

INTRODUCTION TO THE LETTER TO THE EPHESIANS

Paul the apostle fulfilled his mission from God by planting the church of Christ in the population centers of the world. The Good News which told of God's act in Jesus Christ to set men free rapidly took root in the hearts and minds of the teeming masses who populated the great cities such as Ephesus. Here was, at one and the same time, the greatest opportunity to take Christ *to* the world, but also the greatest challenge *from* the world!!!

Two special challenges for the church of Christ (messianic community) were (1) The ostentatious and pompous worship of Judaism, especially as it centered in the Temple at Jerusalem. (2) The pagan *mystery religions* which claimed to hold the secrets of God. Both *pagentry* and the idea of *knowing secrets which are withheld from the common man* fascinate we human beings. Therefore these things *can be dangerous* to your Christian life!

Ephesians is purposely designed to restrain the enchantment which the *mystery religions* still held for the Gentile converts, and also to counteract the false arguments of the *circumcision party* by which they tried to seduce the Gentile Christians into submitting to the Law of Moses. Paul did not want *two* churches, one Jewish and one Gentile! In this Letter he stresses the *unity* of The Church, and the fact that Jews and Gentiles become **ONE** in Christ!!! Some of the problem which the early church faced may be seen in this fragment of prayer in the Jewish synagogue: "Blessed be thou O Lord our God . . . who has not made me a Gentile . . . who has not made me a slave . . . who has not made me a woman!"

Paul wrote this while in prison at Rome, about 62 A.D.

THE LETTER OF PAUL TO THE EPHESIANS

1 From Paul, who by God's will is an apostle of Christ Jesus—

To God's people who live in Ephesus, those who are faithful in their life in Christ Jesus:

²May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.

Spiritual Blessings in Christ

³Let us give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! For he has blessed us, in our union with Christ, by giving us every spiritual gift in the heavenly world. ⁴Before the world was made, God had already chosen us to be his in Christ, so that we would be holy and without fault before him. Because of his love, ⁵God had already decided that through Jesus Christ he would bring us to himself as his sons—this was his pleasure and purpose. ⁶Let us praise God for his glorious grace, for the free gift he gave us in his dear Son!

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God,

The the saints, in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus:

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

Spiritual Blessings in Christ

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. **3**
4
5
6

1. **From Paul.** It was the custom to state the writer's name at the beginning of a letter. Note that Paul stresses the fact that he is an apostle by God's will! Compare note on *Gal. 1:1*. **To God's people.** The CHURCH of Christ is uniquely *God's people!!!* [*Saints*: see note on *1 Cor. 6:11*.]

2. **May God.** See note on *Rom. 1:7*.

3. **Let us give thanks!** "God has blessed not only the Jews but also you Gentiles, with all the riches of heaven!!! And he has done this without making the Law of Moses a condition to salvation!!!"

4. **Before.** "What God did in Christ was not an *afterthought* or an act of desperation on his part. Salvation comes to you Gentiles because God planned it that way even before the world was made." **God had already chosen us.** "Before there was Jew or Gentile, God chose to have a people for himself, the whole *church* of Christ, people of the covenant, limited to no one earthly race." **Holy and without fault.** "Accepted as holy because of Christ (*Rom. 8:3-4 and notes*), not because of Jewish or pagan rites."

5. **God had already decided.** "God had already decided that we, the church of Christ, should be adopted as his children!" *Johnson* says: "The whole line of argument is general instead of particular. God foreordained a church which should be composed of those adopted as his children."

6. **For his glorious grace!** "We praise God for his goodness which he displayed to us in the free gift of life which he gave us in his dear son!"

⁷For by the death of Christ we are set free, that is, our sins are forgiven. How great is the grace of God, ⁸which he gave to us in such large measure! In all his wisdom and insight ⁹God did what he had purposed, and made known to us the secret plan he had already decided to complete by means of Christ. ¹⁰God's plan, which he will complete when the time is right, is to bring all creation together, everything in heaven and on earth, with Christ as head.

¹¹All things are done according to God's plan and decision; and God chose us to be his own people in union with Christ because of his own purpose, based on what he had decided from the

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment—to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.

In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the

7. **For by the death of Christ.** Death and blood cannot be separated! Death = blood = Christ-on-the-cross!!! "In the church of Christ you Gentiles have the promise of being put right with God through the death of Christ as our sin-offering!!! Our sins are forgiven and we are set free!!!" See notes on *Acts 8:39-40*. Compare *Col. 1:13* and note.

8. **In such large measure!** "Rather than only revealing his secret to a very few, God gave us his grace in a measure beyond our imagination!!!" Compare *1 Cor. 2:6-10*; *1 Pet. 4:18* and notes.

9. **And made known to us.** "God made this VISION OF THE AGES known to us apostles by his Spirit (*1 Cor. 2:10*), and through us to you! God's secret is known by all who have been made God's children through their faith!" Some may have said that the GOSPEL was a "modern thing" and not to be trusted. In these verses, Paul shows us that this was ALWAYS God's plan and purpose, kept secret until the *right time*, and revealed IN the Christ of history!!! Compare *Luke 9:31* and note.

10. **God's plan.** "God's plan is to bring everything in all of creation into a UNITY with Jesus Christ as head!" Compare *Col. 1:15-20* and notes. **Which he will complete.** God's act in Christ is complete!! But the effects of it will not have all taken place until death is destroyed in the Resurrection! Compare *1 John 3:1-3* and notes. Our salvation will not be complete until our whole being is set free by our bodies being redeemed (*Rom. 8:23*). In contrast, many of the mystery religions said that our salvation would be completed by our becoming disembodied spirits.

11. **According to.** God rules over history. In the message of the Good News, God's plan and decision, which he had already decided from the beginning of the world, was revealed to the entire world! Christ is the sole means or agent through whom God's predetermined (foreordained) purpose of putting men right with himself is fulfilled. The *Expositor's Greek Testament* says: "The fact that we were made the heritage of God is thus declared to have been no incidental thing, nor an event belonging only to time or one having its explanation in ourselves, but a change in our life founded on and resulting from the eternal foreordaining purpose of God Himself." *Lipscomb* says: "God foreordained the provisions of salvation, the characters that should be saved, and the conditions and tests by which they would be saved. He left every man free to choose or reject the terms and provisions of salvation and in so doing to refuse to form the character God has foreordained to be his children and so predestined to everlasting life." Compare *Rom. 8:29-30* and notes.

very beginning. ¹²Let us, then, who were the first to hope in Christ, praise God's glory!

¹³And so it was with you also: when you heard the true message, the Good News that brought you salvation, you believed in Christ, and God put his stamp of ownership on you by giving you the Holy Spirit he had promised. ¹⁴The Spirit is the guarantee that we shall receive what God has promised his people, and assures us that God will give complete freedom to those who are his. Let us praise his glory!

Paul's Prayer

¹⁵For this reason, ever since I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people, ¹⁶I have not stopped giving thanks to God for you. I remember you in my prayers, ¹⁷and ask the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, to give you the Spirit, who will make you wise and reveal God to you, so that you will know him. ¹⁸I ask that your minds may be opened to see his light, so that you will know what is the hope to which he has called you, how rich are the wonderful blessings he promises his

purpose of his will, in order ¹² that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. And ¹³ you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. In him, when you believed, you were marked with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is ¹⁴ a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.

Thanksgiving and Prayer

For this reason, I, since I ¹⁵ heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, have never ¹⁶ stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. I keep asking that ¹⁷ the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray also that the ¹⁸ eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheri-

12. **Who were the first to hope.** "We Jews waited many centuries for the Messiah to come, and we who were the first to believe in Christ have this hope, not through the Law of Moses, but through the free gift of Jesus Christ! We praise God's glory in what he has done!!!" Compare *Heb. 12:23* and note.

13. **With you also.** "When you heard the Good News, you reached out through faith to seize Christ and make yourself part of Him!" **His stamp of ownership.** The Jew viewed circumcision as God's stamp of ownership on him. Here Paul identifies the *Holy Spirit* received in baptism (*Acts 2:38*) with *circumcision* (*Col. 2:11-13*).

14. **The Spirit is the guarantee.** "What God has promised his people is not complete until our bodies are changed (*Phil. 3:20-21*). The (indwelling) Spirit that each Christian receives (*John 7:37-39; Acts 2:38; 5:32*) is our guarantee that this will take place!!!" **Complete freedom** = the redemption of the purchased people. Paul stresses *freedom*, possibly because the *mystery religions* claimed to offer unusual freedom.

15. **For this reason.** "Because the Spirit is the guarantee of our complete freedom." **Ever since.** He says this to show that he is *aware* of their faith and love.

16. **Giving thanks.** Paul always praises God for the faith of sincere Christians!!!

