grave. This quickening, or making alive, is an act of grace on God's part, the apostle says; **by grace ye are saved.**

The Apostle Paul attributes the whole work of our salvation to God's free grace, assuring us that it is solely by grace; there is no merit or worth in any of the saved, **by grace ye are saved.** Our salvation is, in every aspect of it, dependant upon the grace of God. This wonderful truth is made known to us and emphasised by the Apostle Paul. He, with all of us who know the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour, will testify to the same truth, we did not deserve, did not earn, and cannot inherit the Salvation we have as a free gift from God. All we have in and through the Lord Jesus Christ is ours only through grace.

**6. And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:** The future of the saints is secured and made real and relevant to us in this assurance, we are now raised with our Saviour, and we are now seated with Christ Jesus where He is with the Father. We are raised from the death of sin to the life of a Christian by virtue of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from among the dead, so close is the connection between Him and His redeemed people that His resurrection makes ours a certainty.

**And hath raised us up together** by Christ; His resurrection being the proof to us that the Saviour has made full satisfaction to God, that we are justified by His blood. Believing the record which God has given us of his Son, we receive remission of sins, assurance of salvation, and we know we are raised from death due to sin to a life of righteousness with our risen Saviour. Now we sit in heavenly places and have a right, in Christ, to the kingdom of God. The finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ in satisfying all the claims of a righteous God on our behalf is spoken of as a completed work simply because God is not restricted to or confined by time as we are.

**Sit together** with the Lord and His people; not working for acceptance, simply resting in the work that our Saviour has finished. When He sat down at the right hand of the Father He made room in His Father's presence for all those who trusted, and all those who will trust in Him for their salvation. When the Father raised up Christ from among the dead, He did in effect raise up all believers together with Him, the Lord Jesus being their common head; and when the Father placed the risen Saviour at His own right hand in the heavenlies, He brought all the redeemed with the Lord and glorified them in and with Him, their raised and exalted and glorified Head and Forerunner.

We may be confident in the Lord Jesus, for He who has begun a good work in us will complete it. One sits down satisfied when the work is finished; the work the Lord Jesus finished was to the satisfaction of His Father and results in permanent blessing for all who believe.

All who believe, with all who have believed and all who will yet believe constitute the Church, the Lord Jesus Christ is the head of the body called the Church and all the believers are members of that body.

**7. That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.** God has brought into being an example, one which will be on record through all generations that He gives new life dead souls; that He forgives the sins of the most sinful when they repent and believe in Christ Jesus as Saviour and have Him as Lord. What God has done for the sinners at Ephesus serves as an encouragement to all future ages; on this evidence every preacher of the Gospel may boldly proclaim that Christ saves unto **the uttermost all that come unto God through him** Hebrews 7:25. So **the exceeding riches of his grace** appear in provision He has made for the salvation of both Jews and Gentiles.

This statement the Holy Spirit has caused the apostle to write is of great importance; it shows we are authorised to state in all the successive ages that He who saved the sinners at Ephesus is ever ready to save all who repent of their sins, and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The riches of Divine love and grace would be shown in the conversion of sinners, a testimony to the saving power of the Gospel to all future generations. Such was the love of the Lord Jesus Christ to those who were lost, that the Church is an everlasting monument of His mercy, a perpetual and unchanging proof that He is good. We are raised up with Christ, and are made to share his honour and glory; in order that other sinners may be impressed with a sense of the Divine goodness and mercy we enjoy and seek the same blessing.

**The exceeding riches of his grace**, the abounding, overflowing riches of grace, this is an expression so beautiful and full of meaning. One object of the conversion and salvation of sinners is to provide a proof of the mercy and goodness of God. Another objective of the Apostle suggests is that their conversion may be an encouragement to other individuals and Churches. The fact that such sinners as the Ephesians were pardoned and saved is encouraging to all readers of this epistle and to us who follow so many hundreds of years later. The history of the church for more than 2000 years is all the encouragement which we could hope for. The conversion of sinners, sinners of all kinds and from all countries and all religions is a special proof of Divine love and compassion.

Heaven, the home of the redeemed, will furnish the most impressive and conclusive proof of the goodness and grace of God. In the glory there will be a countless host who were once dead in trespasses and sins, with no hope of life, led captive by Satan at his will. All the redeemed will have the same testimony; I can be numbered with the redeemed because the Lord Jesus Christ bore the penalty for my sins.

The Church, comprised of the redeemed, made pure, freed from sorrow, and death, are living monuments of the grace of God.

**8. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:** It is not by our own merit; it is not because we have any claim on God, we have done nothing to deserve what is ours in the Lord Jesus Christ. This doctrine brought to us by the Apostle Paul, is recognised by all who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity and truth. In these words the apostle informs the Ephesians, and all succeeding Christians, that their complete salvation, from New Birth to the Rapture depends upon God's free favour, His grace in Christ, and not upon any merit or value in ourselves; works have no merit, nor social status any influence upon our salvation, to the intent that all boasting may be excluded, and that all the saints' glorying may be in what God has done through the Lord Jesus Christ and not anything they may have done in the flesh.

Believers are fully saved already, not only because they have salvation begun in their New Birth, but they have a right and title to, a pledge and an earnest of complete salvation for that is what the indwelling Christ tells us by His Spirit who dwells within each believer.

The believers' salvation is through faith in Jesus Christ. That grace, by and through which we are saved, is not of ourselves, **it is the gift of God**; grace is the gift of God as well as His Son the Lord Jesus Christ, and the one as necessary as the other; the only way to heaven is by Christ, the only way to Christ is by faith.

We are now brought into a state of salvation, our sins are all blotted out, and we are made partakers of the Holy Spirit. Our hope of eternal redemption must not be attributed to any works or merit of our own; for when this Gospel reached us, we were all dead in trespasses and dead in sins; therefore it was God's grace and mercy to us, manifested through the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom we believed; having believed by the power of the Holy Spirit, we received, and were sealed by, the Holy Spirit of promise; so that this salvation is in no sense of ourselves, but is the free gift of God. If any form of works, any sacrifice, any pilgrimage were able to save us then Christ died in vain. No man can boast as having wrought his own salvation, or even contributed any thing towards it; by **grace are ye saved, through faith** in Christ. This doctrine continues unchanged and unchanging and is essential to the knowledge and assurance of salvation, and will remain so, never to be revoked or replaced.

It may ask; is not faith the gift of God? Yes, as to the grace which produces faith; but the grace or power to believe, and the act of believing, are two different things. Without the grace or power to believe no man ever did or can believe; but with that power the act of faith is of the man. God never believes for any man, no more than He repents for a man; the penitent person, through the grace of God enabling him, believes for himself; the power to believe may be present long before it is exercised, else why the solemn warnings which we see so often in the Word of God, and threatening against those who do not believe? This is a proof that we as individuals have the power but do not always use it. God gives the power to believe; in every person there is a testimony to this power, man in using the power correctly, believes God and brings glory to God. Without the power, the grace of God, no man can believe; with the grace of God any man may believe and be saved. There is in every man a testimony to the grace of God, through the means He has ordained; man has a responsibility to believe God and be saved from the wrath to come.

**9. Not of works, lest any man should boast** is the frank, unequivocal statement we are unable to believe God without the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts. All the good works, philanthropies, pleasantries, nice deeds have no weight with God in relation to our being accepted into His kingdom.

A Jew would naturally ask, if the view which the apostle gives is correct, what benefit can the Jew derive from his religion, his heritage? What profit is there of circumcision? The law commanded works, and the Jews relied on works, Law keeping. If they were justified by keeping the Law, they would have had grounds for self-confidence, or boasting, being justified by their own merits. This word from the Lord teaches us than any activity or thought pattern, or any religion which ends in boasting, and self-satisfaction, and pride, cannot be true.

There is a law of faith, a rule, an arrangement which proclaims that we have no merit in ourselves, nor any merit we can earn; we are lost sinners; and we can only be justified by faith.

Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ leaves no basis for boasting in the deeds of the flesh.

**10. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.** We are His making; we are created or formed by Him, not only in the general sense in which all things are made by Him, but in the peculiar sense whereby we are the new creation, the Church and as the individuals that make up the Church each one of us is a new creation in Christ Jesus. All individuals, saved by the grace of God are the Stones used by God to build the special Body He wants as the representation of His Son on the earth. Whatever we have of peace, or hope, or purity has been produced by His Holy Spirit. There cannot be a stronger expression to denote the way God works in the conversion of men, or the fact that salvation is wholly of grace; that it has nothing whatsoever to do with man's will or volition.

**Unto good works**, with reference to a holy life; the design for which we have been created anew in Christ is that we should lead a sanctified life characterised by works motivated by the

Holy Spirit working in our lives and minds. The primary objective was not to bring us to heaven, it is the purpose and desire of God to have a representative of His Son in the midst of His creation, and it is that we should be holy, separate from sin to truly show His love and compassion for sinners and the salvation He has planned for them. The workmanship of God is the church, the building He is erecting, and the building in which He lives since the Temple is no longer His chosen place.

Paul held perhaps more firmly than any other man to the position that men are saved by the grace of God, it is also certain that no man ever held more firmly that the best evidence of salvation is a holy life. God has saved us that we may show forth the **virtues of Him who called us from darkness into his marvellous light**. We are not saved by our good works, yet we are saved that we may perform good works, to the glory of God and the benefit of man.

Good works are expected of a Christian for **it is God that works in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure**, Philippians 2:13. There is much done by man that is good and benefits man, much that is helpful, all of which will have a reward in this life from the family, community, friends, society, or country; but only that which is done as the Holy Spirit commands and is in the will of God has the promised reward of eternal life, peace with God. A Christian has the assurance he will be with the Lord through eternity and know the blessing of peace with God has promised now, even in the midst of the most trying times and situations.

**God hath before ordained that we should walk in them;** the child of God is given the Spirit of God that he may do the works of God. Living in obedience to God is the same as being obedient in all things. Being obedient is the same as walking with the Lord, is congruent with doing the Lord's will. The basic need, the most essential prerequisite for all good works, all the work that will be acceptable unto the Lord is that we walk in the Spirit, in obedience to the Word.

**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;** We often hear there are two classes of people namely saints and sinners; this must be true but it does not fit with the words of the Apostle Paul to the Corinthians where he states there are three kinds, **Jews, Gentiles and Church of God**, 1Corinthians 11:32 It is a good thing for Christians to **remember** what they were. This faculty of the mind will produce humility, sorrow for sin, gratitude for the grace of God, and love for the Lord and His people, more than all other attributes of the mind. It is good to recall former sins; to acknowledge our hardness of heart, our unbelief; to remember our guilty state, until the heart is affected, and we feel sorrow and are penitent. The converted Ephesians had much to recollect and to mourn over in their former life; as have all who are drawn to proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord.

Remembering our former state will generate in us a desire to magnify the greatness of God's love, and to marvel at the riches of His grace. This we will certainly do when we remember that God's grace abounded toward us when we were dead in trespasses and sin that He did not give up after one or two rejections but was longsuffering towards us, 2Peter 3:9 **The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.**

Remembering will increase our godly sorrow for sin; we will be enlivened to greater zeal and industry for the Lord and His work; it was the remembrance of what Paul was before conversion, that fired him with holy zeal, and carried him forward with such vigour and industry after his conversion, so that he laboured more abundantly than all the apostles, 1Corinthians 15:10 **... but I laboured more abundantly than they all:**

**That ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh;** formerly you were under the dominion of the flesh, subject to the control of carnal appetites and pleasures. You were called *the uncircumcised*. This is a term similar to that which we use when we speak of non-Christians. It meant that they were not numbered with the people of God; they did not have any of the privileges of the Jews; it was commonly a term of reproach used by the Jews, of those who were not in that special relationship with God which the Jews enjoyed.

**In the flesh made by hands**, contrasted with the circumcision of the heart, some had adopted the manners, speech and rites of the true Christians, though it did not follow that they had the **circumcision of the heart**, or that they were the children of God by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Jews lived as Gentiles and Christians may, but should not, live as the unsaved, should not live as those who have not known the grace of God in salvation.

**In the flesh** is the same as saying without the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour, without the indwelling Holy Spirit to guide into the truth needed to walk with the Lord. All without Christ, that is without a saving knowledge of Christ, without any relationship to Him, or interest in Him, without union in the Spirit and having no communion with Him, without new life communicated, having no spiritual light, destitute of the grace of God, of joy and comfort, of the pardon and peace received from Him. They did not discern any excellence, nor experience any sweet fellowship with Christ; and consequently had no love to Him, no longings after Him, no delight or satisfaction in Him.

This description fits all unbelievers in all countries and in all walks of life; it is not related to their personal physical position or social status, it is not changed by wealth or poverty, **in the flesh** is set against *in the Spirit*, in the Spirit is descriptive of a child of God.

The Jews were reckoned as being in that special relationship with God as His chosen people because of **the circumcision made by hands**, on or as close as possible to the eighth day after birth, a custom continuing to this day.

**12. That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world. At that time**, before you were saved by the grace of God, you had no thought of sin and the alienation it caused between you and God. The miserable condition of a Christless soul is described as without the spirit and grace of Christ, to enlighten, to quicken, to save and sanctify.

The Ephesians were as we all were, **aliens from the commonwealth of Israel**; they were not members of the Church, the Ephesians did not profess themselves to be a people that stood in any relation to God; they were unbelievers, Gentiles; for until the Apostles were sent out with the Word of God only among the Jews was God known, and was His name great. Psalm 76:1

Whatever the world thinks it is a very great favour from God to be born again into His family, the Church. They were strangers to the covenants of promise; to the covenant of grace, first made with Adam after the fall, then with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, afterwards with Israel upon Mount Sinai; for which reason it is here called by the apostle covenants, in the plural though it was always one and the same covenant in substance; and being called the **covenants of promise**, seems to point to the promise made to Adam, Genesis 3:15 the first and original promise. The Ephesians' are said to be strangers to the covenant of promise because as Gentiles, this covenant was never revealed to them, nor was any offer of it made to the Gentiles specifically, consequently they had no actual interest in the blessings and privileges of the Gospel.

This tells us that for men to live and die without ever hearing of the grace of God, in the sacrifice of His Son, is a woeful, sad, and dangerous condition for them because their salvation is most unlikely. Romans 10:14, **how then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?** In an ordinary way it is impossible, for the terms upon which salvation may be had are concealed from them. God is still able to do His work without man, but that does not relieve us of the responsibility we have to live and preach Christ as the only Saviour.

The people we meet may never meet another Christian so we will be held accountable to God for them; as the Word of God teaches us, **there blood will be upon our heads** if they do not hear about the saving power of the Lord from us when we have opportunity.

**13. But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.** The Ephesians' were brought home to God, adopted into His family, made members in the Church, placed as Living Stones in the Building and given all other privileges consequent upon the blessing of being children of God. The saints are a people near to God, they are in

Christ and in Christ they are as near to His Father as He is. Every believer owes his nearness to God, and his interest in God's favour, to the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ; by the coming and propitiatory death of the Lord Jesus Christ, by the gospel which He preached in His life, death and resurrection.

**Ye who sometimes were far off**, who were formerly far off, they were not numbered with the people of God. God was supposed to reside in the temple; it was a privilege for the Jews to be near the temple. Those who were remote from Jerusalem and the temple were regarded as far off from God, and so considered irreligious and wicked. To be far off, and to be near, are sayings in common use among the Jews; to be near signifies, to be in the favour of God; and to be far off means to be under his displeasure. A wicked Jew was said to be far off from God when he was chastened in some way; and a God fearing Jew or a genuine penitent might be said to be near to God. Every person who offered a sacrifice to God was considered as having access to Him by the blood of that sacrifice; so the priests were considered as being near to God; and all who brought gifts to the altar were considered as approaching the Almighty God.

Being **far off** signified the state of the Gentiles as distinguished from the Jews, who were near. These expressions were used in reference to the tabernacle for it was God's dwelling place among the Israelites, and the sacrifices there offered. All those who had access to the tabernacle, or were camped about it, were said to be near to God; those who had no access to the tabernacle were said to be far off.

To be far off distinguish the Gentiles from the Jews; this appears to be the meaning of the prophet, Isaiah 57:19: **I create the fruit of the lips; Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the Lord;** I give cause of praise and rejoicing to the Gentile as well as to the Jew; probably the Apostle Paul is referring to this scripture. You Ephesians who were unacquainted with God, and were even without God in the world, are brought to a nearness with Him; and are now through Jesus Christ, brought into the favour and fellowship of God.

As the Jews of old approached God by the blood of their sacrifices, so we Christians approach God by the blood of Jesus Christ his Son the Sacrifice He made of Himself. All who would come unto God must come unto Him in the way He has appointed and approved; we all Ephesians 4:13 **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 fullness of Christ.**

**14. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;** For he is our peace, Jesus Christ has died for both Jews and Gentiles, and has become the peace-offering, to reconcile both to God and to each other. He is the Mediator of our peace, the great peace-maker between God and men. He is the purchaser of our peace, the establisher of our peace. Not only of peace between God and man, but also between man and man. He has made both one; both Jews and Gentiles are brought into the Church by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, previous religions are done away with and unity in Christ is established.

**Who hath made both one**, He has made of Jews and Gentiles one Church, all believers of both Jews and Gentiles are equal in the new body, the Church.

**The middle wall of partition**, the laws and ordinances, God has removed all which kept the two parties separated, not only in a state of division, but also at variance with each other. This expression, **the middle wall**, refers specifically to the distinction which the Jewish laws and customs made between them and all other nations. This same partition the Jews jealously guarded, excluding all who were not circumcised.

Wherever the Jews went, their own rites, ordinances, and customs were sufficient separation between them and the nations among whom they lived; and since the Lord Jesus Christ abolished those customs, admitting all into the Church, both Jews and Gentiles, by repentance and faith, He may be said to have broken down the **middle wall of partition**. At the death of Christ the veil of the temple was rent from the top to the bottom, it was symbolic that the way into the holiest was open, and that the people at large, both Jews and Gentiles, were to have access to the holiest by **the blood of Jesus**, Hebrews 10:19

The uniting of both Jew and Gentile into one church was one blessed effect Christ purchased with His blood; Christ's offering of Himself was a sacrifice to remove the enmity between man and man, as well as the enmity between God and man; **He is our peace**, who hath made of both Jew and Gentile one people.

What Christ has done in order to make peace between Jew and Gentile was done by abolishing the ceremonial law, called here a **wall of partition**, between the Jews and the Gentiles; possibly an allusion to the wall in Solomon's temple which separated the court of the Jews from the court of the Gentiles, so that they could neither come to nor look at one another. This partition, broken down, teaches us that Jew and Gentile, who had two religions, the one in a covenant with God, the other afar off, and without God; yet now by the Lord Jesus Christ both are adopted into the same relationship, partakers of the same covenants, incorporated into the same faith, entitled to the same riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

**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;** Christ has abolished the enmity and continuing strife between Jew and Gentile, caused by the Jews adhering to the ceremonial law and the ordinances and the Gentiles imagining they were some secret society. The Lord Jesus Christ has abolished the enmity; the ceremonial law, the cause of the enmity between them. This is called the law of commandments contained in ordinances; Jehovah did actually separate the Jews from all the world by giving them ordinances and commandments, judicial and ceremonial laws, with many visible and external observances, forbidding them to communicate with Gentiles in some areas, not to participate with them in any realm that would compromise them in their faith.

