

Studies in Ephesians

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Apostle Paul: Epistle to the Ephesians

In the Epistle to the Ephesians we see Paul revealing a mystery to both Jew and Gentile. In times past, Paul persecuted the saints even unto death, but the Lord chose Paul to reveal the mystery that had been previously hidden in God. Paul revealed God's plan unto the Gentiles - they too would be accepted in the beloved. The walls had been broken down; no longer would there be a division amongst God's people.

Through the redeeming power of our Lord's shed blood, He once and forever paid the price for sin. Paul explains that by love and the grace of God we have been accepted through the shed blood. Paul tells the saints that we are no longer to be under the law. We are no longer outside the gate. We now have a mediator, a Great High Priest, who has interceded and still intercedes for us at the right hand of God.

Scripture tells us that we were once alienated from God through sin, but now we have been brought nigh through our Lord Jesus and his redeeming work on the cross. Can we ever fully understand the awesome power of our Lord's sacrifice at Calvary? Scripture tells us that he who hangs on a tree is accursed. He became a curse for us. He loved us so much that He laid down His life for the sheep. The Lord willingly laid down His life that we may live forever. May we never neglect such a great salvation that has been wrought for us in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Ephesians 3

The Function of the Church, the Mystery, Christ and the Church

Introduction

In this chapter, Paul's present position in jail and its cause are brought before us. Because he preached to the Gentiles, the Jews were angry with him. See Acts 22:21-22, Acts 13:46, and Acts 21:29. This resulted in his arrest in Jerusalem and his ultimate imprisonment in Rome, the city from which he wrote this letter. This was one of his prison epistles. A greater bondage claimed him—he was a prisoner of Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 3:2

Beginning at verse 2 and running through verse 13, we have a parenthesis. In Ephesians 3:14, the thought that began in Ephesians 3:1 continues. In this parenthesis, Paul explains the sources of his knowledge of what he has been revealing in chapters 1 and 2. He also reveals the purposes of God in relation to the Church. We are introduced to the stewardship of the grace of God. The dispensation mentioned here in relation to Paul was a stewardship of grace given to him that he might minister the unsearchable rights of Christ, especially to the Gentiles.

The Newness of It

Ephesians 3:3-4

The content of the chapter is the subject of new revelation. These great themes mentioned here were not

taken from the Old Testament, but they came directly from God. They came to him by direct revelation. At this point, we must mention “the mystery.” There are eleven mysteries in Matthew 13. A “mystery,” in the New Testament sense, is not something mysterious, but it is truth that could not be known apart from direct revelation from God. Ephesians 3:4 says, “I write more fully now—I am thoroughly informed by God of this mystery.”

Ephesians 3:5

Paul was the principal channel through which God chose to reveal His eternal purposes. “For this cause, I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus, for you Gentiles.” Paul was a prisoner, because he preached the things he has just revealed. He advocated that the Gentiles were not second-class citizens, but were equal partners with the Jews in the Church of God.

Stewardship—a steward is one who is appointed to administer the affairs of another person. Paul was God’s steward; to him was given the responsibility to set forth the truth regarding the New Testament assembly. It was an unparalleled manifestation of the grace of God. A mystery was hidden from Old Testament saints, but God revealed it to me. Now I am going to explain it to you.

These great truths that he has been expounding on in previous chapters and is about to reveal had not been made known to previous generations. In the Old Testament we do not find the Church taught at all. And truth such as Paul is about to unfold is found nowhere in the Old Testament. Other apostles and prophets had a part in this revelation by the Spirit.

Ephesians 3:6

This verse reveals the mystery. The content is as follows:

We, Gentiles, have been made heirs together with the Jews—Fellow heirs.

We are in the body of Christ, together with the Jews—Fellow members.

We are partakers, together, of the promises of Christ—Fellow partakers.

The great sign of this dispensation is principally the baptism and indwelling of the Holy Spirit in all believers, Jews and Gentiles. The patriarchs never contemplated this in their wildest dreams. [Body—Bride—Building; see Romans 10:12.] There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him. Paul was the servant whom God used.

Ephesians 3:7

Paul, the minister of it, was the servant whom God used. He now discusses his own ministry connected with this. This ministry was an underserved gift. Paul became the principal vessel through which God revealed the mysteries hidden in His heart from eternity past. Notice here that it was not natural fitness, temperamental training or ability of which Paul had plenty. The revelation came by the grace of God.

Ephesians 3:8

Paul's ministry was two-fold. Notice Paul's humility here, "Less than the least."

He was a minister of the Gospel.

He was a servant minister of the Church.

That I should preach the unsearchable riches of Christ tells us of his ministry in the Gospel. He speaks here of things most precious, including the boundless wealth and the unfathomable and incalculable riches of Christ. The depth and height of these riches can never be fully plumbed or scaled. His ministry to the Church would be "to make all men (Jews and Gentiles, Slave or Free) see what the fellowship of the ministry is."

Ephesians 3:9

The fellowship of the mystery should read, "the sharing of the truth. The secret of it." To make all men see, literally means, "to bring to light." It was Paul's ministry to bring to light, through his writings and teaching, the working out of God's plans. Paul emphasizes that this mystery of the Church has been hidden, but notice the emphasis - it was not hidden in the Old Testament, but it was hidden in God. The mystery of the Church was a secret held in the eternal counsels of God's heart. It was not known to anyone, but God. The secret was hidden in "God who created all things." He created the universe, He created the ages, and He created the Church. In His great wisdom He decided to withhold our knowledge of the creation of the Church until after the first advent of Christ.

The Scope of God's Purposes

Ephesians 3:10

God had already revealed this mystery to men on earth, but in this verse, we also see the tremendous extension of its revelation. We see the ministry of the Church to God's other creatures. Through the Church, He is making His manifold wisdom known to the angelic hosts

—the principalities and powers. He shows His all-embracing, multi-faceted, complex, and supreme wisdom.

Since the great truth is apparent that we are displaying God’s wisdom to superhuman intelligences, how diligent we should be to live godly, soberly and righteously before men—before God—and before the angels. Think of what we once were “in Adam” and then think of what we are “in Christ.” It is incomprehensible.

One of God’s present purposes, in connection with the mystery, is to reveal His manifold wisdom to the angelic hosts of Heaven. As the angels look at the church, they are compelled to marvel at the way God has triumphed over sin to His glory. They see how God sent heaven’s best for earth’s worst. They see how God has redeemed His enemies at enormous cost. They see how He conquered them by love, and prepared them as a Bride for His Son. They see how much glory has been brought to God and they see the blessings that have come to the Jew and the Gentile. As the angels view the Church, they see that God has been vindicated and Christ exalted. They see that Satan has been defeated and that the Church is destined to share Christ’s glory.

Ephesians 3:11

This mighty plan and purpose was from the ages of the ages—eternal. It is fully worked out in Christ Jesus, in His incarnation, death, resurrection, ascension, and glorification. The whole program is centered in Christ.

Ephesians 3:12

In this verse, God’s purpose for us in Christ is now described. “We have boldness and access with

confidence by faith in Him.” The law failed entirely to bring man near to God. But we can draw near to God with boldness and confidence through faith in God through Christ.

Ephesians 3:13

“Wherefore I pray you not to be disheartened at the sufferings I am undergoing for your sakes.”

Paul was in prison. In light of what he has unfolded in previous chapters, the trials of this life are not worthy to be compared with the glory yet to come (see Romans 8:18 and 2 Corinthians 2:9). Paul relates the most sublime truth to the practical everyday circumstances of life.

In the New Testament, truth is never divorced from practice. Note the last three chapters of this book, as well as the format of Romans 1-8, which is doctrinal, Romans 9-11, which is dispensational, and Romans 12-16, which is practical.