17. **To give you the Spirit.** "I continually ask God who is the source of our eternal hope to give you the supernatural gifts from the Spirit. He will make you wise (*1 Cor. 12:8*) and reveal God to you as you understand the truth we have preached to you."

18-19. **To see his light.** We cooperate with God in our salvation, and as we reach out to him through faith, he also reaches out to us. As we make ourselves receptive to his truth, he opens our minds. It is

people, ¹⁹and how very great is his power at work in us who believe. This power in us is the same as the mighty strength ²⁰which he used when he raised Christ from death, and seated him at his right side in the heavenly world. ²¹Christ rules there above all heavenly rulers, authorities, powers, and lords; he is above all titles of power in this world and in the next. ²²God put all things under Christ's feet, and gave him to the church as supreme Lord over all things. ²³The church is Christ's body, the completion of him who himself completes all things everywhere.

tance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which ²⁰he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, ²³the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

From Death to Life

2 In the past you were spiritually dead because of your disobedience and sins. ²At that time

Made Alive in Christ

2 As for you, you were dead in your transgres-

a paradox that the more we learn about God, the more we are able to learn (*1 Cor. 2:14*). His light makes it possible for us to see (1) *the hope* we have as spiritual descendants of Abraham; (2) *how rich* are the wonderful blessings God has for us in eternity; (3) *how very great* is his power which sets us free from guilt and punishment and will raise us from death! **This power.** See *2 Cor. 4:16-18* and notes.

20. Which he used. See *Rom. 8:11* and note. **And seated him.** To show that Christ is King and rules the universe, God seated him at his right side, the place of honor! Compare *1 Cor. 15:25*.

21. Above all. Both Judaism and the mystery religions viewed God as unapproachable with angels arranged in layers as go-betweens. Heavenly rulers, authorities, powers, and lords were names they gave to different ranks in the angelic world. Paul shows Jesus Christ, the God/Man sitting not only in God's presence, but at God's right side!!! Jesus has bypassed the angels to make a direct link between man and God!!! **All titles of power.** This makes Jesus Christ superior to everyone and everything except God the Father himself! Compare *Col. 1:16; 1 Pet. 3:22; Eph. 3:10*.

22. God put all things. See *1 Cor. 15:27. Gave him to the church.* Paul usually means *local congregation* when he says *church*, but here he means the universal church which is composed of all the saved - the messianic community in its widest sense. This church is Christ's *body* and Christ himself is the *head* of that body. See *Col. 1:18; 2:19*.

23. The completion. The church *completes* Christ in the sense that the church is the visible declaration that Christ is Lord!!! Paul stresses the close connection between Christ and his church!!! See note on *Acts 9:5*. This also can be translated *fullness* as the NIV has done. *Lipscomb* says: "Jesus filled with all the fullness of God bestows the fullness of his blessings on his body, the church." Paul shows the Ephesians how very inferior in both dignity and happiness the members of pagan fellowships and mystery religions are, when compared with the members of Christ's church!!! The *church* of Christ is a fellowship protected and ruled by *One* whom God has raised to the highest position in the Universe, in order to make the members of the Christian fellowship (church) holy and happy through all eternity!!! Notice the *church* does not terminate, but continues on into Eternity!!! Compare *Rev. 19:7-9; 21:1-5*.

1. You were spiritually dead. "In the past, even though you knew mysteries and secrets, you were spiritually dead in disobedience and sins."

you followed the world's evil way; you obeyed the ruler of the spiritual powers in space, the spirit who now controls the people who disobey God. ³Actually all of us were like them, and lived according to our natural desires, and did whatever suited the wishes of our own bodies and minds. Like everyone else, we too were naturally bound to suffer God's wrath.

⁴But God's mercy is so abundant, and his love for us is so great, ⁵that while we were spiritually dead in our disobedience he brought us to life with Christ. It is by God's grace that you have been saved. ⁶In our union with Christ Jesus he raised us up with him to rule with him in the heavenly world. ⁷He did this to demonstrate for all time to come the extraordinary greatness of his grace in the love he showed us in Christ Jesus. ⁸For it is by God's grace that you have been saved, through faith. It is not your own doing,

sions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of

2. **You followed.** "The evil powers who control this age and shape the lives of men separate man from God! The mysteries and secrets you knew came from this source." Both Jewish and pagan thought placed the evil spirits and angels in space and even the air itself.

3. **Were like them.** "Even we Jews lived like this, slaves to our human natures, controlled by the Devil, doomed to suffer God's wrath!" Paul shows by this that the Law of Moses was not as effective as the *circumcision party* claimed. Also, he shows the Jewish Christians that they were just as dead in disobedience and sins in the past, and equally needed to be made alive by Christ! Compare *Rom. 3:9-20*.

4. **But God's mercy.** This tragic and helpless situation of man, sets the stage for God to reveal his mercy and his love to both Jew and Gentile!!

5. **He brought us to life with Christ.** "God acted in history at a time when the world was spiritually dead. God brought Jews and Gentiles to life with Christ by raising Him from the dead (*Acts 13:32-33; 2 Cor. 5:15-17*), and we share in this life by acting out the events of the Cross (*Col. 2:11-13; 1 Pet. 3:21*). I say it is by God's grace you have been saved, since only God's grace could give life to the dead!!!"

6. **In our union.** "We became Christians by being united to Christ (*Gal. 3:27*), and in this union God raised us to life from our dead spiritual state (*Col. 2:12*). But more than this, in our union with Christ Jesus we are now ruling with him in the heavenly world (*Col. 3:1-4; Rev. 5:10 and notes*). The messianic community of the redeemed in the present is a fulfillment in part of God's promise of Eternity!"

7. **To demonstrate for all time.** See *1 Tim. 1:16* and note. "This shows, that in every age of time, all who believe and reach out through faith to seize Christ, may expect forgiveness and new life in Christ!!!"

8. **For it is.** "Neither the works of The Law nor the secrets of the mystery religions could ever save you and set you free from ignorance and superstition. Only God's grace could make that available to you. Salvation is the gift of God through faith! You seize it, not achieve it!!!" [Note: in the Greek, FAITH is feminine but IT is neuter. Faith is not the gift, but salvation is! The Holy Spirit produces faith through the message of the Good News (*Rom. 10:17*). But faith is more than just believing (*James 2:19*).]

but God's gift. ⁹There is nothing here to boast of, since it is not the result of your own efforts. ¹⁰God is our Maker, and in our union with Christ Jesus he has created us for a life of good works, which he has already prepared for us to do.

One in Christ

¹¹You Gentiles by birth—who are called the uncircumcised by the Jews, who call themselves the circumcised (which refers to what men themselves do on their bodies)—remember what you were in the past. ¹²At that time you were apart from Christ. You were foreigners, and did not belong to God's chosen people. You had no part in the covenants, which were based on God's promises to his people. You lived in this world without hope and without God. ¹³But now, in union with Christ Jesus, you who used to be far away have been brought near by the death of Christ. ¹⁴For Christ himself has brought us peace, by making the Jews and Gentiles one people. With his own body he broke down the wall that separated them and kept them enemies.

God—not by works, so that 9
no one can boast. For we are 10
God's workmanship, creat-
ed in Christ Jesus to do good
works, which God prepared
in advance for us to do.

One in Christ

Therefore, remember that 11
formerly you who are Gen-
tiles by birth and called "un-
circumcised" by those who
call themselves "the circum-
cision" (that done in the
body by the hands of men)—
remember that at that time 12
you were separate from
Christ, excluded from citi-
zenship in Israel and for-
eigners to the covenants of
the promise, without hope
and without God in the
world. But now in Christ 13
Jesus you who once were far
away have been brought
near through the blood of
Christ.

For he himself is our 14
peace, who has made the
two one and has destroyed
the barrier, the dividing wall

9. **There is nothing.** "Your salvation did not come through the rites of The Law nor through a knowledge of secrets and mysteries. It isn't the result of your own efforts, therefore there is nothing here to boast about!"

10. **God is our Maker.** "But though we cannot save ourselves by the good deeds we might do prior to our converting to Christ, yet in our union with Christ Jesus God has *created us* for a lifetime of good works by which we praise and worship Him. He has *programed* the world to demand the best from us, and he has taught us how we should live, through the Good News and the influence of the Spirit." Compare *Matt. 25:31-46; Gal. 5:22-26*.

11. **You Gentiles.** "To strengthen your sense of God's goodness in saving you, and to show you the obligation that this salvation places on you to live a life of good works, I ask you to remember what you were in the past. The Jews despised you and called you *the uncircumcised!* But of course they were wrong to boast about something done by men themselves on their own bodies."