Since the Lord Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, all those observances cease to have the same relevance, all the legal ordinances are done away with; all peoples from all nations can be blessed in Christ, and Jews and Gentiles be united as the people of God, both admitted into the Church on the same basis, and both alike blessed in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The moral law, comprised and comprehended in the Ten Commandments, was not part of the wall of partition between Jew and Gentile. Nor did the death of Christ do away with the moral law, it is not at all abolished; it was the ceremonial law only which the sufferings and death of Christ put an end to; for when He died, the shadows disappeared and the substance was revealed.

The only one of the Ten Commandments not mentioned as being applicable in this Church era is the keeping of the Sabbath. The reason for this is that Christ is our Sabbath, we both find our rest in Him; no longer one day in the week but a continuing rest, an everlasting rest in the Lord Jesus who has finished the work on our behalf.

**Making peace** was a prime motive in the Lord Jesus Christ; He made peace between sinful man and a most holy God by removing the enmity caused by sin, man's rebellion, man's selfishness and self-will. To make one Church out of both Jews and Gentiles, the body of which Jesus Christ is the head. So the Lord Jesus Christ makes one new man, one new Church; and He makes and establishes peace on the grounds of His own sacrifice of Himself.

**16. And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:** the Apostle Paul has declared in the foregoing verses, that one result of Christ's death was to make peace between Jew and Gentile; here he assures us, a second end was to make peace between God and man, that the Lord Jesus Christ might reconcile both Jew and Gentile, united, to an offended God. This Jesus did by the sacrifice of Himself upon the cross; destroying the enmity between man and God, by undergoing the punishment due to the sinner, the cause of that enmity.

In order to reconcile man with God, and bring peace to man, a price was paid by Jesus Christ upon the cross, satisfying divine justice, He being the propitiation for the sin of man.

It was not only the enmity between Jews and Gentiles, but the enmity between the sinner and God that was ended. He has by His death as a sacrifice for sin removed all the obstacles to reconciliation on the part of man and on the part of God. Only the complete fulfilment of the Law could remove the enmity of the sinner against God, and produce peace.

**17. And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.** Christ's having purchased peace, He came and preached peace to both Jews and Gentiles; to the Gentiles, said here to be afar off, and to the Jews, that were nigh. Though the Lord Jesus did not in His own person preach peace to the Gentiles, He gave a commission to the apostles to preach to them, Matthew 28:19-20, the Apostles and their successors with the Spirit of Christ within them, fulfilling that commission, preached peace, even to them that were **far off, and to them that were nigh.**

The main effect of the work of redemption was to bring peace. It was not merely to produce harmony between Jew and Gentile, but it was that both Jew and Gentile, who had been alienated from God, should be reconciled to Him. This was in addition to producing peace between them, though the one grew out of the other. All who are reconciled to God should be at peace with each other, all the factions in the Church are because the saints are not vitally conscious of the Lord in their lives and have moved away from the Word of Life.

**18. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.**

**Through him**, that is, through Jesus Christ, **we both**, Jews and Gentiles, **have access**, that is, freedom to approach, **by one** and the same **Spirit, unto the Father.**

Through Jesus Christ, all believers, of whatever denomination they choose to associate with, have access to God by the Holy Spirit who indwells each of them. The distance between God and man was both a natural and a moral distance, natural as created beings and moral as sinners, having rebelled. Access denotes proximity, a nearness to God, in opposition to the distance created by sin; our approach to God is free and voluntary, as friends and is a peculiar privilege, beneficial and advantageous to all with a saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We who believe have access to the Father's heart and love, to the Father's ear, care and protection; to His guidance, comfort, counsel, support, but especially to His sanctifying work fitting us to dwell with Him. We have this access to the Father through Jesus Christ, through His mediatory work; we have access to God's heart, to God's ear, to His Fatherly care while we are here on earth, and to His presence eternally.

It is by the Holy Spirit's influence that we are initially brought home to the Father; the Holy Spirit prepares us for this access unto the Father; He stirs us up to know the awfulness of sin, the holiness of God, He kindles holy desires in us, and helps us to see the way of salvation which was hidden to us while we were dead in trespasses and sin.

Through the Lord Jesus Christ both Jews and Gentiles may come into the presence of God; to try to come into the presence of a holy God in a way not specified by God is vain to say the least. This should serve as a warning to all Christian religions, man's ways are not God's ways and man's ways lead to error in the simplest case and damnation in the worst.

**19. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God;** The Apostle Paul began this chapter by setting before the Ephesians the heathen state they were in before believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. He closes the chapter with an account of that glorious and blessed state which the Christian enters into by faith; **no more strangers, but fellow-citizens.**

The present condition of the saints is contrasted by showing what they were, strangers and foreigners, positively by showing what they are now, freemen and fellow-citizens, with the saints. It must be remembered, that all the nations of the world, except the Jews, were called strangers to the God of Israel; but the Jews were called, His neighbours, or near ones. Now says the apostle, there is no such difference for the believing Gentiles are equally admitted with the believing Jews to the privileges of citizenship, and are fellow-citizens with one another; Believing Gentiles are no longer aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, but free men.

The apostle sets forth the condition of the saints as of a city, of a household or family, and of a building. The apostle compares the Christian Church, of which the Ephesians believers are members, to a city; and shows that as believing Gentiles, they have a right to all the privileges of that city, equally with the Jews, who reckoned themselves the only free members.

Paul compares the Church to a household or family; you are **fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.** This metaphor suggests a closeness to, and communion



with, the whole body of believers, more than citizens, now in the family. There was a familiarity and friendship between the members of a city in those days, there were fewer people and closer ties. In the family there is a bond that is rarely if ever severed. We learn that the Church of Christ is God's great household or family, admitted to a profound communion with Him, the Church is in a special way provided and cared for by Him; and every Christian is a member of this blessed family, and can enjoy all the privileges. **Ye are all fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.**

**20. And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;** This similarity brings to us a degree of nearness to and communion with God and His Church, closer than the former simile. What can be more closely united and more firmly joined together than stones in a building? The Apostle Paul calling the church a holy temple alludes to Solomon's temple, as a type of the Church, as the tabernacle was of the Jewish economy. The tabernacle was carried about, and made of decaying and corruptible materials, and so typifies the Jewish dispensation, which was temporary and transient; the temple was made of durable rich materials, and is a type of the Christian Church, which is called a kingdom that cannot be shaken.

The comparison of the church with a building is common in the Scriptures and was taken from the temple, and as that was an edifice of great beauty, expense and purity, it was natural to compare the church with it. The temple was the sacred place where God dwelt on the earth; and as the church is the place where He delights now to abide, it was natural to the Apostle to speak of His church as the temple, or the dwelling place of God. This building, the Church, says Paul, is on permanent and firm foundations, well proportioned and splendidly adorned.

The foundation upon which the Church is built, is the apostles and prophets, the doctrine which they taught and lived by, not their persons; Jesus Christ himself is the foundation and **chief corner** of the building not made with hands; and this is what the Apostles taught. All the believers are the bricks shaped to fit in the niche the Master Builder sees they will best occupy.

Though Christ Himself is the builder of, and the **chief corner** in His church, yet He employs His ministers, His servants, the priests, as the of old, to build upon the Foundation the superstructure, and no one apostle in neither the early Church, nor any man today has a privilege in this work above another. There is one Master Builder and we all are under His direction.

**21. In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:** The Lord Jesus Christ said, **I will build my church**, and He is still in the process of doing so, using a variety of skilled persons whom He has endowed with special skills. They all work from the same manual with the guidance of their employer, the Master Builder.

The church as a spiritual building or temple is described by the unity and fit of each of its parts. **In whom all the building fitly framed together;** all the members of the church are by faith firmly joined to Christ built upon the true foundation, united to one another by love, and unity is both the strength and the beauty of the edifice. This building is growing into a **holy temple**. The church grows two ways, by the addition of new converts, and by the increase of Christ likeness in each and every believer.

However it is possible that the growth may be stunted or deformed when man takes to himself the organisation and financial responsibility, when man uses his own resources or takes no heed to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. So many 'churches' have vast numerical growth and magnificent buildings, enormous financial burdens while others have to close their doors through lack of support. Let me suggest this is because man is trying to do the work of building instead of letting the Lord do the work in His own way. He said **I will build my church**.

This spiritual building, the church of Christ, differs from all other buildings for each stone has life; the building is still growing after hundreds, thousands of years; the vital force as strong as ever. This life comes from Christ the foundation, in Him all the building grows; all of a Christian's life and spiritual growth flows from his union and communion with Christ Jesus the Lord; for in Him all the building grows.

The Christian church, consisting of converted Jews and Gentiles, is described by the end design of the Lord as a holy temple unto God, wherein He may now manifest His presence, and be worshipped, glorified, and served in an acceptable manner.

The whole church, or collective body of believers, and each believer, are a spiritual and holy temple unto the Lord, in and by whom all spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise are offered up, and all the expressions of love and devotion, of sincere obedience are acceptably performed.

**22. In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.**

The apostle now applies the metaphor to the purpose for which he introduced it, keeping some of the symbolic expressions. As the stones in the temple were all carefully placed so as to form a house with perfect symmetry, and be a habitation for God who is worshipped there, so you are all, both believing Jews and Gentiles, prepared by the doctrine of the prophets and apostles as they were taught by the Spirit of Christ, to become a habitation of God, a Church in which God shall be worshipped, and in which He can dwell.

In Christ, or on Christ, as the solid and precious foundation all the saints are builded together. We are built into that edifice which is still being added to, we constitute a part of it. We are not merely added to it, but we are an integral part of the building. **For an habitation of God** for the indwelling, or the dwelling-place, of God. Formerly He dwelt in the temple; now He dwells in the church, and in the heart of each of His children.

Other thoughts

We were by nature dead in sin, Ephesians 2:1. We had no spiritual life. We were insensible to the voice of God, to the beauty of the Christian religion, to the claims of the Creator.

Parents should feel deep concern for their children, Ephesians 2:3. They are "children of wrath." They have a nature prone to evil; and that nature will develop itself in evil for ever, unless it is changed.

The salvation of sinners involves all the exercise of power that is put forth in the resurrection of the dead, Ephesians 3:5. It is not a work man can do; no one can impart spiritual life but He who gave it life at first.

It is true that though we are by nature "dead in sins," we are not in all respects like the dead. The dead in the grave are dead in all respects. We are by nature dead only in sin. The dead in their graves hear nothing, see nothing, and feel nothing. Sinners hear, and see, and feel; but they do not hear God, and they see but not the Light of the world or His glory. While we admit that we, our children, and friends, are by nature dead in sin, let us not abuse this doctrine by doing nothing.

We do well to remember our former course of life, Ephesians 4:11, 12. When we as Christians are in danger of becoming proud and self-confident, let us remember what we were. Remembering the past should make us humble. Remembering the past should make us grateful to God for the grace ministered to us. The recollection of the past should lead us to devote ourselves to God.

Sinners are by nature without any hope of salvation, Ephesians 2:12. They are living without Christ, having no faith in Him, and no hope of salvation through Him.

The gospel produces peace, Ephesians 2:14-17. It produces peace in the heart of the individual, reconciling him to God. It produces peace and harmony between different societies and statuses of men and causing them to love each other. The best way of producing friendship between nations and tribes, societies and classes of men, between those is to preach to them the gospel of the grace of God.

Let us rejoice in the privileges which we now have as Christians. We have access to the Father, Ephesians 2:18. In all times of affliction, poverty, depression and oppression, we may approach the Father. We are not now strangers and foreigners; we belong to the family of God. We are fellow-citizens with the saints, Ephesians 2:19.

On the prophets and the apostles, Ephesians 2:20, on their doctrine we can build. On them the church is raised. It is not on the opinion of philosophers and lawgivers; not on creeds,

symbols, traditions, and the decisions of councils; it is on the authority of the inspired book of God.

Let us have and show a special regard for the Lord Jesus Christ, Ephesians 2:20. He is the precious Corner-Stone on which the whole spiritual temple is reared. On Him the church rests. It is important that the true doctrine respecting His Divine nature, His incarnation, His sacrificial death, His resurrection, should be maintained. Everything relating to the welfare of the church, and the peace and spiritual health of its members, depends on proper views of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The church is designed by God as the place of the Holy Spirit on earth, Ephesians 2:21, 22. It is the temple where He dwells; the edifice built for His abode.

### Chapter 3

1. For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,
2. If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:
3. How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words,
4. 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;
6. That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:
7. 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;
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:
10. To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly *places* might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,
11. According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:
12. In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.
13. Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.
14. For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
15. Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,
16. That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;
17. That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,
18. 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.
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,
21. Unto him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

This chapter may be divided into three sections;

1, A statement that the Gentiles were to have all the blessings of the gospel, and that this ministry was especially given to the Apostle Paul, 3:1-12. Paul observes: That he was the prisoner of Jesus Christ on behalf of the Gentiles, he was in bonds for endeavouring to take the Gospel to them. He reminds the Ephesians of the fact that he was called, to make this truth known, to take to the Gentiles this gospel, and he refers them to what he had said before.

Paul speaks of this great truth as the "mystery of Christ;" which was made known by him, 3:4-6. This had been hidden but now it has been revealed by the Spirit of God; that the wall of partition was to be broken down, the division between Jew and Gentile, the Law as given to Moses, and the gospel proclaimed to all. The apostle says that this commission was committed to him, to proclaim among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, 3:8, 9. This illustrated the wisdom of God in the plan of salvation, showing to the Gentiles the glory of God, not seen in any other dimension.

2. Paul expresses his earnest desire that they should comprehend the glory of this plan of salvation, 3:13-19. Not be weak on account of his afflictions, his prayer that God would be pleased to strengthen them, and enlighten them, and give them understanding of the plan God has for man.

3. The chapter concludes with the Apostle praising God, for the manifestation of His power, the glorious plan of salvation, and the grace He manifests in making it known.

**1. For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,** for having preached the doctrine already expressed, and for maintaining that the privileges of the gospel belong to Jews and Gentiles, though the Gentiles are not circumcised, I am now a prisoner. Man has incarcerated me but I am a prisoner of Jesus Christ, as I suffer in His cause and for His sake, as His faithful servant; and He cares for me in all adverse and favourable times, while I am in His service

The servants of the Lord, if they are imprisoned, are His prisoners; He does not think less of them or consider them to be bad in any way. Paul continued faithful in the doctrines of Christ, and Christ owned him when he was in prison and when he was at large. The Jews persecuted and imprisoned him because he was the apostle to the Gentiles, and preached the gospel to the Gentiles. Faithful ministers of the Lord Jesus Christ are to make known His sacred truths, however disagreeable they may be to some factions in the community, and whatever they may suffer for doing so.

**The prisoner of Jesus Christ,** Paul was at the same time Christ's prisoner, the Jews' prisoner, the Romans' prisoner, the Gentiles' prisoner. He was Christ's prisoner, as persecuted and suffering for the Gospel; the Jews' prisoner, as accused and persecuted; the Romans' prisoner, sentenced and imprisoned; the Gentiles prisoner, suffering for his labours in order to reach them with the truth for their salvation.

Paul's, imprisonment for Christ was a great honour, he was a prisoner in the service of the Lord Jesus; made a prisoner in His cause. Not a prisoner for crime, or debt, or as a captive in war, but a prisoner in the service of the Lord Jesus Christ. At the time of writing this letter Paul was in bonds and was in Rome.

I am a prisoner at Rome on your behalf, because I maintained that the gospel was to be preached to the Gentiles; Paul was taken first to Cesarea, and then to Rome. The cause of his imprisonment and of all his difficulties was that he maintained that the gospel was to be preached to the Gentiles; that when the Jews rejected the Gospel, God rejected them.

Paul was qualified and called, was specially called, to carry the message of salvation to the Gentiles and he was diligent in doing what the Lord required of him.

All Believers are called to preach the Gospel, all Believers are enabled to preach the Gospel assisted by the Holy Spirit, all Believers have the same commission to go into life where ever they are and so live that the Lord Jesus Christ may be seen in them. In this way we are all prisoners of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**2. If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: If ye have,** since indeed, seeing that, is a better translation, as is so translated in several

other places of the New Testament. **Seeing ye have heard**, they had learned from the Apostle during his stay at Ephesus, for **he had not shunned to declare unto them the whole counsel of God**, Acts 20:27, and **kept nothing back that was profitable** to them, Acts 20:20. And this was certainly among those things that were most profitable, and most necessary to be known.

By the **dispensation of the grace of God** we may understand, both the apostolic work and gifts granted to the Apostle for the purpose of preaching the Gospel among the Gentiles, and the knowledge which God gave him of the Divine plan which He had formed for the conversion of Gentiles so uniting them with believing Jews to form the Church.

The dispensation, economy; rendered stewardship by Luke 16:2-4; and dispensation by the Apostle Paul, Ephesians 1:10; 3:2; Colossians 1:25, means here the arrangement was made by God that he should be the Apostle to the Gentiles. In assigning the different tasks of the work of building the Church, preaching the gospel being one aspect of the work, the office, (by office is meant the appointment to the work, not to be confused with rank of position) had been committed to the Apostle of making it known to the Gentiles. This office or commission, or work entrusted to the apostle is no more or less than what the Lord expects of all His children. Grace is given for each task to each person, sufficient to accomplish the work to the glory of God. This grace was given to Paul and was to be exercised in ministry towards Gentiles. Not to the Ephesians only, but to the nations at large as occasions arose, as the Apostle was led by the Holy Spirit.

Special attention should be paid to the word of the Lord Jesus Christ, never was the commission to preach limited to a certain tribe, country or nation; the message of salvation has no barrier. The commission was to **go into the whole world and preach the Gospel**; more precisely, *in your going wherever you are in the world preach the gospel*. If this entails moving to another country and learning another language then the Lord will make that clear also. We will never be given a work to do in our own strength; we will always be given with the commission the assurance and the ability to carry out the task the Lord Jesus Christ has given us to do.

**3. How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words,**

**4. Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)**

The calling of the Gentiles to salvation by faith in Christ, without the works of the law, was a mystery hid from ages. Paul came by the knowledge of this mystery by divine revelation. The mystery of man's redemption in general, of the calling of the Gentiles in particular to participate in the work of grace, was made known by divine revelation to the apostles by God himself. The redemption of mankind, by the incarnation, passion and death, of the Son of God, so astonishes is so wonderful and amazing, that the very thought of such a redemption is impossible to man; God planned it and executed the plan then revealed it to a lost world.

The apostle wishes the Ephesians to understand that it was not his own opinion, or a doctrine which he was taught by others, or something he learned from the ancient prophets in his studies as a Pharisee; this truth came to him by immediate revelation from God, as Paul had informed them before in a few words, referring to what he had said Ephesians 1:9-12.

**(As I wrote afore in few words, 4. whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)**. A mystery in this context is a purpose and decree of God, unknown to and unsearchable by man, until by revelation made known by God himself; such a mystery was the gospel in general and in particular concerning the calling of the Gentiles. Paul calls it a mystery, for in other dispensations it was not made known, or not so plainly and clearly revealed that all could grasp the truth. The calling of the Gentiles was foretold and prophesied during the Old Testament, but not clearly or readily understood and recognised till the Holy Spirit of God revealed it to the apostles and prophets in the dispensation of grace in which we now live.

The Apostle Paul amplifies and sets forth the glorious excellence of that mystery which he discloses; that the Gentiles should be accepted into the family of God without the rites of the

Jews, circumcision, sacrifices and temple duties. The Gentiles are joint-heirs together with the Jews who express a saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, without the works of the law. Jews and Gentiles share equally in the grace of God by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, His death, His burial, His resurrection, His promise to return, His sending of the Holy Spirit, by believing and obeying.

