

NOTES ON EPHESIANS (AND COLOSSIANS) by Scott Long



Intro to Ephesians

“In all the New Testament, Ephesians is the most direct, most eloquent, most thorough, and most compelling appeal to Gentiles that they recognize what God has done especially for them and that they therefore respond by walking worthily of their calling. ... Colossians largely follows the general outline of Ephesians but focuses on the particular problem at Colossae.” Smelser (see page 15, and Caldwell p_{xv})

Authorship

“All accepted Greek texts of Ephesians open with Paul’s name.” Caldwell

Also see 3:1, 8, 13; 4:1; 6:20-22.

Strong factors of Paul’s authorship include the claim of apostleship 1:1, the mystery made known by revelation 3:3, and the claim of the author’s being in chains 6:20. Polycarp, Irenaeus, and Clement of Alexandria quoted from Ephesians and cited Paul as the author.

Smelser says that the fact stood as such for 17 centuries until ‘Unitarian Edward Evanson is credited with being the first to assert that Paul was not the author of Ephesians. ... in 1792, he denounced both Ephesians and Colossians as having been “fabricated by the same opificer [maker].”’

Time and place of writing

Paul seems to indicate that he is “a prisoner” 3:1 and 4:1 and “in chains” 6:20. This would likely put the date of writing during his Roman imprisonment in 60-4 AD. In addition, he probably also wrote Colossians, Philippians, and Philemon at the same time. Tychicus was the messenger of these letters, 6:21 and Colossians 4:7.

The Recipients

Of the major translations today, the Revised standard does not have the words “in Ephesus”, and the NetBible includes the words in brackets with a footnote. Issues include the lack of personal references (Paul had been there over two years) and no specific problems which Paul deals with.

Jeff Smelser says the following about these words, ‘Some manuscripts, very few to be sure, omit the words, “in Ephesus” in Ephesians 1:1. The extant manuscript evidence is heavily in favor of the reading “to the saints in Ephesus.” Ninety-nine percent of the manuscripts that include verse one have “in Ephesus. ... But in the early centuries, manuscripts that omitted the words “in Ephesus” were more prevalent, such that some well-learned men understood the true reading of the word to exclude the words. ... Among all manuscripts extant today that include Ephesians 1:1, among those that lack the words [in Ephesus] are the three oldest. ... If the words were original, what can account for the omission of the words in those earliest manuscripts? ... there are reasonable explanations for the presence of the words in so many later manuscripts even if the letter was not intended especially for the church at Ephesus, but rather for a larger, primarily larger Gentile audience.’

He suggests that there may have been multiple copies made, one addressed to the Ephesians and another addressed to Laodicea (causing Marcion to say that the letter was addressed to the Laodiceans) which would have prompted Paul to write to the Colossians that they should read the letter from Laodicea (meaning the location of the letter). This letter may have become associated with the Ephesians because Ephesus was the first stop of Tychicus in Asia Minor.

The City - Ephesians

Forty miles south of Smyrna, twenty miles north of Miletus, one hundred miles from Colossae. It became a Roman city in 133BC.

‘The greatest landmark of ancient Ephesus was the temple of Diana [Artemis in Greek mythology]. In Roman mythology, Diana was the daughter of Jupiter, king of the gods. ...Diana and Apollo were twins. Diana was the moon goddess, and she became the deity of

womanly chastity, modesty, and childbirth. ...The temple of Diana was one of the “seven wonders of the world.” It was 425 feet in length and 220 feet wide (A football field is 360 feet by 160 feet). It was surrounded by 120 columns each standing sixty feet high. ...It has been said that this so-called “house of worship” served as the home of hundreds of “sacred” prostitutes who were ironically identified as priestesses to Diana. Diana, herself, purported to be a virgin who demanded virginity of her attendants. They were not, however, so virtuous.’ Caldwell

Also in Ephesus was the great theater that housed 50,000 people,

Founding - “Paul's Work at Ephesus. (1) Revisited there on the return from the second missionary journey (Acts 18:18-21). and left with them Aquila and Priscilla. (2) On the third missionary journey he spent about three years there, (Acts 20:31). (3) During this second visit he had such influence as to check the worship of Diana to such an extent as to arouse the opposition of her worshippers and make it necessary for him to depart into Macedonia (Acts 20:1). (4) On the return from the third missionary journey he stopped at Miletus, thirty miles away, and sent for the elders of Ephesus to whom he delivered a farewell address (Acts 20:16-38).” Lange

The city - Colossians

Colossae lost its importance by the 1st century bc when Laodicea was founded. It, along with Laodicea and Hierapolis, was destroyed in the earthquake of ad 60.

“It was about 10 miles from Laodicea and 13 miles from Hierapolis. Colossae had once been a fairly important town, but the trade route had shifted to go through Laodicea so that by Paul’s day, its importance had dwindled. The population was mostly Gentile, but a sizeable Jewish population had settled there several centuries before (Douglas Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and Philemon* [Eerdmans/Apollos], p. 27).” Bible.org

Epaphras seems to have begun the congregation there. See Col 1:5-8; 4:12-13.

Eusebius is said to have chronicled an earthquake destroying Colossae, Laodicea, and Hierapolis (*Chron. Olymp.* 210.4) in the 10th year of Nero [AD 64]. Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible: "*That this city [Colossae] perished by an earthquake, a short time after the date of this epistle, we have the testimony of Eusebius...*"

Tacitus records the quake in the 7th year of Nero (Nero was Emperor of Rome from AD 54-68, putting the earthquake around AD 61—[Annals 14.27](#)). Tacitus recorded that Laodicea was also destroyed in the quake, but was later rebuilt apparently without Roman assistance. Note that Jesus wrote to Laodicea, but Colossae was not mentioned

among the letters of Revelation. **By this time (AD 96), Colossae in large part no longer existed.**

CHAPTER 1

Vv 1:1 to 3

Paul – clearly identifies himself as author, see also 3:1. Paulos means small or diminutive.

An apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God – it is true that all those named apostles would have been so by the will of God, simply an affirmation that he was a true and duly ordained apostle. Authority. It may also be that Paul says this to illustrate God's unusual choosing of him as related in Acts 9 and 22 as also in 1 Corinthians 15:8.

To the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus – To omit “in Ephesus” makes the sentence odd. Is Paul merely addressing the saints who are? As we have already said, this may have been a replaceable part of the greeting, but either way, Paul is addressing faithful saints. It may be that he is addressing the saints in Ephesus and faithful (also saints) in other places.

“In” suggests a spiritual relationship, not a physical location.

Grace (used 13 times) and peace – a usual salutation of blessing from God. A combination of Greek and oriental that became uniquely Christian according to Smelser. Peace may reflect peace with God. These Paul extends and/or wishes to them from God the Father and Jesus the Son.

V3 seems to be an overarching statement or theme of the book. It expresses that the readers, as Christians, ought to give God all blessing and praise as the Father of Jesus. Through Jesus, God has blessed us with EVERY spiritual (used 13 times) blessing in the heavenlies (indicates the place to which Christ ascended. This is the risen Lord. See 2:6.) Paul will go on to explain this in greater detail. Note blessed, blessed, blessing in this verse. Smelser says, “the spiritual blessings of God are themselves exalted.”

->Colossians 1:1-4 adds Timothy to the greeting. V2 seems to echo v1 of Ephesians in form and includes “in Colossae.” Paul also praises and thanks God, the Father of Jesus. He also tells them that he is praying for them after hearing of their faith.

Vv 4 to 14

From v3 to v14, Paul is speaking of the specific facts of why God is to be blessed. The main reason, in v3, is that He is the father of Jesus Christ and has blessed us with every spiritual blessing. Now he delves into those specific blessings which he shows us are in Christ. So, God, the father of Jesus who died for us, gave us every spiritual blessing which comes through Jesus.

Key words: predestined, adoption, glory, grace, accepted, redemption, forgiveness, mystery, purposed, dispensation.

Many threads run through this section:

Our Father, Father of Jesus, predestined us to adoption, God became our Father.

All spiritual blessings are: “in Christ” – vv3, 10, 12; “In Him” - vv4, 7, 10, 11, 13; “by Jesus Christ” – vv5; “in the beloved” – v6

God did this according to the good pleasure of His will, the riches of His grace, and His good pleasure.

Paul makes clear that every spiritual blessing only came to us because of Jesus Christ; and God the Father sent Him. Colossians 1:5-8 sums this section up as “the hope which is laid up for you in heaven.”

V4 gives no end of confusion to people who would do well to remember that God is not a respecter of persons and shows no partiality, Acts 10:34-35 which means nothing if all are saved, Romans 2:11, Galatians 2:6, Ephesians 6:9, Colossians 3:25, 1 Peter 1:17. If we believe that Paul is saying that God predestined specific people to be saved or lost, then God becomes a respecter of persons.

The key is really in the answer to the question, “How did God choose?” He chose (picked us out - RWP) “in Him (Jesus).”

Romans 6:3, Galatians 3:27 – baptized into Christ

Remember to whom Paul is writing; he says God chose “us.” Who is the us? Christians. It has to be Christians (or at least Israelite Christians) and not Israelites alone because He did this choosing before the foundation of the world, before creation. This verse shows that God knew that man would sin against Him and developed the plan whereby man could be reconciled to Him even before creation began.

“...it is certain that [katabole] can mean nothing but "laying down" in the sense of "establishing" or "founding"; the phrase used here and in ten other New Testament passages is unambiguous and denotes the creation of the universe.” F.F. Bruce

Those who are saved “in Him” are not limited to faithful Israelites but also include those faithful before Israel became a nation. So, those whom God chose are those who would be faithful to God. Whether before the cross or after, it is Jesus’ blood that cleanses us all.

And “in Him” is where we were chosen “that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.” Or God put those who are “holy (set apart) and without blame before Him in love” in Him. Either way, the idea conveyed is not that God picked certain people and not others to be saved but that He would chose those who chose to be obedient, 1 Corinthians 1:21.

Smelser: “Before the foundation of the world, God’s plan was to accomplish this in Christ, namely, that we would be holy and without blemish before Him in love.” He also notes that “in love” may refer adverbially to God’s choosing us or adverbially in what way we are holy and blameless.

In v5, God also predestined/foreordained (defined or decided beforehand – RWP) us. So, He decided beforehand (before the creation) to pick out IN JESUS those who would be holy and without blame. More precisely in the verse, God picked the “us” of v3 and on to be adopted as sons by Jesus Christ to God, Himself, John 1:12, Galatians 3:26-4:7.

“The word adoption seems to stress the fact of the Christian's privileges in God's family being totally undeserved and unmerited, just as an abandoned and forsaken child may be taken into a family by adoption, such a legal action bestowing upon the child all of the rights and privileges of that family without regard whatever to any merit of the child. Also, there is another suggestion in the fact of an adopted child's being of a different kind (that is, a different family) from that into which it is adopted.” Coffman

This adoption is also “according to the good pleasure of His will.” God, our God, was pleased to receive us as if we were true sons. Even though we are not true sons in the family, we would enjoy all the benefits of belonging to this family and in no way come short in regards to the true sons.

V6 states that this good pleasure to do what He did (past tense) only redounds to the praise of God, again v3. It is by this choosing and predestining that God, through His

grace (an act of God, not a state into which He brings us), made us accepted, graced us, again in the beloved, in His own beloved Son, Matthew 3:17.

V7 – in Jesus we have our redemption, “a releasing effected by payment of ransom, deliverance, liberation procured by the payment of a ransom” NetBible.

->See Colossians 1:14.

We were in captivity to our sin, John 8:34. Jesus’ death paid the price, His blood, that purchased or bought us out of our captivity, Acts 20:28, 1 Peter 1:18-19. See Exodus 6:6. This act led to the forgiveness of our sins/trespases. An interesting question is did the death of Jesus automatically lead to the forgiveness of the sins of all? Of course not. Only those who are obedient.

The death of Jesus demonstrated the riches of God’s grace toward us.

V8 – God’s caused His grace to abound, overflow, to us in all wisdom and prudence or understanding, either 1) that is God’s or 2) that can result in us from our obedience to the word. The plan God, developed before the foundation of the world, that involved Jesus’ blood’s paying for our sins, pleased Him and shows us how full of grace and wise He truly is.

V9 – God made known to “us”, presumably the apostles and prophets, the mystery (that which was previously not revealed, Colossians 1:26-27) of His own will. God gave His plan by inspiration to man again according to His good pleasure. It pleased God not only to predestine us to adoption but also to reveal this plan to the very people He willed to save. He did not hold back but gave us everything to life and godliness, 2 Peter 1:3.

Smelser says that it makes most sense that “which He purposed in Himself” refers not to God but to Christ since the emphasis of the passage is on the blessings God has bestowed in Christ.

-> See Colossians 1:26-7

V10 – Vincent says it should read, “the mystery which He purposed in Himself unto a dispensation.” He made known the mystery of His will so that in the dispensing, the management of or working out in an orderly way the fullness of the times, Galatians 4:4-5, at the right time His ultimate purpose might be fulfilled, Mark 1:15.

"According to the economy of God." An old word from oikonomeô, to be a house steward (oikos, nemô) as in Lu 16:2-4; 1Co 9:17; Eph 1:9; 3:9. It was by God's stewardship that Paul was made a minister of Christ.” Robertson

Smelser: 'The phrase "dispensation of the fullness of times" brings into view a planned distribution that was to occur at the culmination of a defined time period. At the appointed time, God's grace, which was planned in Christ, would be distributed. This anticipates the point Paul will more fully develop in Ephesians 3:1-11.'

That ultimate purpose was that He might sum up/gather together/head up (Romans 13:9) in one all things in Christ. This would include Jew and Gentile, 2:14-16. Vincent states that "God contemplates a regathering, a restoration to that former condition when all things were in perfect unity...."

By this, Paul does not mean to advance the idea of universalism. Only those in Christ can receive all these great blessings.

V11 – Also, we have obtained an inheritance or become a heritage (passive voice, some say we have become the heritage of God, private possession. Paul speaks of what we are not what we have. Caldwell says, "That ... infers... the future blessings promised by the Spirit to the faithful.")

Smelser says, "We who are God's people comprise an allotment, an inheritance, something designated as belonging to God, having been so foreordained. God had been deprived of this allotment because of our sin. However, in Christ, God has redeemed His possession, regained it."

The one who is adopted is treated as one of the family. If there is an estate, he shares in the inheritance. Again, he speaks of the Jews. But if he refers to their being chosen as God's people, it seems at variance with the idea that this inheritance came through Jesus. Gentiles to be included soon in the letter. What is our inheritance? 1 Peter 1:3-4. Having been adopted by God, we have the right to inherit what He has for us, heaven and eternal life.

Vincent says that it means "obtaining by lot" and more correctly "we were made a people of inheritance."

Again, being or having been predestined, v5. We were predestined to adoption according to the good pleasure of His will; and here, we are predestined to the inheritance or to be the heritage according to the pre-determined purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel (intelligent, deliberate design or decree) of His will. God, in His good pleasure, decided to offer adoption to those who were lost and then gave the right to inherit as He purposed by His will.

->See Colossians 1:5-8

V12 – that we who first trusted – gives us the first indication of the "we" that Paul is speaking of. Who was it who first trusted in the Christ? To whom did Christ go? Matthew 15:24 'But He answered and said, "I was not sent except to the lost sheep

of the house of Israel." Who were the first to respond to the gospel. Again, those of Israel in Acts 2. In this first section, with the probably exception of v9 that speaks more specifically of the apostles and prophets, Paul has been using the "we" and "us" to refer to the Israelites. Those Israelites (among what had been God's chosen people) who obeyed the gospel (Israel's true remnant) were to the glory of God.

Vv13 & 14 – Paul turns his attention to "you" as opposed to the "we who first trusted" in v12. You also trusted, he says, after you heard the word of truth, John 17:17, James 1:18, which is the gospel of your salvation. Paul is not merely saying that we believed first and afterward you believed also. Paul is making an overarching and sublime point. God called us first into the vastness of spiritual blessing through His Son which God gave us the right to partake when we obeyed the gospel. And He called you also in the same vastness of spiritual blessing through His son which God gave you the right to partake when you also obeyed the gospel. You, Gentiles, and we, Jews, are now no different in God's sight. We both share in His great blessings.

In addition, you were also (as well as we Jews who were heretofore God's chosen people) sealed with the very Holy Spirit of promise AFTER you believed.

"In whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit." KJV

"in whom you also, having heard the word of the truth, the Good News of your salvation,--in whom, having also believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise" WEB

"And in Him you Gentiles also, after listening to the Message of the truth, the Good News of your salvation--having believed in Him--were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit" WNT

"in whom ye also, having heard the word of the truth--the good news of your salvation--in whom also having believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of the promise" YLT

Coffman points out that the Spirit did not descend upon Jesus until after His baptism, Matthew 3:16, Mark 1:10, Luke 3:22.