12. **At that time.** "At that time in the past, you had no promise of The Messiah, and you could not belong to God's chosen people!" **Covenants.** See *Rom. 9:4-5*. **Without.** With neither hope nor God, they lived futile lives!!!

13. **But now.** "But now through the bloody-death of Christ, the Jewish Messiah, you who were formerly *excluded* from God's temple at Jerusalem are brought near to God by being built into Christ's church, the messianic community of the saved!"

14. **For Christ himself.** "Christ died for the Gentiles as well as the Jews! With his own body of flesh, he brought us peace by breaking down the wall of The Law, which like the *wall of separation* in the Jewish temple, *included* the Jews but *excluded* all others!"

¹⁵He abolished the Jewish Law, with its commandments and rules, in order to create out of the two races one new people in union with himself, in this way making peace. ¹⁶By his death on the cross Christ destroyed the enmity; by means of the cross he united both races into one body and brought them back to God. ¹⁷So Christ came and preached the Good News of peace to all—to you Gentiles, who were far away from God, and to the Jews, who were near to him. ¹⁸It is through Christ that all of us, Jews and Gentiles, are able to come in the one Spirit into the presence of the Father.

¹⁹So then, you Gentiles are not foreigners or strangers any longer; you are now fellow-citizens with God's people, and members of the family of God. ²⁰You, too, are built upon the foundation laid by the apostles and prophets, the cornerstone being Christ Jesus himself. ²¹He is the one who holds the whole building together and makes

of hostility, by abolishing in ¹⁵ his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this ¹⁶ one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He ¹⁷ came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him we ¹⁸ both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

Consequently, you are no ¹⁹ longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built ²⁰ on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him ²¹ the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord.

15. **He abolished the Jewish Law.** "By the bloody-death of his Cross, he abolished the Jewish Law with all its rites!!! He did this to create ONE NEW PEOPLE in union with himself." On the wall between Jews and Gentiles, see *Acts 10:28*.

16. **By his death.** *Christ-on-the-cross* (see note on *1 Cor. 1:23*). The Cross destroys the enmity between Jew and Gentile, and the enmity of the sinner toward God; unites both races into *one body* (Christ's church, see notes on *Matt. 16:18*) through the *new birth* (*Titus 3:5*) and brings them back to God (*Col. 1:20*).

17. **So Christ came and preached.** See *Heb. 1:2* and note. Paul points back to the First Coming and God's finished work in Christ! The long awaited time has now come and the apostles and the church announce the Good News of peace!!! Compare *Isa. 52:7; 57:19 Zech. 9:10; Rom. 10:15*.

18. **That all of us.** To see the *king*, you had to be introduced by someone close to him. Paul is using this symbolism to say that it is *only through* Christ that any of us can be introduced to God and come in/by the *one Spirit* (*1 Cor. 12:13*) into the presence of the Father.

19. **So then.** "Being formed into *one people* (Christ's church) along with the Jews, you Gentiles are not foreigners or strangers any longer! You share the covenants of promise and are members of the family of God! House of God = household of God = family of God = Christ's church = messianic community of the saved.

20. **You too.** "The Jews, and you Gentiles too, are built into the spiritual temple of God as *living stones* (*1 Pet. 2:5*)! You are built on the foundation which the apostles and prophets laid by proclaiming the Good News (*Eph. 3:5*), and the cornerstone which unites the two sides of the building is Christ Jesus himself!"

21. **He is the one.** "As the cornerstone, Christ is the one who holds the whole building together by destroying the hostility between Jews and Gentiles. He makes it grow into a sacred temple (*1 Cor. 3:16*) by bringing new members (converts) into the *community* (church). In this sacred temple, the Lord Jesus is High Priest!"

it grow into a sacred temple in the Lord. ²²In union with him you too are being built together with all the others into a house where God lives through his Spirit.

Paul's Work for the Gentiles

3 For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles, pray to God. ²Surely you have heard that God, in his grace, has given me this work to do for your good. ³God revealed his secret plan and made it known to me. (I have written briefly about this, 'and if you will read what I have written you can learn my understanding of the secret of

And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

Paul the Preacher to the Gentiles

3 For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—
² Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, that is, the mystery made known to be by revelation, as I have already written briefly. In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of

22. **You too are being built.** You Gentile Christians (along with Jewish Christians) are being built [present continuous] into a house (made of living stones held together by love) where God lives (*Acts 7:48; 17:24*) through his Spirit!" *Lipscomb* says: "The New Testament clearly recognizes each separate congregation as the body of Christ. So that God through his Spirit dwells in each distinct and separate church. The church is the body of Christ in the community in which it is situated. It is not a foot in Corinth, an arm in Ephesus, an eye in Philippi, an ear in Antioch. But each was a complete integral body of Christ composed of all the different members needed to make up his body." Each congregation is the visible body of Christ. In sum-total, they form the invisible body of Christ, the *one church* which he built (*Matt. 16:18*).

1. **For this reason.** "Because of the truth that God had already decided to adopt the Gentiles as children (*Eph. 1:5*), I am the prisoner of Christ Jesus for your sake." Since Paul writes from his imprisonment in Rome, it is important the Ephesians do not misunderstand his suffering or be discouraged by it. The main subject of *verses 1-13* is God's *call* to the Gentiles and Paul's *mission* as an apostle to take the Good News to the Gentiles. He reminds his readers of the *secret* of that call, how the *call* was revealed to the apostles and prophets, and his own commission to the service of preaching the Good News to the Gentiles; and to show that God's grace opened the *church* to those who were not part of national Israel.

2. **That God.** "You cannot doubt that I am imprisoned for the sake of you Gentiles, since you have heard about the mission God gave me, to preach the Good News to you without requiring you to obey the Law of Moses!" Compare *Gal. 1:13-16*.

3. **His secret plan.** To Paul, a secret or mystery is something hidden until the time comes for it to be revealed. Compare *1 Cor. 2:6-10*. I have written briefly. *Johnson* thinks Paul means what he has already written in this Letter (*Eph. 1:9-10; 2:11-18*). Some scholars think Paul had written other letters to the Ephesians, which do not form part of the New Testament.

4. **You can learn my understanding.** (1) "You will know as much of the secret of Christ as I know!" (2) "You will see in my actions and my whole life, my understanding of the secret of God's will for the Gentiles!"

Christ.) ⁵In past times men were not told this secret, but God has revealed it now by the Spirit to his holy apostles and prophets. ⁶The secret is this: by means of the gospel the Gentiles have a part with the Jews in God's blessings; they are members of the same body, and share in the promise that God made in Christ Jesus.

⁷I was made a servant of the gospel by God's special gift, which he gave me through the working of his power. ⁸I am less than the least of all God's people; yet God gave me this privilege of taking to the Gentiles the Good News of the infinite riches of Christ, ⁹and to make all men see how God's secret plan is to be put into effect. God, who is the Creator of all things, kept his secret hidden through all the past ages, ¹⁰in order that at the present time, by means of the church, the angelic rulers and powers in the heavenly world might know God's wisdom, in

Christ, which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.

I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power. Although I am less than the least of all God's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make plain to everyone my administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things. His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in

5. **In past times.** "God did make his promise to Abraham, but no one ever thought God would save the Gentiles through their faith in Christ. In fact, in times past, no one knew just how God would make his promise come true! But now that God has acted in Christ, the Spirit revealed the Plan to God's holy apostles and prophets (*John 14:26; 1 Cor. 12:8 and notes*)."

6. **The secret is this.** "The Gentiles share directly with the Jews in the heavenly inheritance. This means: they are now members of the same body, the church, through faith in Christ; they share in the promise (*Gal. 3:17-18*) that God made in Christ Jesus."

7. **I was made.** "At a specific time and place, Christ appeared to me to make me an apostle, and this was God's special gift to me."

8. **I am less.** Some think Paul never really got over the fact that he had tried to destroy the messianic community! Yet, it is equally clear that Paul knew God had forgiven him for this (*1 Tim. 1:12-13*)! It is probable that Paul's enemies kept bringing this up to try to discredit him, and that he takes their accusation and uses it to prove the reality of his commission to be an apostle.

9. **And to make all men see.** In contrast to the mystery religions which claimed to reveal secrets to the privileged few, Paul states that his mission is to tell *all men!* God's secret plan, is put into effect by God's offer to save men through Christ by faith!!!

10. **In order that.** "God kept his secret hidden during the past ages, and even the angelic rulers and powers did not understand what He had planned. Now, at this present time, the fullness of God's wisdom is revealed! The church (messianic community) plays a vital part in God's Plan, since it is by means of the church that we are able to identify God's unchanging Plan at work in history. The continual growth of Christ's church points forward to the climax which is still future (*Eph. 1:10*).

all its different forms. ¹¹God did this according to his eternal purpose, which he achieved through Christ Jesus our Lord. ¹²In union with him, and through our faith in him, we have the freedom to enter into God's presence with all confidence. ¹³I beg you, then, do not be discouraged because I am suffering for you; it is all for your benefit.