**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;** The calling of the Gentiles was made known by the prophets in different ages of the Jews, it is also clear they had no comprehension of the plan of God in this respect; but it was not made known in the clear and precise manner in which it is now revealed by the Spirit unto all who minister the New Testament. It was not revealed unto the Jews, that the Gentiles should find salvation without submitting to the yoke of the Mosaic Law, or that the Jews should be freed from that yoke of bondage; these were totally new concepts, now revealed for the first time by the Spirit of God, through the Apostle Paul.

**By the Spirit;** those who exercised the gift of prophet in the early Church were inspired. They were persons specially equipped in this manner for the purpose of teaching to the newly-formed Churches the doctrines of the new system inaugurated on the day of Pentecost. This was not designed to be a permanent order of men in the Church. They were necessary for setting the Church on a permanent basis, and gifted to this end. In the absence of a full written revelation, God chose and equipped these men to fill that need when the apostles were elsewhere building the Church. When the Scriptures were completed, when the doctrines were revealed, and the doctrines of the gospel were understood, the work of Apostles and Prophets ceased.

**6. That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:** This is the substance of that mystery which had been hidden from all people in the past ages, which was now made known to the New Testament apostles and prophets, particularly to the Apostle Paul. The 'mystery' hidden in God was the divine purpose to make of the Jew and the Gentile a completely new body, the Church, which is also called the Body of Christ, or 'His body'. The Church is formed of all Believers, baptised with the Holy Spirit; all national and religious distinctions invalidated as they are made 'one' in Christ. The doctrines of the Church were committed to the apostles and prophets by the Holy Spirit.

**His promise in Christ;** the promise made to Abraham extended to the Gentiles, Paul has proved in his Epistle to the Romans; and that it was to be fulfilled to them in the Lord Jesus Christ, he proves there also and in his Epistle to the Galatians, that these blessings were to be announced in the preaching of the Gospel, and received by all who believed the message.

**Of the same body,** meaning the Jews and the Gentiles who had faith in the Lord Jesus Christ are placed by the Spirit of God into the one mystical body called the Church, the Body of Christ. Despite the divisions made and emphasised by man, each child of God can know and enjoy the privileges of knowing God as Father and of fellowshiping with Him and His people in the Church relationship. The Lord Jesus Christ lives in each and every Believer by His Spirit, the affiliation of the Believer to a denomination is not the criteria for receiving the promise of God. **There is one body and one Spirit, even as you are called in one hope of your calling,** Ephesians 4:4.

The conversion of Gentiles to faith in Christ was a mystery, and for the revelation of the grace of God in this respect we ought to praise and thank Him. The Gentiles and the Jews had a vast difference between them; the Gentiles had been so long in the dark and so far from God, that only a Divine work could change the state of them. Nothing is too hard for the grace of God to do; none so unworthy, so evil a sinner, so antagonistic to God when confronted by their sin and alienation from God and His grace that the Holy Spirit cannot awaken in them the need for the saving grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. When we consider our own state before God and hear the teachings of man, men who know not God we know it was a divine work that awakened in us a need and made us know how sinful we were in the sight of a holy God.

**7. 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.** Minister, deacon, a servant acting under and by the direction of the Lord Jesus Christ; from whom, by a definite call and revelation, I received the

apostolic gifts and was given the responsibility, and the energy to do this work in His power. This Gospel which I preached was made effectual to the salvation of large numbers of Jews and Gentiles says the Apostle.

No work can be done effectively for the Lord apart from the effectual working of His power in the worker. We can see as we look around Christendom, large buildings, congregations that are too numerous for the buildings, falsely claimed to be the work of the Lord. The Lord Jesus Christ said; **I will build my Church**, the materials He uses are people, living beings that have seen that Jesus Christ is Lord and who give their allegiance to Him and live according to the practices and precepts of the Word of God.

The Apostle Paul was made by the Lord, a minister of the Gospel; he was equipped with the Word of God, the Love of God and Power of God, the only tools needed to erect the building called the Church. These three tools are used effectively as the wielder is close to the Lord Jesus Christ in prayer, receiving directions from Him as to the best way to use the instruments He has trusted them with.

**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;** The apostle had a low opinion himself, not thinking his own person was less, for his education and achievements among the Jews was of a very high standard. The comparison was made with him as a sinner and the Lord Jesus as the perfect and Holy One. In this respect Paul was not merely the least, but less than the least of all saints for he was, in his own esteem, as little as could be, **less than the least**. In this context the word means, *who is incomparably the least of all the saints*; or not worthy to be counted with the saints. It conveys the deep sense which Paul had of the sinfulness of his past life; of his guilt in persecuting the Saints and his antagonism towards the Saviour. Paul never could forget the guilt of his former life; when he was purposefully and deliberately opposed to Christians, engaged in persecuting those whose faith was in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul makes much of his work, and little himself. A faithful minister of the Lord Jesus Christ will be humble, thinking little of himself and his abilities, even while he thinks and speaks very highly and honourably of his Lord and Saviour.

Grace is given to magnify the Lord; pride puts man before the Saviour. Pride boasts in the work done. Pride destroys the Church while building an edifice to the person. Pride says look what I have done. Humility says look at what the Lord has done with such a poor and weak tool, look at what Grace has succeeding in doing where all the efforts of proud man failed.

**The unsearchable riches of Christ**, unsearchable or past finding out, means that which cannot be fathomed, or explored; inscrutable, or incomprehensible; the riches of the Lord and the Grace of the Lord will never be known fully by mortal man. There is a sufficiency in Christ, the fulness cannot be appreciated by unsaved, unregenerate man, nor fully appreciated by saved man. The heart of the Apostle Paul was full of admiration of the sufficiency and glory that was in the Saviour; Paul lacked words to express what he knew and appreciated in the Lord Jesus Christ. He considered it an honour to tell the world that there was such a Redeemer ready to share His riches of glory with His redeemed people.

**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:** And to illuminate all; to give enough information to both Jews and Gentiles; to provide sufficient spiritual light, for them to discern the marvellous truths of the Gospel; in order that all mankind might see the glory of God in the plan of salvation. Previously the limited revelation of God's plans and the character of the Saviour had been confined to the Jews; now it is His plan that all mankind should know there is salvation by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Instead of **fellowship** here most authorities read dispensation. The mystery of truths formerly unknown, and which could not be known by man unaided by the revelation of God, but which are now revealed by the Holy Spirit to the children of God in this church age; no longer concealed, or confined to a few, but to be shared and understood by all with the help of the Holy Spirit.

The 'mystery' (the new revelation) in Christianity was made known to all, concealed from none, and there is no distinction made between Jew and Gentile. No truths which God has revealed are held back from any person, there is a common participation by all who will be taught by the Holy Spirit. The Church has no hidden truths for a select few; it has no reserved doctrines; it has no secret word for a limited number or class. Church doctrines are for every follower of Christ and all the benefits of the faith which Christ has revealed are common to all in the Faith. Paul felt himself called into the ministry in order that all men might understand that salvation was free for all, the mystery, a truth that had been concealed for ages, now made clear to all who believe.

**Hath been hid in God who created all things by Jesus Christ**, or hid with God; it has been concealed in the heart of God, the plan was formed, but it was not made known, or revealed till God chose to open the minds and hearts of believers to receive the truth. This refers to the new creation, that God manages this new creation wholly by Jesus Christ; the new creation is the amalgamation of all the faithful into one body, now called the Church.

**10. To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God**, For principalities and powers see comments on 1: 21.

One grand and glorious purpose in the creation of the universe was that the wisdom of God should be clearly shown wherever there is a group of believers meeting in the name of the Lord. It was not enough to show the power of God by the formation of the sun, the stars, the earth, the seas; it was not sufficient to show it by the creation of intelligent beings, or even the various ranks of the spirit world. There are views of the Divine character which could not be obtained only in connection with the redemption of the world. The universe was created and illustrated Divine perfection in that work, but in a more renowned manner in the work of redemption, and in that a personal relationship with the Creator. The intense interest which the angelic hosts, principalities and powers have ever shown in the salvation of man is an evidence of the Majesty, Might, and Supreme power of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**That now**, since the Messiah is come; now, in the Christian dispensation, this revelation is to be made throughout the world of man and is there for the spirit world to see in the salvation of man and the formation of the Church. The angels could gather their knowledge of these mysteries by observing the ministry of the apostles, by seeing the Church grow, by noticing the delight believers have in the meetings to remember the Lord and in the fellowship they enjoy one with another. **The manifold wisdom of God** is most clearly seen in the plan of Redemption and then in the formation of the Church. The wisdom of God in man's recovery from a lost eternity is shown in a variety of ways; manifold in kind, manifold in degree, manifold in administration. There are many secrets in this wisdom; some not clearly seen, some evident, and some that may never be thoroughly understood till we are with the Lord in glory.

The Church is the means God has chosen to make known to man all He wants man to know.

**11. According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:** According to the eternal purpose, according to that disposition or arrangement of the ages which God made in Jesus Christ, or through Him. God formed a plan which was eternal in reference to the salvation of men; that plan has reference to, is centred in the Lord Jesus; and it is now executed by preaching the gospel and the Holy Spirit using the word preached to bring conviction to the sinner. It is impossible to get away from the idea that God has a plan. It is often affirmed in the Scriptures, and is not to be disputed. An intelligent Being that had no plan, no purpose, no intention, and that did all things haphazardly or capriciously is not to be followed or believed. God has a plan, it is eternal and unchangeable, He has no new schemes; He has no new intentions; He does not change His purposes nor His mind.

**Which he purposed** which He made, **in Christ Jesus**, with reference to Him; to be executed through Him. The eternal plan is in respect to the Lord Jesus Christ, and was to be executed by His coming and work of redemption, the building of the Church and receiving the Church unto Himself as the Bride and into glory with Him forever.



The freewill of man has ever worked against the plan of God; not that the God of all the earth did not know but that He determined to let His creation, mankind, find out for himself the folly of pursuing his own course. God purposed man should voluntarily choose to exercise faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; having done so then to realise the abundance of blessings available in Him.

**12. In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.** By whom, in Christ, we Gentiles have this liberty of speech; so that we may use any needed words in prayer and supplication, and this introduction into the presence of God is by faith in Christ. It is only in His name we can pray to God, and it is only by Him that we can come to God; none can give us an introduction to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ but Christ Jesus, and it is only for His sake that God will hear us. It is in the light of such verses as these that we conclude all our prayers in the name, and for the sake, of Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Apostle shows the great privilege which all believers can participate in, by and through our Lord Jesus Christ; namely, **boldness** in access, and **confidence** in having the undivided attention of God. In the Lord Jesus Christ we have **boldness**, and **access**, and **confidence**, through His faithfulness.

We have **Access**, a liberty of approach to God as Father; we may be bold, displaying **Boldness**; freedom in speech opening our heart, our whole mind and heart to Him, in prayer and thanksgiving; this with **Confidence**; that is, a well-grounded persuasion that both our person and performance will find acceptance with God for it is His Son we approach Him.

**13. Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.** In the earl church there was much persecution; new believers were in continual danger of falling away from the faith, not well grounded in it for there scriptures were not complete or readily accessed. The apostle advances a strong reason why they should be firm in the Faith; I suffer imprisonment on account, the Jews are envious; I can bear my afflictions patiently, knowing that what I have set forth is of God, and my continuance in times of personal affliction is ample proof of the sincerity of my own conviction.

The sufferings we endure are for your cause; far from being any reason why you should faint, or draw back like cowards; we are sustained by the power of God, **wherefore I desire that ye faint not**. Paul was a prisoner at Rome; he was imprisoned for his efforts to spread the Christian faith among the Gentiles. His zeal in this cause, and the opinions which he held on this subject, roused the wrath of the Jews, and led to all the persecutions and antagonism which he was suffering. Of that the Ephesians were aware, it was natural that they should be distressed at his sufferings, for his privations were endured on their account. He was indeed suffering; but he was reconciled to it, and they should be also, since it was promoting their welfare.

**Faint** means to turn out a coward, or to lose courage, to be faint-hearted, sometimes it is rendered **faint** sometimes **weary** and can mean dismayed.

When we see how the Lord upholds His people through various trials and persecutions we should be encouraged. **His strength is made perfect in our weakness**.

**Which is your glory**, which tends to your honour and welfare. You have cause to rejoice in having a friend who is willing to suffer for you; you can look forward and rejoice for all the benefits which will come to you from the trials endured in His behalf. No wonder James could say, **My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience**. James 1:2, 3.

**14. For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for this cause**, wherefore, that the work of spreading the good news may be carried on and that the purposes of my sufferings may be to your benefit and glory, **I bow my knees** to God, and pray. The posture which the apostle used in his prayers, knees bowed, expresses humble reverence, the attitude of his heart in prayer, humility, unassuming nature, meekness.

The position we adopt in prayer will reflect our reverence for God; will express our reverent humility before Him. God, as our Father, and in particular as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is the One before whom we bow. **I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ**.

Blessed be God that believers and Jesus Christ have one and the same Father; He by nature, we by grace; He by eternal generation, never less than the Son, we by gracious adoption. By virtue of this relationship we may confidently expect to be heard in prayer as Christ was, and to be helped in our times of trouble as the Lord Jesus Christ was, and in God's good time to have the inheritance of children, the inheritance reserved for us in heaven where our forerunner has gone for us.

Is the posture important? Does the posture determine whether the prayer will be heard or answered? I think no, what is very important is the heart, what I think of God and His Son, how obedient I am to His Word, whether there is unconfessed sin in my life, am I walking in all the truth that the Holy Spirit has revealed to me, am I swayed by human relationships or opinions.

**15. Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,** Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ on earth, the spirits of just men made perfect in a separate state, and all the angelic host doing the will of God, make one family, of which God is the Father and Head. Paul does not say families, as if each order formed a distinct entity, he says family, because they are all one, created and formed by One. All this family is named, derives its origin and being from God. Christians are so named after the one to whom they have given their allegiance; all the members of His Church upon earth; and all the spirits of just men (saved since His advent, and through His blood) in heaven they are all the sons and daughters of God Almighty.

**Of whom the whole family,** the *whole family of God* may mean all His children; the idea is that we all bear the same name, derived from the Lord Jesus Christ, and as Christians are all in the one family. No matter where we are, in heaven or on earth; no matter from what nation we originated, *being converted*, from among the Jews or Gentiles, we have one name, one Redeemer, and all belong to one family.

**In heaven,** spirits of just men made perfect; Paul is not here speaking of angels, but of the family of the redeemed. The Jews were accustomed to call the angels in heaven God's upper family, and his people on earth his lower family. **Is named,** all believers in the Lord Jesus Christ have one Father, and are all of one community. The expression is taken from the custom in a family, where all bear the name of the head of the family; and the meaning is, that all in heaven and on earth are united under one head, and constitute one community. It does not mean that all are called by the same name, or that the name Christian is given to the angels and men, but that all created beings display the mighty power of God in the forming of such diverse groups, nationally and from the spiritual realm one glorious testimony to His Name.

Part are in heaven, near his throne; part in distant lands; part are angels of light; part are the redeemed who have gone before, part are the church on earth; but all are united as one family, and have one Head and Father. This glorious family will yet be gathered together in heaven, and will surround the throne of their Father rejoicing in His Love and power.

**16. That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;** We can expect nothing from Him but as a free gift through Christ Jesus; let this be a fundamental sentiment of our hearts when we pray to God. The riches of the grace of God in the Gospel message are there for the child of God.

**That he would grant you,** spiritual strength, strength in the inner man, to enable us to bear afflictions, to endure persecutions, to resist temptations, to fight our spiritual enemies as we strive to live before the Lord in all honesty.

The fountain from whence all spiritual strength flows is from the Holy Spirit, He writes the Word on our hearts; our believing and continuing in the Faith is by the strength He imparts. **Strengthened with might by His spirit;** it is the Holy Spirit of God that constantly renews the believers strength, by making the Word of God live in us, relevant to each need and pertinent for every occasion. Our spiritual enemies are mighty and numerous, these we have to wrestle with and strive against; except we are bolstered and strengthened by the power of the Holy Spirit in the inner man, we will lose the fight; certainly not gain ground against our three enemies, the world, the flesh and the Devil. Believing the Word of God and prayer are the weapons of victory in the fight; without these we may be an easy prey to every temptation, to misleading doctrines or physically pleasant pastimes that could distract us from the paths of holiness.

We have many enemies, deceitful energetic, many temptations too great for our natural strength to resist; many trials, which in and of ourselves we are not able to withstand; many duties to perform, which cannot be accomplished by the strength of man; therefore we need Divine strength. We must have His **might**; and we must be strengthened and fortified by that **might**, to be effectually **strengthened** in His will.

**By his Spirit**, by the sovereign energy of the Holy Spirit; this spiritual energy is the sole supply of the spiritual strength which is necessary for the spiritual work a believer is engaged in and conflict he meets with in the course of his service with the Lord.

**The riches of His glory** are the source of all the blessings, graces power and motivational forces in the Christian and without the Grace of God, the Riches of His Glory, we are destitute and unable to do His will or show forth His power and glory.

When we approach God for any blessings, especially spiritual blessings, it is imperative we look only to God, He is both able and willing to bestow upon us whatever is according to His will and what will redound to His glory. The Holy Spirit is sent forth into our hearts to make the Lord Jesus Christ known and real to us so that in knowing the Son of God we will know also our place in the plan of God and the church of the living God. The Holy Spirit is the motivating force in us and always and only guides us in the paths of righteousness.

**17. That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love**, Christ is said to dwell in His people individually and as a group, a Church, He is always present with the believers as individuals and as a Church. His Word, His gracious influence, His power and directions are personal and collective evidence of this.

It is desirable to have Christ dwell in our hearts; when the Law of Christ is written there, and the Love of Christ is shed abroad there, then Christ dwells there. Christ dwells in the soul of every Christian by His Spirit. Where His Spirit dwells, there He dwells; He dwells in the heart by faith, by the continual exercise of faith in Him. Faith opens the door to receive Christ; faith lets Him in and by faith we submit to the Lordship of the Lord Jesus Christ. By faith we are united to Christ, and have a vital interest in the work of the Lord.

The Apostle prays that **Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith**, faith in the written and spoken Word, the revelation of the Son of God. The phrase *dwelling in us* implies a very close and intimate union between Christ and believers; He dwells in us individually and effectively by His grace and influence, by His power and assistance, by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the uniting power between the Lord Jesus Christ and the Believer, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ on our part and the promise of God are brought together in us by the Holy Spirit.

Paul considers the Church at Ephesus completely formed, prays that God may dwell in it. There can be no indwelling of God but by Christ, and no indwelling of Christ but by faith, and no faith but in the finished work of salvation, he prays that they may have such faith in Christ, to keep them in constant appreciation of His love and presence.

God, at the beginning, formed man to be His temple, and while man was pure He inhabited this temple; when the temple became defiled by sin, God left it. In His divine mercy and grace He planned that Christ should repair the breach caused by sin, remove the enmity in the heart of man, that it may become a suitable habitation for our Holy God. This is what the apostle points out to the saints at Ephesus, in praying that Christ might **dwell in their hearts by faith**.

Man's heart, which is not God's house, is the home of much evil; Satan and his evil spirits will endeavour to hide all overtures from God, Satan is active in presenting the things of the world, the flesh and from himself as good and desirable, deceiving many and hindering the work of God.

**Being rooted and grounded in love** is a double metaphor; one taken from agriculture, the other from architecture. As trees, believers are rooted in the Love of God, this is the soil in which their souls are nourished; it is in the Love of God our souls strike their roots, and from this love derive all the spiritual food essential for Christian growth, till we have the mind of Christ, or till we are **filled with all the fulness of God**. As a building, our foundation is laid in this Love, this Love is the mortar which holds all the building together. This is a foundation that cannot be destroyed and will not decay; it is from this Love alone that the truth of redemption comes to

sinful man, and from this doctrine the soul has its assurance and stability. In this love the soul has the right soil to grow and reach maturity. On this foundation the building stands secure and inviolate.