On of promise - First, God had prophesied that He would pour out His Spirit on all flesh (not just Jewish flesh), Joel 2:28. He did that first on the Jews of Pentecost in Acts 2, then the Gentiles of Cornelius' household in Acts 10. See Matthew 3:11, 2 Corinthians 1:21-2, Ephesians 4:30, 2 Timothy 2:19. Second may refer to the Spirit's being a promissory note that we will be redeemed.

Sealed – See Caldwell on sealed, pp41-5. Robertson, “First aorist passive indicative of sphragizô, old verb, to set a seal on one as a mark or stamp, sometimes the marks of ownership”

NetBible, “1) to set a seal upon, mark with a seal, to seal, 1a) for security: from Satan, 1b) since things sealed up are concealed (as the contents of a letter), to hide, keep in silence, keep secret 1c) in order to mark a person or a thing 1c1) to set a mark upon by the impress of a seal or a stamp 1c2) angels are said to be sealed by God 1d) in order to prove, confirm, or attest a thing 1d1) to confirm authenticate, place beyond doubt”

The seal is not a guarantee that a Christian can never lose his salvation. Instead, it is a marking of one as God’s. Again, much like Ezekiel 9 and Revelation 7:3ff, 13:17, 14:11, 16:2. This is a spiritual mark that separates/identifies those who are God’s from those who are not God’s. It is done by the giving of the Spirit of promise. See 2 Corinthians 1:21-2, Ephesians 4:30, 2 Timothy 2:19. Promise could mean that the Spirit had been promised or that the Spirit points to God’s promise of redemption. Acts 2:38-9.

The latter might be verified in v14 in that the Spirit (Himself) is the guarantee of our inheritance, 2 Corinthians 1:22. If we have obeyed and been adopted and sealed with the Spirit, then we are guaranteed to inherit (if we are faithful). But God gave the Spirit in order that we would know that we have been given the right to inherit.

Or, as some say, the Spirit is the seal of our being an inheritance. Maybe in all of this there is a double meaning. Most concentrate on the idea of inheritance connected with possession, but what about its connection with adoption? Maybe inheritance is the hinge. We are adopted and so become qualified to inherit. We belong to God now, and so, are considered His inheritance/possession. See 1:18.

Coffman – ‘The meaning of "earnest" as used here is exactly the same as that intended by the use of the word today to refer to a partial payment tendered as a guarantee that the full amount promised will be paid in the future. The earnest of the Holy Spirit is given to Christians by the Father in heaven, or by Christ (it is true both ways), as a pledge of the ultimate reception of the redeemed souls into eternal fellowship with the Father in heaven.’

Caldwell makes a great point about this. “Those who must have some physical evidence or personal, direct “indwelling” do not walk by faith.”

We and you are sealed, not indefinitely, but until the redemption (buying back, Galatians 3:13) of the purchased (by Christ’s death and blood, 1 Corinthians 6:20) possession (we belong to God, 1 Corinthians 3:23, 6:19-20, Galatians 5:24).

All of the above redounds to the glory of God because it was His will and purpose, His doing through His Son, Jesus. God provided everything for us to be reconciled to Him except our obedience, which He leaves to us.

Recapping VV 3-14, what constitutes “every spiritual blessing”?

V4 – God chose us in Him to be holy and blameless

V5 – God predestined us to adoption by Jesus

V6 – He made us accepted

V7 – Jesus’ blood has redeemed us

V7 – We have the forgiveness of sins

V8 – God’s grace abounds to us

V9 – God made known the mystery of His will

V10 – He would gather all things together under Christ

V11 – Through Christ, we have (or are, or both) an inheritance

V13 – The gospel was given to the Gentiles

V13 – We were sealed with the Holy Spirit

V14 – The Spirit is a guarantee that God will redeem us

Eph 1:15-23 Col 1:9-20

Vv 15 to 23

Vv 1 & 2 – Therefore, as a result of the foregoing, primarily that the readers had heard the gospel, believed, and were sealed with the Spirit, v13. Paul constantly reveals his thankfulness for believers, honest hearts that recognize the gospel message for what it is, salvation.

After I heard of your faith – Not a faith that originates from them but their embracing of and living by` the gospel. Paul has more knowledge than this of the Ephesian congregation in particular because of his years there founding and strengthening it; however, he has been away for about five years and has probably heard a current report of their faithfulness in Jesus and love of the saints, possibly from Epaphros, Colossians 1:7-8.

This is a comment I appreciate by Caldwell, “It is horrifying to witness so-called Christians who have no apparent special feeling for those in the kingdom of God. Many need to develop a more spiritual character filled with longsuffering and kindness toward brethren and sisters in Christ.” Wow! So true.

Some mss do not have “love”. This reading is problematic because the reading would be, “I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and for all the saints” which puts

the Lord and the saints on equal footing. Also Colossians 1:4 says, “since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of your love for all the saints.”

Vincent says, “Love being omitted, this refers to faith; faith which displays its work and fruits toward fellow Christians.” Maybe?

If we all had merely these two ideals for which to strive, how could we go wrong. God takes this tact as well in Jesus’ saying there are two laws: love God and love your neighbor. If we truly believe in Jesus, we will obey His will. If we truly love our neighbor, whether he is not a believer or is a believer, we will be concerned for his salvation and will do what is in his best interest.

So, Paul did not cease to give thanks for them. We should be, as Paul, thankful for our brethren, thankful that they are saved as we are, thankful for those of like precious faith. They are valuable and beautiful in the spiritual sense even if not in the physical sense. If we have this attitude, we will not soon hurt our brethren. What hurt does not result from a lack of this attitude?

Vv 17 to 20a – Certainly, Paul thanks God for these brethren in his prayers, and he also prays for them that 1) God may give (something given of one’s own accord. Whatever Pauls speaks of can be prayed to God for and God will give it, James 1:5) to you:

The spirit of wisdom – they had already been sealed by the Spirit (v13), so Paul probably does not mean the Holy Spirit Himself. Might Paul be alluding, however, to the Spiritual gift of wisdom, 1 Corinthians 12:7-8, and revelation, 1 Corinthians 14:26. Had Paul heard that they did not have the Spiritual gifts? Was Paul praying that the Spirit would fall on them? We see no other instances after Cornelius of this happening. If not, what, then, is the spirit of wisdom? Wisdom is the Greek word *sophia*. Generally, wisdom is differentiated from knowledge. Knowledge is what we learn, and wisdom is how we apply what we learn. There is good wisdom and there is bad wisdom, James 3:13-17. There, the good wisdom is “the wisdom that is from above.” The other is “human wisdom”, 1 Corinthians 2:4; “the wisdom of men”, 1 Corinthians 2:5; the “wisdom of this age”, 1 Corinthians 2:6. What wisdom is really important in the human life? The wisdom to understand and apply the word of God. We can pray for wisdom. Paul may be praying that God would give them such wisdom.

Vincent believes this is the Holy Spirit. See Romans 1:4

Caldwell describes this as “a disposition which guides, influences, or governs the individual.” Galatians 6:1, 1 Corinthians 4:21, 2 Timothy 1:7. He says it is through “the preaching of truth or the reading of His inspired word.”

Smelser says, “when Paul prays that his audience might receive a spirit of wisdom and revelation, he has in mind guidance by means of the spiritual gifts.” 1 Corinthians 1:5 and chaps 12-14.

Colossians 1:9

And (the spirit of?) revelation – If Paul is not speaking of the miraculous gift, what is revelation? Preaching the gospel is revealing the word to someone, Romans 16:25.

Some say that Paul prays that God would reveal more of the word and His will to them, that they might grow in knowledge.

In the knowledge of Him – Who is the Him? The Father seems to be the last one mentioned. V18 seems to be speaking of God also. Where does knowledge originate from? God, the Father. In knowing God, we seek His wisdom and revelation, greater ability to apply the word and deeper knowledge and insight into the mind of God. All important knowledge is in knowing God. Knowledge may also extend to our having a relationship with the Lord. Not to be vulgar, but the word know in the context of a man and woman connotes relationship. To know the Lord can connote a relationship as well.

One thing Paul is not doing, if He is not speaking of the Holy Spirit, is praying for special, ongoing revelation or miraculous understanding for us as Christians.

Colossians 1:9 puts this together differently, “with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.” The key idea here is knowing God’s will. Knowing His will leads to wisdom in its application and in growth to deeper levels of understanding. A cycle.

The eyes of your understanding being enlightened/illuminated – The perfect participle indicates that the action has already occurred. Thus, since your eyes were opened. You have seen the truth. Since you are no longer blind to the truth. Probably, the meaning is since your eyes have been opened, I pray that God will give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation.

2) that you may know -

These seem to be the end goals of those who have been enlightened, who have believed in the gospel.

a) what is the hope of His calling – Realistic expectation through the gospel, 2 Thessalonians 2:14. What is the end result of believing? Titus 3:7, eternal life; 1 Peter 1:13, it comes with Jesus' return; 1 John 3:2, to be like Him

b) what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints – We have already talked about the two view on inheritance. If the inheritance is what God gives us, it is the culmination and realization of what God has promised to those who are faithful. This inheritance shows the riches of God's glory. Otherwise, the inheritance is Christians whom the Lord will inherit. This, too, is a glorious inheritance.

and c) what is the exceeding greatness of His strength of might **toward us who believe** (see Vincent p372). We underestimate God sometimes, what He is willing to do for His children. This should be an obvious thing, considering what He has already done for us. In fact, Paul says also that this is all according to the working of His power in raising Christ from the grave. The resurrection is the key to it all, 1 Corinthians 15. If we believe that God had the power (and desire) to raise Christ from the dead for us, can we not see that He has much greater blessings in store for us. The death of Christ is merely the beginning of and assurance of the hope that we will realize one day.

Beare, via Coffman, defines the words of v19 thusly, “[Dunamis] means the ability to accomplish, the cognate verb means "I am able." [Energeia] means power to work, not mere potential power but active power. [Kratos] means the power that rules, has dominion, especially over rational beings. [Ischus] means inherent strength, or might. It has more to do with potential, intrinsic might, whether active or not.”

These things, the Christians to whom Paul writes, already do know to some degree; but Paul prays for them a deeper knowledge and understanding, maybe appreciation, of God's great grace given first to the Jews and then to you Gentiles as well.

Vv 20b and 21 – Four acts, here, according to God's power: 1) raised Christ, 2) seated Him at His right hand, 3) put all things under His feet, and 4) gave Him to be head over the church.

God not only raised Christ from the dead but also seated him at His right hand, Acts 2:29-30. See Matthew 28:18.

See Smelser p95 “Lincoln says,…”

In the heavenlies – We have seen this expression in v3, where Paul said that God had given us every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. How could He do that? Well, Christ is risen to sit at the Father's right hand in the heavenlies (or heavenly places). It is through His resurrection and ascension to the Father to sit on His throne that allows us these blessings when we obey the gospel.

These heavenlies are far above all:

principality – “1) beginning, origin 2) the person or thing that commences, the first person or thing in a series, the leader 3) that by which anything begins to be, the origin, the active cause 4) the extremity of a thing 5) the first place, principality, rule, magistracy 5a) of angels and demons.” NetBible

and power – “1) power of choice, liberty of doing as one pleases 1a) leave or permission 2) physical and mental power 2a) the ability or strength with which one is endowed, which he either possesses or exercises 3) the power of authority (influence) and of right (privilege) 4) the power of rule or government (the power of him whose will and commands must be submitted to by others and obeyed) 4a) universally 4a1) authority over mankind.” NetBible

Vincent says, “These words usually refer to angelic powers, either good as 3:10...; or bad as 6:12...; or both as Romans 8:38. ... Here probably good, since the passage relates to Christ's exaltation to glory rather than to His victory over evil powers.”

and might - *dunamis*, authority, “1) strength power, ability 1a) inherent power, power residing in a thing by virtue of its nature, or which a person or thing exerts and puts forth.” NetBible

and dominion – “1) dominion, power, lordship 2) in the NT: one who possesses dominion.” NetBible

Smelser: “it may be that Paul is using each noun abstractly, saying Jesus is above every rule, authority, power, and lordship, rather than every ruler, authority figure, etc. However, whether he is speaking abstractly of power wielded or concretely of those who wield it, there is little difference in the meaning of the passage.” He has a discussion on pp96-98 on the questions of what these are.

and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come – What names would be named? If we include the last age of the earth and beyond, there would be plenty of people named for salvation, Acts 4:12. The name of Jesus is the only name for salvation.

Vv22 and 23 – God has put all these things, and for that matter, everything, under the rule of Jesus. This relates to v10. If so, this does include the creations, angels etc of heaven and people of earth. God gave Jesus (as a gift, Vincent) to be head over the church. It is His body as v23 says, Colossians 1:15-18, 24.

Jesus is over all; therefore, it makes complete sense that every spiritual blessing is in Him. The church, His body, is the fullness (Vincent, “That which is filled. The church, viewed as a receptacle.”) of Him who fills all in all, 3:8-12. God gives all things necessary. It was no accident but was according to the prior plan of God.

Smelser says, “This sets up what Paul now wants to do, and that is expound upon the glorious blessing that God has bestowed upon His gentile audience, affirming that in every way and with all the prerogatives of those who were saints before them, they are part of the body that is the fullness of Christ.”

CHAPTER 2

Eph 2:1-13; Col 1:21-2:13

Vv 1 to 3 – You, Paul says. Again, the Gentiles whom he addresses. This is the crux. He has already made the point that the Jews were given great blessings as firstfruits in Christ and that the Gentiles have also have been given those same blessings. Now, he asserts that though they had been dead in their trespasses (stumbling aside, making a false step) and sins (missing the mark), God made them alive. The words “He made alive” are italicized, not in the Greek. So to what would Paul refer when he says, “And you, who were dead....” The idea of made alive occurs in v5. There, Paul talks about “we” were dead and made alive. They both had been dead due to their sins. Spiritually dead. Unable to help themselves out of their condition. Paul also relates to 1:20 where God raised Christ from the dead.

The Gentiles had walked in their trespasses and sins. The admonitions to Christians are to walk in the Spirit, Romans 8:1; Galatians 5:16. The rest walk in darkness, John 8:12; Ephesians 4:17. Those who do not know God are dead in their sins yet continue to walk in them. It is the course (age) of this world. ‘Curious combinations of aîôn (a period of time), kosmos (the world in that period). See 1Co 1:20 for "this age" and 1Co 3:9 for "this world,"’ Robertson. Such behavior is the way of the world.

According to the prince of the power of the air – Sin is the way of the world according to The prince is Satan. Power is *exousia*. The NetBible gives the definitions as “1) power of choice, liberty of doing as one pleases, 1a) leave or permission, 2) physical and

mental power, 2a) the ability or strength with which one is endued, which, he either possesses or exercises, 3) the power of authority (influence) and of right (privilege), 4) the power of rule or government (the power of him whose will and commands must be submitted to by others and obeyed).” This power is not the authority that originates with power. That power originates with God; therefore, the authority/power that Satan exercises is that which has been given Him by God. See Job 1:6-7, 2:1-2, John 12:31, 16:11; 2 Corinthians 4:4; 1 Peter 5:8; 1 John 5:19. Satan has some sort of power over the air (lower heavens), earth that, it seems, God gave to Him.

Vincent says of the power, “the whole empire of evil spirits.”

The spirit – of the power, not the Holy spirit, not even in the spiritual sense, but more like a *zeitgeist*, “the activating or essential principle influencing a person acted in a *spirit* of helpfulness; an inclination, impulse, or tendency of a specified kind,” Webster. It is this disposition that works in those who, themselves, work disobedience, who continue to live in their sins.

God has given Satan sway in this world; and he uses his power to influence those who voluntarily submit to his temptations to evil.

We all – Paul may be alluding to both Jew and Gentile. If not, then he is saying the Jews lived among the sons of disobedience (Colossians 3:6-7), which seems unlikely since it would include these Gentiles. All people have sinned and, therefore, did live and act in a framework of their own lusts/passions of their flesh in order to fulfill (carry out) their own desires of the flesh and beliefs rather than the desire of our creator. Those in sin have a sinful worldview that promotes their actual doing of the deeds of that sinful framework. Thinking sinful thoughts, doing sinful deeds.

We were by nature, by our own human tendencies, (Caldwell says, “nature refers to one’s acquired nature through habitual, regular practice.”) children of wrath. Children means birthed of. Wrath, not anger unless it is the anger of rebellion. Probably more likely of the wrath that sinful behavior deserves, the wrath of God or the earning of it.