The Love of Christ

¹⁴For this reason, then, I fall on my knees before the Father, ¹⁵from whom every family in heaven and on earth receives its true name. ¹⁶I ask God, from the wealth of his glory, to give you power through his Spirit to be strong in your inner selves, ¹⁷and that Christ will make his home in your hearts, through faith. I pray that you may have your roots and foundations in love,

the heavenly realms, accord- 11
ing to his eternal purpose 12
which he accomplished in 13
Christ Jesus our Lord. In 14
him and through faith in 15
him we may approach God 16
with freedom and confi- 17
dence. I ask you, therefore, 18
not to be discouraged be- 19
cause of my sufferings for 20
you, which are your glory.

A Prayer for the Ephesians

For this reason I kneel be- 14
fore the Father, from whom 15
the whole family of believers 16
in heaven and on earth de- 17
rives its name. I pray that 18
out of his glorious riches he 19
may strengthen you with 20
power through his Spirit in 21
your inner being, so that 22
Christ may dwell in your 23
hearts through faith. And I 24
pray that you, being rooted

11. **Which he achieved.** "God's Plan, which becomes visible in the church, is not some whim of God, but the result of God's eternal purpose. God's great saving power in all of history is focused in and through Jesus Christ and his church!!!"

12. **The freedom to enter into.** *Johnson* says: "In Jesus Christ, all, both Jew and Gentile alike, can come boldly [with confidence] to God. Without the revelation of Christ [The Faith] we could hardly know of God as a God of love, who loved to have us come to him."

13. **Do not be discouraged.** "I have given you good reasons why you should not be discouraged by my suffering for you. I have showed you God's secret which has been revealed in Jesus Christ, and I have showed you that God accepts you Gentiles directly, without first becoming Jews. My suffering really proves the truth of the Good News I have preached to you!"

14. **For this reason.** "Because of the great privileges God offers to all of us including you Gentiles, and because I do not want you to be discouraged by the things I am suffering, I fall on my knees before the Father in prayer for you all!" [Early Christians sometimes kneeled in prayer, but usually stood, with arms outstretched and hands palm upward, with their eyes raised to the sky.]

15. **Receives its true name.** *Johnson* says "The idea is that The Father is the *Father* of all the families of his children, whether Jews or Gentiles on earth, or in heaven." *MacKnight* thinks this includes the good angels.

16. **I ask God.** "My prayer to God for you is: that out of the wealth of his glory, he would give you power (compare *Acts 4:31*) through his Spirit who lives in you (*1 Cor. 6:19-20*), to be strong in your inner selves as you see God's promises to you and that you will have the courage to hold firmly to these things!!!"

17. **And that Christ.** "And that Christ, who bought you for God by his death and made these promises of God available to you, will make his home in your hearts! Faith is the means by which he does this." **Your roots and foundations.** "Your very *life and growth* has its roots in love, and love is the mortar that builds you *living stones* (*1 Pet. 2:5*) into God's Temple (*Eph. 2:22*) on the foundation which is Jesus Christ!" See *verse 19*.

¹⁸so that you, together with all God's people, may have the power to understand how broad and long and high and deep is Christ's love.

¹⁹Yes, may you come to know his love—although it can never be fully known—and so be completely filled with the perfect fullness of God.

²⁰To him who is able to do so much more than we can ever ask for, or even think of, by means of the power working in us: ²¹to God be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus, for all time, forever and ever! Amen.

The Unity of the Body

4 I urge you, then—I who am a prisoner because I serve the Lord: live a life that measures up to the standard God set when he called you. ²Be humble, gentle, and patient always. Show your love by being helpful to one

and established in love, may ¹⁸ have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that ¹⁹ surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Now to him who is able to ²⁰ do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be ²¹ glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

Unity in the Body of Christ

4 As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. ² Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.

18. The power to understand. "Unless your roots and foundations are in *love*, you will never really be able to understand the far reaching effects of Christ's love!!! Love led him to the Cross and love caused him to build his *church* (Matt. 16:18), which not being limited to Jerusalem, covers the whole earth and reaches to heaven itself!!! Christ's *church* is large enough to contain *all* the believers of *all* the nations; and it is so firmly built that it can never be destroyed, but will extend into Eternity!!!"

19. Yes, may you. "I want you to come to know Christ's love, on which his church is built. You can know it, although it is true that in this world we can only know in part the infinite love of Christ! I want you to be filled with God's grace and power to the fullest extent, and love is vital to this!!!"

20-21. To him. "And now to him who is able to make both we Jews and you Gentiles participate and share in all his promises, and to do so much more than we can ever ask for or even think of, both now and in Eternity, by means of the power working in us (Eph. 1:10, 19; Col. 1:29; Phil. 2:13): to God who is able and willing to do all this for us, be glory in the church as the body of Christ, and in Christ Jesus through whom God focused his great saving power, for all time, forever and ever! Amen." It may be that Paul views the *everlasting future* as one long AGE which began at the Empty Tomb which climaxed Christ's First Coming and which extends into the limitless Eternity!!!

1. I urge you, then. "I have showed you the secret Plan of God and the glory of Christ and his church to make you aware of *who you are!!!* What I am about to say is based on the fact of *who you are in Christ!!!*" **A prisoner because.** "I am a prisoner because I serve the Lord. My Jewish enemies have put me here because I insist on telling God's Good News to you Gentiles without forcing you to submit to The Law." **Live a life.** "As sons and daughters of God, you have been called to the highest standards and privileges with which man has ever been honored!!!"

2. Be. "Christian ethics call you to be humble, generous, and patient always! Show that your love is real by being helpful to one another in the problems and sorrows of life."

another. ³Do your best to preserve the unity which the Spirit gives, by the peace that binds you together. ⁴There is one body and one Spirit, just as there is one hope to which God has called you. ⁵There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶there is one God and Father of all men, who is Lord of all, works, through all, and is in all.

⁷Each one of us has been given a special gift, in proportion to what Christ has given. ⁸As the scripture says,

“When he went up to the very heights
he took many captives with him;
he gave gifts to men.”

3 Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.
4 There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called—one Lord, one
5 faith, one baptism; one God
6 and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

7 But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. This
8 is why it says:

“When he ascended on high,
he led captives in his train
and gave gifts to men.”

3. **Do your best.** “As Christians you all have unity in the *one Spirit* (*1 Cor. 12:13*), and by the peace which grows out of love and that binds you together, do your best to preserve this unity!!!” Compare *Col. 3:14*.

4. **There is one body.** Not *one kind of body*, but **ONE BODY** composed of every one who is **IN FACT** a son or daughter of God! Even though each congregation is *the body of Christ* (see note on *Eph. 2:22*), and Christ is the head of each congregation in that sense, yet Christ is the head of the **ONE BODY** into which he unites both Jew and Gentile and brings them back to God (*Eph. 2:16*). **One Spirit.** See note on *verse 3*. *Lipscomb* says: “There is but one Spirit to give life, to guide, and direct that one body.” **One hope.** The hope of eternal life created in each one who hears God’s call (through the gospel, *John 6:45*) and responds to it!

5. **One Lord.** Jesus Christ (*Acts 2:36*), who by his bloody-death bought men for God and is head of the church which he built (*Matt. 16:18*). **One faith.** One living, life-giving confident trust which centers in *God’s finished work in Christ*. Our *creed* is Christ!!! **One baptism.** The *one baptism* which combines water and the Spirit is the promise made to God from a good conscience (*1 Pet. 3:21*). *Lipscomb* says: “One burial [in the liquid grave] of him whose heart is purified by faith, who has been crucified with Jesus Christ to sin, that he may rise [from that liquid grave] to walk in newness of life with the risen and glorified Savior.”

6. **One God and Father.** Not many “gods,” but **ONE God** for all men, both Jew and Gentile, whom the Spirit gives the right to call Father (*Rom. 8:15*). **Who is Lord of all.** See *1 Cor. 15:28*. **Works through all.** *MacKnight* views this in the sense of *Rom. 8:28*. **Is in all.** See *Acts 17:28*. The whole point of this verse is: *what God is to the Christian!*

7. **Each one of us.** “In addition to the gifts which I have just mentioned, which each and every Christian receives, I now mention the special gifts which Christ has for us individually. Each receives what Christ has to give them, in proportion to what Christ himself has given, some more and some less, but each from the same Hand and for the same purpose!” Christians are all equal in promises and privileges, but they are not equal in abilities and responsibilities. See *Luke 19:11-27* and notes.