**18. May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;** These words are full of meaning, it is difficult to grasp the full sense. The first word, **Able**, to be strong, signifies that they might be thoroughly **able**, having been strengthened with might by God's power. The second word, **Comprehend**, to take, catch, or seize on, can be translated, that you may fully grasp with the mind, take in, and fully understand this wonderful mystery of God. The mind must be rendered capable, and the soul rejuvenated, to take in and comprehend the mysteries of the Faith. We have been conditioned to think in three dimensions, and three is a common denominator in much of the world and thinking of man.

God is not limited to three dimensions, in this verse and the next we are introduced to a fourth, fifth and possibly a sixth dimension.

The temple at Jerusalem was what the Apostle Paul had in view; for that was built to be a habitation of God; that was His house, and that the place of His rest. The Christian is the temple and the heart of the believer are the constant residence of God; and how dignified and noble, upright and true must that building be in which the eternal Triune God dwells.

What the apostle means by these four dimensions, **breadth, length, depth, and height, of the love of God** is beyond mathematics. The fifth dimension is Love; it takes in the eternal nature and love of God. God is Love; and in that, infinity of breadth, length, depth, and height, is included; all dimensions, breadth, length, depth, and height, are lost in the immensity of the Love of God. It comprehends all that is above, all that is below, all that is past, and all that is to come.

In reference to human beings, the love of God, in its **Breadth** encompasses all mankind; in its **Length** it is measured from the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world. In its **Depth** reaches to the lowest and most depraved of the fallen sons of Adam, to the degenerate human heart; and in its **Height** to the throne on which the Saviour is seated at the right hand of God. **He that overcomes will I give to sit down with me upon my throne, as I have overcome and sat down with the Father upon his throne**, Revelation 3:21. So we see that the Father, the Son, and all true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, are to be seated in the same throne with the same royal privileges. This is the height of the love of God, and the heights to which that love raise those who believe in Christ Jesus as Lord.

**19. And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.** The love of Christ towards us; the immensity of redeeming love is totally beyond the human mind to comprehend, but there is a certain revelation to the saints given by the Holy Spirit. It is not merely the love which He showed for the Gentiles in calling them into His kingdom; it is the love which is shown for the world of mankind in giving Himself to die. This love is often referred to in the New Testament, and is declared to exceed all other loves known to man. To know this love; to feel this love; to have a vital sense of this love, is one of the highest delights and privileges of the Christian.

It is only by the **love of Christ** that we can know the love of God; the love of God to man was the reason He sent His Son to die to redeem sinful man; Christ's love to man induced Him to give His life for the salvation of man. *The gift of Christ to man is the measure of God's love; the death of Christ for man is the measure of Christ's love.* God so loved the world that He gave His Son; Christ loved us, and gave Himself for us.

How can the **love of Christ, which passeth knowledge**, be known? This difficulty may be overcome with the reading; *that ye may acknowledge, approve, and publicly acknowledge, that love of God which surpasses knowledge.* We can acknowledge and approve of things beyond our understanding; by faith we know much that it is not possible to understand another way. We cannot comprehend God; yet we can know that He is; we can love, worship, and serve Him. Though we cannot comprehend the vastness of the love of Christ, yet we know that **He has loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood**; and we acknowledge Him as our

only Lord and Saviour. In this sense it may be said we **know the love of Christ that passeth knowledge.**

**That ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.** Among all the great sayings in this prayer, this is the greatest. To be **Filled** with God is a great thing; to be **Filled with the Fullness** of God is still greater; but to be **Filled with All the Fulness** of God totally bewilders the sense and confounds the perception.

Most expositors in quoting these words, try to explain what the apostle means by adding the word communicable. The Holy Spirit has not made a mistake; the apostle means what he says, and would have us understand the word as recorded. By the fulness of God, we are to understand all those gifts and blessings which He has promised to bestow, and which He bestows to members of the Church, and for the church. To be **filled with all the fulness of God**, is to have the whole being filled with meekness, gentleness, goodness, love, justice, holiness, mercy, and truth. The person **filled with all the fulness of God** implies that the person should have no known sin active; that sin is not dominant, that the heart is determined to follow after righteousness. There is no end to the merits of Christ, so there can be no bounds set to the saving influence of the Holy Spirit in the heart and life of every believer.

They were to be filled with the fulness of God; they were to have the richest measures of Divine comfort, support, and personally enjoy the presence of God. Not with partial and limited measures of His gracious presence, but with all which He ever fully and freely bestows.

The Christian faith, in the person of the Son of God; is the richest, best gift of God to man. Christianity is spiritual, elevating, and pure, directly from God. We dwell with God; walk with God; live with God; commune with God; *are like God*; we become partakers of the Divine nature, 2Pe 1:4. In rank we are associated with angels; in holiness, happiness and purity we are in Christ with God.

**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,** The Apostle Paul closes his prayer with thanksgiving and praise, praise for answered prayer; we respond to spiritual blessings with praise to God who has seen fit to answer our prayers.

Paul's faith and confidence in his approach to God in prayer and praise is his realisation of the Omnipotence, the Almighty power of the one who has delivered him from religious duties and formalism to faith in a risen Lord. In our prayers to God, it is our duty to have such an appreciation of Him, and use such expressions concerning Him, as may best show our faith in Him. **He is able**, says the apostle, **to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we can ask or think.**

This expression fully defines the understanding the Apostle has of his Saviour and Lord. **He is able** to do for us, to do **abundantly** for us, to do **exceeding abundantly** for us, **above what we ask**; yes even to do exceedingly abundantly for us above **what we can think**, as well as ask.

Our prayers rarely embrace the confidence we may have in the power of God. We may ask much in prayer; we may encompass grand things in the mind; but the Lord is able to do above what we can ask, abundantly above what we can think.

What encouragement this is for us to pray, what encouragement to pray for much that we think is not possible; with man is not possible, with God is achievable. We pray to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think.

The Apostle Paul bases his faith in prayer upon what God has promised, and on what he has previously experienced of His power. **According to the power that worketh in us**; that is, according to that infinite and almighty power which God exerted when He took us out of darkness into His marvellous light. This power was for the apostle, and is for us, the main support for our confidence in prayer.

The experience we have had of God's gracious power working in us, by conversion and renewing grace, ought to confirm our faith that **He will do exceeding abundantly for us above what we can ask or think**; we come to God, Omnipotent God, our Saviour God, who can do all things.

**21. Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.** Glory, the glory of God, is the source of all excellence in the saints; we can only shine with light reflected from God's perfection, as the planets in our solar system shine with the light they receive from the sun. God is infinitely glorious and in His Son all the excellence and perfection of the Church and its members are the reflected glory of God. The Church is the Building by which the glory of God may be seen; and it is by the Church that His name and work is manifest. The saints, the Church, give this glory unto God; **to him be glory in the church.** It is the duty of all reasoning creatures to set forth God's glory; but only the Church (believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, His person and work) can do so in an acceptable manner, and then only through the Lord; **to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus.**

The duty of praise and thanksgiving is what all the saints owe to God for the blessing He has freely bestowed, that is all we have to pay Him; but this and every other duty can find acceptance with God through the intercession of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Throughout all ages, world without end,** this means *for ever*. The apostle has coined this phrase. It is literally, *unto all generations of the age of ages*, or *unto all the generations of the eternity of eternities*, or *the eternity of ages*. It is the language of a heart full of the love of God, and desiring that He might be praised without ceasing for ever and ever.

God shall never lack glory from His redeemed people, there will always be a Church to give glory unto God; salvation is an eternal blessing and the Church will never cease to give the glory to God.

**Amen** is a note of assent, and as such is used by the Jews and Christians at the end of public prayer times, to testify that they are in agreement with what has been presented to and requested from God, in their name, or on their behalf. We say, Amen, so be it; so let it be, O Lord, for ever.

Sometimes it is necessary to say **Amen** when the situation is threatening or worse has resulted in persecution or particular hardship. To say Amen from the heart is an expression of agreement and a recognition that all things can and will work together for good in them that love God.

#### Other thoughts

It is a wonderful truth that the offer of the gospel is made to Gentiles; this offer of salvation is not confined to a class, nationality or condition of men, nor to a tribe or religious group. The Jews regarded themselves as a peculiar people, the chosen people, exclusive, and favourites with God. Many nations have a favoured class, an upper class, often with the belief that God regards with special, and sometimes exclusive affection, may be on account of their birth, or rank, or nation, or wealth, or skin colour. No one class are the objects of Divine interest more than others; the same plan of salvation is required for the poor, for the ignorant, and for the slave, the rich and the royal. The gospel regards all as on the same level; offers the same salvation to all, and offers it on the same terms. The Gospel meets man as he is and where he is, and is the provision of God, a plan adapted to lift all from the slavery and degradation of sin to glorious eternal life in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul felt that he was the least of all saints; remembering his former life. He recalled the time when he persecuted the Christians; he felt that he was not worthy to be numbered with those he had wronged. Paul was humble, his station in his former life did not give him credits or power prestige or position as a child of God. The remembrance of his former life served always to keep him humble, and operated as a check on all the tendencies to pride. There is enough in our past lives to make us humble, when we recall it, to make us feel that we are not worthy to be numbered with the saints. There is not a Christian in the entire world that does not have in his past something to make him humble. Prayer and the reading of the Word of God will bring the humbling conviction that we have lived so far from God that we are not worthy of the lowest place among the saints.

Paul felt it was a privilege to preach the gospel; it was an honour of which he felt he was by no means worthy. It was proof of the favour of God that he was permitted to preach. It is a

privilege, an honour, and a duty to preach the gospel anywhere, and to all men. The man who carries the gospel goes as the minister of peace, goes to tell of salvation. The preacher goes forth with a message to raise the intellect above the mundane, to encourage virtuous living, and to tell all there is a way back to God.

In Christ there is unsearchable riches, none can understand the fulness that there is in Him; none can fathom nor exhaust it. Millions have been saved by the riches of His grace; and still there is grace sufficient for all who will call upon the Name of the Lord. The Light of the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ has illuminated millions; to-day that Light is just as bright, and rich, and glorious, as when it first shined in the heart and mind of a penitent sinner and brought life. The Sun of righteousness will shine on in glory for ever and ever; and the last penitent sinner on earth who comes to bask in the riches of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ shall find it as full and free as did the first sinner who sought pardon through His Blood.

There is no good reason why any sinner should be lost; if the merits of the Saviour were limited; if His arm were a feeble human arm, short and not able to reach out and touch; if He died only for a few; and if His merit were already close to being used up, we might despair. It is not so. The riches of His grace are unbounded and inexhaustible. If a child goes down to hell from a Godly Christian family whose is the fault? If a man or woman goes to a lost eternity from a place where the Gospel is preached and where the person has refused to look into the truth put before them, whose is the fault? It is not because the merits of Christ are limited; it is not because the Death of the Lord Jesus Christ has lost efficacy, nor because there is a genuine excuse; all who die without the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour have only themselves to blame.

The Church is designed by God to accomplish a very important purpose, to show to the world Divine glories and perfections. It is by the Church that His great wisdom is shown. It is by Church that His mercy is displayed. His power is shown in the creation and continuance of the worlds; His Goodness and Providence in providing for the creatures He has created.

His mercy is shown in the Church; and there alone. Throughout the universe there has, as far as we know, no exercise of mercy or grace but in the Church. The angels have a real interest in the work of redemption. They desire to look into these things, and to see more of the height and depth and length and breadth of the love of God displayed in the work of redemption.

All tribulation and affliction may work to some good, may benefit others, Paul felt that his sufferings were for the welfare and honour of the Gentiles on whose behalf he was suffering as a prisoner at Rome. He was no longer permitted to go abroad to preach the gospel. How natural it would have been for him to be despondent, and to feel that he was laid aside. He did not feel this was the end of his ministry. He felt there was some way he might continue in the ministry. He used his time profitably in writing letters; and he talked with all who would come to him. Paul continues to accomplish much from his prison ministry through the letters he wrote.

The sick, the afflicted, and the imprisoned, the house-bound through illness often feel that they are useless. The long imprisonment of John Bunyan, so mysterious to him and to his friends, was the means of producing the Pilgrim's Progress, now available in the entire Christian world and already blessed to the salvation of thousands. The meekness, and patience, and kindness of a Christian, aged, infirm, ill, or imprisoned may do more for the furtherance of the Gospel than could be done in a healthy life. It has been said "more things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of".

There is one family for all the children of God, we all have one Father, and all are brethren. In heaven and on earth we belong to the same family, and worship the same God. Christians, though they belong to different denominations, and are called by different names, are all in the same family, and are united under the same glorious Head. It is an honour to belong to such a family; an honour to be a Christian.

Let us seek to know more of the love of Christ in our redemption, unto understand more of the extent of that love which he shows to us. There are few Christians, if there are any, who can understand the richness and fulness of the gospel of Christ; few who have high opinions worthy of the Lord, as they might have, and few who believe the Gospel is the work of the Lord Jesus alone; and He in grace deigns to use His servants to make the riches of His glory and power of

His work known. It is a strange phenomena that they who profess to love the Lord Jesus do not study His Word more, and desire more, to know the height, and depth, and length, and breadth of the love of Christ.

True, it passes knowledge. We cannot hope to fully fathom it while we are here but we may know more of it than we do. When we long for a close relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ; pant for it; strive for it; pray for it, it will not be in vain. Though we may not gain all we desire; yet there will be enough gain to reward our efforts, and to fill us with love and joy and peace in the Holy Spirit.

#### **Chapter 4**

**1. I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,**

**2. With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;**

**3. Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.**

**4. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;**

**5. One Lord, one faith, one baptism,**

**6. One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.**

**7. But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.**

**8. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.**

**9. (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.)**

**11. And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;**

**12. For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:**

**13. 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:**

**14. That we henceforth be no more children, 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;**

**15. But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:**

**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.**

**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,**

**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:**

**19. Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.**

**20. 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:**

**22. That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;**

**23. And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;**



**24. And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.**

**25. Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.**

**26. Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:**

**27. Neither give place to the devil.**

**28. Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.**

**29. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.**

**30. And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.**

**31. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:**

**32. And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.**

This chapter is the beginning of the exhortations for the saints, how to live a life to please God and be a blessing in the Church. It is usual of Paul to present an argument in his epistles, then to enforce various practical duties.

There is an exhortation to unity, 1-6. Paul exhorts, begs the Ephesians to walk worthy of their vocation, shows them how it may be done, in order to should show meekness and kindness, 2 and exhorts them to unity, 3; for there is one God, one Saviour, one baptism, one faith, 4-6.

Paul teaches them that God has made provision for His people, that they may be sound in the faith, in unity and doctrine, 7-16. the Apostle assures them that to every Christian is given grace in the Lord Jesus Christ suited to the special circumstances of each believer, 7; that the Lord Jesus ascended to His Father's right hand to receive gifts for His people, 8-10; that He gave gifted people, apostles, prophets, and evangelists, pastors, teachers, specifically for the work of building up the Church and the members of the Church 11,12; that they might be established on a firm foundation, and not carried about with every wind of doctrine, 14-16.

The Apostle Paul exhorts the saints in the local church not to live as the heathen around them live, but to show that they are under new management with the Lord as their Master, 17-24. Their past life was not the life a Christian should be living so the apostle exhorts them to lay aside all that pertained to their former course of life, and to be conformed to the principles and practices of the new man, 22-24.

He exhorts them to perform particular Christian duties, and to put away those things which they and others were in danger of, 25. In particular the Apostle begs them to avoid lying, 25; anger, 26; theft, 28; corrupt and corrupting conversation, 29; grieving the Holy Spirit, 30; bitterness, evil-speaking, and malice, 31; and entreats them to in their communal life a spirit of kindness and forgiveness, 32.

## **Chapter 4**

**1. I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,** Seeing the riches of God's grace in Christ have so abounded towards you, once idolaters, but now Christians, I Paul, who am a prisoner for preaching the gospel, and for declaring this gospel message to you, do exhort you that ye live according to your profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and according to the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God as it comes to you.

I Paul, **the prisoner of the Lord**, beseech you; I am in bonds for Christ, I am imprisoned for preaching the gospel, for rejecting the teachings that led you into spiritual bondage.

When the people see that we are ready to suffer for the truths which we preach to them, they are more likely to believe; certainly to see that we believe the doctrines we preach and live by are real to us and relevant to every day life. Paul says, I am deprived of my liberty for the Lord's sake, I have a lesson to learn of dependence on God in adverse circumstances and have the experience of His provision and support when I cannot care for myself. Also I am a prisoner of the Lord in that I am no longer free to do my own thing, He purchased me and has the right to full control and can expect of me total allegiance. This gives me confidence in saying to you **walk worthy of the vocation** to which my Lord has called you.

**That ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called;** worthy, answerable to the dignity and obligation of your of your being called *Christ like ones*, Christians; or as Paul exhorts the Philippians, 1:20, *walk as becomes the gospel of Jesus Christ*.

When we walk according to the Word of God; accountable to that standard of holiness which the gospel sets before us, the example of Jesus Christ; that is to **walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called**.

**2. with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; with all lowliness,** humility, walk in a voluntary humility; the idea is that a humble mind is fitting for those who are *the called*, and that we walk worthy of that calling when we walk humbly with our God.

**Meekness** is the opposite of anger, is a calm and peaceful nature not aggressive. **Meekness** relates to the manner in which we receive injuries to person or pride. We are to bear them patiently, not to retaliate, or plan nor seek revenge. We show the gospel has a unique power in enabling us to bear injuries, wrongs, without anger or a desire of revenge; to respond with a mild and forgiving spirit.

**Longsuffering**, is never permitting a trial or provocation or difficulty to destroy patient, peaceful communion with the Lord. **Longsuffering** is bearing patiently with the foibles, faults, and infirmities and provocations of others. This virtue is required most as we meet with our fellow believers, our brethren in Christ. No virtue is more frequently demanded in our daily contact with others. We do not travel far with any believer on our journey to glory before we find there is need to exercise this Christian grace. We are so often with a person who has a temperament different from our own, may be sanguine, choleric, or melancholy; while we are the so different it is by the grace of God we can continue in the presence of that Believer without discord. He may have different tastes, habits, disposition, so unlike ours that it takes a deal of patience, longsuffering, to understand submission to the Lord is the way of peace.

If we would have a smooth Christian life, we must learn to bear and forbear. We must accept the brethren and sisters in the Lord; love them with the little peculiarities of speech and actions. A spirit of fault-finding, dissatisfaction, bad temper, irritability, surreptitious glances, disagreeable manner; a frown when no reason is apparent, can neutralize all the good, and can make one's life anything but a blessing. It is in virtues such as meekness and forbearance that the happiness and usefulness of life consist, far more than in skills learned in the classroom or workplace.

It is not by great deeds only, like those of philanthropists, not by great sufferings only, like the sufferings of martyrs, that a lasting Christian work is done; it is by the daily quiet virtuous life, Christian demeanour, forbearance, **Longsuffering**, the spirit of forgiveness in the husband, the wife, the father, the mother, the brother, the sister, the friend, the neighbour, that good is done; in this way with the Spirit of the Lord all His children can be useful.

**3. Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.** The Apostle means the saints should strive, be diligent, industrious, and united in their endeavour, to preserve the unity of the Spirit; unity in the faith and doctrine. The Church at Ephesus was composed of converted Jews, as well as Gentiles. The different manner in which they had been brought up was a frequent cause of dissention. Possible the converted Jews were envious that the Gentiles were admitted to the same privileges with themselves, without being brought up bearing the burden of the Mosaic Law. The Apostle Paul shows them that they should work hard to promote and preserve peace and unity. Not peace at any price; peace as found in the Lord Jesus Christ.