The summary of this section is as follows:

The source of Paul’s doctrine regarding the Church was a revelation from God. It was the revelation of the mystery of the Church. The fact that the revelation of the Church was not seen or known in other ages equals the Old Testament. Paul’s twofold ministry in the Gospel and in the Church is mentioned. The great function of the Church as being an object lesson to heavenly ranks and orders of beings is unfolded here alone.

Ephesians 3:14

These verses contain the second of Paul’s great prayers in the book. The parenthesis has just concluded and he now resumes from verse 1 of this chapter. As he thought

back to the revelation of chapter 2, he wrote “for this cause.” The bowing of the knees suggests earnestness, intensity, and humility in prayer. [Describe the different postures]

In Ephesians 1, Paul addressed the “God of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Here, he addresses the “Father” of our “Lord Jesus Christ.” The first title expresses the dignity of God in His counsels, plans, and purposes as they are revealed in Jesus Christ. The second title indicates family relationship.

Ephesians 3:15

“The Family of God” - this could also be rendered the “Fatherhood of God.” He is the Father of saints on earth and in Heaven. “Every family.” See Ironside regarding “every family.”

The Prayer

Ephesians 3:16-17

Here we enter the prayer proper. He asks the Lord to answer this prayer not according to our needs, but according to His riches in glory. Note the riches of His glory—vast wealth. The apostle asks three things for us:

1. He prays that we might be “strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man.” This means, “A mighty increase of strength by the Spirit in the inner man.” We know too well our weaknesses—so does the Spirit. This prayer is for the spiritual man—not the physical body. The prayer primarily would be to enable us to grasp the vast range of truth already stated, and that which is about to follow.

Chapter 2 tells us of what the Gentiles were by nature and by practice, and what they became through union with Christ. It tells us of the astonishing rise from poverty and death to riches and glory. This is unthinkable, unbelievable, and incomprehensible.

Every family - “All the saints on earth and in heaven.” All created beings, un-fallen angels, the family of Old Testament saints—the patriarchs, and the Church today in this day of grace. Then in the future there will be the glorious kingdom family. There may be dispensational distinctions but all receive life from the same person and together they adore and worship God.

2. He prays that “Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith.” Paul prays that Christ may actually live in our hearts permanently. Christ dwells in the hearts of all believers. Here he is praying that we might be more conscious of His living in our hearts. This is realized not by agonizing prayer, fasting, or crucifying the flesh—but simply by faith.

3. He prays for strength for a twofold purpose: “That ye [be] rooted and grounded in love,” having your roots deep and your foundation strong in love. “Being rooted” speaks of the vine and refers to fruit bearing. “Being grounded” speaks of stability.

Ephesians 3:18

To comprehend the following truths we must be rooted deeply and grounded in love. “Then we will be able to comprehend with all the saints.” Then we will be strong and fully able to grasp firmly the breadth, length, depth, and height. Some connect these dimensions with the love of Christ introduced to us in the next verse.

Keeping the immediate context in mind, the Spirit would

have us apply these dimensions to the breath-taking revelation of God, unfolded in the earlier chapters of the epistle.

Ephesians 3:19

This verse introduces us to the deep, deep love of Christ. We will need all the strength, wisdom and perception that we can muster to try to comprehend the “love of Christ that passes knowledge.” This love transcends and surpasses human understanding. The preceding requests have outlined a program of spiritual growth and development that prepares the child of God to grasp “with all the saints” what is the breadth, length, depth, and height.

“That you might be filled with all the fullness of God.” Be filled to the full with God himself. This is the climax of Paul’s prayer. Such a request leaves us speechless. How can I be filled with the fullness of God? Van Ryan once said, “You cannot fill a cup with the ocean, but you can fill it in the ocean.” We as believers can bring our empty vessels to the immense ocean of God’s fullness and fill them there.

Ephesians 3:20

After having shared these unsearchable riches of Christ, Paul cannot contain himself any longer and breaks into a paean of praise. In this soul-inspiring doxology he calls our attention to the fact that He is able to do infinitely beyond what we can ask or think. Our God is able to do “exceedingly,” abundantly... God’s ability goes beyond our asking and our thinking. This exceeding abundant ability can be realized personally when we are in total dependence upon God’s “power that worketh in us.”

Ephesians 3:21

Unto God be the glory in the Church by Christ Jesus. See Psalm 148. The Church will be the means by which praise, honor, and glory will be ascribed to God in every generation throughout the ages. This encompasses both time and eternity. A true appreciation of the glory revealed in this prayer will drive us to our knees or faces, just like Paul on the road to Damascus. It also gives us a foretaste of celestial scenes of ineffable glory where every voice will be raised in unison to praise Almighty God.

“The power that worketh in us.” This refers to the Holy Spirit who is constantly at work in our lives. Seeking to produce fruit in our lives—reproving of sin—guiding in prayer—inspiring worship—directing in service. The more we are yielded to Him, the greater will be His power flowing through us.

Ephesians 5

Survey:

Ephesians 5:1-17 describes the walk of the believer. In this section, the things that are permissible and the sins that are not permissible are described.

Ephesians 5:18-21 provides a description of the inner life of a spirit-filled believer.

Ephesians 5:22-33 describes the married life of Spirit-filled believers.

The Christian Walk (Ephesians 5:17)

Ephesians 5:1 - "Be imitators of God."

Ephesians 5:2 - "Walk in love."

Do we love God? The standard of that love is to love as Christ has loved us. Christ's love was a burnt offering to God. As we love our brethren and sisters in this way, it ascends as a fragrant aroma to God.

Ephesians 5:3-4 - These verses reveal the sins that should not be once named among us. These sins are detestable to God. They consist of fornication, uncleanness, covetousness, filthy stories, obscenity, silly talk, suggestive talk, and off color jokes. These have not to be named once among us. We should not engage in these sinful things, but rather give God thanks for "the many blessings."

Ephesians 5:11 - You were once darkness. These are the sins you practiced "in Adam." Now, "in Christ," we are light. Therefore, we ought to walk as children of the light, exhibiting goodness, righteousness, and truth. 2

Peter 2:9 speaks of us as being called. [Illustrate “from darkness into light”] See also 2 Peter 2:10, which says how “Men loved darkness.”

Proving what is acceptable unto God means proving what is well pleasing. In Romans 12:1-2, acceptable is mentioned twice. We are to be proving or testing what is well pleasing. Our conversation, standard of living, clothes, books, pleasure, friendships, and sports should be acceptable to the Lord. “Take my life and let it be.”

Ephesians 5:14-17 - There are many believers today who are asleep and they have been asleep for so long that they appear to be dead—just like the unbelievers around them. This verse is a message to any believer in this condition; it is a command that states, “Awake, thou that sleepest.” Ephesians 5:15 talks about how we as Christians are to constantly be walking circumspectly. Ephesians 5:16 speaks about redeeming the time and Ephesians 5:17 talks about how our concern should be to understand what the will of the Lord is.

1 Peter 2:9 “That we might show forth the praises of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.”

The Spirit-Filled Believer (Ephesians 5:18-21)

These verses describe God’s will for every believer. This is the evidence of being filled with the Holy Spirit. This is seen through acts such as speaking, singing, giving thanks, and submitting. Psalms and hymns are spiritual songs. Psalms are the composed writings of David and Asaph, while hymns are uninspired songs, which give God praise and glory. Spiritual songs are songs that deal with spiritual themes.