8. **As the scripture says.** *Psalm 68:18* Septuagint. “When Christ went up to the very heights of heaven itself, he took many captives with him (the evil spirits and powers who had made slaves of men by using sin, the curse of The Law, and the fear of death); and he gave spiritual gifts to all men, both Jew and Gentile!”

9 Now, what does "he went up" mean? It means that first he came down—that is, down to the lower depths of the earth. 10 So he who came down is the same one who went up above and beyond the heavens, to fill the whole universe with his presence. 11 It was he who "gave gifts to men"; he appointed some to be apostles, others to be prophets, others to be evangelists, others to be pastors and teachers. 12 He did this to prepare all God's people for the work of Christian service, to build up the body of Christ. 13 And so we shall all come together to that oneness in our faith and in our knowledge of the Son of God;

(What does "he ascended" 9 mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? He who descended 10 is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) It was he who gave 11 some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare 12 God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in 13 the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and

9. Now? "Because the Jews deny that Jesus is The Christ because of his shame and death, I show you that 'he went up' can have no other meaning but that he first came down to earth from heaven. This must be true, if the one who *went up* is divine, as the Psalm shows!" [Lower depth of the earth = the lower (in relation to heaven) earthly regions. If Paul had meant *the world of the dead*, he would have said it differently. The point-of-view is the *identity* of the one who *came down*, *went up*, and *gave gifts to men*.]

10. **So he.** God's throne is said to be above the heavens, since God is *above* all! As Christ sits at God's right side, he has been raised above all! Paul declares that all the gifts working in the church at Ephesus, whether normal or supernormal, have their origin in the Christ who went up to heaven!

11. **It was he who.** Paul identifies the *gifts* as specific services performed in the body of Christ. **Apostles.** If we take this in the strict sense, it means the Twelve and Paul. Their work was complete and not one can or did take their place. They belong to the *first generation* of the church. **Prophets.** These also belonged to the *first generation*. They preached the Good News (God's message) which they were taught directly by the Holy Spirit. Agabus, Judas, Silas, the four daughters of Philip, are mentioned as having this gift. **Evangelists.** It is unfortunate that many think only of *evangelists* in terms of "revivals." The evangelist in the first century of the church was what we call a preacher, but with a little difference in the *job description*. The evangelist did much the same work as the apostles and prophets, but was not *inspired* (although he might have one or more gifts), and did not have the same authority. The mission of the evangelist is to preach the Good News (2 Tim. 4:1-5), to *water* (1 Cor. 3:5-9), to train other workers (2 Tim. 2:1-2), to put things in order (Titus 1:5), and in general to teach the true meaning of the Good News (Titus ch 2). **Pastors** = shepherds, bishops, church elders, church leaders. In the early church, all these titles described the same men. These spiritually mature men, called by the congregation to supervise the spiritual life of the group, and to assist each member to fulfill his or her service to Christ. **Teachers.** Every pastor is a teacher, but not every teacher is a pastor. The church is *on-the-job training* for Eternity!!!

12. **To prepare all God's people.** Christ gave the *gifts* mentioned in *verse 11* to prepare the believing Jews and Gentiles, who are God's people, for the ordinary work of Christian service (both telling others the Good News, Acts 8:4; and benevolence), to build up the body of Christ (in spiritual strength and in numbers).

13. **And so.** The *work* of the leadership is to bring each Christian, man or woman, to the highest degree of spiritual maturity possible! By doing this, Christians come to a *oneness* in faith and knowledge of Christ. Lack of *oneness* implies spiritual immaturity. **Of Christ's full stature.** The *Expositor's Greek Testament* says: "The *CHRISTOU* is the *poss. gen.*, and the phrase means the fullness that belongs to Christ, the sum of the qualities which make Him what He is. These are to be *imaged* in the Church (compare Eph. 1:23), and when these are in us we shall have reached our maturity and attained to the goal set before us." This must be the aim of all our *teaching* and all our *living*!!!

we shall become mature men, reaching to the very height of Christ's full stature. ¹⁴Then we shall no longer be children, carried by the waves and blown about by every shifting wind of the teaching of deceitful men, who lead others to error by the tricks they invent. ¹⁵Instead, by speaking the truth in a spirit of love, we must grow up in every way to Christ, who is the head. ¹⁶Under his control all the different parts of the body fit together, and the whole body is held together by every joint with which it is provided. So when each separate part works as it should, the whole body grows and builds itself up through love.

The New Life in Christ

¹⁷In the Lord's name, then, I say this and warn you: do not live any longer like the heathen, whose thoughts are worthless, ¹⁸and whose minds are in the dark. They have no part in the life that God gives, because they are completely ig-

become mature, attaining the full measure of perfection found in Christ.

Then we will no longer be ¹⁴infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking ¹⁵the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole ¹⁶body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

Living as Children of Light

So I tell you this, and ¹⁷insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They ¹⁸are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their

14. **No longer be children.** Children are weak, inexperienced, easily fooled. God has purposely set up this world as an *obstacle course!* We reach our *eternal goal* only by using all of God's help to avoid the mudholes, the barbed-wire, the barriers, and everything else the Devil puts in our way to send us off in the wrong direction!!!

15. **Instead.** "Rather than being children, we must grow up to Christ's full stature!" Truth spoken without love can destroy the one who uses it! See *Rev. 2:4-5* and notes. But truth spoken in love will bless both the one who speaks and the one who hears!!!

16. **Under his control.** "As the *head*, Christ controls his body. Under his control, all the different parts of the body (Jew and Gentile, slave and free, man and woman) fit together in a synergetic community where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts." The health and growth of the whole body depends upon the functioning of each and every member!

17. **In the Lord's name, then.** "This is the Lord's command I speak to you! Do not live any longer like the heathen do! They live lives that are morally and intellectually futile! Do not be fooled by their mysteries and secrets, which they call *true wisdom!*" **Worthless.** "They waste their mental powers on things that have no value at all!"

18. **In the dark.** "They are ignorant of truth and do not know they are ignorant!!!" **In the life that God gives.** The *Expositor's Greek Testament* says: "This cannot mean the *godly life*, the way of life approved by God. For *ζωή* in the NT seems never to mean the *course* of life, but *life* itself, the principle of life as opposed to *death.*" See *Rom. 1:21-23*. **Because.** The fact that they have no part in the life God gives is due to their own choice! The cause is not something external, but in *themselves!*

norant and stubborn. ¹⁹They have lost all feeling of shame; they give themselves over to vice, and do all sorts of indecent things without restraint.

²⁰That was not what you learned about Christ!

²¹You certainly heard about him, and as his followers you were taught the truth that is in Jesus. ²²So get rid of your old self, which made you live as you used to—the old self that was being destroyed by its deceitful desires. ²³Your hearts and minds must be made completely new.

²⁴You must put on the new self, which is created in God's likeness, and reveals itself in the true life that is upright and holy.

²⁵No more lying then! Everyone must tell the truth to his brother, because we are all members together in the body of Christ. ²⁶If you become angry, do not let your anger lead you into sin;

hearts. Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more.

You, however, did not come to know Christ that way. Surely you heard of him and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

Therefore, each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body. In your anger do not sin: Do not let the sun go down while you are

19. **They have lost.** "They are no longer able to feel shame or guilt at the things they do!" **They give themselves.** See *Rom. 1:24-32*.

20. **Not what you learned.** The message of the Good News included the command: *You must be holy, because I am holy (1 Pet. 1:16)*.

21. **You certainly heard.** Paul links Christ with the *shape* of moral life! **And as his followers.** See note on *verse 13*. Jesus refers to the *Christ of history*, through whom God spoke (*Heb. 1:2*), and whose words form the message of the Good News (*John 14:26; Acts 1:1-2*).

22. **So get rid of.** "Because you are new in Christ, your life must be a series of deliberate choices in which you get rid of your old self (*Rom. 8:12-13*) to live new in the Spirit! *The life style* of the Christian must *match up* with his or her new relationship with Christ!!

23. **Completely new.** "You made a promise to God in your baptism (*1 Pet. 3:21*), and you must change your whole way of thinking, with God's help (*Rom. 12:1-2*)." *Becoming holy* = taking *being put right with God* seriously!!!

24. **You must put on.** Note this is said to those who are already Christians!!! *The Expositor's Greek Testament* says: "... but as 'the holy form of human life which results from redemption,' created once for all in and by Christ, and participated in by the individual convert." We do become *new* in our new birth (*Titus 3:5*) and for this reason we put off the *old man* and put on the *new man* as our love for Christ motivates us to live in imitation of Him.