By the unity of the Spirit we understand more than a spiritual unity, also a unity of attitudes, desires, and affections and aims, such as is worthy of and initiated by the Spirit of God. The unity of the Spirit, united spirit, or oneness of spirit, does not refer to the fact that there is one Holy Spirit; but it refers to unity of affection, of love shown by the members of the local church. It means that Christians should be united in disposition and affection, and not divided into factions and parties or sects. Such a unity is produced only by the Holy Spirit; and since there is but one Spirit acting in the hearts of all believers to renew them, all the children of God should have the same feelings and views; and will have if they wait upon the Lord.

There was need among the Ephesians for this exhortation; the local church was composed of Jews and Gentiles, and there could be, and probably was danger of divisions and strife, as in other churches. Unity of feeling is desirable to honour the Lord in the church; there is always danger of discord where men are brought together, from differing walks of life, in one group. There are so many different tastes and habits; with a variety of intellects and feelings; various educational standards and practical skills, so there is constant danger of division. The scriptures give great emphasis to the need for unity; the Apostle Paul teaches we should strive for, wholehearted work for this unity.

**In the bond of peace;** cultivation of that peaceful disposition which unites the saints is desired in all the churches. It is not simply external unity; it is not only unity of doctrine; nor is it agreement in the form of meetings or worship; it is the unity the Holy Spirit produces in the hearts of Christians, when He fills them with the same **love, and joy, and peace in believing**. By **the bond of peace** we are to understand a peace or union, where the interests of all parties are centred, cemented, and sealed; the Spirit of God being the seal; the binding factor, the uniting force, and the love of God and His glory the motive.

**4. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;**

**5. One Lord, one faith, one baptism,**

**6. One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.**

**There is one body,** one church, for so the word body means here, denoting the body of Christ. As there is really only one Church on earth, there ought to be unity. The church is at present, divided into many denominations. It has different forms of worship, and different rites and ceremonies. The church embraces those of different nationalities and social statuses in life, and it must be admitted there are contentions and jealousies in different parts of that Body. There is but one, one holy, universal church; and that church should feel it is one.

Christ did not come to redeem and save different groups and give a variety of names to them, to give them a different place in heaven. He did not come in the flesh to save a special nominated group, nor did He return to His Father's side to arrange a special place for each group or persuasion. He came that He might make of a multitude of every tribe and nation, kingdom and people, from every land, one Peculiar People on earth, and ultimately assemble them in heaven with Himself. The church is **one body**. Every blood-bought child of God is a Christian, is a member of the Body, the Church, and has an equal right with all others to its privileges.

Being one by the design of our Saviour, we should be one in feeling, one in desire, and every Christian, no matter what position in society, should be ready to greet every other Christian as a fellow-heir of God in Christ, on the journey to heaven.

Unfortunately human nature overrides spiritual nature and many divisions are caused and the Church on earth is divided with irreconcilable differences. Today there are estimated to be more than 400, four hundred, Christian denominations and sad to say many of them do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord.

**And one Spirit,** the Holy Spirit. There is one and the self-same Spirit that dwells in the Church, the Church being all believers. The same Spirit is all the children of God; enlightens all; convicted all; and pointed all to the Lord Jesus Christ. Wherever they are, and whoever they are, the Holy Spirit Does the same work in the heart of every Christian. There are differences arising from temperament, disposition, education, and social status, there is a difference in the response of each believer to the operation of the Holy Spirit on the soul; there may have been a difference

in the degree of conviction for sin and in the evidence of conversion, but only by the work of the Holy Spirit in a repentant sinner is salvation.

All the gifts bestowed on the saints are produced by the same Holy Spirit. Therefore there should be unity. The Church is united, is one in Christ, the same Spirit works in each believer, therefore there should be unity. Salvation is only by faith in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ therefore there should be unity.

**Even as ye are called in one hope of your calling**, there is one Body and one Spirit, in like manner there is one hope in the child of God resulting from being called. This is a plea for unity in the local Church as well as a declaration of the truth that all believers are one in Christ.

In **one hope** resulting from our being called into the **kingdom of God's dear Son**. This is that Christians have the same hope, **looking for and hasting unto the appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ**; and this hope should also bring unity. We are looking forward to the same future with the same Lord; we hope for the same resurrection. The hope of the Christian does not change with external circumstances; the Lord is **the same yesterday, today and forever**. The hope of each Christian being the same promotes unity.

The crown of life, with the reward of heaven and being ever present with the Lord Jesus Christ is the same for all believers. They may all may obtain that crown; all may share the rewards.

**One Lord**, Christ, the head of the church, to whom, by God's appointment, all Christians are immediately subject. Jesus Christ, the head of His church, the Saviour of the body, one whom we all profess to serve and obey; be ye therefore one, for your Lord is one. This evidently refers to the Lord Jesus. The Spirit is mentioned in the previous verse; the Father in the verse following. There ought to be unity among Christians because they have one Lord and Saviour. We all, we who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour; understand He has a right to rule over us as individuals and as the Church. Constant reminders that we have the same Saviour will promote unity. Contentions should never arise between those who have the same Saviour and Lord.

**One faith**, the same belief, either belief of the same doctrines, or faith of the same nature in the heart, the word may be used in either sense. It means that Christians should be united because they hold the same great truths; because they have the same confidence in the Lord Jesus Christ, the same expectation of His return to receive them into His presence for eternity. Christian Doctrines as distinguished from Judaism, Paganism, Islam, Deism and all the multiplicity of cults that have arisen in the years since the New Testament was completed. They should therefore be one. They saints have the same trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, they should therefore be one. We do indeed differ in many ways; in temperament; in pursuits; in work and in leisure, but we have a **one faith**, and we should be one in pursuit of holiness.

It would be a worldwide phenomenon if all the saints used only the Bible, we have been deceived by the arch enemy of the Lord Jesus into following various doctrines of men, sometimes they appeal to our intellect and sometimes to the flesh, either way they take us away from the freedom and purity the Lord our Saviour desires for us.

There is **one baptism**, one special work of the Holy Spirit whereby both Jew and Gentile, bond and free, rich and poor, are all one in Christ Jesus; by one Spirit baptized into the **one body**. This special work is at salvation and is not dependant on man or the efforts of man; it is a divine work as the Lord builds the Church of those who come to Him in faith.

**One God and Father of all**, the God and Father of all Christians of all persons in Christ, from whom all have one and the same salvation. This God is above all, is over all; His eye sees all, and He is with each child of faith, as in His Temple, which Temple we are.

This then is the sum of the apostle's argument; seeing we are all members of **one body**, partakers of **one Spirit**, have the **one hope**, have **one Lord** and the same Saviour, **one faith** and trust in the same Person, **one baptism** as the Holy Spirit has placed us in the body; and **one God and Father**; seeing we are one in all these particulars, so we should strive to **keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace**.

From this we may learn, that with obligations so strong for all the members of the Church we should be at unity among ourselves, united in judgment, having one mind, one heart.

**7. But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.** All the members of Christ's body, the Church, agree in many things, yet there are some areas where they differ; the areas of agreement should cause affection among the saints since all gifts are derived from the same Source and designed for the same purpose. Unto every one of us Christians is given grace, a grace gift, for the mutual help of one another. **Unto every one of us is given grace;** grace to exercise the gift bestowed for the benefit and blessing of the Church. There is no reason to fight about the gifts or to seek eminence among the saints because a particular gift is more evident than another. All are **given according to the measure of the gift of Christ**, in such a measure as deemed best by the Lord Jesus Christ to bestow upon each. All the members of Christ's body owe all the gifts and graces that they possess to Him; this is a good reason why we should love one another, should love one another with a pure heart fervently, because to every one of us is given grace.

There is a grace given by Christ to all His members, bearing some portion of and similarity to the grace which Christ possessed and displayed. The design of Christ, in dispensing His grace in different measures and degrees, is the general good of His church, for preserving and promoting unity and love amongst the members, for the growth of the Church which is His body. No one has all the gifts, whatever gift or gifts we have are for the whole body, the benefit of the Church, for the extension of the Kingdom or the beautification of the Living Stones, not personal advancement. Grace is bestowed upon all true Christians, and all have enough to enable them to live a life of holiness and be a blessing to others.

We are taught here, that Grace is a gift. It is freely bestowed on us; it is not originated in us, not purchased by us. It is given in a certain measure to each believer. It is given by a certain predetermined measure. The same grace is not given to all Christians, but to all is given enough to enable them to work and live as they ought to in the kingdom of God on earth. Having a gift of teaching does not of necessity mean being on the platform and teaching a congregation; gifts may be for one-on-one or public exercise. Each child of God has a duty before the Lord to use the gift or gifts as directed by the Holy Spirit; the gifts are not for personal, private use. The grace of God is given and is sought for by the Christian for the singular purpose of bringing glory to God.

That measure is **the gift of Christ**, what is given in Christ, what is given by Christ, what is given for Christ; it comes through Him and is for Him. It is what He has purchased; what He has obtained by His merits. We all have enough grace for the purposes which God has called us to, we do not all have the same gifts, we do not all have the same ministry; we do all have the duty to so live before men that they see the Lord Jesus Christ is our Saviour and He lives in us by His Spirit.

**8. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.** The propose of the Lord Jesus Christ in giving His grace in different measures is for the good of His church, for promoting unity and love among the members of the local church. Every one has a gift from God, and a place to use that gift. No one person in any church gathering has all gifts, one has that grace which will benefit the church another has that grace which will be best in personal work; in the ideal gathering of the saints there will be evidence of most gifts, if not all.

The point of the apostle's argument is that Christ, when He ascended to heaven, obtained certain gifts for men, those gifts were bestowed upon His people, and then those gifted people were given to His work in building the Church.. To prove this Paul quotes this passage from Psalm 68:18; the Psalm is a song of triumph, celebrating the victories of the LORD particularly the victories when the Ark was at the head of the army. The tabernacle was a type of Christ; the whole Psalm, having original reference to the tabernacle, may be applied to the Lord Jesus Christ as the antitype. The Psalm had original reference to the bringing up the Ark to Mount Zion, and the fact that the Ark of God thus ascended the hill of Zion, to the place of rest; was the proof of its triumph. Placing the Ark there was the proof of permanent victory. The **ascending on high**, in

the Psalm, refers to the Presence of God accompanying the Ark on Mount Zion, to the placing it **on high** above all the foes of God's people.

The Lord Jesus Christ also ascended on high; His ascent was the proof of victory over His foes. He returned to heaven, His permanent abode. His ascension is connected with bestowing important blessings to the Church. The Apostle Paul is saying there is grace given to each one of us, or that the resources are provided by the Lord, through His Spirit, for us to lead holy lives, and share with the Lord Jesus in the work of building.

**He led captivity captive.** The meaning of this in the Psalm is that He triumphed over His foes and led them in His triumphal procession. The Lord not only subdues His enemies, but He leads His captives in triumph. When Christ ascended to heaven, He triumphed over all His foes. It was a complete victory over the malice of the wicked one, over those who had sought His life, over death and hell.

Man is held by Satan as a prisoner; Satan's chains are around him. Christ rescues the prisoner from sin and death, and promises to make the rescued one a part of His triumphal procession into heaven; the victory is complete, triumphing not only over the greatest foe, but adding to His procession the multitudes of those who were the captives of Satan, now the redeemed of the Lord.

There is a blessing, an eternal blessing waiting for all on one condition; Faith in the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ; the satisfaction He gave to His father when the demands of God's righteousness were met.

There is no enemy of the Lord that can triumph in the end for the victory the Lord Jesus Christ won is valid and pertinent for all who exercise Faith in Him. The Lord Jesus Christ fought the final battle against sin on our behalf; we live in the victorious state for we live in Him.

**And gave gifts unto men,** or more correctly He gave gifted men to build and embellish the church as we will see at verse 11.

**9. (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.)** It is affirmed in the Psalm that He ascended; *Thou hast ascended on high.* This implies that there must have been a previous descent; or, as to the Christ, it is true that *he previously descended.* Paul does not specifically say that the word *ascended* demonstrates that there must have been an earlier descent; but in the case of the Lord Jesus Christ there was a descent into the lower parts of the earth first. The language used appropriately expresses His descent to earth.

**Into the lower parts of the earth,** to the lowest state of humiliation possible to the only one who is absolutely holy and pure. This seems to be the right understanding of the words. Heaven stands opposed to earth, one is above; the other is beneath. From heaven Christ descended to the other; and He came not only to the earth, but He stooped to the most humble condition of humanity while on earth in person. It is the earth itself that stands in contrast with heaven; and the Apostle's thought is, that the Saviour descended from His high and exalted place in heaven, and became a man of humble circumstances, without rank or status among his peers. The person who ascended is the Messiah, and His ascension plainly infers His descent; His incarnation, humiliation, death, and resurrection. The Lord Jesus Christ humbled Himself first, and then he was exalted. He descended first, and then ascended.

He who descended so low is the same who has ascended so high. The Lord Jesus Christ came to the lower parts of the earth, the very deepest abasement and humiliation; having emptied Himself and taken upon Him the form of a servant, and humbled Himself unto death, even the death of the cross. Now He is ascended far above all heavens; higher than any conceivable height; He has a name above every name. Here his descending into the lower parts of the earth is put in opposition to his ascending far above all heavens. His abasement was unparalleled; so also is His exaltation.

**That He might fill all things,** that He might be the fountain, the source of all blessings, providing all good things to the members of His Body, the Church according to the many needs

of both converted Jews and Gentiles that they should be one body with one aim and one Lord and with all the gifts and enablement of the Holy Spirit.

**11. And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;** the Apostle Paul now tells us what the gifts were at Christ's ascension. They were people specially equipped with the power of the Holy Spirit in certain areas of ministry. These ministries of the persons gifted in this way were important for the establishment of the church in those early days; today we do not have Apostles and Prophets as in the days of the establishment of the early church. Diversity of gifts in the church, and varying measures of grace in the members of the church are too often an occasion of division and strife, through the prevalence of envy and pride.

This variety of gifts and the grace to exercise the gift for the glory of God, rightly considered, is one of the strongest ties uniting the saints, seeing we all stand in mutual need of the gifts of each other. It is evidently the Apostle's objective to appeal for and enforce unity, from use of the diversity of gifts which are exercised by the members of the church. May it never be that the gifted persons should be the cause of envy and animosity, strife and contention, or divisions in the local church.

The Apostle's next argument for unity follows where he proves, that as the unity and edification of the church was the design of the Lord in bestowing gifted people among the members of the church, so was it His aim that we should all come to the point of unity, seen in Christ likeness in belief and action.

**Apostles**, sent forth by the Lord Jesus, to be witnesses of His doctrine and miracles, and to preach the gospel throughout the entire world, they having received the Holy Spirit in an extraordinary manner at Pentecost. The Holy Spirit in the believer is the spiritual power for the work of the Lord, is the power in a believer to do the service required of him in the building of the Church and the building up of the saints.

**Prophets** explained the mysteries of faith, foretold things to come, and expounded the writings of the old prophets. These are not to be confused with those who prophesy in 1 Corinthians 14: 3, these Prophets were gifted in a special way to bring the Word of God to the new Church so that all had the same basis for faith and practice.

**Evangelists** were sent out by the apostles, some Apostles, possibly all, also had this gift, to plant the Seed, see it grow and the establishment of a local church. The evangelist was one whose main spiritual gift was preaching, and not to work in the local church. The word means *a messenger of good tidings*; and implies a brother or sister not located in any place, but one who travelled as a missionary to preach the gospel, and to found a church where the Lord led. The work is distinct from that of the pastor, the teacher, and the prophet; and is a work in which preaching the Gospel is the main occupation.

**Pastors** in the local church are guides and instructors, shepherds caring for the flock; being sure the sheep have the right food and sufficient.

It is Christ's special prerogative, as Head of the church, to appoint such persons in His church, in His wisdom, knowing what is most needed and what will be best for the saints and what will bring glory to His own name.

That the great aim and design of the Lord in instituting the Church with a variety of personalities and capacities, is to show forth His beauties, to show the wonders of His love by uniting a diverse congregation, with varying temperaments and with that united having one aim; His glory.

**12. For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Perfecting** means that these various members of the Body were appointed in order that everything in the church might be arranged with the Lord Jesus Christ as the Head, that all be in a right relationship to the Lord and the saints; that the church might be complete. The Apostle Paul earnestly desired that Christians have every possible advantage for becoming mature, perfect in love, and knowledge, and order in the church.

**For the work of the ministry** all these gifted saints are engaged in the work of the ministry, the ministry of making the Saviour known to as wide a group of people as is possible,

though in different aspects, to different classes and in different conditions. Together these saints with their respective gifts constituted the ministry by which Christ was to establish and build up the Church. All these gifted people co-existed at that time, though it is clear that they were not all these gifts were designed to be permanent.

The apostolic work was to cease with the death of those who were the witnesses of the life and doctrines of Jesus the Messiah, the work of prophets was to cease with the end of inspiration, the completion of the Word of God. The work of the teacher continues as long as there is a need for an evangelist, the work of the pastor will not cease while there are Sheep needing food and guidance, such ministries will end when the Lord returns.

These various continuing functions of the saints chosen for the special tasks, and with gifts conferred upon them were necessary for instruction in the important doctrines of Christianity in the formative years of the Church. The same gifted workers are still necessary, and God gives them the ability; and each person with these Church building gifts has a need to wait patiently on the Lord to know the place He has prepared for them, the place where their ministry will best show that the power is of the Lord. Individuals are not given a gift for personal benefit, each gift and the person with the gift is for the church.

In most Christian Churches there appears to be but one *office* that of preacher; and one gift, that by which he professes to preach. The evangelists, pastors, and teachers, are today all classed as preachers; and many, who have not the gift for a public ministry waste their time, and mar their ministry, and rob the saints of the blessing the Lord has for them.

**For the edifying**, for building up the saints and the Church in the knowledge of the truth, and in holiness; encouraging the saints to continue steadfastly in the things of the Lord, this is stated as the reason for the various ministries of the gifted believers; this is how the Lord is building His Church in size and adorning it with the one beautiful Gem that is attractive to the God of all the earth—**Christ likeness**.

**13. 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:** The apostle declares here how long the work of the believers appointed by Christ for building His church, edifying the saints, was to continue; **till we all come**, by means of faith in Christ, and knowledge of Him, **unto a perfect man**, till the church, which is Christ's mystical body, shall be complete and perfect, and attain full maturity having come from infancy to full and evident Christ likeness. **In the unity of the faith**, Jews and Gentiles being converted, made one according to the doctrines that teach Christ is all and in all. The church of Christ here on earth, ideally, is labouring for and striving after perfection in knowledge and holiness, to come **unto a perfect man**, and to reach the high ideal, **the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ**. The ministry of the Word, in preaching and teaching is an appointment of the Lord Jesus Christ, to continue till He sees the Building is complete and calls the Church to Him.

The ministry of the word is essential for all the saints; none are above receiving benefit and advantage by the preaching and teaching of the Word. Even the Apostle Paul reckons himself among the number of those who stood in need of the ministry of God's word, to bring him to a perfect man, full maturity in the Lord, he says **till we all**, come unto a perfect man. However good a man might be there is always room for improvement.

**Measure of the stature**, the full measure of love, knowledge, and holiness, which the Gospel of Christ requires and which all the believers are encouraged to strive for. Let us all look for the Grace of God in our peers rather than the things that mar the fellowship. The measure of the stature of the fulness is seldom seen, or looked for; the measure of the stature of smallness, worldliness, and pride is often on parade.