The Spirit-filled life is a fountain bubbling over with joy (see Acts 13:52). There are four results of the Spirit's filling:

Boldness to witness—Acts 4:8-12, 31; Acts 13:52, Acts 14:3

Powers for service—Acts 1:8, Acts 6:3, 8; Acts 11:24

Generosity—Acts 4:31-32

Exaltation of Christ—Acts 9:17-20, 10:44-46

Married Life Among Believers (Ephesians 5:22-33)

Here, Paul describes the married life of Spirit-filled believers. Paul illustrates this by the relationship between Christ and the Church. In Ephesians 5:22-24, Paul outlines the relationship of the wife to her husband. Every well-ordered society rests on two supporting pillars: authority and subjection. Wives are to be subject to their husbands. The husband is the head of the wife. And in the same way the Church is subject to Christ, the wife should be subject to her husband. God did not take material from Adam's head so that he would lord it over her, nor did He take it from his feet to be trampled by him. God took her from his side, to be his partner, close to his heart that he might love her.

Ephesians 5:25-28 tells us that husbands are to love their wives. In what way has the husband to love his wife? Ephesians 5:25 says that "He has to love her as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it." Thus, subjection would not be a problem. Ephesians 5:28 says He ought to love her as his own body. She is his flesh and bones—the two become one. If these principles were carried out, problems in the home would disappear. Our homes would be a foretaste of heaven

itself. The divorce courts would be shut down. The final exhortation comes in Ephesians 5:33. The husband is reminded that he has to love his wife as he loves himself, while the wife is told she must reverence her husband.

Meditations in Ephesians

Introduction

In this epistle Paul describes “the wealth, the walk, and the warfare” of the believer. In the first three chapters, we are raised into a heavenly sphere where glories are unlimited. In the last three chapters, we are abruptly brought face to face with the cold facts of everyday living and told how we should live in the home, in the church, and in the workplace.

Scholars believe that among Paul’s writings there is none more sublime, profound or greater than the letter to the Ephesians. The truths revealed take us to the summit of divine revelation. This epistle takes us both farther back and farther ahead in the eternal counsels of God than any other of his writings.

Among other truths, the epistle reveals:

1. The present character of the church (The highest church truths, but nothing about church order).
2. The relationship between Jew and Gentile.
3. The source and exercise of spiritual gifts.
4. The spiritual warfare of the believer.

Blessings in Ephesians 1

Ephesians 1:1-2

Paul wrote this letter to the saints at Ephesus, who were also known as “saved sinners.” The first truth he reminded them of was that they were, “In Christ.” He mentions this fourteen times in fourteen verses.

Believers are vitally united with Christ by the baptism of the Holy Spirit (see 1 Corinthians 12:12-13).

In Ephesians 1:2 we are introduced to two of God's great attributes:

(1) His grace (the first mention of fourteen references). This reminds us that our glorious position as described in the epistle is because of God's grace.

(2) His peace (this is the first of seven references).

These blessings come to us through the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (See Eph. 1:17). Note in this connection that our Lord is given His full title: The Lord Jesus Christ. As Lord, He is our absolute Master with full rights to all that we are and have. As Jesus, He is the Savior of the world. As Christ, He is our anointed Prophet, Priest and King.

Ephesians 1:3-6

Ephesians 1:3-14 contains the longest sentence in the Bible. This is one of the most magnificent hymns of praise in the Bible. It is the overflow of a heart that worships God for all of His blessings. See Psalm 48. Without a break in thought, Paul pours out his heart in these verses. This particular section is divided into three parts and is divided by the phrase "to the praise of His glory." See Ephesians 1:6, 12-13.

In Ephesians 1:3-6, Paul directs his worship to the Father. [See and describe Eph. 1:3]. He traces all his spiritual blessings to the Father's counsel in eternity past. Notice that these blessings are spiritual, not material, and are to be experienced in the "heavenlies," not heavenly places.

The expression “heavenlies” is used five times in the epistle:

It is the sphere of our spiritual blessings (Eph. 1:3).

It is where Christ is presently enthroned (Eph. 1:20).

It is where we are presently enthroned (Eph. 2:6).

It is the place where the angels see God’s wisdom manifested in the Church (Eph. 3:10).

It is the place that is the source of our present conflict with evil spirits (Eph. 6:12).

The believer is a heavenly person and a pilgrim and stranger on earth.

Notice how the blessings that come to us are from God our Father:

Ephesians 1:4 shows that He has chosen us in Him.

Ephesians 1:5 shows that He has predestined us and that He has adopted us.

Ephesians 1:6 shows that He has made us accepted in the beloved.

Let us analyze some of these blessings:

“God has chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world.” This is an astounding statement. This is the truth of election. It is in the Person and work of the Lord Jesus that we were chosen. This is one of the most profound truths in the Scriptures. It was meant to be a source of comfort and strength to believers down through the centuries – before the creation of the world, they were chosen by God to have eternal life. Paul mentions this great truth in 1 Thessalonians 1:4, 2 Thessalonians 2:13, and 1 Peter 1:2. Unfortunately,

Satan has distorted this truth, disturbing the faith of some and fraying the temper of others.

Despite what anyone may say, in the last analysis, God chose every believer before the creation of the world (see 2 Thessalonians 2:13). Peter tells us that we were elected according to the foreknowledge of God (see 1 Peter 1:2). The Bible also teaches us that people can know whether they have been elected by their response to the Gospel. Those who hear and believe it are the elect (see 1 Thessalonians 1:4). One must consider, however, that the Bible never teaches that God chooses men to be lost.

The same Bible that teaches election also teaches human responsibility. God makes a bona fide offer of salvation to all men in the Gospel. See Matthew 11:28, Romans 10:13, and 2 Peter 3:9. Anyone can be saved by repenting and accepting the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior. Therefore, if a person is lost, it is because he chooses to be lost, not because God desires it. [Note the purpose for which we have been chosen, "That we might be holy and without blame before Him." See 1 John 3:2 and 1 Peter 1:16. They speak of the future, the present time, and practical issues.]

The other two great themes in this section are predestination and adoption. Predestination has to do with God ordaining ahead of time that the believer is to be made like Christ. The difference between election and predestination is as follows: Election is God's choice of men to salvation. Predestination is an advance on this. It means that God has determined ahead of time that all who would be saved would be adopted into His family as

sons. He could have saved us without making us His sons, but He chose to do both.

God predestines us “to be conformed to the image of His Son.” In our adoption we are placed in God’s family as sons. This brings pleasure to God. As chosen, predestined and adopted sons, we rejoice that He has blessed us (Eph. 1:3), chosen us (Eph. 1:4), predestined us (Eph. 1:5), adopted us (Eph. 1:5), and accepted us (Eph. 1:6). All these blessings are ours to the praise and glory of God’s grace. He is the “Great God of wonders.” For this reason Paul pours out his heart in adoration and worship (Eph. 1:3).

Ephesians 1:7-12

In Ephesians 1:7-12, Paul focuses our attention on the Lord Jesus. In this section he gives the preeminent place to the Son. It is in the Son that we have “redemption through His blood.” We have redemption here and now—its blessings are a present possession. We have been purchased from the slave market of sin. We have been bought never to be put on sale again. We have been freed from the Law, the judgment of God, and the guilt of sin. In other words, He has redeemed us and we are never to be enslaved by sin again.

The price for these blessings is “the precious blood of Christ.” An added blessing from “redemption through His blood is the forgiveness of sins.” Our sins are gone, never to be remembered against us again. God’s grace and Christ’s blood are the means through which they have been removed. God’s grace is infinite and so is His forgiveness, “to the praise and glory of His grace” (see Eph. 1:6), “to the riches of His grace” (see Eph. 1:7).

“Having made known unto us the ‘mystery of His will’ through Christ.” In Ephesians 1:9, we are introduced to one of the main themes of the book. This “mystery” was a sacred secret unknown to Old Testament saints, but now, in Christ, He makes the “mystery” known. The “mystery” is that believing Jews and Gentiles are now one in Christ. The middle wall of partition has been broken down and we are fellow-members in the body of Christ—the Church. Ephesians 1:10 tells us that at present, we are seated together in Christ in the heavenlies. In the future, we will share Christ’s glory as Head over all things.