25. **No more lying then!** Lying was *standard practice* in the Gentile world. **Because.** "I want you to see the union we have with each other through our union with Christ! This is the reason you must tell the truth to your brother! Being part of the body of Christ means that your whole life is shared with your brothers and sisters in Christ!"

26. **Do not let.** "Anger can lead you into sin, if it is not controlled!" [Paul quotes *Psalms 4:4* Septuagint.] **Do not stay angry.** "Do not let your anger turn into a grudge and make you hostile!"

and do not stay angry all day. ²⁷Don't give the Devil a chance. ²⁸The man who used to rob must stop robbing and start working, to earn an honest living for himself, and to be able to help the poor. ²⁹Do not use harmful words in talking. Use only helpful words, the kind that build up and provide what is needed, so that what you say will do good to those who hear you. ³⁰And do not make God's Holy Spirit sad; for the Spirit is God's mark of ownership on you, a guarantee that the Day will come when God will set you free. ³¹Get rid of all bitterness, passion, and anger. No more shouting or insults. No more hateful feelings of any sort. ³²Instead, be kind and tender-hearted to one another, and forgive one another, as God has forgiven you in Christ.

Living in the Light

5 Since you are God's dear children, you must try to be like him. ²Your life must be controlled by love, just as Christ loved us and gave his life for us, as a sweet-smelling offering and sacrifice that pleases God.

still angry, and do not give ²⁷ the devil a foothold. He who ²⁸ has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need.

Do not let any unwhole- ²⁹ some talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the ³⁰ Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get ³¹ rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and com- ³² passionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

5 Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. ²

27. **Don't give the Devil.** "Uncontrolled anger and violent temper give the Devil a chance to tempt you into evil actions!" [Erasmus translated this: "Give no chance to heathen to say bad things about the holy religion which you profess."]

28. **Who used to rob.** Here is a strong statement of the *Christian work ethic*. Honest work is the best antidote to a dishonest life! But notice the emphasis on *to be able to help the poor!!!*

29. **Do not use harmful words.** Christians must work to build, not to destroy! Compare *James 3:5-12*.

30. **And do not make.** "If you use harmful words and live unholy lives, you will make God's Holy Spirit sad, and deprive yourself of His help!" **God's mark of ownership.** This mark of ownership was placed on them in the new birth of water and the Spirit (*John 3:5*). A **guarantee**. We expect to be completely set free in the Resurrection (*Rom. 8:23; 1 John 3:1-3*).

31. **Get rid of.** "All these things make the Spirit sad!"

32. **Instead.** Christian love is: acting toward others as God has acted toward you! These are positive qualities that the Spirit leads you to develop (as the written word teaches you)! Compare *verse 3; Gal. 5:22-26*. [Contrast this with the Gentile philosopher Epictetus, who said: "If one is in affliction, thou may say to him, Thou hast pity on him, but take care not to feel any pity."]

1. **Since you are.** "Do not imitate the viciously immoral character of the heathen *gods!* You are God's dear children and you must try to imitate his perfect character, especially his forgiving love!"

2. **Controlled by love.** "The greatest *expression* of God's love is his act in Christ to set us free! Christ himself loved us and voluntarily gave his life for us (*John 10:17-18*)! Christ is our sin-offering, to change us from enemies to friends of God! This is the example of love which your life should imitate!"

³Since you are God's people, it is not right that any questions of immorality, or indecency, or greed should even be mentioned among you. ⁴Nor is it fitting for you to use obscene, foolish, or dirty words. Rather you should give thanks to God. ⁵You may be sure of this: no man who is immoral, indecent, or greedy (for greediness is a form of idol worship) will ever receive a share in the Kingdom of Christ and of God.

⁶Do not let anyone deceive you with foolish words; it is because of these very things that God's wrath will come upon those who do not obey him. ⁷So have nothing at all to do with such people. ⁸You yourselves used to be in the darkness, but since you have become the Lord's people you are in the light. So you must live like people who belong to the light. ⁹For it is the light that brings a rich harvest of every kind of good-

But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure, or greedy person—such a man is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. Therefore do not be partners with them.

For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and

3. **God's people.** "As God's holy people, sin is no longer a possible option for you (*1 John 3:9*)!" The Gentiles did not count these things as sin, but these were some of the deadliest temptations to which the Gentile Christians were exposed. They still are!!! See notes on *Gal. 5:19-20*.

4. **For you to use.** "Even the way you talk must show you belong to God!" **Obscene.** Deeply offensive to morality or decency. **Foolish.** Frivolous and senseless. But it may have the sense of *malicious gossip* (see note on *Matt. 12:36*). **Dirty words.** The coarse joking that makes fun of modesty and despises goodness. **Give thanks to God.** This is the antidote to the attitude that uses obscene, foolish, or dirty words. If you spend your life giving thanks to God, you will avoid these sins which are out of place in the life of God's child.

5. **You may be sure of this.** "The message of the Good News teaches you that no man, even a Christian, who is immoral, indecent, or greedy (*verse 3*) will ever receive a share in the Kingdom (*Matt. 7:21-23*)!" **Idol worship.** The greedy man makes money his *idol*.

6. **Do not let.** "Do not let a legislator, a philosopher, a teacher, or a preacher deceive you with foolish words and convince you that these things we say to prohibit immorality, indecency, greed, and evil words are only ritual rules which originate from the Law of Moses! God's wrath is coming on the world for these very things!!!" Compare *Rom. 1:18; Jude 15-16*.

7. **So.** "Do not share in their crimes, or you will share in their punishment!" Compare *1 Cor. 5:9-13; 2 Cor. 6:14* and notes.

8. **Used to be.** "When you were heathens, you used to live in darkness, even though you knew secrets and mysteries. But now you have become the Lord's people and are in the light of *truth*! This places an obligation on you to make your *life style* holy!" In the Dead Sea Scrolls, *light and darkness* are locked in struggle during this entire age. The Good News shows that the *crisis* was reached when Christ came into the world (*John 1:5*); and that the darkness is passing away, and the real light is already shining (*1 John 2:8*). The darkness has already *lost*! See *John 12:31* and note.

9. **That brings a rich harvest.** The pagan mystery religions stressed *ecstatic experience* as a fruit or harvest of their version of *light*. Paul makes it plain that the true harvest which *light* brings is a transformed life style! Compare *Col. 1:10; Gal. 5:22-23*.

ness, righteousness, and truth. ¹⁰Try to learn what pleases the Lord. ¹¹Have nothing to do with the worthless things that people do, that belong to the darkness. Instead, bring them out to the light. ¹²(It is really too shameful even to talk about the things they do in secret.) ¹³And when all things are brought out to the light, then their true nature is clearly revealed; ¹⁴for anything that is clearly revealed becomes light. That is why it is said,

“Wake up sleeper,
and rise from the dead!
And Christ will shine on you.”

¹⁵So pay close attention to how you live. Don't live like ignorant men, but like wise men. ¹⁶Make good use of every opportunity you get, because these are bad days. ¹⁷Don't be fools, then, but try to find out what the Lord wants you to do.

(truth) and find out what 10
pleases the Lord. Have noth- 11
ing to do with the fruitless
deeds of darkness, but
rather expose them. For it 12
is shameful even to mention
what is done in secret. But 13
everything exposed by the
light becomes visible, for it 14
is light that makes every-
thing visible. This is why it is
said:

“Wake up, O sleeper,
rise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on
you.”

Be very careful, then, how 15
you live—not as unwise but
as wise, making the most of 16
every opportunity, because
the days are evil. Therefore 17
do not be foolish, but under-
stand what the Lord's will is.

10. **What pleases the Lord.** “Your life is a living sacrifice in praise to God! So you must learn what the Lord expects from you!”

11. **Have nothing to do.** “Have no part in the worthless things that people do in secret, things that belong to the darkness! Bring everything out into the light of truth and expose evil for what it is!”

12. **Even to talk.** Those initiated into the mystery religions were not allowed to reveal the secrets and mysteries. Paul is saying that this certainly is best, since they are really too horrible to even talk about!

13. **Then their true nature.** “The light of the Good News clearly shows up the true nature of things: If the light, so called, of the mystery religions was true, it would show up their sins for what they really are!”

14. **Becomes light.** The TEV gives the literal translation, the NIV the meaning. *Aford* understands this: “The light of your Christian life, which will be by your reproof (censure) shed upon these deeds of darkness, will bring them out of the category of darkness into light.” That is why. Some think this quotation is from an early Christian baptismal hymn. This kind of language was associated with baptism very quickly (compare *Heb. 6:4*). Baptism was viewed as the climax of being raised from the dead (spiritually) into the light of Christ (*Col. 2:12*).

15. **To how you live.** “Wise men see the ethical side of truth and pay close attention to their life style. Ignorant men do not, and let themselves be swept away by the forces of evil.”