**14. That we henceforth be no more children, 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;** Paul makes clear here there is one design for which the ministry of the Word was given to us, to preserve from error, to produce soundness of mind, and settled judgment, and to confirm the saints in fundamental truths. Paul calls those children, irrespective of age, who in knowledge and understanding are immature; the word he uses suggests immaturity, weakness,



instability, and that those in question are not grounded in knowledge. Children here are set against the perfect or mature man in the preceding verse. The man is grown up strong and healthy, and has attained knowledge and ability that qualifies him for the place in his society where he will be of most use and respected. The child is yet without knowledge or understanding, weak, and unsteady, easily persuaded this seems to be the apostle's allusion.

The Apostle Paul uses a double metaphor; the wave of the sea, and a light cloud, neither wave nor cloud have any constancy, but are both moved by external forces; the wind blows according to the laws laid down by the Lord Jesus Christ and man has no say or control.

The cause of this instability in a young believer is professors of the faith who lack principles, every wind of doctrine moves them to and fro, and every false teacher can mislead them, taking the new Christian into paths of unrighteousness, or ignorance as he pleases. The Apostle uses the term **wind of doctrine** because there is no firm foundation in it. Being only wind in the speaker it generates wind in the hearer.

**Cunning craftiness**, using the various means of deception, craft and subtlety in general, cheating and imposition, the current meaning is *wiles*, a particular sleight, mode of trickery and deception seen in card tricks, sleight of hand and conjuring tricks; it is applied to the arts which the devil uses to deceive and destroy souls; Ephesians 6:11, called there the **wiles of the devil**. Seducers in the Church cheat with false doctrines, as gamblers may do with loaded dice or marked cards. **Cunning craftiness** relates to the subtlety of the serpent that seduced Eve; implying that seducers are just as skilful to deceive; they lie in wait to deceive; implying that all seducers' sleight and craftiness is to this very end, to snare and catch men with their lies and drawing them away from **the truth as it is in Jesus**.

Seducers and false teachers are masters of sleight and subtlety, using strategies to deceive; they have ploys, ways and methods, to lead the saints astray, and to make money from the people they have misled. They wrest the scriptures out of context to make them say what they please, not what the Holy Spirit intended.

This generation is deceived by the display of wealth of some Christian groups, the argument being that what God has blessed in this way must be right. Huge ostentatious buildings, mansions for the 'ministers', vehicles far more expensive than is appropriate are some of the deceptive ways used when they are put forward as the reward of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Such people, though members of the Body of Christ are lost to materialism and the concepts that destroy the testimony of the grace of God; they have a testimony designed by the enemy to make the Word of God of none effect.

**15. But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:** The truth recommended by the apostle is the Gospel, the Truth as it is in Jesus, the doctrines pertaining to salvation and sanctification; this we are to teach and preach, and this is to characterise the preaching and teaching. This truth, the doctrine of God's eternal love to mankind, must be preached in love.

He who has the Truth of God need not defend it, speaking it and living it is a testimony that cannot be refuted.

**Speaking the truth in love**, while we stand firm on the doctrine of Christ, which is the truth, we must live in love one with another. Love is excellent; but we must be careful to hold fast to truth with it. Truth is excellent; yet it is lost in words if we do not speak it in love, these two go together, truth and love, bringing peace to the individual saint and to the congregation of the saints. The truth is to be spoken, unadorned, unvarnished truth. This is the only way to avoid error, and will preserve others from error; the truth will stop error from intruding into the life of the individual and the Church. Christians are to speak the simple truth, and nothing but the truth. Every statement which they make should be plain truth; every promise which they make should be true; every thing they say of others should be simple truth. Truth is the representation of things as they are; there is no virtue more valuable in a Christian than the love of the truth.

The **truth** should be spoken **in love**. There are other ways of speaking truth, it is sometimes spoken in a harsh, dictatorial and condemnatory manner, which does nothing but offend. When we state truth to others, it should be with love, with a sincere desire to win them to Christ, to

promote Christ likeness. When we admonish a brother or sister it should be in love, in a way that will bring them back to the place of blessing.

When preaching the awful truth of God about depravity, death, judgment, and hell, it should be in **love**. In like manner, when we are obliged to convince one who is in error, we should approach him in **love**.

We will see a positive response to our ministry if we first show that we **love** the person we are ministering to and the ministry is the **truth**.

This metaphor taken from the members of a human body receiving nourishment equally and growing up, teaches us the truth of God should be so preached to all the members of the Church of God, that they may all receive the vital spiritual food for growth. In the local Church, the Body of Christ, there are persons in various states, with a variety of needs; God has given gifts to members of His Church, and has given gifted members of the Church to the work of the ministry.

The ministry of each brother and sister is for the blessing of the whole body, that it should grow up into Christ in all things. **Into Christ**, be more deeply rooted in Him. **In all things** in knowledge, love, faith, the new man completely subjugating the old man. We should grow towards maturity, leaving the childish state behind and seeking those edifying truths that will delight the soul; this is the expected aim of all who **speak the truth in love**. The more we grow with Christ, faith in him, love to him, dependence upon him, the more attractive we will be to the lost souls around us, also the more willing they will be to listen.

The Christian's growth brings honour and glory to our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

**Who is the head, even Christ**, who, as Head, instructs and vitalises every member of the Body both in the local church and in the universal church; as every member shares what they are taught to others; *till we all come in the unity of the faith unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ*.

**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.** The apostle draws a comparison between the natural and mystical bodies, and the increase of both. There must be a vital connection between the natural head and members of the body; there must be a union between Christ, our spiritual head, and the members of His body that make up the Church. Nourishment for the natural body is through the intake of the right sustenance; nourishment for the spiritual body comes from the Lord as we take heed to His Word, feeding on it. Communion and fellowship of the members of the body amongst themselves, in order to grow, comes as they live in concord, love, and unity, upholding one another in prayer and spiritual support with the exercise of the gifts the Lord has blessed us with; all actions and speech governed and directed by the Word of God.

There is a supply from the Head to the members in the mystical body, and from one member to another in that body; one teaches, another comforts, another counsels, one will preach, another exhort, and all these contributing to the welfare and growth of the Church. The Head in this case is the Lord Jesus Christ. Ideally the members of both the natural and mystical bodies are working effectively in the right place and in the right manner, and contributing all they can to the improvement of one another for the benefit and advantage of the whole.

**Fitly joined together**, the body, the natural body, without illness or deformity is the basis for the Apostle in this metaphor. Each member is in the appropriate place, is united to the other members and has the same vitality. The idea of harmony is in the word used by the Apostle.

The members of the natural body work together for the good of the whole; so should it be in the church, each member in the proper place and doing the right thing, having the correct function so the whole body is blessed, united in aim and working towards the glory of God.

There is no place for antagonism, backbiting, envy, jealousies or any activity or emotion that may destroy the harmony or rend the unity of the Body the Lord is putting together, the special Body now called the Church.

Most unfortunately the whole of Christendom refers to the building where the saints meet together as the church, causing untold confusion, multiple heresies and leading many in the paths of destruction. So many say they belong to this or that denomination or church while completely ignorant of the salvation there is by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the finished work of redemption.

**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;** I bear witness in the name of the Lord Jesus, I instruct with His authority. The Apostle Paul reminds them of what they were before they were converted, and the manner in which the heathen around them live.

The natural man walks as seems best in the present situation and as will be most beneficial in a purely selfish way. The Christian man walks as is best as a testimony to the grace of God and as will best please the Lord who has redeemed him.

We do well to note the manner in which the unbelievers walk, the pleasures they seek, the diversions they practice so we may avoid all appearance of evil. **That ye henceforth walk not,** that you do not henceforth live, the Christian life often being compared to a journey. Take special care, being now Christians; do not walk like ignorant and unsaved heathen. **Walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their minds,** following their own imaginations, fulfilling the desires of the flesh, not having any regard to the Word of God, to a holy life and the preaching of the Gospel.

**As other Gentiles walk** implying most of the converts in the church at Ephesus were from among the heathen, Paul regarded them as converts from among the Gentiles. These walked, had their manner of life as did the Gentiles **in the vanity of their mind**, morally wrong, worshipping idols, alienated from the true God by wicked works.

Paul has concluded his exhortation to love and unity amongst all Christians, and enforced it earlier in the chapter; he now urges the Ephesians to practice the truths they have been taught. Though we live among the unconverted we must be careful not to live like them; to live like them is no testimony to the saving grace or power of the Lord.

**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:** Having no means of knowledge, the heart, naturally dark, became more and more so by means of habitual transgression; every thing in the Gentile systems could only blind the eyes and darken the soul. They walked in the vanity of their mind, in the foolishness of their mind; a lack of spiritual wisdom, and it was through this the Gentiles became obsessed with all manners of idolatry. This same folly still dominates in the world; men imagine they can obtain help from gods which are the works of their own hands, or their own imaginings. This shows a complete lack of spiritual wisdom and is a clearly proof of the ignorance in them; **alienated from the life of God.**

The original design of God was to live with and in man; and the life of God in the pinnacle of His creation, man, was how God intended to make man happy, give to man satisfaction and contentment, and without which true happiness is never found by any person. Through the continually existing ignorance, nothing to instruct, nothing to enlighten, man was entirely ignorant of the real nature of God. With no correct knowledge of the true God they could have no true religion; and if no true religion, no moral standard to live by.

The moral state of man today is become so shameful, base, and vile that they abhor every thing spiritual and pure, they detest and loathe every thing that has a tendency to lay any restraint on their vicious, violent, and sadistic passions and inclinations. Without knowledge of the true God there is no righteousness, no acceptable standard of morality, no code of conduct.

They were as we were, **alienated from the life of God**, from a godly life, they were strangers to the life which God requires and approves, demonstrated to us and lived among us by the Lord Jesus Himself. Holiness, the Christian life, is called the life of God, because it is the life which God requires of us, it is the life which He works in us, it is the life whereby God lives in us; the life whereby we live unto God; it is an ever living life. Every carnal man, unsaved man, is alienated from the life of God; the unsaved man has no desire for it, no inclination towards it, even prefers a life of sin, and to live in ignorance of it.

The Bible is readily available, preachers are often in the streets with the Word spoken or handing out leaflets with the message in them, in tract form, Christians are living with their social 'equals', still the Gospel message seems to be inadequate in reaching the hearts of man, why? Do we put our faith in gimmicks, in songs, in entertainments, in socialising? Have we considered the command of the Lord, to go into the world and preach? How shall they hear without a preacher? Are my neighbours **alienated from the life of God** because they do not see the Lord Jesus Christ in me?

**Because of the blindness of their heart**, or hardness; hardness is a better word. This is given as the reason why they lived and acted as they did, why the understanding was blinded. A man who has a blind and hard heart sees no beauty in the truth, and does not know its power, and is insensible to the appeal of the Gospel.

Men have no one but themselves to blame for the blindness of their understanding, their hard hearts. Whatever proceeds from a wicked heart is the responsibility of the individual and he will be held for the ignorance and lack of faith. For an inferior intellect there is no blame and such are not held responsible for not believing.

All are under obligation to repent and believe the Gospel, to love God. All are held accountable to God for their response to the message of salvation. The way to lift the understanding of man is to purify the heart and God has revealed the only way that can be done. When a man is right towards God, they will think right; the understanding will be clear and the Word of God will be the guide through all the troubles of life.

There is a distinction between spiritual blindness and natural sight, with natural sight we see the creation, things brought into being, things useful, beautiful things, also much that is ugly and damaging or disastrous. With spiritual sight we see the Lord and things that are not of this world, we have a food supplied to nourish us spiritually so we may grow up into God in all things, verse 15. Spiritual food is supplied by those who in some measure present the Lord Jesus Christ to us, in their ministry of the Word of God, their godly demeanour and their lifestyle. This translates into **walking in the light as He is in the light**, 1John 1:7.

**19. Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. Being past feeling**; hardened in sin so that no depravity impresses the mind as wrong or inappropriate behaviour. There is a total lack of emotion on moral issues, so no sense of right or wrong. This is an accurate description of the state of all sinners. Such people have no feelings of wrong; they have no anguish for immorality, no mental hurt when confronted with the brutality evident in the society. Such people often give intellectual assent to the truth, but are without feelings of any kind; the heart is insensitive, callous and as remorseless and unyielding as rock, hard-hearted.

**Have given themselves over unto lasciviousness**, lasciviousness, showing a desire for, or unseemly interest in sex is here personified and the Gentiles are represented as having delivered themselves over to her jurisdiction. **Lasciviousness** is also provoking lust in others by unseemly behaviour. The Gentile world is depicted by uncleanness, lewd and lustful behaviour, debauchery of every kind flourished among those without Christ, without limit or restraint. Almost all the gods and goddesses of the gentiles were of this character. The people around the saints in Ephesus indulged themselves in their filthy lusts; yielding themselves up to the dominion of these they became the slaves of sin and the devil, working all uncleanness with greediness.

When men's consciences are once seared, there are no bounds to their sins. When they set their hearts upon the gratification of their lusts, no more can be expected than the most abominable sensuality and lewdness. This was the character of the Gentiles, this is the state of the world we now live in, where most entertainment is centred around the lusts of man and his sinful nature.

Christians living among gentiles of this character need deliberate care and prayerfulness to stay free from the contamination of sin; not to be numbered with the transgressors.

**To work all uncleanness with greediness** is the choice of the most abandoned characters; to do all this evil in every instance and with fervent desire and abandonment leaves nothing more

profligate to be described. Such was the state of the Gentiles before they responded to the preaching of the Gospel. Such is the state of those nations, tribes and people who have not yet received the Gospel; of multitudes of those in so called Christian countries that refuse to receive the Gospel, and who take refuge in the false religions, though they are called Christian.

Proverbs 26:19 mentions those who have left the Christian principles and dogma to return to unprincipled behaviour as *the dog who has returned to his vomit*. In so called Christendom it is not easy to discover who are the children of God by faith and those who profess to be but are just clean living people. Professing Christians will be known by *their walk and their talk* as it relates to the teaching in the Word of God; deviation from the truth is evidence of the flesh having a stronger influence than the Word of God. Numbers in the congregation, the size and ornate structure of the meeting place is no basis for correct judgement. Fortunately the **Lord knows them that are His**; these will strive to walk pleasing to the Lord even though led, misled, in various paths by the teachings of men.

**20. But ye have not so learned Christ;** you have been taught the real truth, as held forth by Christ himself, both in His teaching and in His life. What you see in the Gentiles is not what is taught to us by the example of the Lord Jesus Christ. You have received the doctrines of Christ and are taught differently; you have received the Spirit of Christ, and are saved from such a way of life as will lead you into thinking you can achieve acceptance with God by self-effort. You have learned the way to God is by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; the blessings of God are through the Lord Jesus Christ, the Christian life is lived in the power of the risen Christ.

**21. If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus:** Since you have listened attentively to the Holy Spirit speaking through the Word and learned the true nature of Christianity from the teaching and behaviour of those who made Christ known to you. As you have been taught by Him, by his Spirit, by the ministers whom He has sent to you, so walk worthy of the Lord who has redeemed you and put His Spirit within you.

What the truth was which the Lord Jesus taught, and what His principles implied, the Apostle Paul makes clear in the following verses.

**22. That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; The truth as it is in Jesus,** the doctrine of the gospel, requires of us to put off the old man, our former heathen manner of life, and live in obedience to the teaching of the Word of God; live as those who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth.

The whole of our former life was corrupt and abominable; we lived in the pursuit of pleasure, we sought enjoyment in pursuing the lusts of the flesh; and were continually deceived by these lusts, and disappointed. This is clearly a word for today; was there ever a society where sin abounds as is currently the case, where evil is termed good and the flesh is catered to in all levels of life. Pleasure is used as the standard for right and wrong; the people say if I like it then it is not wrong. The people say if it does not harm someone else then it is not wrong; in Psalm 36:1 **The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes.** Romans 3:18 **There is no fear of God before their eyes.** Both the Old and New Testaments agree that sin can blind the mind and deaden the senses; the entrance of God's Word brings light to the darkened understanding. Psalm 119:130 **The entrance of Thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.**

**23. And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;** there cannot be a clean life without a clean mind controlling it, **the light of the glorious gospel of Christ** is all that can give light and life to the dark and dead soul. The regenerate mind determines to live in the way the Holy Spirit teaches, uses the Word of God as the basis for understanding what God wants. It is not our minds only, but the spirit of our minds that need renewing, corruption has polluted the soul and translates into a defiled life. We must serve God with our entire mind; with the spirit of our mind. The regenerating and renewing grace the Holy Spirit brings to a child of God covers the whole man, body, soul and spirit; sin destroyed the whole man, salvation is for the whole man.

**24. And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.** Sin pervaded the whole man, all the powers and faculties of it, and destroyed in man all that was of God. The work of grace restores integrity; the renewed person is sanctified

totally, a new nature is given to him, **which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.**

The 'new man' is the regenerate man, distinguished from the 'old man'; *our old man is crucified with Him*, Romans 6:6. The 'new man' is a partaker of the 'new life' imparted to him at 'new birth': the 'new man' is new in the sense that Christ is formed in him. The 'old man' is reckoned dead with Christ, the crucifixion; the 'new man' is alive in Christ, the resurrection.

The **new man** refers to the nature of the saved man. This is called in other places, the *new creature*, or the *new creation* and refers to the condition of man after the heart is changed; from being dead in sin to alive in Christ. The change is so great in the redeemed person that he is not seen as the same person so the sight and company is that of **a new man**.

The **new man** has new feelings, new principles, and desires. He has laid aside his old principles and practices, as should we, and in everything that pertains to moral character, life and godliness we are a **new man**. The physical body is the same; the brain and practical knowledge is the same; there has been a change in principles and feelings which make the **new man**, in all the realities of life, a new being. Regeneration is not a small change in attitude or in aims, it does not change our family ties, is not a mere change of relationships or of superficial conditions. The child of God is a **new man**. Regeneration, being born again of the Spirit of God is the birth, the beginning of a new life in God.

**After God**, in respect to God; man is renewed so God can by His Spirit dwell with him, the Divine image is restored to the soul. In the parallel passage in Colossians 3:10 the idea is clearly expressed **renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him**. Man by the new birth, regeneration, is restored to the image of God.

**Is created in righteousness and true holiness**, this phrase is used to denote the new birth, free from the defilement of sin, likening the New Birth to the first act of creation, perfect before the corruption of sin entered. The renewed man is made to resemble God in righteousness. This proves that man, when he was made, was righteous; or that righteousness was fundamental in man as he was the image of God as he was created. The object of the work of redemption is to restore to man the lost image of God, or to bring him back to the condition in which he was before he fell.

Holiness refers to purity towards God, and righteousness refers to man's standing before God and integrity towards men. Restored man is made upright and pious, restored to a right relationship with God. such a man should avoid the sins and vices which are practised by non-Christians, some of which the apostle specifies.

This phrase also proves that when man was created, he was a holy, without sin, was with God and able to commune with God. These blessings are restored to man through the Lord Jesus Christ when man exercises saving faith in Him.

**25. Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.** It may seem strange that the apostle should seriously exhort Christians to put away lying, it implies they were in the habit of speaking falsehoods. We must remember that lying is a universal vice. Among the heathen of past eras, as among unbelievers of this present day, it is almost universally practised. Many teach and practice, if it does not harm a third party then it is of no moment. Those who think this way have no concern for their eternal welfare; do not know the holiness of God. So called white lies and half truths are mere subterfuges to avoid the truth. Sometimes lying takes place in silence when we avoid answering or change the subject; at other times we may follow a course of action which will deceive.