Calvinist ideas of nature contradict Romans 2:14. See Meyer quote in Smelser, p104.

Vv 4 to 7 – Smelser says that Paul’s detour from v1 now concluded, he must start the thought over. Indeed compare v1 to vv4-5. “And us, being dead by our trespasses and sins, God made alive together with Christ.”

To us, Jew and Gentile alike. Now Paul turns his attention to the maker of this salvation, God, the Father. He is rich in mercy, kindness or goodwill. Why would God

show such mercy to those sons of disobedience, those who were dead in their own sins? Because His love knows no bounds. He created us. He loves us. If He does not reconcile us, we would not be reconciled. 1 John 4:10, 19. Mercy comes from love.

How much love is shown by the fact that it was while we were dead in our sins, our transgressions against this very God, that He loved us and determined to have mercy on us.

He made us alive together **with Christ** – This may allude to the salvation given through the death of Christ or the raising of Christ is a portend of our resurrection. After all, we have been sealed with the Holy Spirit. Romans 6, Colossians 2:12-13.

By grace you have been saved – This is the mercy and love of v4. Grace is generally the unmerited favor of God. Nothing we are deserves it. Nothing we have done merits it. God reconciled us to Himself simply because He loved us. The overall conclusion of our salvation is that it was due solely to the grace of God.

He raised us up together – He begot us, John 3:3ff, made us spiritually alive. Though we have not yet realized our resurrection and translation into eternity, there is a sense in which we have been reborn, Romans 6:1ff. Together may be alluding to both Jew and Gentile. Colossians 2:12, 3:1. The idea may be exalted.

He made us sit together in the heavenly places – figuratively sitting with Christ and reigning over the sinful world. Again together, Jew and Gentile. Together **in Christ Jesus**. Colossians 3:1-3.

Why? That in the ages to come, (the time between the writing and heaven, men's ages, as we are in the last age, Matthew 12:32; Luke 18:30; 1 Corinthians 10:11.) God might show how exceeding is His grace toward us in the kindness that He has showed us **in Jesus Christ**.

Vv 8 to 10 – Back to you, the Gentiles.

V8 is a most misunderstood verse. The teaching often goes that we are saved by grace, which Paul has said in v5 and that all agree with, through faith. The acknowledgment is that we need faith in response to God's grace. The problem comes when some try to say that the next clause "and that/this not of yourselves, it is the gift of God" means that the faith is not of us but that God gives it to us. Our

faith, then, is not something we do. God does it for us. This is Calvinistic. It also contradicts what Jesus says in John 6:28-9. Is the gift that God gives us merely our faith in response to His own grace? Or is the gift of God the grace itself? The latter seems more likely. The that/this must refer back to something; does it refer to faith? Gender doesn't match. Grace? Gender doesn't match. Also, is the gift of God just faith? Or grace? The whole idea of the thought is God's salvation. Isn't that what Paul is talking about in vv4-7. It was by grace. It is through faith. All of what God did was by His grace and is not of us but His free gift to us. See 6:1 for a neuter referring to an abstract idea, per Smelser.

Vincent says, "Not faith, but the salvation."

Coffman makes a good point, here. If salvation were by grace alone, all men would be saved. Titus 2:11. It is, therefore, conditioned upon a response, that of our faith. If God wants to save all men, 1 Timothy 2:4, then He could have His grace save all men. But we know that not all will be saved. Again, why would He not just give all men faith, if He does give faith? That way all could be saved. No, faith is our response to God; it is not given to us by God.

But I am not sure I agree with his contention, "Through faith ... The most likely meaning of this phrase, as attested by the Emphatic Diaglott rendition of it, is "through the faith," that is, "through the Christian faith," or the Christian religion. One thing is absolutely certain: this cannot mean the subjective trust/faith of sinners. [These] reasons deny such an interpretation: (1) the Diaglott rendition is supported by the Vatican manuscript which has the article (the); and furthermore the inclusion of it is often understood anyway so that the absence of the article in some manuscripts does not deny it; and, in all probability, the translators would have supplied it (as permitted) if they had properly understood the meaning of it. (2) The qualifying clause next given, "and that not of yourselves," absolutely denies that the faith of sinners is in view here." His contention seems to be that Paul is saying that we are saved by grace through the faith of the gospel which did not come from us. He also mentions the possibility that the faith could be referring to the faith of Jesus. This thinking about various passages seems fashionable now.

When Paul says, "not of works" akin to "not of ourselves"; is he talking about our faith? Or is he talking merely about the fact that there is nothing we can do to earn what God has given to us? The former, again, contradicts Jesus in John 6. Our faith cannot earn our salvation, and nowhere does scripture teach it. Paul is saying that we could not earn our salvation, God gave it to us freely, and no work we do nullifies that and causes God to owe us salvation. If our works earned us salvation, we could

boast in our works. Since it is of God, we have no room to boast in what we do.
Romans 4:2.

We (all of us) are His workmanship/doing – While it is true that all humans are creations of God and are created in His image, the idea here is that God has graciously saved us from our condition of being dead in sin by begetting us to a new and living hope. We are re-created, therefore, His workmanship. This is made known because Paul says we are His workmanship in Christ Jesus. This alludes to the new birth, to the salvation offered by the grace of God through the blood of Jesus.

I have always thought about the fact that we, as humans, were created for good works. That was God's hope originally, but we sinned and ruined that. But when God re-creates us, we are re-created for good works. It is the good works that God created beforehand that we should walk in them. It was always His will. Paul will have much more to say about this walk, as opposed to the walk of v2, in chapter 4 and following.

Vv 11 to 13

Therefore – Paul has used this word in vv15 and here. He also uses the word “for” in 2:14 and the word “and” in 2:1. Up to this point, Paul is making one long argument. He has shown the Jews to be the first beneficiaries of Christ, then linked the Gentiles to that same blessing.

Again, he addresses the Gentiles. I think the structure that says, “Therefore **remember** that you, once Gentiles in the flesh” is awkward. They were not once Gentiles; they are Gentiles. And Paul does not say they are no longer Gentiles. It seems more logical to me to say, “Therefore remember that once, you Gentiles in the flesh” or “Therefore remember that you once, Gentiles in the flesh....”

There was a time - to which Paul returns after a parenthetical expression which is “who are called Uncircumcision (1 Samuel 17:26) by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands.” This division is the same division. Jew/Circumcision and Gentile/Uncircumcision. There must be a reason why Paul brings these terms up other than mere variety. Circumcision was not only the sign of the covenant God had with the Israelites, but also the thing that they often continued to push on the Gentiles. One must become of the Circumcision before he can be in a right relationship with God, a Christian. Maybe the name Circumcision stands opposed to the name Christian.

In addition, Paul adds that the Circumcision is made in the flesh by hands. Colossians 2:11 is important, here.

This time which he returns to in v12 by saying, "that at that time." "Therefore remember that once...at that time." What was that time?

1) They were without Christ/God, maybe godless, Vincent. It may be said that the Israelites always had Christ in the sense that the Messiah was to come into the world through them. Even when He came in the flesh, He came to the Israelites. Christ was of the Jews. John 4:22 "salvation is of the Jews." The Gentiles, by contrast, had no association with Christ because they did not know God.

2) They were aliens from the commonwealth/city of Israel – It was this commonwealth of Israel that had God's favor. Gentiles were outside of His favor. They were outside, 1 Corinthians 5:12-13. It is not that God had no concern or dealing with them, but that they were not members of His covenant. They had no way to be redeemed from their sinful ways.

3) They were strangers from the covenants of promise – As has been said already, they Gentiles had not received the law of God. That law went to the Israelites.

They had no savior, no nation/state, no home, no hope, and no law from God. These are the things that made the Israelites a nation and God's special people. God chose the Israelites, gave them His law, made them a nation, and promised them a savior.

The condition of the Gentiles was such that they a) had no hope and b) were without God in the world. A) Their condition was hopeless. They had no way of redemption, no savior. B) All of this left them without the true and living God. They had their gods, but did not have God by their choice, Romans 1.

Coffman: "The pessimism of the entire pre-Christian Gentile world is one of the saddest and most wretched chapters of human history. In the vanity of his own intellectual conceit, ancient man rejected the knowledge of God, which at one time he most certainly did have; and the story of what then followed is recounted in the first two chapters of Romans. Every man should read it as a prophecy of what will surely happen to "modern man" when he has finished with removing God from his thoughts."

Robertson, without God (atheoi) "Atheists in the original sense of being without God and also in the sense of hostility to God from failure to worship him."

But – here comes the shift. But now, as opposed to once/at that time. The times have changed. Things are not the same. You, Gentiles, are now in Christ Jesus as opposed to alienated. Where are all spiritual blessings? In Christ, 1:3. You have believed, repented, and been baptized. You have responded to the call of the gospel. As a result, you who once were far off, Acts 2:39, Gentiles, have been brought near to God, this alludes to reconciliation, by the blood of Jesus.

The clear statement is that even though the Gentiles were at one time not God's chosen people and did not have a hope of reconciliation to Him, Jesus died for them, as well as the Jews, and cleansed them with His blood.

Eph 2:14-22; Col 2:14-23

Vv 14 to 16

He, Jesus, Himself is our (both Jew and Gentile) peace, not merely peace-maker. This verse says so much about Jesus. Jesus did not come to bring peace, Matthew 10:34, because that is worldly peace. He is peace. Spiritual peace. How is this so? He made peace between Israelite and Gentile. He made both one. Galatians 3:28 and Colossians 3:11, there is no more Jew and Gentile. Jesus brought both of them together. No longer does God see this earthly division. Jesus erased it. Now, as Paul says in Romans 1:16, both come to God through Jesus. The Israelites do not have preeminence. Jesus broke down the middle wall of separation, the wall in between. Much like the tearing of the temple veil. May refer to the wall of the temple that delineated where the Gentiles could go.

Paul was accused of bringing a Gentile into the temple, Acts 21:28.

Jesus, in fact, in His flesh – while He was in the form of a man on the earth.

Abolished (made null and void), Colossians 2:14, the enmity. Enmity (as opposed to peace) means that which was against us, hostile, enemy. The enmity which is the middle wall of separation (the middle wall or the fence or hedge, Vincent), Matthew 27:51, is defined as:

the law of commandments in ordinances – Not law in general, but the specific laws of the old covenant. What is the difference between commandments and ordinances? It seems that Paul places the commandments within the ordinances. The ordinances may be the entire codified law which contains the commandments. How was this enmity and a wall. It was enmity because no one could be saved by the law, Romans 3:20, Galatians 2:16; and it was a wall because it belonged only to the Israelites. The Gentiles did not have the Mosaic law. So, even though the

Israelites had it (and the Gentiles did not), it did not do them ultimate good. Only the blood of Jesus could accomplish ultimate good.

And Jesus did that good by abolishing the law. It was no longer necessary because He became the final sacrifice once for all.

Vincent says the verse should read as, “brake down the middle-wall of partition, even the enmity, by abolishing in His flesh the law of commandments contained in ordinances.”

He made peace in Himself (as all things are in Him so now the new man is) by bringing the two (creating), Jew and Gentile, together as one new man, new in quality. In turn, once united, Jesus could present them to God, reconcile them to Him. This reconciliation is in one body, not here the two becoming one new man, but the body being the church, Colossians 1:18. Jesus, by His death on the cross, did away with the law, brought Jew and Gentile into the same relationship with God in the church.

This passage has to be a loose commentary not only on race relations but also the issue of slavery itself. Those who say that the Bible does not address slavery have not read this section of Ephesians. If there is no longer a difference between Jew and Gentile, there is no longer difference between the races of men in God’s sight. Such condition would put an end to slavery.

Vv17 and 18

Jesus, while He lived, preached the good news to the Gentiles, those who were far off, and Israelites, those who were near. Not that He was sent to the Gentiles but that He did speak to some of them.

For, through Jesus both Jew and Gentile have the same access to reconciliation in God by one Spirit. Here, we have another mention, as in 1:3-14, of Father, Son, and Spirit. All are active in this reconciliation. It was God’s gracious plan, executed by the Son through His death, and related to us through the Spirit.

Vv 19 to 22

As a result of the foregoing, you are no longer strangers and foreigners (aliens and strangers, without Christ and God). The opposite of strangers, foreigners, and aliens is citizens, those who are of the commonwealth. The old law spoke of how to treat strangers, those Gentiles who had become converts. Now the Gentiles are not just proselytes; they are full citizens in their own right with the saints (holy ones – maybe

those who had gone before, prophets) and members of the household of God. They are citizens of the kingdom and children in the house. In other words, they have the closest relationship to God that is possible, just as the Jews who believe.

This commonwealth/kingdom and, primarily, here, household is described as a building. A building needs and has a foundation to make it stable, to anchor it to the ground. This one has a foundation built on the apostles and prophets, those who went before in the work of God. In addition, Jesus Christ is Himself the chief stone, the cornerstone, 1 Peter 2:6, the guiding stone by which all others are laid. He, Himself, is our peace; He, Himself, is the chief stone/cornerstone, Matthew 21:42.

In Jesus, the whole building, continuing the analogy, is being fitted together (1 Peter 2:5) by God, Acts 2:47. That means Jews and Gentiles being built together in the same building on the apostles and profits, Jesus the cornerstone. This building, being built together (composed of all of us) is a holy temple in the Lord, 2 Corinthians 6:16, a place wherein He dwells in the Spirit. Does this mean that the Spirit dwells in us in some way so as to indicate the presence of God as it was in the old temple? Ezekiel 48:35, Revelation 21:3.

This new building where God dwells was necessary as the old one would soon be destroyed, taking with it the system that made the Israelites separate.

CHAPTER 3

Vv 1 to 7 – For this reason. Paul builds on his previous statements that the Gentiles are now part of the spiritual building being built on the foundation of the apostles with Jesus as the chief cornerstone. He states that he is a prisoner of Jesus. We know that he is literally a prisoner in Rome, and it is for the cause of Christ, for his preaching. And he is a prisoner for the Gentiles because he was the one chosen to take the message to them, Acts 26:17; Romans 11:13, 15:16; Galatians 2:7-9; 1 Timothy 2:7.

But now there appears to be a break, a parenthetical expression, the end of which is noted in my NKJ as in v17. That is a long break. We'll have to see if it holds as we go.

I believe the thought that Paul expresses is based on his statement that he is a PRISONER for you Gentiles IF.... If indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you. God had chosen Paul to take the

message to the Gentiles. If the Gentiles had heard the message, then Paul was in prison for them.

He then goes on to express what that dispensation was. How by revelation He (God) made known to him the mystery. Another parenthetical expression within a parenthetical expression, “as I have briefly written already (presumably in the first two chapters where he details that the Gentiles are now the recipients of the same benefits as the Israelites or 1:9-10, more specifically. Smelser says it may be the earlier Galatian letter. See Galatians 3:29.). He goes on to make an important point which is that if one **reads** the writing of Paul, he may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ. If one **reads** what Paul wrote, he can know what Paul knows. He can understand. If I can read and you can read, we both can understand. Further, if we both understand, then we understand alike. Now, the verse does not say “alike”, but the idea is there. If we **read** what Paul wrote, our understanding should be alike.

The like understanding may be limited to what Paul calls the mystery. A mystery is something that was not previously revealed which is what Paul goes on to say in v5. In other ages, this knowledge was still a mystery. It had not been given to the sons of men. Yet it has now been revealed by the Holy Spirit to the holy apostles and prophets, Hebrews 1:1-2, 2 Peter 1:19-21.

So, Paul says, I am your prisoner if you have heard and obeyed the word of the dispensation to me that made known the mystery that had not been made known until now. What is this mystery? He does clearly say that the mystery is that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs. This fact is what he has been explaining. I am your prisoner if you heard the word of the mystery that says you would be able to hear. He seems to bring this thought around full circle. In addition to being fellow heirs, he further explains that the Gentiles would be fellow members of the same body that is the church/kingdom, and fellow partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel. What is the promise? It seems to be more than simply a rehash of their becoming fellow heirs and of the same body. This promise extends into eternity and must be that as heirs and members of the same body they will inherit eternal life. Imagine the joy of knowing that the eternal life promised through the blood of Jesus for the Israelites had now also been extended to the Gentiles.

Smelser says, “But what had been a mystery, now revealed, was the means whereby Gentiles would be included in the blessings of God. For one thing, from an OT perspective it was not clear that Gentiles and Jews would be reconciled in one body to God. And it was also

not clear that Gentile believers would be counted as children of Abraham. What Paul describes as having been a mystery, now revealed, is in part the fact that Gentiles would be joint heirs, fellow members of the body, and sharers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.”

Again, circling back to the gospel of which he became a minister according to the grace of God given to me by the effective working of God’s power.