“The dispensation of the fullness of times.” The Millennium is the time when “all things will be headed up in Christ.” It refers to the last, great, glorious age when Christ will reign from shore to shore as King of kings and Lord of lords. He will be the administrator of the last era of human history. He will put down every enemy and reign over all things on earth and in heaven. He will be the object of universal worship.

In Ephesians 1:11, “we have no continuing city, but we look for a city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God.” See Hebrews 11:10. This inheritance that is being referred to in this verse, in God’s purpose and will, was predetermined beforehand. According to 1 Peter 1:4, this inheritance is “incorruptible, undefiled, and fadeth not away, [it is] reserved in heaven for us.”

The glory of our inheritance will be realized when the Lord comes. The church’s complete blessing awaits the Lord’s coming. Every individual’s ultimate blessing awaits the Lord’s coming. The redemption of our body awaits His coming. The conversion of Israel awaits His

coming. The full redemption of all Gentiles awaits the coming of our blessed Savior. [Consider the glory of our inheritance by reading Revelation 21:1-5. All this was given in Christ for the praise of God's glory.]

Ephesians 1:13-14

In Ephesians 1:13-14, Paul now directs our attention to the blessings we have in the Spirit. The Spirit's ministry here is twofold. He is the seal and the earnest. We are sealed "unto the day of redemption." John 10 and Romans 8 speak of this security. The Holy Spirit is the seal, signifying a finished transaction. See Jeremiah 32:9-12; it also speaks of ownership. See also Esther 8:8 and Ephesians 4:30.

The Spirit has given us His pledge and is the "earnest of our inheritance." He is the "down payment," pledging that the full amount will be paid. God guarantees our future blessings in that He has sealed us with His Spirit. The 'seal' guarantees that we will be kept for our inheritance. The 'earnest' guarantees that the inheritance will be kept for us. These, then, are some of the spiritual blessings that drew forth the magnificent hymn of praise, adoration and worship from the depth of Paul's redeemed heart.

Ephesians 5, Part 3

Walk In Love (Ephesians 5:1-5)

Ephesians 5:1-2 - In Ephesians 5, Paul discusses the social conduct of the believer. We are called upon to be imitators of God as beloved children. Furthermore, we are instructed to walk in love. The Spirit immediately gives us the standard of that love - just as Christ loved us. The term sacrifice implies the notion of bloodshed. As an offering, Christ's death was voluntary, but as a sacrifice, His death was costly. This sacrifice was well pleasing to God. It was a fragrant aroma to Him; for He was perfectly satisfied with the Lord's sacrifice. If we walk in love—and love our brethren as Christ loved us, the sacrifices involved will be a fragrant aroma to God.

Ephesians 5:3-5 - These verses tell us of things and persons God hates. The sins mentioned in verse 3, for example, are so detestable to God that they ought not even be mentioned among believers. Immorality, impurity, and greed - these sins are not to be talked about among the saints or holy ones of God.

The sins censured in verse 4 are all too common: obscenity, indecency, empty conversation, double meaning, filthy stories, silly talk, suggestive talk, and coarse jokes. This kind of talk is unbecoming of a child of God. Instead of engaging in these sinful things, we should be occupied in giving thanks to God for all His blessings.

Verse 5 tells us, in no uncertain terms, that anyone who is immoral, impure, covetous, or an idolater has no place in the kingdom of Christ and of God. This would be a

description of an unbeliever. May God, by His grace, deliver His people from the sins that are abominable in His sight.

Fornications: When it is mentioned in the same verse as adultery, it means illicit intercourse among “unmarried persons.” In Eph. 5:5 it means any form of immorality.

Uncleanness: immoral acts, impure pictures, obscene books, or any sex-related material designed to stir the basest of passions.

Covetousness: this generally means the lust for money. In the context of Eph. 5:5, it is referring to sexual desire; the insatiable greed to satisfy one’s sexual appetite outside the bounds of marriage.

These things should not be named among believers.

Walk in Light (Ephesians 5:6-14)

Ephesians 5:6-7 - Darkness and deception go hand in hand in with spiritual things. In order to avoid these things, we need to walk in the light. “Let no man mislead you with plausible arguments.” Moral standards have plummeted and are being justified by some. There are many cults today who can explain away nearly all the fundamental doctrines. The unsuspecting and immature believer can be swept away with their reasoning, but when their arguments are carefully analyzed, one sees that they are only empty words (i.e. modernism - the liberals). Blind leaders of the blind look forward to judgment with fear, for “the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.” Ephesians 5:7 exhorts us not to associate with these people, because it will dishonor Christ and ruin one’s testimony.

Ephesians 5:8-14 - In verses 8-14, Paul gives a discourse. Verse 8 reminds us of our former condition of darkness. We were not just darkened - we were darkness. Ephesians 4:18 says, "They are 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 hearts." We were actual darkness. Now, however, in Christ we are light. 1 John 1:5 says, "God is light and in Him is no darkness at all." Because of our new state as believers, we should walk as children of light.

Ephesians 5:9 is parenthetical, but very important. Most reputable scholars quote this verse as follows: "For the fruit of the light consists of goodness, righteousness, and truth." This is in keeping with the context (For the fruit of the Spirit, see Galatians 5:22-23).

Eph. 5:10 says, "Proving what is pleasing to the Lord." This echoes Romans 12:2. As we walk as "children of light" we will be called upon to test and prove many things, accepting only those things, which are pleasing to the Lord. This is what really matters in our life. As the Lord's life was pleasing to the Father, so our life should be pleasing to our Lord - in our conversation, standard of living, clothes, books, pleasure, friendships, and sports.

The Lord's attitude toward such sin as fornication and adultery was seen in Numbers 25:1-9. 24,000 Israelites were slain because they sinned with the women of Moab. The Lord's attitude toward homosexuality was displayed when Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed by fire and brimstone from heaven (read Genesis 19:24-28). Those who practiced sexual sins experience

God's judgment in other ways - these are mental, emotional, and/or nervous disorders. These are changes in personality; for instance, the effeminate often become more feminine (see Romans 1:27).

In the final judgment, God will show no mercy to whore mongers or adulterers. Goodness represents moral excellence. Righteousness is having integrity in dealing with God and men. Truth is honesty, equity, and reality. Put these all together and you have the light of a Christ-filled life shining out of the darkness.

Ephesians 5:11 contains a very necessary exhortation - "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness." This is a clear command. As children of the light we should not participate in works of darkness (i.e. the world, the flesh, and the devil). Instead of participating in them, we should expose and reprove them. Our Christian faith is very demanding. Not only does it govern our actions, but it also controls our tongue. See James' exhortation here.

Ephesians 5:12 says that it is disgraceful in God's sight to speak of those things done by unbelievers in secret. Television, newspapers, magazines, and novels are full of indecency and obscenity under the guise of "being true to life." Beloved - watch your eyes and ears, and guard your tongue.

In verse 13 we have the exposing and reproving ministry of light. While we are told not to speak nor think of the lurid practices of the children of darkness, there are times when we, as children of Light, should, through the Word and the power of the Spirit, expose and reprove gross error.

Ephesians 5:14 is an approximate quotation from the O.T. (see Isaiah 60:1 and 26:19). This verse suggests that the child of God who is not actively engaged in walking in the light is a person sleeping among the dead. In this backslidden condition, we could be mistaken for one of the children of darkness. Because of this, there comes the urgent call to awake out of sleep - immediately we arise and Christ will shine upon us.