All the ways of deceiving or hiding the truth are addressed by the Apostle Paul in this directive. The Ephesian believers were recent converts, and were new to the requirements of the gospel. A new conscience is created when unbelievers are converted, and it is by the reading of the Word and the teaching of those wiser in the Faith that they see the evils of many things which to those who are saved for some time have known and put away.

The sinful habits abide after a man is converted and it is not till the new convert is made aware of the sin, either by reading the Word of God, the preaching of the Word or conviction by the Holy Spirit that the putting away of the sin is possible. The exhortation is appropriate to

Christians of this generation; to one who conceals the defects of an article for sale, or false or misleading advertising. To the boss who instructs a secretary to say they are out or in a meeting, when they are not, let them put away lying and not cause the employee to lie on their behalf.

Do we lie by exaggeration, by recounting a story before ascertain the truth, by passing on rumours without checking them? Have we made a promise planning to disregard it; in that way lying?

No professing Christian can have a valid testimony and be a liar, let us all who name the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

A form of lying common among professing Christians and at the same time not admitted is teaching unbelievers to 'come to Jesus'; then telling them to make a decision for Christ, maybe, just maybe the Lord will have worked in that way. My unshakeable belief is that the Holy Spirit must convict a sinner before the repentant sinner can call upon the Lord for salvation. In that case 'whosoever will call upon the Lord, will be saved'.

**For we are members one of another;** we belong to one body, the church, which is the body of Christ. Falsehood will slacken the bonds that tie Christians together. In the natural body one member cannot deceive another part of the body, each part works together for the harmony of the whole. Falsehood in the church is as bad as the hand refusing to put food into the mouth; the whole body will suffer malnutrition.

**26. Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:** It is implied here, that there may be anger without sin; and that there is danger in all cases where there is anger, that it will lead to sin.

Anger is a passion most common to this generation in the western world. It is a stirring up of the mind, to violent response, produced by a real or supposed injury, producing in the 'injured' party a desire for revenge. The desire for revenge is generally accompanied with a desire to blame, rebuke, or punish, harass the person who caused the anger.

The sudden hurt of an accidental moment may cause anger; such anger is involuntary, and may remain innocent. Anger is excited when we misuse a hammer and hit our thumb, or damage the object; when a tyre blows on a long journey; when we stumble; or when a threat to our person is perceived. This strong feeling in the mind of man will rouse him to an immediate defence, before reason has time to determine a suitable course of action. If we persevere with a malignant and vengeful mind it is always wrong. Anger may be against a thing or a person; an action or the perpetrator of the action; anger is not always sinful.

Anger is a sin when it is attended with the desire for revenge. That is always wrong, Romans 12:17, 19. **Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. 19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.**

Anger is a sin when there is an unforgiving spirit; **Let not the sun go down on your wrath.** Do not cherish anger, do not sleep with anger, do not harbour a desire for revenge; do not hold in the mind thoughts of ill-will against another. When the sun sets on a man's anger, be sure it is wrong, it is sin.

If you are for some reason angry, which may legitimately be the case, and be unavoidable, see that the emotion does not become sin; do not cherish it; do not let it remain in your heart and mind to the setting of the sun. While the sun is sinking in the west or before if there is time, let the strong emotion in the heart and mind be calmed, let peace rule in the life as the day ends and sleep takes over. Anger may keep you awake and in bed at night, the time before sleep takes over is the time when revenge is contemplated and plotted. The Apostle Paul instructs us to put this emotion far from us; it destroys the peace of the angry man, ruins the relationship with what or who has caused the anger, and when not dealt with immediately will inevitably lead to sin.

**27. Neither give place to the devil.** Our adversary the Devil will strive to influence our minds, and irritate our spirits; we must watch and pray that he does not get any place in us, or any power over us.

As the word translated devil is sometimes used as calumniator, tale-bearer, whisperer, or backbiter; here it likely has the same meaning. The Apostle Paul says to us, do not open your ear to the tale-bearer, to the slanderer, who comes to you with accusations against your brothers and sisters in the Lord, and do not listen to surmising and evil speaking concerning them. These would do the work of the Devil, by making you angry even without just cause; therefore give them no credence, but if you should be overtaken in this fault, do not let not the sun go down upon your wrath; go to your brother or sister against whom you have been turned; say what you have heard, and what you fear; receive the personal account, listen to that explanation; **judge righteousness judgement**, let the matter be finally settled, so that Satan does not gain an advantage over either you or the other person in the dispute.

It may be that we are deceived by our own mind into thinking the 'evil we do or say is not harming anyone else'; this is a subterfuge of Satan to gain the advantage over us and to destroy the testimony.

With the variety of means of communication at our fingertips in this modern technological age there is no excuse for us not to right any wrong in the same day or same hour as it becomes apparent.

**28. Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.** Theft, like lying, is almost a universal vice among the unsaved. Immediately we are up in arms, ready to defend our honesty in relation to this pervasive evil. The practice of pilfering prevails in the community so that no property is safe which is not guarded, locked up, fenced and made inaccessible in some way.

We are not to suppose that stealing was a common vice among the saints; but the Apostle cautions the saints on this point, knowing that old habits do not die easily. Having been in the habit of a particular sin, one is in great danger of falling into it again. The objective the apostle aims at is to show the gospel requires holy living; all Christians are to avoid the vices prevalent in the society generally and in the local community particularly. Among the saints there is a need for self examination; we are prone to favour ourselves and excuse our indiscretions by saying it is worth nothing or it won't be missed or he has plenty or my need is greater. There is no valid excuse for doing what is forbidden by the Word of God.

An area of theft not considered in this generation is the theft of a person's integrity, his good name, assassination of character by gossip or repeating things heard yet unverified. When we are told to **speak evil of no man** Titus 3:2 the Apostle does not make exceptions. The truth when spoken as gossip or with malice or evil intent may do more harm than good and will certainly alienate the wronged party; the right way is **speaking the truth in love**, as we learned in verse 15.

The Word of God speaks to us saying, let no man defraud another; but let him work with to provide for himself and his dependents that which is needed and that he may have something over to give to a necessity he may become aware of. Stealing, defrauding, are consistently banned in every Christian religion that acknowledges the true God and His Son Jesus Christ. If Christianity does not teach men to be honest in the sight of God and man, it does nothing for them. Those who are not saved from dishonesty have no fear of God, though they may dread man and the retribution of man.

**But rather let him labour**, let him live in an honest manner, by his own industry, not wronging others, but where possible helping others and encouraging them to do the same. **Working with his hands**, pursuing some honest employment for an agreed wage, is the example of the Apostle and the teaching of the tentmaker. Paul was not ashamed to labour with his own hands, 1Corinthians 4:12; and no man is dishonoured by honest labour. God gave man to toil, Genesis 2:15; and employment is essential to the happiness man, his family, his society and his nation.

No man, who is able to support himself, has a right to depend on others, but in the economic times we have generated in the modern world there are circumstances it was not possible for the Apostle to envisage; that does not change the principle. Paul writes in another



place, 2Thessalonians 3:10 for even when we were with you, this we commanded you, **that if any would not work, neither should he eat.**

**29. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.** We are here warned against corrupt communication; any speech or action which could lead another person to err in the slightest degree. Our speech is best directed to what is useful and edifying,

**Corrupt communication** signifies useless, unsavoury, impure and obscene words or conversation. Whatever speech or activity has a tendency to harm the character or the name or interest of another person is deemed corrupt. It appears to mean any word or obscene thing that injures virtue, allows vice, or denigrates religion is deemed as corrupt. Filthy and unclean words poisonous, corrupting the mind of the hearers; they come from a corrupt source and taint the hearer with the same putrefaction. They proceed from corruption in the heart of the speaker therefore Christians should be consciously putting away all the filth of the flesh.

We must not only put off corrupt communications, but put on **that which is good to the use of edifying.** The finest use of speech is to edify those with whom we converse. Christians should strive to promote a useful conversation, having it centred on things that edify. That the subject of the conversation **may minister grace unto the hearers;** that it may be good for, and acceptable to, the hearers, in the way of information, counsel, reproof, encouragement or the like. Conversation with the ungodly must have an aim to lift them up out of the low position and present them to the Lord who can save them and **set their feet on a rock.**

It is a primary duty of Christians to take care not to offend with their speech, that they direct their speech and the subject of their talk for the good of others.

**But that which is good to the use of edifying,** to edify profitably, to useful edification, to instruct, counsel, and comfort others. Speech is a precious gift; a blessing of great worth which most of us take for granted. He who talks liking to hear his own voice, or is quick to speak without consideration will say many foolish things. He whose main aim in life is the benefit of others will not say something he will regret. Matthew 12:36; Ecclesiastes 5:2; Proverbs 10:19; James 1:19.

**30. And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.** The Apostle Paul puts this caution between what comes out of the mouth, that which defiles a man and what is seen in the actions and heard in the speech of unsaved man corrupt man. The Apostle states that all lewdness and filthiness, lying, and corrupt communications grieve the Spirit of God. He continues later to say corrupt passions such as bitterness, and wrath, and anger, evil speaking, and malice, grieve the Holy Spirit.

This exhortation teaches us to act towards fellow believers and indeed all our human contacts in such a manner as will not grieve the Holy Spirit or destroy the peace that may exist. We must not do anything or say anything which is contrary to His holy nature; we must listen to the Word as He counsels, teaches and instructs us in the way we should go.

We should not grieve the Holy Spirit for by Him we are sealed unto the day of redemption. There is a day of redemption; the body will be redeemed from the power of the grave at the resurrection, and then God's people, all believers will be delivered from the effects of sin, and death, having been delivered from the penalty of sin when first believing, and the miseries of sin while living in communion with the Saviour. All believers, not necessarily church goers, or those that follow certain Christian religions; all true believers are sealed with the Holy Spirit and will be taken to be with the Lord in that day.

God has distinguished His people from all others by setting His Seal upon them; and He gives to them the earnest, the promise, the seal and assurance of a glorious resurrection and union with His Son. **The Spirit of God is the seal,** every one born of the Spirit is indwelt by the Spirit of God.

God's sealing His people by his Holy Spirit suggests and implies that God has distinguished them from all others. That He has set them aside for Himself; that He has put a value upon them, and holds them as a special personal possession. The Seal shows the irrevocable purpose of God

for the salvation and eternal security of all who constitute the Church, purchased by the Blood of the Lord Jesus Christ and sealed by the Holy Spirit.

**31. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:** The Apostle Paul exhorted the saints not to grieve the Holy Spirit of God; in this verse he names some of the particular sins that would grieve the Holy Spirit. It is astonishing that any people who profess to be Christian should indulge in a bitter spirit, especially against another believer. Those who are censorious, hyper-critical, display no mercy who have decided upon a certain standard by which they measure all others in all circumstances, and class as unworthy on being named with the saints these are the bitter ones against whom the apostle speaks.

They, who are religiously censorious have a bitter spirit, act under the pretence of superior holiness, doing evil in the church and community, seldom if ever doing any good in the censored or those that hear them.

**Wrath** or an impetuous fierceness of spirit, upon some real or supposed injury, the emotion stirred up which will in many cases lead to unrestrained and harmful activity or speech.

**Anger** is seen when wrath is active, when the passion is accompanied with injurious words and outrageous acts; **anger** is not without a desire for revenge.

**Clamour**, loud and disruptive speaking, brawling, unrestrained talk, often the follow up of wrath; all of which contradict the meek, loving, quiet, peaceful mind of Christ in His people and His Church.

**Evil speaking**, blasphemy, words which are intended to hurt those against whom they are spoken, the speaker deliberately harming the character of another is the basis of such talk. Evil speaking, either of others or to others is not becoming in a believer.

**All malice**, every kind of malice or malicious act; in thought, word or deed; the apostle is telling the Ephesians to put away from them. All malignity and anger produces wrath, and wrath clamour, and together they make up malice; which is always looking out for opportunities for revenge by destroying the object or person of its indignation.

The Christian does well to put all these evil passions and desires far from him. But let the Christian be aware that far greater evils await, ready to fill the vacuum left by the expulsion of these unwanted traits if the space in the mind and heart is not filled with the love of Christ.

**32. And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.** Be mild, courteous, polite, 1Peter 3:8. Christianity produces true courteousness, or politeness. It does not make one rough, uncouth, bitter; nor does it teach or incline its followers to violate the social sensibilities. The secret of true politeness is kindness, or a desire to make others happy; a Christian should be polite even during stressful moments. There is nothing of the Christian faith in bad-tempered, unpleasant, resentful, rude, aggressive behaviour. The politeness of a Christian is to be based on kindness; his well mannered behaviour is to be the result of Christ's love, a desire for the happiness of others.

Tender-hearted, having a heart disposed to sympathy and compassion, and especially inclined to show kindness, even when the brethren are difficult or unresponsive. Compassionate, being sympathetic, with a heart to feel anguish of those in adverse circumstances. God forgives us freely, completely, and sincerely, even though He has power punish, or exact full payment; in like manner we should forgive one another.

When we receive any injury from a brother, or any man, we have the example of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Word of God exhorting us to be as ready to forgive him, on his repentance, as God was to forgive us when we repented and sought His mercy.

## Chapter 5

**1. Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;**

**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 sweet smelling savour.**

**3. But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints;**

4. Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks.

5. 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.

6. 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.

8. For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:

9. (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;)

10. Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.

11. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

12. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.

13. But all things that are reprov'd 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.

15. See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,

16. Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

17. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.

18. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;

19. Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;

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

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

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

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.

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

25. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

26. That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

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

28. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.

29. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:

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

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.

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

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.

General comments: Christians should imitate the Lord Jesus Christ as He alone is the true representative of the Father, and walk in love, with the Lord Jesus Christ as the only example. They should avoid all uncleanness, impurity, covetousness, and foolish jesting, and idolatry, because these things are not in the Example given to us. To walk is steady balanced progress forward; the Apostle tells us to follow our Lord in this way. Through the epistle we are told to

walk in good works, walk worthy of our vocation, not walk in vanity of the mind, walk in love, and to walk circumspectly.

The Ephesian saints were once in darkness, blinded by sin, but having their eyes opened to the salvation of the Lord they are in the light. They are exhorted to walk in the light of the Lord and live in fellowship with the Lord and His people.

Growing in the Lord is to exhibit the fruit of the Spirit; to have no fellowship with the workers of iniquity, whose evil deeds are brought to the light by the Gospel and also by those who live the Gospel. All believers are exhorted to awake, to open the eyes of faith; to walk circumspectly; to redeem the time; and to learn what the will of the Lord is.

The Apostle gives particular instructions relative to avoiding the excesses that unbelievers commonly indulge in. He tells us how to best occupy private moments, by singing and giving thanks, being joyful and spiritual Christians. Submission to each other is a mark of humility, a sign of the Holy Spirit at work in the heart. Husbands should love their wives, as Christ loved the Church; for the marriage union, is a practical demonstration of the union between Christ and the Church. Wives are exhorted to reverence their husbands, and we will see the implication of that word reverence later in the study.

**1. Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;** This chapter continues with the exhortation to Christian living and the way it is best displayed. The word we translate **followers**, is a word meaning *impersonate*, assuming the way of walking, the accent in speech, the bearing and habits of the one being impersonated and it is from this Greek word that we have the word mimic.

Let your whole conduct be like that of your Lord Jesus; imitate Him in your actions, words, spirit, imitate Him as children follow their parents in speech, habits, hobbies etc., and always bear in mind that you stand in the relation of a beloved child to Him. As the children of God we can do no better than to show this love to our heavenly Father, by imitating the moral perfections of the Lord Jesus Christ, and letting the mind of Christ dwell in us.

**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 sweet smelling savour.** Three times prior to this occasion the Apostle Paul has instructed the Ephesians to walk, in 2:10 we are to walk with good works, as the demonstration of our faith in the Lord. In 4:1 the instruction is to be worthy of the name given to us as the children of God, worthy of the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. In 4:17 The Apostle exhorts us to leave behind the old ways and strive to be examples of the faith. The verse currently before us informs as to how this is best accomplished; it is by walking in love. Not the sentimental love that the world writes and sings about; but the sacrificial, unselfish love of the Lord Jesus, who gave himself an **offering and a sacrifice**. The same love mentioned in verse 8 of this chapter tells of a great change wrought in our lives by the entrance of light into the darkened soul, a light which lightens the path of the Christian so he may walk without stumbling. Chapter 5:15 **See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise**, is specific as to how to walk, placing each foot carefully, correctly and firmly in the right place and on solid ground and with the light of the glorious gospel of Christ shining on the path.

**And walk in love**, this cannot be the 'love' the world talks about; that love allows for all manner of evils in thoughts, speech and actions contrary to the teachings of the Word of God. There is no sensuality in the love the Apostle and the Word of God asks us as the Children of God to exercise one toward another. The first epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, the 13<sup>th</sup> chapter, describes the Love of God that is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit; that love excludes all selfishness and self-seeking; it works diligently to show forth the merits and beauties of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Love of Christ that constrains us will always point to God in such a way as will draw others to Him. The example before us is the Lord Jesus Christ and is a sacrificial love, a giving love, a selfless love, a love seeking no benefit for itself or merit or acknowledgement from man.

The Apostle Paul is instructing us in the way we should be distinguished as different from others, he is telling us how we can show the Holy Spirit in us has made such a difference in our

focus on things natural and spiritual. The standard, the benchmark is the love the Lord Jesus Christ showed to the Father and the example He is to us in withholding nothing, not even His life, which He gave as **an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour**.

Laying down our lives for our brethren if necessary; counting nothing too difficult to promote their joy in the Lord, is the Apostle's wish for the saints at Ephesus, and what he is asking of us as we follow the Lord. Many have been martyred, many tortured, many spurned and even today many are rejected by family and nation because they follow the Lord.

Take special note, none who have walked in obedience with the Lord have been justly accused and punished. The error, the sin is always on the part of the unbeliever in such cases.

**A sweet smelling savour** is what ascends to God in each case where a child of His stands when persecuted for His Name's sake. When a child of God blesses the name of the Lord there is a sweet smelling savour rising to God. When the saints gather in the Name of the Lord to worship there is a sweet smelling savour rising to the throne of grace. **He gave himself an offering and a sacrifice**, the Lord Jesus Christ gave Himself; now gifts are expressions of love and when we give ourselves or our possessions to the Lord and his work it is accepted as an offering and a sacrifice. The Lord Jesus Christ was a voluntary sacrifice, a sacrifice par excellence, efficacious, and propitiatory to God for us. The sacrifice and sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ were voluntary and free; the offering of Himself was a free-will offering.

This voluntary sacrifice and free-will offering of Christ Jesus, was acceptable to God, because it was a complete satisfaction for sin's wrong; and efficacious for us because the debt we owed to God because of our sin was fully discharged.

**3. But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints;** the Apostle Paul now exhorts the Ephesians to shun several sins practised among the Gentiles before their conversion. First fornication, a common vice among the heathen probably worse now than then; a vice so common the saints are often deceived into believing it is not so bad; into which the saints are in danger of falling. All sorts and degrees of uncleanness and impurity of life are contrary to a Christian walking with the Lord.

The pagan world, the world in which we live, is totally indifferent to covetousness, not able to see the difference between legitimate desire for advancement and the acquisition of wealth. The Apostle advises the Ephesians, and us to beware of covetousness, all irregular and inordinate desires, and lusting after things forbidden, of having an insatiable love of riches. Such as is prevalent in the society we live in. This sin Paul earnestly desires may not be committed by any of them, not so much as named by them, or attributed to them by any on the outside. Covetousness is associated with the lowest and most debasing vices, was not once to be named among them, no believer ever to be accused of such sin, or give the appearance of sin in that way.