Vv 8 to 12 – Paul may be continuing his parenthetical thought in explaining the grace that was given to him. This grace is the gift of proclaiming the gospel. He says that he is less than the least of the saints, more least than all the saints, Vincent. This is not false humility. Paul sees himself very humbly in relationship to the fact that God chose him to be the minister to the Gentiles. I believe this is due to the previous life of Paul, 1 Corinthians 15:9; 1 Timothy 1:12-15. In all sincerity, he persecuted the way, Acts 9:2; and he did it in all good conscience, Acts 23:1. It is not that he does not know that God has forgiven him; it is that he regrets his actions. He does not dwell on his past sins as if he has not forgiven himself, but he does perfectly perceive his relationship to God and his need for the blood of Jesus. (This thought, that Paul was least among the saints, is a good argument against the belief that someone else wrote this parenthetical. Who would see Paul this way?)

Even so, God gave him this grace to reveal the mystery to the Gentiles. The Gentiles could then come to know the unsearchable riches of God.

He has a secondary purpose in addition to his ministry to the Gentiles. He also was given the responsibility of making all see what is the fellowship of the mystery. As God has now welcomed the Gentiles into the kingdom, God also expects the Israelites to accept this as God’s will. And this “fellowship” is not merely accepting Gentiles in or being their friends. It goes much deeper and means that the Gentiles are now fellow partakers of all the spiritual blessings in Christ. 1 Corinthians 10:16 talks about how partaking of the Lord’s Supper puts us into true fellowship. We all share in the relationship to God and Christ. It is this sharing that is our fellowship. Belonging together is fellowship. It is our true fellowship as well. Kitchens and picnics are not true Christian fellowship.

Again, this fellowship was a mystery hidden from the beginning of the ages in God who created all things through Christ, Colossians 1:16. It was hidden with intent, the intent being that now the manifold (multi-faceted, variegated, many-tinted) wisdom of

God might be made known by the church. What is the church? The body of Christ to which God adds the saved. Paul is taking great pains to explain that now that body is composed of both Jews and Gentiles. So now seeing that all men, Jew and Gentile, compose the body; and that information had been hidden but is now revealed, the existence of the church can now be seen to be the wisdom of God “which from the beginning of the world has been hidden in God.” In the old covenant, there was only Jew. It may be that the principalities and powers (here, generally, spiritual and not physical, maybe both good and evil, though especially good) thought that God was merely going to craft His kingdom out of the Jews. But once it was revealed that Gentiles were going to be welcomed into the kingdom and it actually began happening, they could see that God’s plan put into action is the greatest of wisdom, 1 Peter 1:12.

The church is proof of God’s wisdom which also means that it was not an accident but was planned by God from before the foundation of the world. It was God’s eternal purpose. He knew beforehand that at a point in time He would send Jesus to die and redeem man, and those who respond to the gospel can be added to a body all together. His purpose was accomplished in Jesus Christ. Again, the death of Jesus was no accident. It was planned. It led to the church. All of it reflects God’s wisdom.

In Jesus, we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Jesus. Hebrews 4:16 “Let us therefore come boldly (boldness) to the throne of grace (access), that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” Hebrews 10:19 “Therefore, brethren, having (boldness) to enter the Holiest (access) by the blood of Jesus” Hebrews 13:6 ‘So we may boldly (boldness) say: "The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?"’ 1John 4:17 “Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have (boldness) in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world.”

Boldness – literally all-telling. “It points to boldness in speaking, freedom of speech, frankness and absence of fear or shame in unreserved openness.” Caldwell

Access – “implies freedom of approach” Caldwell

Confidence – ‘One has “confidence” when he is placed in a confirmed and settled state of assurance.’ Caldwell

The death of Jesus tore open the veil between man and God. The death of Jesus also broke down the middle wall of separation between Jew and Gentile. Jesus has prepared the way for all of us who obey to inherit the promise of eternal life. It is through our faith in Christ (and consequent obedience) that we have this

blessing. Notice how Paul has, in chapter 1, said that all spiritual blessings are IN CHRIST. It is also through our faith IN CHRIST that we have access to those blessings.

V13 – Therefore, as a result of the foregoing, Paul pleads with them not to lose heart at his imprisonment for you, the tribulations that it brings, which is your glory.

Vv 14 to 18 – For this reason, that God had chosen Paul as minister of the mystery to the Gentiles and the fellowship of the mystery to all, he bows his knee to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. This bowing is not in prayer but is meant to convey the humble relationship and submission we should show to God. Some ms omit “of our Lord Jesus Christ.” If this phrase is not original, then it is from God that the whole family in heaven and earth is named and would be the angels and man.

It is from Jesus Christ that we, His followers, get our name, Christians, Acts 11:26. We wear His name. Assuming this would be speaking of those faithful who have died, would they be in heaven? Might be a problem.

It may be that the parenthetical ends at v15. If so what I have previously said about Paul’s bowing of the knee is true. That would make the two verses, 1 & 16 joined, read as such, “For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles--that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, etc.” This may be awkward as there is no verb, but the sentiment would be that the reason that Paul is the prisoner for the Gentiles is so that God would grant them.... If the parenthetical does not end here but in v18, then it is Paul bowing the knee in prayer that God would grant the Gentiles to be strengthened.

Whether it is Paul’s prayer or his apostleship, he wants that God should grant them to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the **inner man**. This is interesting in that he seems to be saying that the Spirit strengthens. Similar to Philippians 4:13, where Christ is the one who strengthens, does this mean an active working of some sort on the part of the Holy Spirit apart from merely the word? That last may be the key. They did not have the word as we do. It may be that as the Spirit gave gifts then, that He also strengthened in some way. Now that we have the word, does the Spirit still strengthen in some way apart from the word, or is it by the word only? This strengthening is also in the inner man, Romans 7:22, 2 Corinthians 4:16. It does seem to match up with what the word does in Hebrews 4:12. Might it be, then, that

the author of Hebrews was really speaking to us in that we are the ones who have the word?

In addition to this strength, he wants Christ to dwell in their hearts through faith, not merely belief but all the action that faith entails. Christ cannot force Himself on anyone, and He only dwells within us if we are willing to have Him, Revelation 3:20. It is their belief and obedience that allows Christ to dwell in them.

If Christ dwells in you by faith, then, further, you should be rooted and grounded in love and if rooted and grounded in love, then able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height.

Rooted – Colossians 2:7, The picture is that of a tree planted in the ground and, therefore, Grounded, secure.

This rooting and grounding, security, is in love. The love of God and Christ which was the impetus for the grace of God and the sacrifice of His Son. It is also about their love for one another maybe as Jews and Gentiles. 1 Peter 1:22.

Comprehend – understand, realize in practice

What is the width and length and depth and height – of what? It seems that there should be something else here, God's love, God's wisdom, God's plan, God's church.

V19 - Maybe v19 is included in the parenthetical and is the answer, the love of Christ, although there it is said to pass knowledge, a size indicator. I wonder if the width/length/depth/height is recalling Ezekiel and the measurement of the temple there which ends in 48:35, "The Lord is there." What is the width/length/depth/height? Is it not every possible measurement? It is divine goodness, God, all in all.

It seems that Paul is saying he either wants or prays for them 1) that God would grant them to be strengthened, 2) that Christ may dwell in their hearts, 3) that they may be able to comprehend the width/length/depth/height, and 4) that they may be filled with all the fullness of God.

If the parenthetical ends at v18, then the verses 1 & 19 would read, "For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles-- to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God." Still there is no verb. It would mean that Paul is the prisoner of the Gentiles so that they would know the love of Christ. It seems to me they already know the love of Christ.

They may not know the extent of that love as it “passes knowledge.” Philippians 4:4-7

I think vv 18 & 19 are together in saying that they should know the entirety of Christ's love which surpasses knowledge, (by letting Christ dwell in your hearts through faith).

It is interesting to consider how one could know the love which passes knowledge (knowing). Smelser says that this is a hint of Gnosticism. The love of Christ passes the supposed special knowledge, falsely so called, of the Gnostics. Caldwell suggests it is the transition from the conceptual knowledge of v18 to the experiential knowledge of v19.

That would make vv 1 & 20 read as such, “For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles-- Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us....” Such would seem to be an opening and closing with no meat in between.

I tend to think at this point that the parenthetical may be from v1 to v14 where Paul repeats what he had said in v 1, “For this reason.” In effect, he would be saying, “For this reason, I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles, bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Vincent agrees. Based on the end of chapter 2, “Seeing ye are so built together in Christ, for this cause, etc.”

Everything in between seems to relate to Paul's ministry of the mystery. It would also make sense in terms of a closing of the parenthetical which begins with Paul's saying that he is a prisoner of Christ and ends with his urging them not to lose heart at his tribulations for them.

Vv 20 & 21 – If Paul has just prayed on behalf of the Gentiles, then he concludes his prayer with a praise of God. To Him, To God. Then, a beautiful statement about the power of God. He is able, has the power, to do what we ask? No, even more than we ask, exceedingly abundantly (superabundantly) above all that we ask or think. We cannot even imagine the power of God in relationship to the things He has done and can do and is willing to do for us, 1 Corinthians 2:9.

According to the power that works in us – I do not believe Paul is saying that the power he has from God is this power, that it resides in him. I believe what he is

saying is that it is God's power in all of us. Now maybe he is talking about the power of the Holy Spirit whose power works to do the things for us that are above what we ask and think, in the miraculous age. If so, then is this verse still true? As with any time the Bible speaks of the Spirit's doing something, is it only in the miraculous age? Then, is it not true for us today? The basic sentiment is universally true, that God is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think. There are no conditions. Does He still accomplish this by a power working in us? Yes, His power. It may be a general allusion to the might or ability of God to do, however He accomplishes this.

To God be glory in the church, see v10, by Christ Jesus, who 5:25-26, to all generations of man, forever and ever. The glory of God does not end with the end of time. The church, Jesus' body, will be translated into eternity, and it will still be glorious. It will be His glory that shines in the midst of it.

CHAPTER 4

Here, Paul begins the practical instructions of the letter.

V1 – Therefore. The practical instructions are based on the forgoing, that the Gentiles had been made fellow-heirs of the promises of the gospel. As a result of this wonderful grace of God, here is how you ought to conduct yourself. You must walk worthy/worthily, live in a godly manner. If you have been thus accepted than conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of that acceptance. Paul the prisoner of the Lord as in 3:1. He beseeches them, urges them. Walk worthy of the calling. How were they called? 2 Thessalonians 2:14, by the gospel.

Vv2 and 3 – How are they to walk? With all lowliness, has to do with proper perception of relationship to God and brethren, having a humble opinion of oneself, modest, Romans 12:3. With all gentleness, meekness, proper submission to God James 4:7 and brethren 4:21, mildness, kindness, not weakness. With longsuffering, suffering long, patience, steadfastness, tolerant, understanding, slowness in avenging wrong. And bearing with one another in love, forbearing, sustaining. Colossians 3:14. Have a humble opinion of yourself in relation to others; be gentle and patient with each another.

In all of this proper, godly behavior, you must endeavor (strive, struggle, exert oneself, make every effort) to keep (guard, preserve) the unity (oneness, the absence of strife and division) of the Spirit. What is the unity of the Spirit? Since the Spirit has revealed to us the word of God and it is in the word of God that we find His

singular truth, the striving must be to preserve and persevere in that truth. If all are striving to preserve and live the scriptural truth, then there will be unity. Disunity among brethren occurs when they do not all seek to live the truth of the word. In the bond of peace – keep the unity of the Spirit in that which binds together, that is, peace. What peace? I would assume Paul has already spoken of that peace. Jesus is our peace, 2:14, in the way that God is love; He made peace, 2:15; and He preached peace to us, 2:17. It is the peace of Christ, that is Christ, that binds us together so that we can be unified in the truth of the Spirit.

Unity of the Spirit does not mean lockstep, identical belief to the utmost, down to matters of judgment. We must be united in and around Christ and the gospel, around all the obvious truths of the scriptures. But when it comes to matters not clearly enumerated, far fewer than some think, we do have liberty as long as it does not cause a brother to stumble in his faith.

Calwell says, “The opening verses of the fourth chapter of Ephesians set forth the two primary principles upon which unity and fellowship among Christians must be established: **Reacting to one another in genuine love** (1-3), and **recognizing the importance of unifying truth** (4-6).” Emphasis mine. This unifying truth is what follows.

Vv 4 to 6 – It is this unity of the Spirit that Paul now enumerates. These are the general truths that the Spirit has given us. Note the continual use of “one” to indicate that unity is in these “one” things. These are the qualifications for unity. We must all believe in these. There is:

One body – There are not two or more bodies. Only one, of which Christ is the head. To what body does Paul refer? 5:23; Romans 12:5; 1 Corinthians 12:12ff; Colossians 1:18, 3:15. There may be only one body of Christ that has risen; but more likely, Paul is speaking of the body of Christ that is the universal church, Matthew 16:18, the church that Jesus would build. He would only build one. The upshot of this fact for us today is that, if there is only one church that Jesus built, then how do we have so many “churches” preaching contradictory doctrine to each other and the word? All the faithful are together in this one body.

One Spirit – It seems likely that this Spirit is the Holy Spirit of God. And of those, there is only one. It is THE Holy Spirit, the one Spirit that has given the word of God. 2:18; 1 Corinthians 12:4-13.

One hope – There is one body and one Spirit just as you were called (2 Thessalonians 2:14) in one hope. These three are related. The Spirit calls us to one hope which is in the one body. The hope is of heaven and eternal life, Titus 1:2, 3:7.

There is no other hope mentioned in the scriptures. For all who are obedient and faithful to the gospel will realize eternal life.

One Lord – There was only one Son of God, one savior, one messiah for all. God did not send multiple lords. As Paul began his letter in 1:3, all spiritual blessings are IN CHRIST and no other. There is no other name for salvation, Acts 4:12. It is through the resurrection of this one Lord from the grave that is the lynchpin for our faith and hope.

One faith – Jude 3. Philippians 1:27 says that this one faith is of the gospel. Faith comes by hearing the gospel, Romans 10:17. There are not multiple “faiths.” There is one faith, one system of belief as given in the word of God.

Hendrickson (via Coffman) argues for *our* faith, ‘The fact that "faith" is mentioned immediately after "Lord," and is immediately followed by "baptism," all in a very short sentence, would seem to indicate that all three are a very closely knit unit.’

One baptism – One immersion. Is this immersion in the Holy Spirit, in fire, in water, or in something else? The essential point, here, is that if there is only one, then all the others have gone away. If Holy Spirit, then baptism in water has gone away. If water, then Holy Spirit baptism has gone away. There is one baptism as part of the ongoing faith of the gospel. Since it appears the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit have ceased, Acts 8 and 1 Corinthians 13, then it appears that a method of imparting those gifts, Acts 2 and 10, have also ceased. If not, we must all be baptized in the Holy Spirit, the sign of which was the speaking in tongues.

As Bruce said, "If 'one baptism' here had meant Spirit-baptism to the exclusion of water baptism, it would have been associated with 'one Spirit,' and not with 'one Lord!'"

One God and Father of all – There is only one God, the author of salvation for all. He is the one, true and living God. Mark 12:32; Romans 3:30; 1 Corinthians 8:6; 1 Timothy 2:5; James 2:19. All the persons of the Godhead are here mentioned.

Above/over all – He is the ultimate source of power and authority. He reigns over all.

Through all – He is in everything. His hand is seen in creation. He sustains this world with His word. There is no place one can go to be away from the presence of God, Psalm 139:7.

In you all – He dwells in us when we live by His word and will. John 14:23, 1 John 3:24, 4:13.

Is there an order to any of this? Why these things and no others? Why not one supper? Vincent has a thought here, “[the Eucharist] assumes and recognizes unity as an established fact; while faith and baptism precede that fact and are essential to it.” Might it be that Paul orders it in the way the Gentiles may have become familiar with it?

You were called to one hope in the one body and through the one Spirit to the one Lord Jesus by the one faith and admitted by the one baptism/immersion into the blessings of the one God. This is a concise “creed” for the Gentile believers. It sums up what we believe.

*How does this relate mostly to the previous? Now that the Gentiles and Jews have both been reconciled to God through Jesus, there is now only one man. And for that one man, there is one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God. All of these are the same now for Jew and Gentile. They are both part of the same one things.

Smelser: ‘Ultimately, that practical unity “with all the saints” (3:18) can only be achieved if the Gentiles cease living as Gentiles (4:17), put away the former manner of life (4:22), and put on the new man (4:24). But they will need to be taught how to do that. And the means whereby that will be accomplished is the point of Ephesians 4:7-16.’