Walk in Wisdom (Ephesians 5:15-21)

In the next seven verses, Paul contrasts foolish footsteps and careful conduct. This is the last of the seven references to our walk in the epistle. This is a dirty and foul world that we are passing through; we should walk as wise men, carefully choosing our steps, lest we become contaminated with the filth, grime, and squalor of the world. In Ephesians 5:15, he writes, "See then that you walk circumspectly." As children of God we should walk carefully, exactly, and responsively.

What is the wisdom that we are exhorted to walk in? It is to walk and live the truths of the previous verses, and in a broader sense, the teaching of the Scriptures. As we walk in wisdom, making the best use of our time, we redeem the time or buy up the opportunities (Eph. 5:16) Make the most of every opportunity by speaking to the children of darkness about Christ. We must bind, beautify, and build the Church of God. We must glorify the name of our Heavenly Father.

In Ephesians 5:17, Paul asks us as wise men to try and understand the will of God as a whole and in particular for our life. We do not have to look very far to find God's will for us (see Eph. 5:18). Negatively, we ought not get drunk with wine. Positively, we are to be filled with the

Holy Spirit. This is not a request, but a command. This is not a filling that takes place once and for all. Instead we are to constantly be filled by the Spirit.

Being filled with the Spirit is not an ecstatic experience as some claim. We are filled when we obey the truths mentioned in the first seventeen verses of Ephesians 5. These verses speak of turning away from sin and of separation from the world. In other words, clean out the luggage and rubbish and the Holy Spirit will fill that space. To be filled with the Spirit, we must confess and put away all sin in our lives. See 1 John 1:9. We must yield ourselves utterly and completely to God (Romans 12:1-2).

Let the Word of Christ dwell richly in us. See Col. 3:16. Finally, we must be emptied of self. See Galatians 2:2a. The exhortation or command here is that we should “always be filled.” In order to always be filled, we must confess and repent of our sins and rid ourselves continually of anything that would disturb our fellowship with God. The Book of Acts shows that there are special endowments and special fillings for special purposes. We cannot fill ourselves with the Spirit, God must fill us. He will do this if we do not have sin that has not been confessed in our life.

The parallel passage in Colossians 3:16 exhorts us to let the Word dwell in us and then shows the same results will follow as being filled with the Spirit. Ephesians 5:19-20 shows us the result of being filled: speaking to one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. It follows, therefore, that the person who is full of the Word will be full of the Spirit. It is through the Word of God that the Spirit controls, directs, employs, and fills

us. Notice the four ways in which the joy of Spirit-filled believers are expressed:

1. Speaking to one another
2. Singing and making melody with all your heart
3. Giving thanks to God for all things
4. Being in subjection to one another in the fear of Christ (Eph. 5:21)

Psalms—Hymns—Spiritual songs - The Psalms are the writings of David, Asaph, and so on. Hymns are uninspired songs, which give God praise and worship. Spiritual songs are any other songs that deal with spiritual themes. “Singing and making melody with all your heart to the Lord.” The Spirit-filled life is a fountain, bubbling over with joy. See Acts 13:52. There are four results of the Spirit’s filling:

1. Boldness in testifying for the Lord (Acts 4:8-12, 31, and Acts 13:52-14:3)
2. Power for service (Acts 1:8, 6:3, 8, and Acts 11:24)
3. Generosity (Acts 4:31-32)
4. Exaltation of Christ and of God (Acts 9:17, 20, Acts 2:4, 11, and Acts 10:44-46)

Domestic Conduct of the Christian (Ephesians 5:22-33)

The theme of the Spirit-filled life that began in the last passage occupies the next section entirely up to Ephesians 6:9. This section shows us the domestic conduct of the Christian. Notice the relationships mentioned: Wives, husbands, and children, as well as parents, servants, and masters. The most important

relationship is taken up first in verse 22, "Wives are instructed to be in subjection to their own husbands."

A paraphrase of Ephesians 5:22 is enlightening. "You wives must learn to adapt yourselves to your own husband, in the same way as you submit to the Lord." This submission is real, but it is unique. God did not take material from Adam's head so that he would Lord it over her, nor from his feet, that he might trample her. God took her from his side, to be his partner - an equal. The submission is not bondage; it is unto the Lord, expressing willing and cheerful compliance - all that we would give Christ if He were physically present.

Ephesians 5:23-24 gives the family order. This was established in creation. For the husband is the head of the wife in the same way that Christ is the Head of the Church. Believing wives should remember that her subjection to her husband is a picture of the church's subjection to Christ.

In verse 25, Paul turns from the responsibilities of the wives and dwells at greater length on the responsibilities of the husband. They are to "love their wives." But what does this really mean? If it were left to some men's judgment, it would not mean much. However, God gives us the standard for the love a husband must have for his wife. "Just as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it." Where there is love shown like this by the husband, there needs to be no fear of subjection on the part of the wife. The divorce courts would be shut down.

In verse 26, Paul shows us Christ's relationship with the Church. He has sanctified her, (i.e. set her apart) - and cleanses her (the washing by the water of the Word).

This washing is with the Word, as applied by the Holy Spirit. See John 13. The future aspect of this ministry of washing with the Word is brought before us in verse 27. "That He might present it to Himself a glorious Church." The Lord looks forward to the time when He will present His glorious Bride to Himself. This is a unique statement. [Explain] The Church's beauty is mentioned - no spots, wrinkles, or blemishes. On the day of presentation she will be absolutely holy, blameless, and perfect.

The Spirit applies this instruction to the husbands in verse 28, saying that they are to love their wives in the same way as they love their own bodies. The natural instinct of a person to take care of his body is given as an additional reason for a husband to love his wife. She is of his flesh, so he should take care of her - for they are one flesh. No one ever hated his own flesh—everyone feeds his body and cares for it (see verses 29-30). This is what Christ does for His body, the Church. "We are members of His body" - The grace of God is amazing!

In verse 31, Paul quotes from Gen. 2:24 - "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." This describes the primary relationship between husband and wife in marriage. The man leaves his father and mother and cleaves to his wife - the two become one flesh. Verse 32 declares that the marriage relationship is a great mystery. This is one of the mysteries of the N.T.; something concealed and unknowable until divinely revealed. The human relationship of marriage is magnified by serving as a model for the heavenly relationship of Christ and the Church.

The man's relationship to his parents is superseded by a higher loyalty—the loyalty to his wife. In order to achieve the high ideal of marital bliss, he leaves his parents and clings to his wife. In marriage, the husband and wife become one flesh. Verse 33 is a summary of the aforementioned truths: Husbands love your wives as you love yourself - wives respect and obey your husbands.

Ephesians 6

The truths of the first nine verses of this chapter are a continuation of the theme introduced in chapter 5. In Ephesians 5, the Spirit-filled wife is subject to her husband. In this chapter, we learn that Spirit-filled children obey their parents (see Ephesians 6:1-3).

Ephesians 6:1-3

The phrase “in the Lord” is interesting. Paul undoubtedly has the Christian family in view. Christian children should obey their parents with the attitude that they are obeying the Lord. Secondly, it means that they should obey in all matters which are in accordance with the will of God. In the case of being ordered to do that which is contrary to the will of God, they should continuously refuse and suffer any consequences meekly.

Paul gives four reasons why children should obey their parents:

It is right (Ephesians 6:1)—This is a basic principle that is built into the family structure; that those who are immature, impulsive, and inexperienced should submit to the authority of parents who are older and wiser.

It is scriptural (Ephesians 6:2)—Paul quotes Exodus 20:12, which says, “Honor thy father and thy mother.” This is the first of the Ten Commandments with a promise attached. It calls for children to love, respect, and obey their parents.

It is in the best interest of the children (Ephesians 6:3) —“That it may be well with thee.” We can see all around

us the effects of the lack of instruction and correction. Some children are personally miserable and socially intolerable.