16. **Make good use.** “The days we live in are so morally corrupt, that you must seize every opportunity you get to do good!” Compare *Col. 4:5-6*; *2 Tim. 4:1-5*.

17. **But try to find out.** A Christian has a new mind and a different set of goals. He or she will carefully evaluate each situation in the *light of Christ*, to find out what the Lord wants done. Compare *1 Cor. 2:13-15*.

¹⁸Do not get drunk with wine, which will only ruin you; instead, be filled with the Spirit. ¹⁹Speak to one another in the words of psalms, hymns, and sacred songs; sing hymns and psalms to the Lord, with praise in your hearts. ²⁰Always give thanks for everything to God the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Do not get drunk on wine, 18 which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. Speak to one another 19 with Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving 20 thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Wives and Husbands

²¹Submit yourselves to one another, because of your reverence for Christ.

²²Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands, as to the Lord. ²³For a husband has authority over his wife in the same way that Christ has authority over the church; and Christ is himself

Wives and Husbands

Submit to one another out 21 of reverence for Christ.

Wives, submit to your 22 husbands as to the Lord. For 23 the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of

18. **Do not get drunk.** "Do not get drunk with wine as the heathens do in their orgies! This will only ruin you, as it gives the Devil a chance to lead you into all kinds of sins!" **Be filled with the Spirit.** Compare *John 7:37-39*. The wild rites of music, dancing, and wine used by the mystery religions will ruin those who participate. Paul shows the contrast of *being filled with the Spirit*, which builds up and incites to holy living!

19. **Speak to one another.** "Instead of singing lewd songs as the heathens do in the worship of their gods, you, in your praise to God and your times of jubilation, must speak in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs." **Psalm.** The Septuagint gave this meaning of: *singing praise to God*. **Hymn.** A general song of praise. **Spiritual songs.** Any song with a spiritual theme. It may be that the Holy Spirit himself was the source of many of these songs (*1 Cor. 14:26*). **Lipscomb** says: "Singing is one means of getting the word of Christ into the hearts of the hearers. By speaking in songs they are to teach and admonish one another, by bringing the thoughts and feelings of the heart into harmony with the sentiment [meaning] of the songs." **Sing hymns and psalms.** A literal translation might be: *hymning and psalming in your heart to the Lord*. The TEV gives the meaning. [Some see in this the vocal music of the synagogue and early church.] See notes on *Col. 3:16*.

20. **Always give thanks.** *Thanksgiving* is a form of praise and is to always be the attitude of the Christian, no matter what the external circumstances might be!! **In the name.** Compare *Col. 3:17* and note.

21. **Submit yourselves.** This is the general rule of Christian community. *Reverence for Christ* is both a motive, and points to the example which Christ himself set for us. Members of the body of Christ have to submit themselves to the life of the body as a whole, and to the direction of the *head*, who is Christ Jesus! Compare *John 17:20-21*.

22. **Wives.** This submitting does not imply any inferiority, but rather a mutual sharing. This attitude on the part of the wife grows out of her reverence for Christ.

23. **Has authority.** Note Paul says the Christ-church relationship sets the standard for the husband-wife relationship. Wives must submit to the authority of the husbands; husbands must love the wives. **The Savior.** In this Paul stresses the difference to strengthen the truth of what he is teaching. See next verse.

the Savior of the church, his body. ²⁴And so wives must submit themselves completely to their husbands, in the same way that the church submits itself to Christ.

²⁵Husbands, love your wives in the same way that Christ loved the church and gave his life for it. ²⁶He did this to dedicate the church to God, by his word, after making it clean by the washing in water, ²⁷in order to present the church to himself, in all its beauty, pure and faultless, without spot or wrinkle, or any other imperfection. ²⁸Men ought to love their wives just as they love their own bodies. A man who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹(No one ever hates his own body. Instead, he feeds it and takes care of it, just as Christ does the church; ³⁰for we are members of his

which he is the Savior. Now ²⁴ as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

Husbands, love your ²⁵ wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, ²⁶ cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to ²⁷ himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same ²⁸ way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no ²⁹ one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church—for we are members ³⁰

24. **In the same way.** The *Expositor's Greek Testament* says: "Christ indeed is Savior of the body, and that the husband is not; nevertheless the question of *obedience* is not affected thereby; for all that, as the Church is subject to Christ, so too are wives to be subject to their husbands." *Johnson* says: "The relation of the wife to the husband is like that of the church to Christ, a close, tender relation, in which there is no bondage [slavery], but freedom, because the service is that of the heart." Compare *1 Cor. 7:2-5* and notes.

25. **Love your wives.** This modifies the relationship. The word here for love is *AGAPE*. If the wife's duty is submission, the husband's is love - a love like Christ's! This gives Paul an opportunity to point to the great love which Christ had, and in particular, the *loving act* of the Cross!!! Compare *Eph. 1:5; 2:4-5; Rom. 5:8*.

26. **He did this.** This points to the goal of Christ's self-sacrificing love. **To dedicate the church.** The idea is *to make holy, to set apart for holy use.* **By his word.** The promise attached to baptism (*1 Pet. 3:21*) is like a *marriage vow*. The *washing in water* would have no meaning without the authority of his word (see notes on *Acts 2:38*). **After making it clean.** The *aorist verb form* points to the act of baptism by which believers are united with Christ, rather than to continuous Christian growth. *Wesley* says: "In baptism; if, with 'the outward and visible sign,' we receive the 'inward and spiritual grace.'" Compare *Titus 3:5* and note.

27. **In order to present.** "Christ makes the church clean, so that at the Day of Judgment he may present her to himself as a bride who is pure and holy! Compare *Rev. 19:7-9* and notes.

28. **Men ought to love their wives.** Paul intends to stress the close relationship between Christ and his church. In marriage, the husband and wife become one (*Matt. 19:5*). This love is more than a duty, it is a *natural* thing!!!

29. **No one ever hates.** "No one in his right mind would hate his own body! Instead he feeds it generously and takes very good care of it, and this is just how Christ treats his church!!! And of course this is how a husband should take care of his wife."

30. **For we are members.** Adam used this language about Eve: "She is bone out of my bones and flesh out of my flesh" (*Gen. 2:23 Zamenhof*). We are *in fact* parts of *that body* of which Christ is *the head*!!!

body.) ³¹As the scripture says, "For this reason, a man will leave his father and mother, and unite with his wife, and the two will become one." ³²There is a great truth revealed in this scripture, and I understand it applies to Christ and the church. ³³But it also applies to you: every husband must love his wife as himself, and every wife must respect her husband.

of his body. "For this reason ³¹ a man will leave his father and mother and will be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." This ³² is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. However, ³³ each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

Children and Parents

Children and Parents

6 Children, it is your Christian duty to obey your parents, for this is the right thing to do. ²"Honor your father and mother" is the first commandment that has a promise added: ³so that all may be well with you, and you may live a long time in the land."

6 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother"—which is the first commandment with a promise—"that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth."

⁴Parents, do not treat your children in such a way as to make them angry. Instead, raise them with Christian discipline and instruction.

Parents, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

31. **As the scripture says.** *Gen. 2:24.* This quotation points to a separation from others, and to a permanent union! It also implies that Christ left his home with the Father for the sake of his *spiritual Bride!*

32. **A great truth revealed.** To Paul, a mystery is something once hidden but now revealed. The TEV gives the correct meaning. The *Expositor's Greek Testament* says: "The truth of which I have spoken, the relation of husband and wife as one flesh, is a revelation of profound importance; but let me explain that, in speaking of it as I have done, my meaning is to direct your minds to that higher relation between Christ and His Church, in its likeness to which lies its deepest significance."

33. **But it also.** "This has very practical meaning for you also." **Every husband.** "Every husband must love his wife as he loves his own body!" **Every wife.** "Every wife must respect her husband because of her reverence for Christ!" [There may be special meaning in the fact that Paul tells the husband to *love*, and the wife to *respect*.]

1. **Children.** "Obey even your unbelieving parents in everything compatible with your duty to the Lord. It is your Christian duty to do this, because of your reverence for Christ."

2. **Honor.** "It is your *duty* to obey; *honor* is the attitude that motivates you to obey." The quotation is *Deut. 5:16*.

3. **So that.** "God added this promise to the commandment. To honor your parents still brings a blessing!" Disobedience to parents grows out of failing to honor them, and Paul sees this as one sign of being estranged from God (*Rom. 1:30; 2 Tim. 3:2*).

4. **Parents.** "Do not make your children bitter and hostile by your harsh and unreasonable treatment of them! (See *Col. 3:21*) Be gentle in your punishment and teach them in love, because of your reverence for Christ!"