The covetous man, according to the Apostle Paul, is to be ranked with the sensual, and with idolaters, 5:5, and with those who are excluded from the kingdom of God.

The Christian world, even the local church often fails to see this sin because it is so common; because it is seen among many prominent Christian leaders; it is not easy to define covetousness, and because the conscience is seared, and the mind blinded to the degradation and evil character of the sin.

Who is a covetous man? A man who in the pursuit of riches, neglects his soul, a man who has his mind, and heart set on a pursuit of gain or satisfaction to the gratification of the flesh. A man who in his insatiable pursuit of the particular lust, wether of the flesh or mind or satisfaction, disregards justice, truth, love, and whose conscience is hardened to the voice of the Lord.

Covetousness is not seen in a person till it is revealed by some other sin.

**Let it not be once named among you**, let it not exist in the members of the church, let there be no occasion for mentioning covetousness, let none in the fellowship sin in this way so there is no cause to mention it; this is **as becometh saints** as the character of Christians, who are regarded as holy.

The argument Paul uses to keep the saints from these sins, is that such are not a representative of the Lord; it is not becoming for saints, not harmonious with a Christian profession.

**4. Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. Filthiness,** any thing improper, immoral or vile in words or deed may be classed as filth.

**Foolish talking** Christians are to guard against the sins of the tongue, to avoid all filthy discourse, suggestive jocularity and all vain talking, all scandalous, slanderous and obscene joking, all excesses in humour especially when based on the human form. Mirth by innocent joking and plays on words, juxtaposition of thought is not here forbidden, but when jesting by suggestive reflections upon the manner, actions, imperfections, or functions of others, is strictly forbidden. When we use humour to make irreverent application of scripture, or ridicule the saints for any reason then we are in real danger of offending the Lord Jesus Christ; we do offend Him.

These words, called foolish talking are not convenient, judged not suitable, not fitting for the speaker, not convenient for the hearers, for they corrupt instead of uplifting the hearers, and pollute both the minds and manners of the hearers, such talk is condemned.

Christians should be grave and serious, though cheerful and pleasant. They should know they have eternal interests at stake and speak accordingly; careful never to upset the hearers in a way to put them off hearing the truth. Christians should be solemn, thoughtful, conscious of the presence of God and eternal issues, at the same time pleasant, sociable, and gracious.

Cheerfulness is not forbidden, for the hope of heaven is set before us in a way to make glad the heart of man as nothing else can. Quiet and gentle humour rising from good-nature, is not forbidden.

It is a very short journey for the tongue to travel from what is lawful to what is sinful and forbidden. James in his epistle wrote, **If any man offend not in word, he is a perfect man** 3:2 intending for us to know there are many that do sin with the tongue; and those who do not sin with the tongue are Christians who have found a place close to the Lord; know experimentally the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ; these have learned in some measure to walk with the Lord.

**Giving of thanks** to God, or praises, is more suitable from Christians than joking or excessive jocularity. Giving of thanks is far more appropriate to the character of Christians, than idle conversation. Instead of meeting together for entertainment Paul would have the saints come together for the purpose of praising God, and activity in His service, exhortation, ministry of the Word, and other activities that will build up the saints. It is more appropriate to the character of Christians to come together to sing praises to God, than to sing the popular songs of the world, to pray, rather than engage in sensual pleasures; to share the things of the Lord and the Faith than to tell jokes and interesting anecdotes which cater only to the flesh. Reflection on the grace and goodness of God, will stir us up to thankfulness to Him.

**5. 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.** The sins listed here which will certainly keep persons out of the kingdom of God are not external sins only, as adultery and sins of the flesh, but internal, of the mind, as covetousness which is idolatry.

A man may be guilty of adultery yet never touch a woman, Matthew 5:28 **But I say unto you, That whosoever looks on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.** A man may be guilty of murder, yet never smite his neighbour, having the evil thoughts in mind; so he may be guilty of idolatry, and yet never openly; idolatry in the mind and desires will shut a soul out of heaven, as well as flagrant worship of any person or thing other than God. Any person or thing that has our highest admiration and regard or is the special object or subject of our hope and trust, this we make our god, and is therefore an idol.

This 21<sup>st</sup> century has presented idols to the Christian in guises not before seen, with the things of the flesh and the world clothed in pseudo spiritual garments. Songs called Christian with words and tunes that excite the emotions in ways far from holy; meetings where people gather to incite each other to activities that are clearly of the flesh. The Old Testament called this whoremongering; the New Testament calls it turning from God to idols.

This 21<sup>st</sup> century presents uncleanness in the guise of normality, so leading young believers astray; in clothing and speech becoming so similar to the common person, often the only difference is when the spoken word is a quote from the bible even then it is not accompanied with appropriate reverence.

This 21<sup>st</sup> century has taught or is teaching us all to want things, and positions in the business or workplace above the necessary, in the Church some are desirous of being the minister or pastor, not content with the place and position God has appointed for them.

Our **inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God** is secured for us by the Lord Jesus Christ; He asks us to forsake the things of the flesh and the world. The Lord wants us for Himself, to be separated unto Him, to set our affections on things above where Christ sits at the right hand of God.

**6. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.** Do not allow any man in the world or in the Church to persuade you that any of these things are innocent, or that they are unavoidable frailties of human nature; they are all sins and abominations in the sight of God. Let no one persuade you that there is no danger from practising these evils; that God can overlook them.

There is a strong temptation to join in the festivities and enjoyments where these harmful influences are not frowned on, or where they are practised by believers still untaught in the Word. Those who practise them are children of disobedience; and on account of such practise the wrath of God, Divine punishment, must come upon them.

This warning is to the children of God, the members of the Church, all those who are born of the Spirit. The Lord Jesus Christ has born the penalty due to the believers for all the sins they have committed in the past, and the Holy Spirit is given to each child of God to teach them how to live in purity and truth. All the unsaved can expect is to bear the wrath of God; the duty of the believers is to warn them to flee from the wrath to come.

**7. Be not ye therefore partakers with them.** Since these things displease God, and expose the culprits to His wrath, avoid them. We who claim to be the children of God must not act as our fellow citizens do; nor permit their philosophies, vain words with empty, deceptive and erroneous doctrines, to lead us astray from the paths of righteousness.

That there was much need for such directions and cautions to the people of Ephesus has been often remarked. We need go no further than our own backyard to see the depths of degradation the western world has sunk to. The various Christian religions are embracing many falsehoods and ways to enlarge their congregations. Allowing many evils condemned by the Word of God so as to boost numbers; often boasting in the liberty they have, which liberty is clearly condemned by the Lord and his Word.

**8. For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:** they were as unbelievers in ignorance of the grace of God, and practised the same abominations as the unsaved around them. While they lived in darkness they committed the same sins as the heathen around them, they lived in sin.

**But now are ye light in the Lord;** when you were unregenerate you were in darkness, you served your lusts and pleasures as all around you, but now you have the light of the Gospel, the wisdom and teaching which come from God; therefore **walk as children of the light**, let the world see that you are not slaves to the flesh or to the evil dictates of the society or surrounding you. As the children of God we are free, willing, rational servants of our god; not uncivilized followers of the evil practises of men or so called gods.

The state which every soul is in by nature, before conversion, is a state of spiritual darkness; like men in the dark, we did not know the right direction to travel nor could we see the stumbling blocks placed in the way.

All those who respond to the call of God to come out of the darkness and ignorance of their natural and unregenerate state, He gives light to them through His word and the Holy Spirit. All who are called and enlightened by the Lord ought to walk so as all may see they are under the influence of the highest authority and answer to and are responding to God. That is to **walk as**

**children of light**; separated from the world, humbly, cheerfully, thankful to the Lord, as examples of godly living and without blame before the world.

**But now are ye light in the Lord.** Light, this word is used to symbolise holiness, happiness in Christ, knowledge of the Lord. Meaning the saints have been enlightened by the Lord to see the evil of the practices the unsaved indulged in, still practised by the people outside the grace of God, and that they ought to forsake them. The apostle calls their former condition darkness, to emphasise the great darkness they were in without the **Light of Life**. They lived wicked lives, being destitute of the **light**, without the illumination of the Spirit of God within.

To be without the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour is a state of darkness. Sinners, like men in the dark, are treading a dangerous path, unable to see what will hinder or stay their progress; or the devastating end awaiting them at the end of the journey.

The grace of God has brought about a mighty change in the souls of the redeemed; now we are **light in the Lord**, enlightened by the Word and the Spirit of God. Now, upon our believing in Christ, and our receiving the gospel we can **walk as children of light**. The best understanding is that we should live as those who have had their eyes opened to see the evils of sin, and the beauty and virtue of the Christian faith.

**9. (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;)** this parenthesis gives us a reason why the Ephesians, who were once in spiritual darkness, but are now enlightened by the Holy Spirit, should walk as children of the light. The evidence of that light, the Holy Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth, it consists in these things, and these are the fruit in the child of God, bestowed by the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit, through the gospel, produces goodness, righteousness, and truth; we who are the sons of God by faith should exhibit these in our lives, and so show that we are the children of light.

The force of Paul's argument is in the love and practice of righteousness and goodness, as the genuine fruit and spiritual result of the Holy Spirit in the life. Only the believers can walk as children of the light, for they are renewed and quickened by the Holy Spirit of God, and made the children of light. The lifestyle of the Christian will be in all goodness, producing all kinds of goodness, in the home in the Church and in the world. This goodness is in righteousness, according to the precepts of the Word of God, the Person revealed in the Word of God and the Truth of the Word of God.

**10. Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.** Reading the last phrase of verse eight before this verse puts these seven words into context. Walking in the light is the confirmation of the promises of the Lord in relation to His people; when we do His will we know in our hearts and in our minds the presence of the Lord. So what is acceptable unto the Lord? The scripture informs us of some saints and some works which are acceptable unto God; such people live by faith, are upright in their walk, sincere in all they do, and true to the Word of God, these are acceptable. When we deal justly and walk humbly, this is acceptable to the Lord. To serve our Lord Jesus Christ with pure intentions, a willing mind, to suffer patiently for doing good, this is pleasing and acceptable unto God, 1Pe 2:20.

By walking in the light of the Word of God under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the example of those He has set over us in the Church, we will have all the proof we need, full proof of that which is most pleasing to God.

**11. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.** The psalmist wrote, **if I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me**, Psalm 66:18. Fellowship with **the unfruitful works of darkness** may be in thought, word or deed, and in this day and generation **the unfruitful works of darkness** are so disguised by a veneer of religion as to mislead the saints.

We must have no fellowship with these unfruitful works; we must not practise them ourselves, we must not condone these works in others. There are ways whereby we become accessories to the sins of others, by commending them, by consenting to them, or by covering them. If we share with others in their sin, we must expect to share with them in punishment for sin, if we have fellowship with them we are in danger of acting and speaking as they do; and can therefore expect chastisement from the Lord. Why? **The wrath of God is revealed from heaven**



**against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness,**  
Romans 1:18

**Rather reprove them** bear a testimony against them by life and lip; convince them they are wrong by living before them in all honesty and truth; reprove them for their vices, showing them what the Bible teaches and how the Holy Spirit is able to transform an unbeliever into a child of God and keep the child of God free from immoral and wicked practices.

We must discreetly and wisely witness against the sins of others, and pray the Holy Spirit will convince them of their sinfulness, by our words and holy living **reprove them**. If and when there is sin in the church that sin must be dealt with and put away completely as soon as it is revealed. It is not necessary to publish among all believers the lapse of one saint in the congregation, unless that sin is public knowledge. In that case all the saints in the fellowship must see that the will of the Lord is to put away sin from the Church.

**12. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.** It is still a shame to speak of the practices of the people in the world around us. All over the world the same thing is true, and unfortunately even in the Church many describe the sins of the people and destroy the purity of a mind cleansed by the blood of Christ. The prophet of old said, **O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens** Ezra 9:6. The sins Ezra blushed at were far less flagrant than the sins the Apostle Paul writes about, and 'mild' compared with the sins of the present day. The deeds and speech of the sophisticated world should not be mentioned among the saints, not under any pretext. There is no merit in a missionary describing the sins of the heathen, or in a servant of the Lord Jesus defining the sins of the world or society in which we live, where we work or where we take our leisure.

The Apostle places emphasis on the words, **even to speak** of those things. Since the Apostle makes clear it is wrong to name those things, to speak of them, it is not wise or safe for Christians to be apprised of or made familiar with the pollutions prevalent or hidden in the society, or for public speakers to mention those things in any detail, the Holy Spirit will instruct the believer in the way he should go, in the things he should think and in the words he should speak

The very naming of abominations often produces improper associations and thoughts and images in the mind; descriptions pollute, the display of pictures, and the demonstration of objects used by idolaters, even for the purpose of condemning them, defiles the mind and soul of the viewer.

There are some vices which cannot be safely described; and many who come to us from working in different cultures have done evil by exciting improper emotions. The Apostle Paul did not describe the vices of the unsaved, he denounced them; he did not dwell upon them or give satisfaction to the curious, nor allow his words to be the corrupting influence in the hearers. He mentioned the vice without specifics, and then he mentioned the wrath of God; he alluded to the sin, and then he spoke of exclusion from heaven.

**Which are done of them in secret**, many of the activities were indeed impure and abominable, but there is no need to suppose that Paul is specifically referring to the heathen practices of the Ephesians. The reference may be to the sins and evils which were secretly practised then even as they are practised now.

We are instructed by the Word of God to keep our conversation pure. It may well be true the world around us is steeped in sin but that does not give us the liberty to speak of **those things which are done of them in secret**.

**13. But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light.** All those unfruitful works of darkness which we are called upon to reprove appear in their proper perspective to sinners, by the light of God's Word as we speak it. The Light which shines forth from a holy, dedicated Christian is what God uses to convince unbelievers who have not heard the Word of the Gospel, our lives and our exemplary walk are the most explicit declaration of the truth. The Light of God's Word, and the illustration of it in Christian conversation, is the right means to convince sinners of their sin, their wickedness.

**For whatsoever doth make manifest is light;** it is the light that reveals what was concealed in the darkness; therefore it is fitting those who are children of light, who are **light in the Lord**, to let the light shine so others may see their sins, to endeavour to convince them of the evil and danger of their sins, so shining as lights in the world. **For whatsoever doth make manifest is light;** anything which shows the real form and nature of an act or object deserves to be called light. In this connexion the system which reveals the true nature of what is done by unbelievers deserves to be considered as light; the Gospel which does this is regarded as a system of light and truth. The Gospel discloses the loathsome and vile nature of sin, and it stands in contrast with all the false systems which allow or produce evils of any nature; that deceives or hides the truth from those who are lost. The light of the glorious gospel of Christ dispels the darkness and shows the path of life to all who believe.

**14. Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.** I can see no resemblance to any part of the Old Testament to suggest this is a quote; the Apostle as an inspired man simply says that God now gives this command; God now speaks in this way. The command is to be separate from sinners. Come out from among the unbelievers among whom you have had your manner of life in the past. Do not get entangled with their abominations; do not even name them. You are now the children of light; and God says to you, "Awake from false security, rouse from the death of sin, and Christ shall enlighten you."

**Awake thou that sleepest,** arouse from a state of drowsiness and thinking now I'm saved all is well. Sleep and death clearly correspond to the state in which men, relative to the Gospel, are in by nature. In sleep we are unaware of any danger, we are unconscious of what may be going on around us; we hear and see nothing. So it is with the sinner, he does not hear when God calls; he is ignorant of the danger he is in; he has no thought of the wonders and glories of heaven; he does not know his true nature and condition. To see this he must be awakened; and so Paul addresses this command to man. Man must rouse from this condition, or he cannot be saved.

It is the work of God, by His Spirit to awaken a sinner to a sense of his condition and danger. God uses the saints, His redeemed, the members of the Church as they speak the Word and live as the Lord Jesus Christ is their example. This is the message the Apostle Paul is giving to the Ephesians.

**15. See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,** the word circumspect, we use today means watchful, wary, and cautiously avoiding all dangers, it is to recognise problems before they are upon us. The original word means correctly, accurately, consistently, or perfectly; the Apostle is instructing the Ephesians who have received the truth, to be careful of their conduct, to walk by the rule which God has given; to not only profess, but live the Gospel.

**See that ye walk circumspectly,** it is impossible for a Christian to maintain a holy lifestyle, of obedience to the commands of God, without great care, caution, circumspection; none can walk and honour the Lord that do not walk circumspectly and watchfully. Circumspect walking is not foolish, ill advised walking, the circumspect walker is the wise walker; walking in the wisdom of God, recommended to us by the Word of God, and such walking is really wise. Such as walk in the world, walk foolishly; but circumspect walking is wise walking; it is wise for us, and to our true interest; it is wise for the here and now and wise for eternity.

**Not as fools, but as wise,** the heathen wanted to be called wise men. The apostle here takes the Greek word *sofov*, and applies it to the Christian; and gives the empty Gentile philosopher the title of *asofov*, without wisdom, fool.

The words may be considered as a new precept, for directing the Ephesians to a holy life; he assures them that if they will walk as the children of God, Christians, they must walk circumspectly, that circumspect walking is wise walking.

**16. Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.** Redeeming the time literally means buying the up the opportunities. It is Christian wisdom to redeem the time; walking with the Lord is how good Christians will redeem the time; by watching against temptations, by doing good, by employing ones time in useful service for the Lord, family, others and self; doing this

will not leave time for sin. Our time is given to us by God; it follows therefore that we should spend the time as is best for Him and His purposes.

To redeem time supposes a right knowledge of the use of time, and the high value of time; and to redeem time requires a resolve to keep it out of the hands of those that would use it up with idleness, sleeping in, excess time in dressing up, adorning of the body, demanding recreations, business in worldly affairs, all these rob us of our time, and time must be rescued out of their hands.

If we have wasted our time before becoming a child of God, we must endeavour to redeem it by diligence as Christians in the future. Why? **Because the days are evil**, by reason of the wickedness of the people and society, and as the days are troublesome and dangerous times for believers in that they are under pressure to conform to the ways of the world.

The present times are dangerous; they are full of troubles without and temptations within and without, and only watchful and diligent Christians have any reasonable chance to keep their garments unspotted from the world. **Because the days are evil**; full of sin, when times are most sinful it is a Christian's duty to look carefully to himself, his time, and use it wisely for God and for his own spiritual welfare.

**17. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.** Seeing the times are so perilous, and our opportunities of doing good are so uncertain and tainted by the ways of the world, be wise and understand what the Bible teaches relative to our duties as children of God. We may learn how to live godly in every relationship, in all duties, through any danger, resist temptations, to know and do the will of God revealed in His Word by taking heed to the Word.

Do not live as a fools wasting time on frivolous things and pursuits, and in your manner of life be consistent in doing the Will of God. Show true wisdom by endeavouring to understand what the will of the Lord is, and then doing it. Divine wisdom is to understand and know what the mind and will of God concerning us is, in every situation which He brings us into; to the glory of God and our own and other's best and eternal interest.

**Be not unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.** Because of the wickedness and depravity of the times, be wise relative to the Word of God, understand your duty as a child of God, search out and do the will of God, understand what the will of the Lord is. Study of the Bible will assist in knowing the mind of the Lord, the same study will reveal the way in which the Lord Jesus Christ would have us walk, where we should go and what we should say.

Ignorance of our duty as the children of God is the direct result of ignorance of the Word of God. An acquaintance with the will of God, and carefulness to obey the Word of God is evidence of true wisdom and spiritual discernment and appreciation.