For obedience to one's parents, the Jewish child was promised "length of days" (Ephesians 6:3)—In this age, a life of discipline and obedience is conducive to good health and longevity.

Ephesians 6:4-8

Paul continues his instruction in the domestic sphere by giving advice to fathers (Eph. 6:4). They are "not to provoke their children to anger." They must not make unreasonable demands upon them. They must not treat them with undue harshness. They must not be constantly nagging them. On the contrary, they should be brought up with discipline and correction—verbal or corporal. They should be admonished (i.e. warned, rebuked, and reprov'd) "in the Lord." The one who administers the discipline must always remember that he is acting as a representation of God.

The third, and final, sphere of submission in the Christian household concerns servants' submission to their masters. The first duty of the servant is to "obey." Ephesians 6:5 reads, "Servants, be obedient." Secondly, the servant should be respectful, acting "with fear and trembling." This does not mean that they should act with cowering servility or abject terror, but rather it means that they should treat their masters with respect and a fear of offending the Lord as well as employees. Thirdly, the servants' service should be conscientious—in singleness of heart. Fourthly, the servants' work should be done as "unto Christ."

A servant's performance should not be determined by the geographical location of the master. Instead, it should be determined by the presence of the ever-present Lord. Those who serve their earthly master well are serving Christ and doing the will of God (Eph. 6:6). The monetary reward may not be commensurate with the service rendered to our earthly master, but in the future it will be recognized and rewarded by the Lord Himself.

Ephesians 6:9-20

Masters should be guided by the same general principles as servants. They should be kind, fair and honest. They should abstain from threatening and abusive language. In disciplining their servants they should remember that they also have a master in heaven who does not recognize that which is an earthly distinctive (Eph. 6:9).

In Ephesians 6:10, the apostle is drawing a close to his letter. He makes a final appeal to the family of God as soldiers of Christ saying, "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might." The spiritual believer is engaged in total warfare. The hosts of Satan are committed to hinder, obstruct, and totally destroy the individual believer (think of Adam and Eve). The closer a believer walks with the Lord, the more he will experience the savage attacks of Satan and his hosts. Consider David (see Acts 16 and Matthew 10:2). In our own strength we are no match for the devil (see James 4:7). Hence, we are exhorted to be strong in the Lord and to draw continually from the inexhaustible resources of His power.

Paul issues his second command here, saying, “Put on the whole armor of God.” The believer must be completely armed to stand. Paul mentions this three different times. The devil has many modes of attack. These include discouragement, frustration, confusion, moral failure, doctrinal error, worldly pleasure, and mediocrity. If he cannot disable us by one method, he will try another.

In Ephesians 6:12, we are called to wrestle. This battle is not against human enemies, but against demonic powers, hosts of fallen angels, and evil spirits who wield tremendous powers. These wicked spirit-beings can oppress and harass the believers. He need not be anxious by their presence if he puts on the whole armor of God. Paul names some of our spirit enemies, which include principalities, powers, rulers of darkness, and spiritual wickedness in high places. These evil beings are present in the heavenly places— the air.

Ephesians 6:13 says, “Wherefore, take unto you the whole armor of God.” Notice it is the ‘whole armor.’ This is mentioned twice here (see Eph. 6:11). We must put the whole armor of God on if we expect to stand when the conflict reaches its fiercest intensity. The evil day is the day of attack. The armor is for the front. Satanic opposition comes in waves. We never know when the attack will come, hence the importance of having all the armor on at all times.

There are seven pieces of armor:

(1) The first piece of armor mentioned is the girdle or belt of truth. Every Christian should be armed with the truth of God’s Word. Everything moral, spiritual, doctrinal, and ethical should be tested by the truths of

the Word. Jesus said, "I am the TRUTH." This is the believer's first line of defense. Example: The Lord in the wilderness.

(2) The second piece of armor is the breastplate of righteousness. Every believer is clothed with the righteousness of God (see 2 Cor. 5:21). He also should manifest integrity and purity of personal life. When a believer is clothed in practical righteousness, he is impregnable. David put on the breastplate of righteousness (see Psalm 7:3-5). The Lord wore it at all times. (See Isaiah 59:17, which asks, "Which of you convicteth?")

(3) The soldier's feet must be "shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace," (Eph. 6:15). This suggests a readiness to go forth with the Gospel of peace, as a literal invader into enemy territory. "How beautiful are the feet of those that preach the Gospel of peace and bring glad tidings of good things" (see Romans 10:5). "Take my feet. Swift and beautiful for thee."

(4) The soldier is also commanded to take "the shield of faith" in Ephesians 6:16. By doing so, he is able to protect himself against the flaming arrows from hell. Faith here is from confidence both in the Lord and in His Word. When temptation harasses, when circumstances are adverse, when doubts assail, when all seems lost, faith looks up and says, "I believe God."

(5) The believer must put on a helmet (Eph. 6:17). The helmet God provides is a helmet of salvation (see Isaiah 59:17). No matter how fierce the battle, the believer should be undaunted, knowing that ultimate victory is sure. The assurance of eventual deliverance should

inspire him and so prevent retreat or surrender. If God be for us, who can be against us? See Romans 8:31.

(6) Furthermore, believers must take the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. The classic example of this is our Lord's use of this sword in His encounter with Satan in the wilderness. He quoted the Word of God three times, under the direction of the Spirit. This was sufficient to discourage him from further attack.

(Example: Moonie Girl).

(7) Finally, Ephesians 6:18 speaks of, "praying always with all prayer." Prayer is not mentioned as part of the armor, but every believer at all times should be enveloped in an attitude of prayer. Prayer should be done without ceasing. We must be "praying always" (see 1 Thessalonians 5:17).

The believer should use all kinds of prayer, praying "with all prayer." This should include both public and private prayer, deliberate and spontaneous prayer, along with supplication and intercession. There should also be confession and humiliation, along with praise and thanksgiving. The Spirit should inspire the believer's prayers. Of what use are formal, ritualistic prayers against the forces of hell?

There must be vigilance in prayer. We must be always "watching thereunto." We must guard against complacency and carelessness. Prayer requires keenness, alertness, and concentration. There also must be perseverance in prayer, "with all perseverance." We must keep on asking, seeking and knocking (see Luke 11:9). Finally, supplication should be made for all saints. All believers are engaged in the conflict and need the supportive prayers of fellow soldiers.

Ephesians 6:19 says, “Pray for me.” Paul is in prison at this time. He did not ask for prayer for an early release, rather he asked that they would pray that the opportunity would be given him to declare the gospel. Usually ambassadors are granted diplomatic immunity from arrest and imprisonment. No such treatment was given Paul. He considers himself an ambassador in bonds; he considered himself to be the prisoner of Jesus Christ (Ephesians 6:20). Even in chains he asks them to pray that he may “open his mouth boldly” and speak the full revelation of God.

Ephesians 6:21-24

These verses draw this remarkable letter to a conclusion. Paul mentions that he is sending Tychicus to them to let them know how he was faring. Tychicus’ task was twofold. He wanted first to tell them of Paul’s welfare in prison and second to encourage their hearts, allaying any unnecessary fears.

In Ephesians 6:23, he desires that his readers may have peace and love with faith. Peace would garrison their hearts in every circumstance of life. Love would enable them to worship God and work with one another. Faith would empower them for exploits in Christian warfare.

Finally, in Ephesians 6:24, the beloved apostle prays that the grace of God will be the position of every true believer. The Roman prison no longer holds its noble inmate. The beloved apostle has entered into his reward, and has seen the face of his beloved Lord. But his letter is still with us, as fresh and alive as it left his heart and his pen. This possibly is one of the most wonderful and majestic spiritual letters ever written.

Ephesians 6, Part 2

Ephesians 5:33 - Paul closes this particular section on marriage by saying that a husband must love his wife as he loves himself. And that the wife must see to it that she respects her husband.