Vv 7 to 10 – Each one of us – Paul could be speaking about several different ones here. He could mean the apostles, all Christians, or the Jews and Gentiles. In this context, however, Paul speaks of the grace that was given due to Christ’s gift. What is Christ’s gift? His sacrifice on the cross for our sins and reconciliation, Romans 5:15, though it may extend to all that the sacrifice means. But God’s grace comes to us through Christ and His sacrifice. Since that gift comes to all who believe and obey, it would seem that Paul is speaking of everyone who has come to believe and obey, individual Christians. This thinking is consistent with Paul’s discussion of unity before and of the growth of the body after. Grace was extended to all those who believed, and that grace was extended because of and according to the measure of the sacrifice of Jesus.

According to the measure – See Romans 12:4-8, 1 Corinthians 12:11.

He then quotes Psalm 68:18. The Septuagint translates this verse as, “Thou art gone up on high, thou hast led captivity captive, thou hast received gifts for man, yea, for *they were* rebellious, that thou mightest dwell among them.” NKJ is “You have ascended on high, You have led captivity captive; You have received gifts among men, Even from the rebellious, That the LORD God might dwell there.” There seems a difference of emphasis in the quote Paul uses and the others. In the above, Jesus seems to be the one that receives the gifts, although it may be that He receives gifts for, on behalf of, men. (Vincent, “received in order to distribute among men.”) Jesus ascended, He led captivity to sin into captivity, that is, took it away from

us and freed us from bondage to sin. He is the triumphal conqueror and leader. And after He had ascended and accomplished the Father's plan of salvation, He gave gifts, *domata*, not *charisma*, spiritual gifts. We know He sent the Spirit, John 15:26.

Coffman says, "It is very probable that here the inspired Paul was writing new Scripture, not merely quoting old passages. Naturally, the new Scripture would use terminology used by other sacred writers, the thought being distinctly new as it is in the passage before us."

Smelser says, "The purpose of the quotation is to use again the imagery of the victorious king and with it, make a new application." If I understand him correctly, he indicates that the descending is unto death and all that means, including a time in the realm of the dead, Hades.

Vincent says that the captivity is not the redeemed "but the enemies of Christ's kingdom, Satan, sin, and death." Caldwell agrees.

The fact that He ascended implies necessarily that He first descended, John 3:13. This is only true of Christ. Paul says He descended into the lower parts of the earth. Some say this speaks of His time in Hades, which would allude to His death. It may simply mean from heaven to earth. Caldwell said it was to "the most loathsome and deepest abasement on earth... the lowest form of servitude...and to the most degrading death on a heathen cross." If Jesus ascended, He first had descended to the earth where He took on the form of a man. This statement confirms His physical incarnation.

And He who descended from heaven in the form of a man is the same who ascended far above the heavens that we see into the third heaven where God dwells that He might fill all things, 1:23, that He might complete the Father's plan and initiate all spiritual blessings, 1:3. Barclay says, "The ascension of Christ meant not a Christ-deserted, but a Christ-filled world." Colossians 2:9-15.

Vv 11 to 16 – He, Himself, must be the one Paul has just been speaking of, the one who ascended into heaven, Jesus. Jesus gave the gift of the Holy Spirit, but He also gave other gifts to the body. He assigned roles in the body, 1 Corinthians 12:28. First of all, He chose men from among His many disciples to serve as His apostles, those sent forth, messengers. They were to be His witnesses, Acts 1:8. The Holy Spirit would guide them into all truth, John 16:13. They were unique, and no man today is an apostle in the same sense. He also gave some to be prophets, spokesmen of God. Prophecy is the revealing of God's word and can be, but does not have to be, predictive. Again, these would have been miraculously inspired, and so, are no

longer functioning, 1 Corinthians 13:9-13. He also gave some to be evangelists, those who proclaim the truth, Romans 10:14, the good news. Since the revealed word now gives all we need to proclaim the good news, this role continues. While Jesus may have chosen some of these men personally, the verse does not mean that He chooses all that follow personally. The meaning is that He gave certain roles within the body as gifts to the body, regardless of the particular men that filled those roles. To say otherwise would make Him a respecter of persons.

He also allowed some to be pastors and teachers. Now are these two different? It would make sense since there are two words used here; however, it may be that these two describe one role. In 1 Corinthians 12:28, the roles are “first apostles, second prophets, third teachers.” True, Paul does not mention evangelists there, but he does also only say teachers. A pastor is a shepherd, an elder, Acts 20: 17, 28; Titus 1:5-7; 1 Peter 5:2. Elders are supposed to be able to teach, 1 Timothy 3:2. Whether they are different roles or one in the same, the point is that Jesus did not leave us without those who guide and teach us. We have witnesses, mouthpieces, proclaimers, shepherds, and teachers. These are all we need in the body.

“Some interpreters have understood the phrase *pastors and teachers* to refer to one and the same group. This would mean that all pastors are teachers and that all teachers are pastors. This position is often taken because it is recognized that both nouns (i.e., *pastors* and *teachers*) are governed by one article in Greek. But because the nouns are plural, it is extremely unlikely that they refer to the same group, but only that the author is linking them closely together. It is better to regard the pastors as a subset of teachers. **In other words, all pastors are teachers, but not all teachers are pastors.**” (Emphasis mine for a good point.) NetBible

Coffman believes

The purpose of all these roles in the body is given for a reason, that being to equip/perfect/furnish (In classical Greek of refitting a ship or setting a bone) the saints for the work of ministry/service. All these various filled roles exist so that the saints can be prepared to do the work that is necessary to be done, the good works, 2:10. Implied is that the saints also have a role to play in the body. It is a role for which they must be prepared. It includes service to God and to others.

All of this preparation for work and doing of the work leads to the edifying/growth of the body of Christ, the church, spiritually, 1 Timothy 4:8, and secondarily numerically. This is the members of the body working together, which he will say, doing their part. See Caldwell p182. He adds, ‘In New Testament days, the Christians

did not sit back and wait upon the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers to convert the lost world. “They”, the saints, “went about preaching the word” (Acts 8:4).’

What is missing? Meals, nurseries, plays, concerts, snack bars, etc. Material, physical inducements.

Smelser takes all this differently (as Chrysostom) in saying that the gifts of the various roles within the body are: 1) for the equipping of the saints, 2) for the work of ministry, and 3) for the edifying of the body of Christ. This does make a great deal of sense, though it goes against what I have previously been taught and believed and the citing above. It does not, however, negate the responsibility of the members of the body as Paul will say later in every joint.

This process continues to work till we all come, he says: to the unity of the faith, to the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of God.

The unity of the faith. There is one faith. Unity is when all in the body, Jew and Gentile, abide in that one faith. Unity is a product of the truth of the faith. A basic knowledge of the faith is necessary in order to become a Christian. Paul must be speaking of a deeper knowledge of the faith. Caldwell makes a good point in saying that it is often immaturity in knowledge that brings disunity.

The knowledge of the Son of God. A basic knowledge of Jesus is necessary in order to become a Christian, so Paul must be speaking of deeper or full knowledge.

Come to a perfect man. He has in mind the idea of reaching the designed end, becoming complete as a Christian. Not perfect in the sense of sinless. Some say the mature man contrasts with children while others say it is the body itself, not the individual Christian, though children returns to the individual.

To the measure of the stature of the fullness of God. Complete in the fullness of God, the realization that God is He who fills all in all.

If we are united and have come to all these, then we should no longer be children (babes), tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, James 1:6. We should be steadfast in the truth. When false teachers come, we can recognize their error and avoid them. These false doctrines will not shake us. At some point, we must grow up in the faith, be mature, be adults. These are based on the trickery

of men in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting. Notice that these doctrines that come to test us are trickery, cunning craftiness, and deceitful plotting. They are designed to fool or trick us. But if we have grown up in the faith, we will not be shaken.

Trickery of men is literally “in the dice game of men.” Smelser says it is a crooked dice game.

Instead, we must speak the truth and do so in love, not in trickery, cunning craftiness, and deceitful plotting; so that we may grow up in all things into Him who is the head, Christ, Colossians 1:18, 2:19. The body must grow to fit the head, Christ, who is already mature. It does so based on the proposition of the truth of the faith.

It is from Christ, the head, that the whole body can even exist, that it can grow into Him. The analogy of the body is one of Paul’s go-to analogies, 1 Corinthians 12:12ff. We understand how our own bodies work. Each member of it must do its work. When one part feels bad, the whole body suffers. Here, Paul says that the whole body is joined and knit together by what every joint supplies. The body is sustained and grows when every member of it does what it is supposed to do, functions as it should. Working together in the faith effectively causes growth which in turn causes growth and building up of the body. See 2:21, above, and Smelser’s comments at that verse.

Colossians 3:1-15

Vv 17 to 19 – Paul testifies, bears witness, some say beseeches them, that as a result of the foregoing, they should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, that is those who have not been converted. This is a continuation of the idea of walking worthy/worthily in v1. In order to walk worthy of the calling, you must not walk as those from whom you have come out of walk, conduct themselves.

They walk according to the futility/vanity of their own mind, their own thoughts, their own standard of living which is not that of God’s standard. It is futility because it will get them nowhere. It is not a way of walking that can lead them to salvation.

He goes on to describe them:

Having their understanding darkened – Romans 1:21 is good here, “because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.” They have turned away from God, any knowledge of God, and doing the will of God. As a result,

they can no longer understand what is right and good. Darkness symbolizes evil and speaks to behaviors done in the dark, 1 Thessalonians 5:7. Their understanding not only turned to ignorance but turned dark in its behaviors.

Being alienated from the life of God – As a result, they could not be in a right relationship with God. Paul had already spoken of this in 2:12, 19. Walking contrary to the will of God alienates one from Him.

Because of:

The ignorance that is in them – Ignorance is not stupidity as we sometimes think. It is a lack of knowledge. When one turns from God, he rejects the truth. Generation after generation, then, grows up not knowing the truth. It doesn't take long for them not to know God at all. This ignorance leads them to a darkened understanding, that sinful behavior is the norm, and alienation from God as a result. Deuteronomy 11:18-19.

The blindness of their hearts – Hearts, here, cannot be literal. Hearts do not have eyes. The heart is symbolic of the seat of understanding and emotion. Since they already have their understanding darkened and are ignorant, I see this as more the emotional side. They do not want to see. When confronted with the truth, they do not want it. They are blinded to it emotionally.

Being past feeling – Their consciences seared, 1 Timothy 4:2. They do not even care anymore. Their lives are what they have become and there is no desire to change.

Have given themselves over to:

Lewdness – lasciviousness, unbridled passion for sin, 2 Corinthians 2:21, Galatians 5:19.

To work all uncleanness with greediness – The deeds resulting from lewdness/lasciviousness. Robertson says, “perhaps prostitution.” Certainly, sexual immorality. The greediness, here, is not an independent vice. It is a description of the intensity of the desire for lewd behavior. Not being able to get enough.

But you have not so learned in Christ. You have learned a different way to walk, a way that leads to life. A way that brings understanding and eliminates ignorance and blindness, that has brought you into a relationship with God, that urges you against lewdness and uncleanness.

Vv 21 to 24 – IF, you have heard Him, that is Christ, Hebrews 1:1-2, and have submitted yourself truly to His teaching, which is the truth, John 1:17, 8:32, 14:6. The truth is in Jesus. One Lord. Truth is found in no other.

These are the steps, then, to put that truth that you learned into practice:

1) Put off the old man – This is again symbolic language. Remove as a cloak. The old man is the man one was before hearing the truth, the one that walked in all those ways Paul just described. In fact, he says that he speaks concerning their former conduct, their previous way of walking. The natural tendency of this man is to grow corrupt, more and more, because of his lusts which deceive him.

2) Be renewed in the spirit of your mind – Change your way of thinking. Elsewhere he says, “be transformed by the renewing of your mind,” Romans 12:2. This change turns from the corrupt and so, like the trees in spring are reborn, renews one. One can no longer think the way he used to think.

3) Put on the new man – If we put off the old man, we replace him with the new man, put him on like a cloak. He is the one who is renewed by the truth, whose desire is the will of God. God has begotten him; he is a new creature, 2 Corinthians 5:17. He is born of the truth in true righteousness, the desire to do what is right in the sight of God and holiness, being set apart to God for His purposes.

Vv 25 to 29 – The almost proverbial nature of the statements in these verses does relate to the rest of what Paul is saying. He has been speaking to the Gentiles about walking worthy of their calling, v1, coming to the unity of the faith, and no longer walking as the rest of the Gentiles walk, v17. He has further told them that they have learned differently from Christ, v20, and must put off their former conduct. These statements regard their former conduct. Conduct means their way of life, not that they occasionally stumble into such behaviors. They must now walk in integrity.

The first is falsehood/lying. Exodus 20:16. NetBible says, “conscious and intentional falsehood.” He has already alluded to this in v15. Put away lying. Remove it from you. There is ample scriptural evidence that God hates lying, for example, Proverbs 6:16-17, 12:22; Revelation 21:8. Paul then quotes Zechariah 8:16 which was uttered by God regarding His desire to do good to the remnant. If you want to be blessed, this is what you shall do: stop lying. Paul even gives a reason – for you are members one of another. The most usual use of *members* is in the body analogies, Romans 12:4-5; 1 Corinthians 12:12ff. If we understand that we are all of the same body (that is Christ’s body, 5:30; Colossians 1:24), and we can relate this to the members composing our own body and not deceiving each other; we can understand the interrelationship of ourselves with the rest of the brethren. And all of us as members in the body are subject to the head, Christ. Because that relationship is so bonding, strong, and natural; it must dictate that we be honest with each other. There are two ways to lie, covertly and overtly.

Caldwell makes the point that falsehood may be more general in nature as to any untruth, including the pursuit of false teaching. Christians must avoid any untruth and always speak truth, whether it be of doctrine or personal dealings. "Lies break the bonds of love and fellowship."

The second is anger. See Caldwell p210. There are two types of anger, righteous and unrighteous. The former was exemplified by Jesus in the temple, Matthew 21:12. The second is the anger of man, Matthew 5:22. Anger may result in explosive expression, Luke 4:28-9; 2 Corinthians 12:20; Galatians 5:19-20; James 1:20. See James 1:19.

Paul even makes the differentiation when he quotes Psalm 4:4. It is possible to be angry and not sin. Now, this is not a self-help passage. Paul is not endeavoring to tell his readers how to accomplish this, merely that they must work to rid themselves of anger that becomes sinful. He does make one helpful statement that even many outside know, "do not let the sun go down on your wrath." Do not allow your wrath to continue after sundown. Or do not go to sleep unless you have resolved what has made you angry. Now, that does not tell us how to relieve our anger, but it does tell us that we should make every effort to resolve it in a timely way.

"Nor give place to the devil" – this phrase seems to be connected to the preceding idea of not letting the sun go down on your wrath. The longer one remains angry, the more likely he is to act in a way contrary to the Lord's will. Unresolved anger can result in bitterness, malice, etc. Even murder, Exodus 20:13. Relate this to 1 Corinthians 7:5. Satan will see an opportunity in this anger to wound you. James 4:7.

The third is stealing. Exodus 20:15. Taking the property of another. In many cases, there is also coveting involved before the theft. What is the alternative to stealing? Working with one's hands. Do not steal from another but provide for yourself with honest work, 2 Thessalonians 3:6ff. It is even possible that your work may provide for the needs of someone else who is honestly down on his luck.

The fourth is speech. It is interesting that Paul separates lying from these sins of the tongue. He seems to give more emphasis to lying in that way. James devotes a great deal of time in chapter 2 to discussing the evils that we can perpetrate with our tongues. In this case, Paul speaks of corrupt, that is rotten, speech. He opposes it, here, with what is "good for necessary edification." Corrupt speech is not good for necessary edification. It is any speech that does not build up but tears down. It may include filthiness, foolishness talking, coarse jesting, 5:4; Colossians 3:8. It may

include gossiping and busybodies, 1 Timothy 5:13. It may include backbiting, 2 Corinthians 12:20, as well as others. Paul is making a very general statement. All speech that does not build another up is corrupt. Our speech should impart grace (favor) to the hearer, Colossians 4:6.

We have, with our speech, the ability to influence and affect others. We can choose to speak good words that make people stronger and uplifted, or we can choose to speak ill words to them that wound and tear down. It is important for us to remember this and seek to follow the example of our savior, “if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him.”

Do not lie but speak truth; Be angry but do not sin; Do not steal but work; Do not speak corruptly but edify.