Slaves and Masters

⁵Slaves, obey your human masters, with fear and trembling; and do it with a sincere heart, as though you were serving Christ. ⁶Do this not only when they are watching you, to gain their approval; but with all your heart do what God wants, as slaves of Christ. ⁷Do your work as slaves cheerfully, then, as though you served the Lord, and not merely men. ⁸Remember that the Lord will reward every man, whether slave or free, for the good work he does.

⁹Masters, behave in the same way toward your slaves; and stop using threats. Remember that you and your slaves belong to the same Master in heaven, who judges everyone by the same standard.

The Whole Armor of God

¹⁰Finally, build up your strength in union with the Lord, and by means of his mighty power. ¹¹Put on all the armor that God gives you, so that you will stand up against the Devil's evil tricks.

Slaves and Masters

Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free.

And master, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.

The Armor of God

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the

5. **Slaves.** "Since the Good News does not cancel the social structure which you are part of, I tell you who are slaves to obey your human masters, with fear and trembling rather than with pride and arrogance! And do it with a sincere heart, motivated by love and your reverence for Christ!" Compare *1 Cor. 7:21-22* and notes.

6. **Do this.** "The point of your obedience to your human masters, is not just to make them think you are a good servant; but you are to do this because of your reverence for Christ!" See *Col. 3:22*.

7. **Cheerfully.** "You must not misunderstand your freedom in Christ! You must view yourselves, not as slaves to men, but as servants of Christ! You must not be rebellious, but serve cheerfully, because in serving them faithfully, you are serving Him!" Christian love causes us to *relate* with others *through* our reverence for Christ.

8. **Remember.** "Remember what the Good News teaches you! Whether you are rewarded in this world for your good work or not, the Lord will reward every man (*Rev. 22:12*)! Whether slave or free, your attitude should be based on this fact!"

9. **Masters.** "Like parents, masters have obligations as well as rights. Let your reverence for Christ guide you in your behavior toward your slaves. Remember that all of you have been bought with a price (*1 Cor. 6:19-20*) and that your Master will judge both you and your slaves by the same standard!" See *Introduction to Philemon*.

10. **Build up your strength.** "Finally, to show you how important it is for you to pay close attention to the *ethical life style* you follow, I show you this picture of what we are actually doing!"

11. **Put on all the armor.** Paul uses the symbolism of a Roman soldier getting ready to go into battle. Armor protects against the weapons of the enemy. **The Devil's evil tricks.** This shows that the battle is actually religious/moral (since the two cannot be separated).

¹²For we are not fighting against human beings but against the wicked spiritual forces in the heavenly world, the rulers, authorities, and cosmic powers of this dark age. ¹³So take up God's armor now! Then when the evil day comes, you will be able to resist the enemy's attacks, and after fighting to the end, you will still hold your ground.

¹⁴So stand ready: have truth for a belt tight around your waist; put on righteousness for your breastplate, ¹⁵and the readiness to announce the Good News of peace as shoes for your feet. ¹⁶At all times carry faith as a shield; with it you will be able to put out all the burning arrows shot by

devil's schemes. For our 12
struggle is not against flesh
and blood, but against the
rulers, against the authori-
ties, against the powers of
this dark world and against
the spiritual forces of evil in
the heavenly realms. There- 13
fore put on the full armor of
God, so that when the day of
evil comes, you may be able
to stand your ground, and
after you have done every-
thing, to stand. Stand firm 14
then, with the belt of truth
buckled around your waist,
with the breastplate of right-
eousness in place, and with 15
your feet fitted with the
gospel of peace as a firm
footing. In addition to all 16
this, take up the shield of
faith, with which you can ex-
tinguish all the flaming

12. **For we are not.** Paul shows us another of God's secrets. The evil angels fight against men and continually try to tempt them into sin! "Our real battle is not against the idolatrous rulers and other evil men of this present age (we want to bring them to Christ and save them). Our real battle is against the wicked spiritual forces in the heavenly world!" Compare *Eph. 1:21; 2:2; 2 Cor. 4:4* and notes. These facts which Paul gives us, take the day-to-day struggle to live holy lives out of the realm of *make-believe!* It is a life-and-death struggle with supernatural forces who are the agents of the one Devil!!! Compare introductory note to *Rev. 13:1*.

13. **So take up!** "God has given you defensive armor against the wicked spiritual powers, but you must put it on!!! Then when the evil day of temptation comes, you will be able to resist the attack of these evil powers, and when they have done their worst to destroy you, you will still hold your ground!!!!"

14. **So stand ready.** Being able to stand ready involves the soldier's own act of preparation. "The spiritual soldier who still holds his ground, must again stand ready to face another such crucial battle, should it come! I show you what you must do before you take your stand." **Truth for a belt.** The soldier's belt anchored and held together other parts of his armor. Since the word of God is the sword, truth here probably means *frankness and sincerity* (*2 Cor. 1:12*). **Righteousness.** A breastplate protected the chest area from injury. Righteousness is *integrity in personal conduct*. This is vital to Christian life (*Rom. 6:13*).

15. **And the readiness.** This means: (1) active preparation; (2) preparedness. [This can be translated as the NIV has done, but Johnson, MacKnight, et. al., understand it as the TEV has done.] It is the *readiness to announce* that forms the shoes. This includes such things as: courage, self-discipline, endurance, and a kind and gentle spirit. The *peace* of God's finished work in Christ is made real in the church now, and will in the future include all the universe (*Col. 1:20*).

16. **Faith as a shield.** Johnson says: "The Roman oblong shield, four and a half feet long, covered the whole body and was a protection in itself." *Faith* is: the firm belief of the teachings and promises of the Good News, which actively holds firmly to these things. **Burning arrows.** This is a literal translation. These were used in much the same way as a fire-bomb. Since our faith is based on God's act in Christ, a historical action **EXTRINSIC** to ourselves, we have the Christian confidence which will extinguish the burning arrows of doubt, fear, defeatism, etc. Compare *1 John 3:19-21*.

the Evil One. ¹⁷And accept salvation for a helmet, and the word of God as the sword that the Spirit gives you. ¹⁸Do all this in prayer, asking for God's help. Pray on every occasion, as the Spirit leads. For this reason keep alert and never give up; pray always for all God's people. ¹⁹And pray also for me, that God will give me a message, when I am ready to speak, that I may speak boldly and make known the gospel's secret. ²⁰For the sake of this gospel I am an ambassador, though now I am in prison. Pray that I may be bold in speaking of it, as I should.

Final Greetings

²¹Tychicus, our dear brother and faithful servant in the Lord's work, will give you all the news about me, so that you may know how I am getting along. ²²That is why I am sending him to you—to tell you how all of us are getting along, and so bring courage to your hearts.

arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

Pray also for me, that I may whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.

Final Greetings

Tychicus, the dear brother and faithful servant in the Lord, will tell you everything, so that you also may know how I am and what I am doing. I am sending him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage you.

17. **Salvation.** *MacKnight* understands this to protect the Christian from the fear of death. **Word of God.** This is the sword that the Spirit gives the Christian to use to defeat the forces of evil. The Spirit conquers through the individual Christian. See also *Heb. 4:12* and note.

18. **Do all this.** "As soldiers identify each other by means of pass-words, let your identification as soldiers of Christ be your prayer in Jesus' name! Be sure to ask for God's help as you face the battles of the day! **As the Spirit leads.** Compare *Rom 8:26; Eph. 2:22; Jude 20; Gal. 4:6* and notes. **For this reason.** Because we are fighting against wicked spiritual forces. **For all God's people.** Only when we constantly pray for *others* in this way, can we pray for ourselves!

19. **Also for me.** Paul often asks this. The context shows he, even in prison, may have the wisdom and the boldness to speak the secret of the gospel in an effective way. Compare *Luke 21:12-13; 2 Tim. 4:17*.

20. **For the sake of this gospel.** *Johnson* says: "As an ambassador is sent to a foreign court to declare the will of the king, so he, though in chains, was Christ's ambassador sent to Rome to declare the will of his King."

21. **Tychicus.** He probably delivered this Letter, and could give them a report on Paul's condition. Tychicus was a native of the Province of Asia (*Acts 20:4*), possibly of Ephesus itself. He was a close associate to Paul, and it is probable that he went to Jerusalem with him, as Trophimus did (*Acts 21:29*), as a "delegate of the church."

22. **That is why.** "I am sending this faithful brother to you to tell you about my condition, and to give you comfort and strength!"

²³May God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give peace and love to all the brothers, with faith. ²⁴May God's grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ with undying love.

Peace to the brothers, and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love. ²³
²⁴

23-24. **May God.** "I give you my benediction and blessing, to the church at Ephesus and to all the others who read this!" This Letter was certainly intended for all the churches in Asia.