Children and Parents (Ephesians 6:1-4)

Ephesians 6:1-3 - Children are directly addressed in the section. God is speaking directly to them Himself. He is not relaying a message through their parents. The message is that they are to obey their parents. One of the characteristics of the last days is disobedience (see 2 Timothy 3:1-2). This has come about through many avenues; among them, the complete disregard for the authority of God's Word and the teaching of the evolutionary philosophy, which denies God's power.

There are three reasons why children should obey their parents:

It is right (Ephesians 6:1) - Even Jesus, who was God incarnate, was subject to His earthly parents. This is a lovely example for all children.

Out of Obedience (Ephesians 6:2) - Paul quotes from the Ten Commandments, saying, "Honor your father and mother." It is not a reluctant, grudging obedience that God expects, but an obedience that will honor father and mother.

For the promise that says, "That it may be well with you, and that you may live a long time." (Ephesians 6:3) - Material blessings were promised to the children of the O.T. for obedience to their parents. This is repeated here

to N.T. children. God will bless children who obey their parents.

Ephesians 6:4 - Fathers must also take heed to God's Word and exercise wisdom in discipline. Children are not to be provoked to anger by inconsistency and over-correction. Children are to be brought up in the fear and admonition of the Lord.

Servants and Masters (Ephesians 6:5-9)

Ephesians 6:5 - "Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters, obeying them as you would obey Christ." Perhaps not in the same harsh way, these instructions apply to employees and employers today. We must serve our employer with respect in the same way we would serve Christ.

Ephesians 6:6 - We must serve faithfully, not only when they are watching, but also when they are not. We are not to serve with the idea of winning their favor. We must serve as the servants of Christ, trying to carry out the will of God.

Ephesians 6:7 - In this day of disobedience and insubordination, any believers who work according to God's rules will shine as a light in a dark place. Why will a believer extend himself to this extent? It is because he is serving the Lord and not men.

Ephesians 6:8 - In this verse the matter of wages is now mentioned. They may be grossly inadequate down here, but we are given assurance that if our service has been unto the Lord, He will acknowledge such and repay accordingly. No man will be paid less than he deserves.

Ephesians 6:9 - The masters or employers are now addressed. They are instructed to act in the same

manner to their employees. They must not threaten them with undue force or unjust retaliation. They are reminded that they also have a Master in heaven and He is no respecter of persons. He has no favorites.

The Christian Conflict—The Armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-20)

In this last section of the epistle, the believer finds himself engaged in fierce conflict. This is a spiritual conflict “in the heavenlies.” Earthly weapons are of no avail here. Note the word, “stand” is used three times. The weapons that are given to us are with one exception, all for defense. There is a very important meaning in all this. Most Christians believe that Spiritual warfare is warfare of offensive action. This may be true in some areas of the Christian life, but this is not the picture here. This warfare is waged against us by Satan and his hosts; the reason for this is because we belong to Christ.

In our unregenerate days, we belonged to Satan, but Christ defeated him and rescued him from his powers and control. This formidable enemy is constantly attacking us to prevent us from enjoying the spiritual blessings which are ours in Christ (see the previous chapter). In the face of these attacks, it is our duty to “stand”, to hold, and to maintain the spiritual blessings we have. If we understand the conflict in this way it will help us to appreciate its meaning.

Ephesians 6:10 - Finally, my brothers, be strong in the Lord. We cannot triumph in our own strength. Human resources and abilities are inadequate to withstand the devilish attacks. When properly armed in Christ, we can never be defeated. We must use the power of Christ's

might; we must use the invincibility of His powers. The standard of His power in this age is “Resurrection Power” (see Philippians 3:10). No enemy, whether angelic, human, demonic, or satanic can prevail against it. This is the power and might that is at our disposal.

Ephesians 6:11 - This verse tells us to, “put on the complete, full armor of God.” We must put on every part of God’s armor. We must not leave off one part. Our formidable enemy is the god of this world (see 1 Corinthians 4:4). The world lies in wickedness—in the wicked one (see 1 John 5:19). Our enemy is a roaring lion (see 1 Peter 5:8). He is an angel of light (see 2 Corinth 11:14). He was cast out of heaven (see Isaiah 14:12-17). He is cast onto the earth (read Revelation 12:9). Paul struggles with the world, flesh, and the devil. See 2 Corinthians chapters 4, 9, and 11. The TRUTH can be found as we consider the replies of the Lord during His temptation.

The reason for this instruction is that you might be able to stand against the cunning devices, schemes, methods, and stratagems of the devil. Satan, our adversary, is the attacker. We are the attacked, and to survive in this spiritual conflict we must use the whole armor of God. Note that the armor covers our front completely; there is no protection for our backs. We must face the enemy armed with the full armor of God and then and only then will we be able to stand against the cunning devices and schemes of the devil, the slanderer. James 4:7 tells us to submit to God and resist the devil.

Ephesians 6:12 - For a moment, Paul changes the figure of the soldier to that of a wrestler. This would teach us

that our conflict is individual and personal. It is not a physical conflict, but a spiritual war.

Next the enemy is described. These are demonic forces—hosts of fallen angels—evil spirits who wield tremendous powers. Though we cannot see them, we are constantly surrounded by hosts of wicked spirit-beings. While these evil spirits cannot include a true believer, they can oppress and harass him.

Ephesians 6:13 - We need to be constantly reminded to put on and keep on twenty-four hours a day, the whole armor of God. “Therefore.” Brethren and Sisters, we must put on the whole armor of God as the conflict reaches new intensity, so that when the smoke of battle has cleared we may be found still standing victorious. The “evil day” is when the enemy seems to overwhelm us. Satan’s attacks are never consistent; they come in waves of varying intensity, advancing then receding. He never leaves us alone for long, as Luke 4:13 describes, which says “He left the Lord for a season.”

Ephesians 6:14 - The first piece of armor mentioned is the belt of truth. The loins speak of physical strength. Transferring this to the spiritual sphere, Peter talks of the “loins of our mind.” Chapter 1, verse 13 says that our mind and being must be saturated with God’s Word. Psalm 119.

The second piece of armor mentioned is the breastplate of righteousness. Every believer is clothed in the righteousness of God (see 2 Corinthians 5:21). But we must in turn show integrity and uprightness in our lives. If we are right in our relationship with God and man, Satan has nothing to shoot at. The breastplate is an important part of our armor; it protects the hearts and

affections. When a man is wearing the breastplate of righteousness he is impregnable.

Ephesians 6:15 - Our feet must be shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace. This is a peculiar piece of equipment for war—the Gospel of peace. This suggests a readiness to go forth with the Gospel into enemy territory. When we relax in our tents we are in deadly peril. May we emulate the beautiful feet of the Savior on the mountains, bearing good tidings and publishing peace. Romans 10:15 says, “How beautiful are the feet...”

Ephesians 6:16 - Next comes the shield of faith. Above all, take up the shield of faith. Nothing is more important than the shield of faith. With it we are able to survive the flaming darts that Satan launches will hit the shield and fall harmlessly to the ground. Faith here is unshakeable confidence in the Lord and His unchangeable Word. When temptations assail, when doubts threaten, and shipwreck seems inevitable, faith looks up and says like Paul, “I believe God.”

Ephesians 6:17 - The helmet of salvation is to protect the head. The helmet is the salvation that God provides. It is eternal. No matter how fierce the battle, the Christian is not daunted, because wrapped in God’s salvation he knows that ultimately victory is assured. Faith in God preserves him from retreat or surrender. Romans 8:31 says, “If God be for us, who can be against us?” Finally, the soldier takes the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. This appears to be the only offensive weapon. The sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, is sharper than any man-made sword (see Hebrews 4:12).