V30 – Do not grieve (make sorrowful, affect with sadness) the Holy Spirit of God – It is obvious from this verse that the Holy Spirit is still active and working. He is able to be wounded by us. We know in the NT that we can lie to the Holy Spirit, we can blaspheme the Holy Spirit, and here we can grieve the Holy Spirit. Is this a fifth command by itself, or is it a general statement that when one acts in the aforementioned ways he is grieving the Holy Spirit. If Paul does not mean to say the latter, then how would we know what he means? He does not give specifics on how we would grieve the Holy Spirit otherwise. How would we follow this command? Certainly, he must be saying that if we lie, express wrath, steal, and speak corruptly, we grieve the Holy Spirit.

And the reason we do not want to grieve the Holy Spirit is because it is He who seals us (who are saved) for the day of redemption, 1:13-14; 2 Corinthians 1:22, 5:5, 2 Timothy 2:19.

Also, specifically the Holy Spirit because Paul is speaking of truth and edifying speech. The Holy Spirit gave us the word, and the word teaches us that we should love and speak truth.

Vv 31 and 32 – The fact that Paul returns to what he has previously spoken of leads me to conclude that the how of grieving the Holy Spirit is in the doing of those things. His list, at this point, is bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor/quarreling, and evil speaking (includes any speech injurious to another). See Caldwell p223. His previous list was lying, anger, stealing, and corrupt speech. Lying may result in bitterness; anger leads to wrath, and corrupt and evil speech go together. But what about clamor/quarreling? How would that match up with stealing? It does not seem to. Paul may not mean to have an exact parallel in this verse with the previous verses. He may be reiterating and adding. Let all of these things be put away from you is a

command to remove them from your conduct. Whether it is those things in vv25-29 or it is the things of v31, they are all sins that must be dealt with in order to walk worthy of the calling. There may be a progression in v31.

As to “with all malice”, it seems there are two possibilities. First, Paul could be saying that these things should be put away with all malice, meaning intent of enmity. He would then be saying that one should hate these things and deliberately make every effort to be rid of them. This seems unlikely for several reasons. Malice never seems to be used in a good way, unlike lust/passion. The 1828 dictionary defines malice as “a disposition to injure others without cause, from mere personal gratification or from a spirit of revenge.” Since this is the usual sense of the word, it would seem unusual for Paul to turn it to mean an enmity towards sin. The second possibility, that it is, itself, an additional item seems to be borne out by the parallel verse, Colossians 3:8. Peter also lists it in 1 Peter 2:1. Malice does lend itself to these others in that it is a disposition that may lead to sin and directly bears on our willingness to sin, to cause hurt to others. Anger that leads to wrath can be provoked by a desire to do harm to someone intentionally. Malice may be behind all of these. Instead, be(come) kind to one another, consider them and seek their good. Be tenderhearted towards one another, inclined toward understanding, sympathy, and concern. Be forgiving to one another, willing to take the wrong when it can be taken with no consequence to the sinner or forgiving when one seeks forgiveness. Again, the admonition to forgive is followed by the idea that Christ has forgiven us also. This statement is a two-fold point. One, Christ forgave even you Gentiles. Never forget that. If we do not, we will be more inclined towards forgiving those who wrong us, Matthew 6:12, 15, 18:35. Two, we were not forgiven merely because Christ hanged on a cross. We had to come to Him, to repent, and be obedient.

These are what you have been taught by Christ. This good conduct will help preserve the unity of the faith in the bond of peace.

CHAPTER 5

Vv1 & 2 – Therefore, again, based on what has gone before, be/become. Now we have moved beyond walking to being. This is not about your conduct; it is about who and what you are.

Imitators – *Mimeomai*, (mimic, mimeograph, imitation writing). 1 Corinthians 4:16, 11:1; Hebrews 6:12; 3 John 11. To copy another in some way. Here, Paul tells them to imitate God. How would they imitate God? By imitating Christ and His word and those who are faithfully doing the same as the verses above say. And imitate God as dear children. They are His children, but it may be that quality in children that Paul

has in mind which allows them to imitate another with complete innocence and genuine learning. One of the ways that we do learn is by imitating the example of our elders. As Christians, we also learn from the examples of those in scripture. Doing this takes what Paul spoke about in 4:21-24, putting off the old man, renewing one's mind, and putting on the new man.

As a result of being imitators (or as Smelser says in order to be imitators), walk ("to order one's behavior," Caldwell) in love. God is love, 1 John 4:8. See 4:15-16. Walking in love really seems to be an emphasis on the doing, the action of showing true love. Do so as Christ also has loved us, and as a result of that love, gave Himself for us. Notice Christ loved us and **gave Himself** (unto death) for us, John 10:17-18. No one took His life; He willingly offered (gift, act) and sacrificed (death, thing itself) Himself for us. He was the priest and sacrifice/offering. His sacrifice was a sweet-smelling savour/aroma to God, meaning it was acceptable for the purpose for which it was meant, Genesis 8:21; Philippians 4:18.

Smelser says, "Paul's use of such language in a letter most specifically addressed to Gentiles is a testament to the extent to which the OT, not only its stories but indeed its concepts and its very language, was expected to serve as the foundation for the faith of all Christians, Gentiles and well as Jews."

Caldwell suggests that Paul goes from the outward sin to the inward heart that leads to the outward sin. The outward sexually immoral sins were a part of Gentile life, 2:3; 4:17-19. Paul is trying to help them understand that giving up the sin is not enough, but changing the heart and life is necessary.

Colossians 3:16-17

Vv 3 & 4 – Fornication, *porneia*, sexual immorality, "illicit sexual intercourse; adultery, fornication, homosexuality, lesbianism, intercourse with animals etc." NetBible

The word translated fornication is not limited as our perception may be but includes any form of sexual activity contrary to the will of God.

All uncleanness – lascivious acts, whatever is defiling, not a broader term for fornication but really the idea of any impurity at all, even in thought, wickedness. Smelser says this is paired, here, with fornication.

Covetousness – See Colossians 3:5 where Paul calls this idolatry and v5. Coveting is avarice, greedy desire as in 4:19. Wanting what someone else has, maybe not also, but instead of, although that may touch the hem of envy. See Luke 12:13ff; Matthew 19:16ff. Remember that the commandment, Exodus 20:17, "You

shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's" dealt also with the coveting of someone else's wife (or servants or animals, sexually?) So, covetousness does connect with fornication and uncleanness.

Let it not even be named among you – 1 Corinthians 5:1. Do not even talk about it (much less do it). Refuting and exposing these may be necessary, but casually discussing them is not fitting/proper among God's people who are imitating Him and have transformed and renewed their minds. Some, including Smelser, believe this to mean that these things should not be named among you because they should not occur at all.

In addition, the implication is that the following must not even be named among you:

Filthiness – obscenity, nastiness, vulgar speech, dirty talk and jokes.

Foolish/silly talking – only here, from *moros*, fool, and *logia*, talk. Sinful, senseless, mindless, ridiculing, impious, 4:29.

Coarse jesting – only here, to turn well or easily, artfully turned discourses, sexual innuendo, double entendre, obscene meanings, "risqué or lewd witticisms," Smelser. 'Dummelow interpreted the reference to jesting, etc., as jesting about such sins as were just mentioned. "Do not get near these topics for the sake of being amusing.'" As quoted in Coffman

None of these is fitting for one professing to be a Christian. In all of the above cases, especially relating to the speech, these are to be put aside in favor of thanksgiving. 4:6 also tells us about the need for the edification of the body when all the members do their part which includes the above.

Vv 5 to 7 – You know, you have been taught and you understand. What do you know? That no fornicator, unclean person, or covetous man (who is an idolator), as Paul mentioned above in v3, has any inheritance (Colossians 1:12; 1 Peter 1:4) in the kingdom of Christ and God. These seeming two "kingdoms" are one in the same. Christ is Deity and so His kingdom is the kingdom of His Father, Matthew 6:33. Paul is not just saying that one cannot enter the kingdom is he is one or more of the above. He is saying that even if he is in the kingdom at this point; if he practices these things, he will not realize the actual hope, the inheritance. Again, Christians can lose their salvation.

Let no one deceive you with empty words – the empty words may be the doctrines of Gnosticism or the like which told that it was acceptable to indulge in the pleasures of the flesh because, though sinful, flesh is separate from the spirit. Obviously, in some manner, there were those saying that these indulgences were compatible with the Christian life. Paul says in no way are they compatible. Colossians 2:8
Smelser, “Justifications of living as the Gentiles do are ‘empty words.’”

For, the truth is, that it is because of these things; fornication, uncleanness, and covetousness, and the speech sins, that the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. 2:2, Colossians 3:6. (Is this expression similar to the sons of men in Gen 6?) Its meaning is simply those who are children of disobedience, who live for sin. God’s righteous anger will be directed towards them, and do not let anyone tell you otherwise. This should answer our current homosexual argument.

Therefore do not be partakers with them. Do not share in the evil of the rest of the Gentiles. 1Peter 4:3-4 “For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles--when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries. In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you.” If you do partake with them, you will suffer that same wrath of God.

Vv 8 to 10 – For you **were** once darkness. This is specifically addressed to Paul’s readers as similarly in 1 Corinthians 6:9-11. They had been as the Gentiles Paul described in 4:17-19, walking in futility, with a darkened understanding, alienated from the life of God, ignorant, and blind. But all that is in the past, and Paul is urging them to continue on their current path. Because now you are light in the Lord. See Matthew 5:16. They are no longer darkness but light, Colossians 1:13. And they are light because they are in the Lord who is light.

Caldwell makes the point, “There is, therefore, no light for mankind other than the wisdom of God revealed through the teaching of God in the gospel.”

4:1 walk worthy of the calling. 4:17 no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk. 5:2 walk in love. And here, walk as children of light. And in so doing, finding out or trying to learn, meaning discerning, what is acceptable/well-pleasing to the Lord. The implication is that this finding out is a process. These Gentile converts are not expected to have learned everything about God’s will for them already as Paul has stated earlier, 3:17-19 for example. As they walk in the light, they will learn more about the will of God. And they will produce fruit.

Parenthetically, Paul then says that the fruit, the produce, of the Spirit, or some read Light (capitalized in NASB), is in all (as revealed by God):

Goodness – uprightness of heart and life, kindness, genuine moral excellence, honorable conduct toward others

Righteousness – concerning the way in which man may attain a state approved of God, integrity, virtue, purity of life, rightness, correctness of thinking feeling, and acting, just

And truth – what is real and certain, fact, in this case the word of God, John 17:17

Does this mean that the fruit is in the doing of goodness, righteousness, and truth? Or does he mean to say that walking in the light/Spirit will produce goodness, righteousness, and truth. It is hard to imagine that truth can be “produced”; however, the meaning may be that more truth is learned. Our lives show forth the truth to a greater degree. If this verse is somewhat parallel to Galatians 5:22-3, then the fruit is, indeed, as fruit is in reality, a product of something. In Galatians, it is the produce of the Spirit, meaning living life in the word of truth. Here, then, it is the produce of walking as children of Light/the Spirit.

Such a life will allow one to continue to learn what is acceptable/well-pleasing to God. Some say proving, “testing, and so, proving,” Robertson. Smelser says, “to consider something to be tried and true,” and “So then we might translate 5:10, choosing what is pleasing to the Lord. This is perhaps close to Tyndale’s “Accept that which is pleasing to the Lorde.””

Vv 11 to 14 – Have no fellowship, v7, do not share in, 1 Timothy 5:22, 2 John 9-11, with the unfruitful (producing no good thing) works of darkness, 2 Corinthians 6:14, Galatians 5:19-21 (as opposed to the fruitful, fruit-producing, walking in the light works). Paul has described these already in this letter, vv2-7. Do not have anything to do with these things, Revelation 18:4; in fact, don’t even mention them, v3. And what is more, actively expose/reprove these works. If there are any among you engaged in these behaviors, bring them to light. Why does Paul urge them to go this far, to out those who are working these works? Probably for the reason he specifies in v4, these things are not fitting for a Christian; Romans 6:1-2, a Christian can no longer live in sin; and 1 Corinthians 5:6, a little leaven leavens the whole lump. The admonition is to root out this sort of behavior from among them. Christians cannot be neutral. When Paul says not to speak of these things for it is shameful, he does not mean that they cannot be spoken of in reproof. He means that they should not be

discussed in any other way than reproof. We cannot, as Christians, afford to dabble in thoughts and wonderings with others about these evil deeds. 1 Corinthians 5:1

All things that are exposed (whatever is made manifest, Vincent) are made manifest seems redundant. The idea of exposing something, bringing it to light, is the same as making manifest. The emphasis, however, may not be in these but in the light. 1 Thessalonians 5:7. It is the light that exposes those things that are exposed. Without the sun, it is dark; and no one can see. With the sun, the light, all things can be seen. It is the sun that makes all things that can be seen visible. Paul concludes this by saying that the light is what makes manifest. What is the point? Without the truth, these evil works cannot be exposed. It is only the truth that informs us of what evil deeds are just as Paul says the law brought the knowledge of sin, Romans 3:20, 7:7.

He then quotes, some say from Isaiah 26:19 and 60:1, though these verses are not exactly the same. Some say the He is the same as 4:8, meaning God through His word, the sense of which is lost in translating as "it says." What says? The latter does seem to be about the Messiah. The point here is to wake up from sleep, ignorance of the truth, which leads to death. Awake and arise, out from among the dead ones. Then Christ will give him light. Poetic. As Jesus said, "Let him who has ears to hear, let him hear."

Vv 15 & 16 – Now Paul adds the admonition that they walk circumspectly, literally carefully. Be aware of how you walk, where you walk, how you speak, etc. One must be conscious and ever vigilant to make sure that he does not stray from the path. Fools walk in darkness and aimlessly; but those who are wise walk in light with purpose.

Redeeming the time – buying back the time, Colossians 4:5. Time as a season of opportunity, Acts 1:7 and 1 Thessalonians 5:1, *seasons*. He may be referring to all the time that they had spent previously in the ways of the Gentiles. Time cannot be gotten again once it is spent; however, we may strive to make the most of the time we have after we come to a knowledge of the truth. We no longer waste time in ungodly behaviors but strive to produce fruit for the Lord. He may also be referring, as he says the days are evil, to the fact that our days are fraught with trouble and trial and persecution. All of this evil conspires to bring us down. Paul says, however, walk wisely and buy back that time with your good behavior, moment by moment, decision by decision.

The NAS and others, instead of redeeming, translate as making the most of your time or opportunity. The idea in such is that since the days in which you live are evil, use whatever opportunity you have to do what is right.

Vv 17 & 18 – Do not be unwise, then, work to know what God wills. It takes work to learn and to understand it so as to put it into practice.

Do not be drunk with wine – Here is the importance of not being intoxicated. Alcohol and related substances alter the mind and rob us of sober-mindedness to which we are called, 1 Thessalonians 5:6, 8; Titus 2:2; 1 Peter 1:13, 5:8. The two are mutually exclusive, and this is the greatest argument against the use of alcohol with influence being a close second. But Paul does say, “do not be drunk.” He does not contradict his statement to Timothy to use a little wine for his stomach, 1 Timothy 5:23. Though I do not advocate the use of alcohol, I believe Paul could not tell Timothy to do something that was sinful just to ease his stomach. A little win, in itself, may not be a bad thing; but the importance in all of this is to remain sober-minded. We want to be in our right minds when the Lord returns.

He says in drunkenness (not in wine, Vincent) is dissipation/excess/wantonness. Recall the prodigal son and see 1 Peter 4:3-4. It is the idea that the life lived for wine has no redeeming value or quality. Webster 1828 defines dissipation as “Scattered attention; or that which diverts and calls off the mind from any subject. A dissolute, irregular course of life; a wandering from object to object in pursuit of pleasure; a course of life usually attended with careless and exorbitant expenditure of money, and indulgence in vices, which impair or ruin both health and fortune.” It is not hard to see the connection Paul is making.

A word, here, on alcohol. I do not want to be put in a position of defending alcohol, as I would never do that; however, I see comments such as those by Caldwell (p251, last full paragraph) as problematic. He looks at the consequences of alcohol abuse and makes the assertion that because of these consequences all alcohol use is wrong. Is this argumentation sound? Do we use it elsewhere? In discussing the speaking of women in various settings, can we say that because women may overstep their bounds they should remain silent? If so, then should we say that because some may fornicate that sex is wrong? Because some may abuse alcohol, can we say all alcohol use is wrong? If this be the case, it is not right for Paul to tell Timothy to use a little wine for his stomach. Medicinal use cannot make right something that is wrong, unless that is the clear purpose for which God intended the

substance. Paul clearly says that dissipation is in drunkenness, not in mere wine. If we are going to argue that all alcohol use is wrong, we must come up with better arguments than look at what it result in and their wine was not as strong as ours. These are poor arguments.

Instead of being filled with wine be filled with the Spirit. Many men have been said to have been filled with the Spirit in a non-miraculous sense as we would be today, for instance in Acts 6:3. Being filled with the Spirit is allowing the Spirit and His word to live in your heart and determine your conduct in life. Many limit this to say “word only” as Colossians 3:16 seems to indicate in saying, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.” They equate being filled with the Spirit with letting the word of Christ dwell in you richly, and that may be the case, here, though not in every instance. As we do not believe that the Spirit works miracles through us today, we are left with saying that He does nothing. Especially since He has already given us the entire revealed word of God. It would have been hard even for the contemporaneous readers of Paul to be filled with the Spirit in any but a passive way, such as saying allow the Spirit to fill you. So how does he say, “be filled with the Spirit?” Today, how are we filled with the Spirit? By the word only?

Paul’s words, here, indicate a choice on the part of the hearer. Be filled with the Spirit means that the person can choose to allow himself to be filled or not. Smelser quotes Meyer noting the “possibility of resistance to the Holy Spirit.”

Vv 19 to 21 – As we are filled with the Spirit, we should speak to one another, teach and admonish one another in Colossians 3:16, in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Much effort has been made to distinguish and define these three; however, the divisions are not clear and agreed upon. For our purposes, we are to speak to one another in songs that extol the virtues of God and the Christian life. In this way, we encourage and edify each other. Our singing is not only praise but teaching. We are commanded to sing praise to the Lord, all of us.

Smelser comments, “The conclusion is that Paul first mentioned psalms, probably having in mind the Psalms of the OT, and then in addition he mentioned hymns, meaning songs of praise and mentioned separately so as to include songs not from the OT, and finally songs that were not necessarily songs of praise, but such as were nonetheless spiritual and therefore edifying. Certainly, an OT psalm of praise to God could be aptly described by all three terms. But not every spiritual song could be so described.”

Making melody in your heart – This is an important phrase in the discussion of the addition of mechanical instruments into the worship of God. Many books have been written about the word *psallo*. If we just take the words on their face, we should be able to understand them without flying back to the Greek. The command is to sing.

How do we make melody? The instruments provide the melody in our contemporary music. But Paul is saying that the melody should be provided in our own hearts, not with mechanical instruments. The key to this is the phrase “to the Lord.” Whatever our interpretation of these verses, we must remember that what we are doing is to the Lord. It is, therefore, His determination as to how He wants us to worship Him, not our own. We must remove any willfulness in this issue. It must be solved by asking what does the Lord desire.

Coffman makes the good point that it seems strange that if God had ordained the playing of instruments he did not make it plain here.

In addition to speaking to one another and singing and making melody, we must always, at all times, be giving thanks, expressing gratitude, for all things to God the Father in the name of the Lord Jesus. The lack of thanks is what began man’s descent in Romans 1:21. They did not glorify or thank the Lord. When we forget to thank the Lord for all He has done for us, Luke 17:12ff, it is as if we do not care about His love for us. James 1:17.

Filled with the Spirit, we must be speaking/singing, giving thanks, and submitting. Paul is not talking about our submission to God, which already weaves through this letter, but our submission to each other. Because of our respect and reverence for the Lord, we will submit ourselves to each other. To submit means “To yield, resign or surrender to the power, will or authority of another,” Webster. The Bible is full of such references: Romans 12:10; Philippians 2:3; 1 Peter 5:5.

Caldwell says, “...originally a military word referring to the forming or lining up of troops for battle under a commanding officer. Every soldier was to recognize and keep his proper place in the ranks as instructed by his authoritative superior.”

Vv 22 to 24 – Paul has just said that all should be submitting to one another in the fear of God. This submission has certain qualifications, though, in that a man does not submit his authority to a woman, for example. In fact, Paul continues with his practical instructions here for wives by saying that they should submit to their own husbands, Genesis 3:16, Colossians 3:18, 1 Peter 3:1-6 in **everything**. Submission, here, is specifically directed toward married women in their own marriages. This is not to say that women never have to submit to men who are not their husbands, See

1 Corinthians 11:3, 1 Timothy 2:11-14. In fact, it is because of the universal principles set in motion in Genesis 3 when Eve sinned and continued in the verses previously cited that a wife must submit to her husband. Women are to submit to men generally; therefore, a married woman should submit to her husband.

A word about submission, here, is in order. Submission does not mean giving up all individuality, all opinions and views, etc. It does not mean that a woman must subject herself to mistreatment, harassment, or abuse. It simply means that she recognize and accept that the man has the final authority in any given relationship. She is free to express her opinions and views respectfully; however, in the end, the husband is tasked with making the decision and bearing the responsibility of that decision. Submission is also voluntary and not coerced.

Also, over all, women are to submit to their husbands in the same way they submit to Christ. Clearly, Christ does not abuse his subjects but loves them as Paul will say. Paul says that the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is head of the church/assembly/congregation and savior of the body.

Caldwell makes the good point that a wife who loves the Lord regards her submission to her husband as submission to Christ.

Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, wives should be subject to their husbands in everything. Many would say that Paul is misogynistic, a woman hater, that as a member of a patriarchal society he is merely putting women down. Such could not be further from the truth. God loves His creation, and Paul loves women as well. This admonition is for the good of the marital relationship. If a physical body will not be controlled by the brain, how will the whole function? We see this with various diseases. If the spiritual body will not be controlled by Christ, how will that body function? It cannot. If a wife will not submit to her husband, how can a marriage function? Some would say a woman could be in charge as well as a man; however, that would contradict the universal principles of creation. Woman was created to be a helpmate. We see the effects of violating these principles in our own society today.

Additionally, a woman who shows her husband respect wins his heart. A man needs to believe that his wife trusts him and respects him as the head. Many marriages have been ruined by a woman who refuses to respect and trust her husband.

Vv 25 to 27 – As Paul admonishes women to submit to their husbands, he also admonishes husbands to love their wives. Notice, women submit, men love. Proceeding with the basic definition of love, doing what is in someone else's best interest even when it may not be in your own, the husband must demonstrate this

attitude towards his wife. A husband who feels respected finds it easy to love his wife.

The example again is Christ who loved the church. How do we know He loved the church? Because He did something to demonstrate that love – He gave Himself. The purposes stated for Christ’s giving of Himself for the church – 1) that He might sanctify (set apart, make holy) her and cleanse her (make free from defilement of sin)*

with the washing of water – what water, what washing? When did this happen and how? This cannot equate to what some say is Holy Spirit baptism. That would not be water. The only involvement of water in the church is immersion in water, Acts 2:47, Romans 6:1ff. Titus 3:5 is very similar. Vincent says, “There is no satisfactory evidence for the meaning washing. The allusion is to baptism.” Clarke, JFB, Wesley, and Robertson see this as baptism, though they do not go so far as to say baptism saves, while Barnes and others stretch to make this about the purification of a bride before marriage.

by the word – it is the word which conveys to us the truth of God’s will for us, that immersion in water is necessary to cleanse us of our sins and add us to the body. Augustine says, “Take away the word, and what is the water but water?”

*Vincent says, “might sanctify, having cleansed. ...brings out the proper succession of sanctification as a consequence of cleansing: might sanctify after having cleansed.”

2) that He might present her to Himself a glorious church – that He might place the church at His disposal, near to Himself. After sanctifying the church through water and the word, Christ was able to present it to Himself, recognize it, as a glorious church/body not having spot or wrinkle. Rom 12:1-2 says we must offer our bodies as a living sacrifice. Since that is true, the church as a whole and made up of all individual Christians is a living sacrifice to God. It must be, as all physical sacrifices were and as Christ was, without blemish. Without blemish means without stain, holy and without blemish.

Vv 28 to 33 – So, as a result of the foregoing, that Jesus loved the church and gave Himself for her, husbands ought to love their wives. To what degree? As they love their own bodies. A man who loves his wife surely loves himself. Conversely, a man who does not love his wife does not love himself. Most people love their own bodies and do them no harm. Better, they do them good. They nourish and cherish them, just as Jesus nourishes and cherishes the church. We, all, are members of Christ’s body; therefore, we know how our savior treats us. Should we not, then, treat our

wives the same way because of how He treats us and the fact that they are members of the same body. We are all of His flesh and His bones.

Paul quotes the universal principle uttered by Adam in Genesis 2:24 that a man would leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife and the two will become one flesh. The bond formed between a man and a woman supersedes the bond between a man and his parents. That bond is special and important, and the commitment not to be taken lightly. Caldwell makes what should be an obvious point but is well made in saying that God says “the **two** shall become one flesh.” Not three or more.

The reason Paul gives for wives’ submitting to husbands is that the husband is the head of the wife. The reasons Paul gives for husbands’ loving their wives are that Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her, that a husband loves his own body, and that a husband left his father and mother and became one with his wife.

This is a great mystery – the foregoing quote from Genesis or his previous discussion as a whole. In and of itself, the instructions are easy to understand, but Paul says he is speaking concerning Christ and the church. The gospel had been foretold but not completely revealed until Jesus came and died. Smelser suggests that Paul was saying, in essence that the Gentiles, in view of the earlier mentioned mystery were now part of the bride of Christ.

Paul does not mean that his emphasis in this passage is on Christ and the church and that marriage is secondary. Paul is giving instructions as he often does based on universal principles. He turns the quote into a mystery revealed because he uses it in the context of the relationship between Christ and the church. Jesus joined the body to Himself. He left His Father and became joined to the church, His bride, Revelation 21:2, 9.

Some say that this passage is about the relationship of Christ and the church; however, I do not see it that way. Paul is giving practical instructions about marriage and uses the over-arching example of Christ and the church to bolster his argument about human marriage.

Nevertheless, if you do not quite understand the connection between Christ and Genesis 2:24, understand that each husband must love his wife as himself and that the wife must respect (submit to) her husband.

All of this, based on universal principle and the example of our own savior, is the recipe for a successful marriage. A man needs respect, and a woman needs love. If these needs are met, the marriage can be everything that God designed it to be.

CHAPTER 6

Vv 1 to 4 – Coffman makes the point that wives, children, and slaves did not have status in the Roman world. They were the property of the husband/father and were subject to his whims. It is God through Paul in this chapter and the previous that corrects those situations.

The fact that Paul turns his attention to instructing children and fathers helps to understand that his previous thoughts were about husbands and wives and using the example of Christ and the church rather than the other way around.

His instruction to children is forthright, obey (stronger than submit) your parents in the Lord for this is right. Looking at Colossians 3:20 helps us to understand what Paul says here, “Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord.” Both have the admonition to obey parents. Listen to, harken to. And not just to hear them but to be obedient to what they say. What good is it if a child hears his parents in the sense of listening to the words coming out of their mouths and then does not do what he is told? The child must hear and obey.

What does Paul mean by children? We might look at 1 Timothy 3:4 and Titus 1:6. Does a father have the right to expect obedience of a child who is grown and is no longer under his care? No, he does not. At some point, that child will leave his father and mother and cleave to a wife. At that point, he is no longer under the control of his parents. Children are those who live in his household and have not yet become responsible for themselves. The admonition of v2 pertains to them.

Caldwell makes this statement because the children Paul talks about must be mature enough to receive instruction, therefore, “it is imperative to accept the fact that the children who are addressed are at least of age to be Christians.” This seems to me to be much more restrictive than Paul means to be. If we assume a child may become a Christian at age 14, and that may be dubious to grant in all cases, we know a child may marry and leave at 18. So, Paul’s instruction to obey parents would likely only pertain to 4-5 years of a child’s life, and what does that say about children under 14? Are they not to obey?

Many make issue of the phrase “in the Lord.” It might be compared to 1 Corinthians 7:39 where a widow may marry again “in the Lord.” But what does it mean? Some say that it means in Corinthians that a woman may only marry a man who is a Christian. I think that has merit. But how would that translate to Ephesians? Are we then to say that a child only has to obey his parents in matters of the Lord? Is that Paul’s emphasis? Colossians says that a child should obey his parents in all things. “In all things” and “in the Lord” may not be exactly the same thing. In addition, the two uses cited of “in the Lord” may not be used in the same way. The meaning of Colossians is obvious, in all things. The meaning, here, is virtually the same. It may mean the manner of obeying is in the Lord, how do they obey? So the two phrases would combine to mean obey in all things as you are in the Lord.

Obedience of children to parents is simply right but also because it pleases God. It is the order of things which God meant to be. A child who rules his parents or parents who are controlled by their child suggest an unnatural order of things. In addition, we need to consider the Biblical admonitions to discipline children for their own good. Instruction and discipline of children begins in the home with the parents, especially the father, v4. Neglect of this duty leads to trouble when the child leaves the parents, if not before. Parents have the right to insist on obedience, and the OT has much to say what response should follow on the heels of disobedience.

Honor your mother and father was indeed one of the ten commandments. This command is not limited. Young children at home, who are capable of respect, are to show it to their parents. Children who have grown up and moved out on their own still must show respect to their parents. If the phrase “in the lord” in v1 meant as long as your parents are doing what is right in the sight of the Lord, the same phrase would be applied here. How could one respect parents who do not respect the Lord? The same way a wife lives with a non-Christian husband, 1 Peter 3:1ff. At the very least, respect them as your parents. Give them the honor due because they are your parents. Matthew 15:1-9. Caldwell reminds us that this obligation extends to in-law parents.

This command is said to be the first with promise, v3. It is not the only commandment with promise. “The” is not in the Greek. It could be that the commandment is first or a prominent or primary commandment. Maybe obedience for children is one of their first commandments.

Does obedience to parents guarantee longer life? The original meaning of the promise was for the Israelites. The land would have been the land they were going

to inherit. Obedience to parents, especially in the laws of the Lord, would mean blessings from the Lord, one of which would be continued dwelling in the land. For us, it may mean God's blessings. It also may have a more practical meaning, that obedience, especially to good parents, is for our own good. If we listen to our parents and do not drink alcohol past sober-mindedness, we will not suffer from alcoholism and all that may result. Eli in 1 Samuel 3:13.

Then Paul admonishes fathers not to provoke their children to wrath. If we merely considered that part of the sentence, we might be inclined to the meaning that fathers should not even play in a teasing manner with their children. My own children love to use that against me (in jest). If we consider the rest, but bring them up in the nurture/training (recognizes the necessity of correction or chastisement, Vincent.; Hebrews 12:5-11.) and admonition (training by word of mouth, Vincent; putting in mind of right, Caldwell.), it seems the meaning is clear. What happens if we, fathers, do not bring our children up in the Lord? We provoke them to wrath. Wrath does not mean their own anger. It means that without proper training they would be exasperated and may seek after evil which would lead them to be subject to God's wrath as sons of disobedience, Ephesians 5:6.

Vv 5 to 9 – Paul then turns his attention to servants/slaves/bondservants and masters. We use this passage to make application to the employer/employee relationship; however, in Paul's time the "relationship" was generally a more one-sided one. Rome was full of slaves. Slaves are subject to their masters by law, and Paul does not change that standard. The simple answer to why Paul does not condemn slavery in the strongest possible terms is that he could do nothing more than that. His condemnation would change nothing. And Paul was not concerned with law and political activism. His letter to Philemon illustrates the proper attitude of Christians regarding slavery. It is not fitting to hold slaves who are Christians. Eventually, that attitude would spread. The spread of Christianity was the answer to the question of slavery.

See Smelser's discussion pp 252-5.

In 1 Corinthians 7:20-24, Paul tells those who were converted while slaves not to be concerned about it. If one can become free, great; if not, live for the Lord. That is the idea here. If one is a slave, he must be obedient to his master. (Calling a man by this term is obviously not sinful. What Jesus meant in Matthew 23:6-10 was not to call a man by those titles in regard to your faith. Do not call a man rabbi, father, teacher, or master for that matter, in the sense of your spiritual life. You have one who serves as

such, and that is God/Christ. That is why Paul qualifies the term master with “according to the flesh.” It is the same obedience commanded of children. Do what is told you to do.

Do so with fear and trembling. Philippians 2:12 comes to mind. It is not fear of and trembling for your master according to your flesh but your Master according to the Spirit. Obey also with sincerity of heart, truthfulness, honesty, honor, and accountability. Serve the master as if you were serving Christ, Himself, and in truth, you are. Do not serve with eyeservice, Colossians 3:22. Do not merely make it appear as if you are working, merely to be seen. Serve as if serving Christ because it is the will of God, and do it from the heart. Do it with goodwill; do not hate your masters or bear them ill will.

We know that if we do good we cannot help but be pleasing to the Lord. And if we are pleasing to the Lord, His will is to bless us. Our good service to our master will return to us in blessing from the Lord. Even if one’s master is evil, the blessing to the faithful servant will be eternity in heaven. And who knows but that the servant may lead the master to the Lord? 1 Timothy 6:1.