The classic illustration of the use of this sword is when the Lord used the Scripture in His encounter with Satan in the wilderness. The times when He quoted the Word of God—not at random—He used appropriate verses which the Holy Spirit gave Him for the occasion (see Luke 4:1-13). The source of victory is when, under the Spirit, we use verses which best suit the circumstances.

Ephesians 6:18 [Quote: “Praying always” - unceasing prayer, use every kind of prayer] Prayer is not mentioned as part of the armor, but it surely could be included. This is the atmosphere in which the Christian soldier must live and breathe. It is the spirit in which he must put on the whole armor and face the foe. Without prayer, our life and warfare will be a disaster.

The Christian soldier’s prayer should not be sporadic or habitual. He should use all kinds of prayer, inclusive of public, private, contemplated, spontaneous, supplication and intercessory prayer, along with confession and humiliation, praise and thanksgiving. This kind of victorious prayer is “watching thereunto.” We watch against drowsiness, mind-wandering, and preoccupation with other things. The prayer of the victorious Christian warrior is keen, alert, and concentrated.

The prayer of the Christian soldier is uttered in unwearied perseverance; he keeps on asking, seeking, and knocking (see Matthew 7). The Christian soldier is continually engaged in supplicatory prayer for all saints fighting the good fight and for fellow-soldiers in the thick of battle.

Ephesians 6:19 - This final section contains a personal message and a benediction. Paul needed their prayers—he was writing from prison. Notice that he did not ask

them to pray for an early release. He asked them to pray that when he opened his mouth in testimony that God would give Him the right words. He wanted to make known the Gospel with boldness—fearlessly.

Ephesians 6:20 - Paul was the Lord's ambassador and he was in chains. Ambassadors usually are granted diplomatic immunity; they are not arrested nor imprisoned. But the Lord's ambassador was in chains. The particular part of Paul's message that stirred Jews to anger was the announcement that believing Jews and Gentiles were now formed into one new society, sharing equal privileges, and acknowledging Christ as Head.

Personal Greetings from the Apostle (Ephesians 6:21-24)

Ephesians 6:21 - Paul announces here that he will send Tychicus to them and he would tell them all the news about Paul. There are only four references to him in the New Testament. He came to them with high recommendations. He was a beloved brother and a faithful helper in the Lord.

Ephesians 6:22 - When he met with them, he would bring them up to date concerning Paul's welfare in prison, and he would encourage them and remove any unnecessary fears they had for his safety.

Ephesians 6:23-24 - These verses contain Paul's benediction for them. He asked, in true apostolic fashion, that peace and love and faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ would be their portion. Lastly, he wishes grace for all who sincerely love the Lord Jesus with an incorruptible love.

The Practical Section

The Practical Section

This part of the epistle contains practical instructions and exhortations for the believer. The practical issues discussed should flow from the lives of believers who comprehend the magnificent doctrinal truths expounded in the first half of the epistle.

Ephesians 4:1-3 - Paul begins this section in verse one with an exhortation to walk worthy of our vocation; that is, our calling or summons from God, being chosen by God. We have to walk before God and men with all lowliness, humility, meekness, gentleness, longsuffering, and patience - making allowances for one another (verse two). These attributes are to characterize our walk. [In the first three chapters we are living in the "heavenlies." In the last three we are in the Church and in the world.]

Verse 3 says, "Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." This suggests giving diligence and earnestly striving. We are to keep this unity, not make it. See Eph. 2 - Oneness - The Holy Spirit indwelling and empowering each believer is the true source of unity.

Ephesians 4:4-6 - Three spheres are suggested in the next three verses: the inward sphere, the outward sphere, and the sphere of creation. Let us look at each more closely (for our own purposes here, let's omit the words "there is"):

- The Inwards Sphere (Eph. 4:4) - One body- one spirit. This would be the inner most circle. They represent that which is inward and not seen. In the earlier chapters,

the body is the great theme. However, men on earth never see it. What men see instead is a baffling array of bodies, each claiming to be the body. This one body is vitalized by one Spirit and looks forward to one hope. The unseen Holy Spirit is the prominent one here.

- The Outward Sphere (Eph. 4:5) - This is the sphere that concerns the Lord Jesus, who is the outward expression of the Godhead. Jesus as Lord is a prominent theme in the N.T. (see Rom. 10:9, 1 Cor. 12:3, and Phil. 2:11 - indeed "Jesus is Lord.") "One baptism." The big question here is, "Is this referring to a water baptism or the baptism of the Spirit?" There are good scholars on both sides. "One faith." This is the common faith that all believers express, in contradistinction to the religions of the Gentiles and the laws of the Jews. The

- The Sphere of Creation (Eph. 4:6) - The most important unity is the seventh. This number in Scripture usually expresses completion or perfection. One God and Father of all. See Gen 2:1-3. The Fatherhood of God extends beyond the Christian sphere to the larger unity of creation. "He is God over all, blessed forever." See Rom. 9. A realization of the truth of these seven unities is expected to lead us into a greater unity with each other.

Ephesians 4:7 - Consider the diversity of the members of the Body. After instructing us concerning the oneness (unity) of the Body, Paul now sets forth the diversity of its members. The source of all gifts is Christ. The channel of ministry is the diversity of gifts. The purpose of ministry is the edification of the Body.

In verse 7, we have the expression, "but unto each one of us was the grace given." To every believer is this grace given. Every believer has been given a spiritual

gift and God has given the grace, power, strength, and wisdom to use that gift for His glory and the building up of the Church.

Ephesians 4:9-10 - These verses are parenthetical and are often interpreted in different ways. "The lower parts of the earth" is a point of conflict. Some teach that "the lower parts of the earth" is referring to the earth itself. Others believe this to be a reference to Hades. Some feel that the incarnation answers the question. Many more take the view that the death of Christ is sufficient to answer the question. Perhaps the last of these answers is the right one.

Ephesians 4:11 - The true and only basis for Christian ministry is given in this verse. It is not a question of education, degrees, ecclesiastical ordination, or man's authorization. The way the Church is built up is through the gifts given to it by the risen Christ. Consider the qualifications, or rather lack thereof, of the disciples. Some were fishermen - one was a tax collector - they were for the most part Galileans. They had no schooling, no college degrees, and no human ordination, but they were gifts from the Lord. Despite their unqualified status, humanly speaking, they turned the world upside down. Note the order here: First, grace is given to each one (Eph. 4:7); then, gifts are given to men (Eph. 4:8); and finally, these gifted men are given to the Church (Eph. 4:11).

In this verse, there is mention of apostles and prophets, but they are no longer needed. Evangelists preach the Gospel. The work of the evangelist is to seek lost souls and win them for Christ. Pastors and teachers - these gifts are closely linked together. This is the only mention

of pastor in the N.T. In other places the same word is rendered “shepherd” (see John 10:11 and Heb 13:20). This illustrates the tender care of the shepherd for the sheep; this is the vital gift of the pastor. The teacher is gifted to bring instruction in an orderly way.

Ephesians 4:12-14 - For the perfecting of the saints - the purpose of these gifts is to equip the believers to serve the Lord, and one another, so that the Church may be built up. It would appear that as the gifted men use their gifts and the body is edified, each member grows and functions in his God-given place, and the corporate body develops into spiritual maturity.

The object of this ministry by gifted men is now brought out in verse 13. It is “until we attain,” or arrive at three things: (1) The unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, (2) A perfect or mature man — a full-grown man, and (3) The measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. This would apply both to the individual and the corporate body.

Verse 14 goes on to say that we henceforth be no longer children – babes – infants. It is not God’s will that we should remain spiritual babes. He wants us to grow up. Paul goes from speaking of the picture of the babe to speaking of the picture of the sea. Maybe he has a piece of driftwood in mind here.