Likewise, Paul does not spare the Christian master of slaves. He does not tell him to release his slaves, but he does tell him how to treat them. Do not threaten them. Caldwell calls this “management by intimidation.” Treat them the same way that they should treat you. Be honest with them. Why should they treat slaves with decency and kindness and justice? Because they have a master in heaven as well. How would they want to be treated by their master? If in kindness and caring, then they should show their slaves the same. In the end, there is no partiality with God, Acts 10:34, Romans 2:11. He will show no preference to one who may have been wealthy enough to own slaves.

Vv 10 to 12 – Final admonitions. Be strong in the Lord and in the power of HIS might. Now that you understand the great blessings that have been bestowed on ALL those who have believed on Jesus Christ, stand firm in Him. Trust in His power to save. Believe His word and His truth.

In order to be strong, God has made provision. He has given us a full set of armor upon which he will expand in the following verses. Whole armor is the word *panoplia*, panoply, of which we sing. This armor, if put on, will help one stand against the wiles/schemings of the devil. The clear import of this statement is that the devil has

wiles/schemes. He disguises himself, 2 Corinthians 2:11, and deceives, 2 Corinthians 11:3, 13-15. In context, the devil will try to sway them from the truth but deception. Be aware and be armed.

Paul says that our struggle is a spiritual one. It is interesting that he uses the metaphor of wrestling. It would be different if the fight were a physical one, but it is not. It is greater because it is spiritual. It is fought in heavenly places. In fact, there is a battle raging that we cannot see against the spiritual hosts of wickedness. See 1:21 and 3:10. All of this reminds us of Romans 8:38-39 where Paul tells us that none of these forces cannot take us away from Christ, the implication being that only we can take ourselves away from Christ.

The terms that Paul uses are often discussed. I see them as:

Principalities – The range of the domains of the rulers.

Caldwell, “rulers, princes, or preeminent ones. The word appears to be used of spiritual beings, most likely angels.”

Lange, “the organization of the kingdom of the devil, denoting the chiefs and heads of the separate groups.”

Powers – The authorities behind the rulers.

Caldwell, “authorities, potentates, or powers....appear also to be spiritual beings, perhaps both good and bad angels.”

Lange, “marks the efficient, attacking powers.”

Rulers of the darkness of this age – may not mean physical because of this age. May be the rulers of the principalities.

Caldwell, “tyrants, no doubt include Satan himself, who is...the ruler of this world.”

Lange, “This term denotes the world-ruling power: for “the whole world lieth in darkness” (1 John 5:19; 1 John 2:14) and Satan is “the god of this world” (2 Corinthians 4:4), “the prince of this world” (John 16:11; John 14:30); his angels are under him world-rulers, whose sphere is designated by the genitive: “of this darkness.”

Spiritual hosts of wickedness (spirit forces of evil) – the forces arrayed against us. May include the first three.

Caldwell, “represents the hosts as beings in the spiritual realm which seduce the righteous to turn toward their evil ways.”

Lange, “is an abstract term, the concluding antithesis of “flesh and blood,” comprising all the spiritualities, which, in contrast with the kingdom of the Holy Ghost, deserve the characteristic: as the spirit of

revolution; to such belong moral wickedness and malice, which is directed to the destruction of others.

See Colossians 1:16. Also comments under 1:21.

Regarding whether it may be that the first three of these is earthly and the battle is in the spiritual realm. That would mean that all those would be earthly. They are, in such contexts, generally not thought of as physical, and Paul says we do not wrestle against flesh and blood.

Vv 13 to 17 – *Panoplia*, the entire set of armor. As many translations say, the whole armor. Paul tells the reader to take the armor, that is, actively take hold of it in order to put it to use. Paul, as he does with athletics, uses a metaphor with which, the Gentiles, and future readers, would be familiar, the Roman soldier. Paul, himself chained to a Roman soldier, would also be intimately familiar with the attire of a soldier. The Roman empire was massive and terrifying. It was the ruling force of the day, exemplified by its soldiers. Why does he use such a metaphor? Because the Christian is in a war which Paul has just described. Though the battle is not against flesh and blood, it is represented here by flesh and blood things. These things, however, have, in turn, a spiritual meaning.

What should the Christian who is fighting this spiritual war do? Take and put on the armor which God supplies. It is with this armor that one will be able to withstand in the evil day. The idea of one's withstanding implies a force coming against him. He will be assailed by the wiles of the devil, v11. Satan will throw all he has against us, and we must be protected. The Lord supplies the armor that will protect us.

What about the evil day? While some may try to pin this to a specific day or time in history, such would limit the relevance God's word has to future readers. If, for example, Paul were referring to the destruction of Jerusalem, what would his admonition to put on the armor of God have to do with us? While Paul may have had a specific day or time in mind in making this admonition, the language is broad enough that it can apply to any Christian at any time such that it may simply be any evil time. Any time in which evil comes against us. Any time of trial or temptation. Certainly, if we put on the armor and do not take it off, we will be prepared for any evil that comes against us.

He admonishes that we stand. Do not allow yourself to be knocked down. Do not sit down and take your ease. Stand after you have put on this armor as follows:

1) gird your waist with truth - Why start here? Why not the sword?

In the martial arts, the area just below the belt in front is the *dan jun*, "a Korean term for the center of the human body. It is the storage spot for *Ki* energy or vital life force. *Dan Jun* or *Tan Tien* in Chinese, is often pictured as a fire pot or stove in the lower abdomen. This represents the engine or power source of the human body."

The belt—known as the *cingulum* or *balteus*—played a crucial role in the effectiveness of a soldier's armor. It was the belt that held the scabbard, without which there would be no place to put a sword. In addition, the Nelson Study Bible says from the belt "hung strips of leather to protect the lower body." It is the belt girded around the waist that holds the sword of the spirit.

The belt would also have held rations and sacks for booty. To it was anchored the breastplate. It also surrounded the whole body.

It is said to be truth. What is truth, as Pilate asked? Is there objective truth? Jesus said, "And you shall **know the truth**, and **the truth** shall make you free," John 8:32."

John 14:6 "Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.'

Let's tie it back to the waist. If that area is our center of power, then it stands to reason that the center of our power in this spiritual battle is the truth.

Ephesians 1:13 "In Christ you also trusted, after you heard **the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation ...**" John 17:17 "Your word is truth. "

Romans 1:16 "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek."

2) put on the breastplate of righteousness - The word here is *thorax* which also means the area from neck to navel and to the end of the ribs, both sides.

How long would a soldier last in battle without a breastplate? The breastplate protects the vital organs. Proverbs 4:23 "Keep/keep watch/guard your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life."

Isaiah 59:17 speaks of God, "For He put on righteousness as a breastplate, And a helmet of salvation on His head...."

What is righteousness? Moral uprightness. Psalm 119:172, "... all Your (God's) commandments are righteousness." If we believe that truth and understand that

truth, we must live that truth. Living the truth is righteousness. Being in a right relationship with God is righteousness.

Jas 2:23 "And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, 'Abraham believed God, (and we know what belief entails) and it was accounted to him for righteousness.' And he was called the friend of God."

We can only be righteous through the sacrifice of Jesus. 2Cor 5:21 "For God made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

Bible.org says, "It is through a continuing and dedicated adherence to both the letter and spirit of God's law that we can defend ourselves with His righteousness."

3) shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace - How far would a soldier be able to go in bare feet, especially over rocky terrain?

Smelser advocates an earlier thought that the word translated preparation could as well mean firm footing or foundation. He agrees that preparation occurs on a foundation, and so preparation may be acceptable as well. It may be the difference between facilitating movement or assuring stability. The participles of the first three are attached to the idea of standing.

Usually known as a *caliga*, each boot was made from three main pieces of vegetable-tanned ox or cow leather - the upper, the sole, and an insole. All three layers were clenched with hobnails, frequently arranged in patterns, at least some of which were designed to facilitate comfortable walking. The uppers were pierced with openwork designs, so that the boots looked more like the modern idea of a sandal, but it was, as Carol van Driel-Murray has pointed out, an extremely functional piece of footwear.

Isaiah 52:7 "How beautiful upon the mountains Are the feet of him who brings good news, Who proclaims peace, Who brings glad tidings of good things, Who proclaims salvation, Who says to Zion, 'Your God reigns!'"

Romans 10:13-15

Micah 4:2 "For out of Zion the law shall go forth, And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem." Acts 8:4 "Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word."

Two possible meanings: Shoes protect our feet, give us a sure footing to stand, so steadfastness; and facilitate our active going, hence readiness. We stand ready and

we take the gospel of peace? Ephesians 2:14 "For Christ Himself is our peace."

Whether Christ or inner peace, which comes from Christ, it is not world peace. Interesting that Paul speaks of the peace of the gospel in the midst of a battle analogy, Caldwell.

4) take the shield of faith – the shield will quench the fiery darts/flaming arrows of Satan. In a physical battle, an army may use arrows and sometimes arrows with flames. Fiery darts or flaming missiles, exactly what one would think, arrows dipped in pitch and lit on fire. These have the primary purpose of killing and the secondary purpose of setting on fire, destroying. The shield, which is our faith, our firm belief in the faith, will quench the spiritual fiery darts hurled at us.

"The *scutum* was a large body shield usually measuring about 2.5 feet wide by 4 feet tall. It featured a very sharp curvature, and is generally described as being semi-cylindrical. It was made of plywood covered with leather, making it both strong and flexible. The plywood construction of these shields consisted of three layers of thin wooden strips, about 2.5 inches to 4 inches wide. The outer two layers ran horizontally, while the strips of the inside layer were oriented vertically. A horizontal handgrip was centrally attached. The *scutum* was about 0.5 inches thick in the center...."

An amazing aspect of the Roman use of these shields was a formation called the turtle, "In siege warfare, the *scutum* could be employed in a unique formation known as the *testudo*, or tortoise. In the *testudo*, the soldiers on the front and sides of the formation would hold their shields outward, while the remainder would overlap their shields above the heads of the formation. The result was a box enclosed on the front, sides, and top, leaving very few vulnerable openings."

1Corinthians 12:12 "For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ."

It is the shield of faith. Conviction of belief. Hebrews 11:1 "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Substance/assurance is what stands under a thing, such as the foundation of a building. It is what gives something its actual existence. A weak faith leads to a weak shield.

As a shield is our first guard from incoming projectiles, our faith protects us from the assaults to it from without. When will we be hit by those projectiles? When we let our

guard (shield) down. Doubt is a fiery dart. Worry is a fiery dart. Fear is a fiery dart. Temptation is a fiery dart.

James 4:7 "Resist the devil and he will flee from you."

5) take the helmet of salvation – A helmet is protection for the head. It must protect the brain from fatal wound. We understand the concept today as young people are required to wear helmets to ride bike, skateboard, etc., though not motorcycles?

"Helmets, *galea*, were of several types. The older Montefortino helmet was bowl shaped, with a topknot that was filled with lead, and a hole for insertion of a feather. The Coolus type helmet was a round, bronze helmet with a small neck guard, and the Port type, which was an iron helmet with a long neck guard. The Port type had a topknot that was adapted to hold the crest, and the helmet later became what is known as the imperial Gallic type. The Gallic type enlarged the neck guard further, and included metal cheek-guards, which protected the face. It also featured a reinforced rib along the forehead to protect against downward slashes."

Remember Isaiah 59:17 speaks of God, "For He put on righteousness as a breastplate, And a helmet of salvation on His head...." Familiar. And in this sense, it is the same armor God is pictured to be wearing there.

We might say that the helmet of salvation protects our intellect, our knowledge. God has not asked us to have blind faith but says that we have evidence of His existence.

Psalm 19:1 "The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork."

Roman "1:20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead...."

God wants us to use the minds that He gave us to reason out His existence. Once we realize the logic of God's existence, we use that knowledge to protect us.

The great multitude of Revelation 7 cried out in v10, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" Salvation is of God.

Peter says that the end of our faith is the salvation of our souls, 1Peter 1:9.

And we know that Jesus brought the salvation of God to us, Hebrews 5:9 "And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him...."

1Thessalonians 5:8 "But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation." Notice, the hope of salvation. This is a promise from God affected by Jesus in His death that carries with it a hope. One commentator, "This hope works like a helmet to protect our minds from the discouragement and despair in this world." What, after all, is the salvation of our souls?

Romans 5:8-9 "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him."

Romans 6:23 "the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Remember, it is for this hope of salvation that we fight, for ourselves and those who would believe. Salvation is the reason we preach.

6) take the sword of the Spirit - When we think of the Roman soldier's weaponry, we think of the sword as the main and most important of his weaponry and armor. The Roman infantry soldier, however, also carried a long spear or two called a *pilum*. A *pilum* is essentially a heavy javelin featuring a long thin iron shank (neck) and heavy shaft. The relatively thin iron shank, with its barbed tip, gave the *pilum* its extraordinary ability; it was armor piercing. The 2 foot long (60 cm) shaft was designed to be long enough to punch through a shield and into the man behind it. Modern testing has revealed that a *pilum* can be thrown 98 feet but it probably had an effective range of between 50-66 ft. A typical Roman strategy would have been to unleash their second *pilum* from a distance of only about 15-20ft and then to follow up with their swords, giving their enemy no time to recover.

Therein lies the reason why Paul did not employ the *pilum* in his list of armor. It is a long-distance weapon. There is no long-distance application to our effort to spread the gospel. We do not need to fire volleys from far away in hopes that we do not get attacked. And we are intimately involved in the battle.

They may also have carried a *pugio*, a dagger used as a sidearm by the Roman legionnaires. It featured a wide leaf shaped blade and was about 9.5" - 11" long. But daggers are generally thought of as a hidden, stealthy, unexpected weapon.

Judges 3:20-1 "And Ehud came to him (now he was sitting upstairs in his cool private chamber). Then Ehud said, 'I have a message from God for you.' So he arose from his seat. Then Ehud reached with his left hand, took the dagger from his right thigh, and thrust it into his belly."

Therein lies the reason why Paul did not employ the *pugio* in his list of armor. There is no need to be covert with the word of God, His power unto salvation.

The sword was the *gladius*. It had a blade about two feet long and two inches wide sharpened on both sides for cutting, though the primary use was stabbing. It was carried on the right side and drawn with the right hand. This was necessary because he held his shield in his left hand.

It is said to be the sword of the spirit. If we don't know what that means, Paul clarifies it as the word of God. It is the only offensive weapon we need.

Jesus is pictured in Revelation 1:16, "He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength."

1Peter 1:12 "To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven--things which angels desire to look into."

2Peter 1:21 "for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."

Jesus said that He came to bring a sword, Matthew 10:34. The word is a sword. It divides. Why? Because, God's word is truth, John 17:17.

Hebrews 4:12 "For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

Without the sword, we are merely wearing defensive armor. We must learn how to wield it. The truth is meant to be an offensive weapon as well as defensive.

Vv 18 to 20 – In addition, though not mentioned metaphorically as a part of the armor, Paul says all this must be accompanied by prayer always, in every time, Smelser. Pray to God, keep the communication with your leader open. He will provide strength not just for you but for others for whom you offer supplication. Pray in the Spirit, may be the Holy Spirit or the human spirit.

Caldwell, "Even though he has on the most protective gear possible, it will not safeguard him without the personal attention of the Lord."

Philippians 4:6.

Coffman says of v18, "As Hendriksen noted, the word "all" is used four times in this verse. **ALL** kinds of prayers and supplications are to be used: public prayers, private prayers, intercessory prayers, prayers of thanksgiving, every kind!

ALL seasons are the season of prayer: all times of the day, all conditions and circumstances, all occasions, all states of mind, etc.

ALL perseverance: through times of discouragement or defeat when it seems that all is lost, when victory has smiled or when it has failed.... let nothing hinder the prayer life.

ALL the saints are to be remembered in prayer.”

Be watchful to this end. What end? The end of **STANDING AGAINST THE WILES IN THE EVIL DAY?** The end of simply **PRAYING IN THE SPIRIT?** Or praying at **ALL** times, Smelser? Pray for all the saints with perseverance, progressing.

And pray for Paul for two reasons: 1) that God would give him utterance, the words to say, and 2) that he would proclaim boldly, as he ought to, the gospel for which he was in chains.

Vv 21 to 24 – Tychichus, the messenger of the letter, who is a beloved brother and faithful minister, servant, would let the readers, to whom he delivered the letter, what was going on with Paul and how he was doing. Paul had sent him for that purpose and that he might, by giving this update on their affairs, comfort their hearts.

Finally, Paul wishes peace to the brethren. He may have in mind the peace that is Christ, the peace that surpasses all understanding, and the absence of conflict. He also wishes love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ to them. In addition, grace be with all the Christians in the absence of hypocrisy.

Sources

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Misc others as noted