

## **The Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians**

The goal of this Bible Class is to give the students a working knowledge of the whole book of Ephesians. It is based on an expository approach to teaching the Bible, with an emphasis in preparing the students for the worship of our Savior. The various lessons are to be viewed by the teacher as thematic suggestions to help with preparation. While the lessons are not intended to be read to the class word for word, the main ideas should be the substance of what is taught.

The teacher, in preparation for the class, should consider reading through the whole curriculum before beginning the class, as well as the book of Ephesians several times. This will provide the instructor with a broad and comprehensive understanding of Ephesians as it is being taught. At the end of the course, the class will be concluded with a Bible Knowledge Evaluation. The instructor should be sure to review the material sufficiently that the students are able to correctly answer the questions on the evaluation at the end of the course.

It is important that the instructor be not only knowledgeable about the material, but also able to teach it with enthusiasm and conviction. Students best learn from teachers that are themselves excited about the scriptures. The use of maps, diagrams, white boards etc. is extremely helpful. Some of these have been provided in the curriculum. It is suggested that the class be conducted in an interactive manner. This can be accomplished by having them read short portions of the scripture texts, asking them questions, and wholeheartedly encouraging them to ask questions. All students should be encouraged to bring a Bible to class.

The inclusion of the Westminster Shorter Catechism as part of the curriculum is designed to help the students acquire a broad understanding of Christian doctrine along with the specific Bible teaching. The Elders of the church will coordinate the specific questions and answers to be used in the class.

It will become evident to the teacher that this course curriculum, while not dealing with every verse and concept in the book of Ephesians, is comprehensive and deeply theological. It is designed to help the students understand the book of Ephesians in its wider biblical context, with emphasis on its place in the redemptive history of God's covenant people. The students will be confronted with and asked to understand and remember fairly difficult concepts. It should be remembered that children are able to comprehend much more than we often give them credit for. While this class will be a challenge for both the teacher and the

students, the rewards for the efforts of those in the class will be surprising and exciting.

In preparation for these lessons, the following works were used with benefit:

Reformation Covenant Church Bible Class Curriculum for the book of Acts:  
<http://www.reformationcovenant.org/ss/default.asp?folder=Acts>

TNICNT, Bruce, F. F., Simpson, E.K., *The Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians*, (Grand Rapids, MI: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1957)

Calvin, John, *Calvin's Commentaries Volume XXI*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House Company, 1989)

Chapell, Bryan, *Ephesians*, (Reformed Expository Commentary, Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2009)

Ferguson, Sinclair B., *Let's Study Ephesians*, (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2005)

Leithart, Peter, Blog Articles:  
<http://www.leithart.com/category/bible-nt-ephesians/>

Smith, Ralph, Blog Articles: <http://berith.org/sermons/eph/index.html>

Wright, N.T., *Justification: Paul's Plan & Paul's Vision*

Wright, N.T., *Paul for Everyone: The Prison Letters*

# **The Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians**

## **Lesson 1 – Introduction to the Letter to the Ephesians**

**Objective – To help the students understand the biblical and historical context of Paul’s ministry to the Ephesian Christians and the Introduction to the letter.**

❖ **Greetings** – Pray with the students for the Lord’s blessing on their class this term

❖ **Attendance and Accountability**

Introduce yourself, and your substitute teacher

Make sure all class members know each other’s **names**.

**Requirements** – Writing utensils, Bibles, a good night’s sleep

**Tests** on the outline of the book and some other material at the end of the course

❖ **Westminster Shorter Catechism** – Briefly go over the question(s) and answer(s) for this quarter.

❖ **Memory verses for Ephesians: Ephesians 2:8-9 and 4:4-6**

2:8-9 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.

4:4-6 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

### **A. The Biblical and Historical Context of the Epistle to the Ephesians**

After Paul was converted and called by Jesus to be the Apostle to the Gentiles the book of Acts tells us that Paul went on three missionary journeys. On these journeys he preached in the synagogues to the Jews first and then proclaimed the gospel to the Gentiles as well. He planted churches wherever he went, and continued to keep in touch with the Christians in the various cities he ministered in by writing letters/epistles and sending his representatives to them. On the first missionary journey Paul went through Asia Minor and planted churches throughout the area of Galatia.

On his second missionary journey (Acts 15:36-18:22) he went to Corinth and while he was in Corinth he met a Jewish man named Aquila and his wife Priscilla, who were also tentmakers, like Paul (Acts 18:2). When he left Corinth he took Aquila and Priscilla with him and briefly went to Ephesus. He left them in Ephesus to continue the work there, while Paul went on to Jerusalem (Acts 18:18-21). In Paul's absence a man named Apollos arrived in Ephesus (Acts 18:24-28). Although we do not know how he came to be a Christian, he had been taught about the Christian faith. (The word used for "taught" is *catechized*, which is where we get our word *catechism*, "to be well taught"). He had only been instructed in the baptism of John (v. 25), which probably means that he had not been told about the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the teachings of the Apostles (see Acts 2:42). Aquila and Priscilla gave him a fuller understanding of the Christian faith. Apollos was a man that was a great teacher, and preached boldly about Jesus in the synagogue in Ephesus. V. 27 says Apollos went to Achaia, and ministered in Corinth, and was powerfully used by the Lord there.

While Apollos was ministering in Corinth, Paul returned to Ephesus (on his third missionary journey: Acts 19:1-21:14), as he had hoped to do (cf. 18:21). He met about 12 believers that had been taught by Apollos (v. 7). Paul discovered that they did not have a knowledge of the faith beyond the preaching of John the Baptist (as had been the case with Apollos before Aquila and Priscilla had further instructed him). Paul instructed them more fully in the faith, and they received the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Paul preached boldly to the Jews in the synagogue in Ephesus for three months. He taught them persuasively about the Kingdom of God, but some were hardened in their hearts and did not believe. They spoke evil about "the Way" and the Christian faith, and so Paul left teaching the Jews in the synagogue and began teaching the disciples in the school of Tyrannus. For two years he faithfully taught them the word, building up the church in Ephesus and the surrounding area (vv. 8-10). Christianity evidently spread to Colossae and the other cities of the Lycus valley (east of Ephesus) at the period of Paul's stay in Ephesus (cf. Col. 1:6-7; 2:1).

Ephesus was the largest and most important city of the Roman province in Asia (now the area we think of as Turkey). It had a vast population of over 350,000 people, and had a theater the size of a football stadium, seating as many as 50,000 people. Ephesus also maintained its religious importance under Roman rule. It became a center of the emperor cult, and eventually possessed three official temples, thus qualifying thrice over for the proud title 'temple-warden' of the emperors. Ephesus was most famous religiously for its devotion to the goddess Diana, also known as Artemis. Here stood the great Temple of Diana, so magnificent in size and architecture that it ranked as one of the ancient Seven

Wonders of the World. It was much larger than the Parthenon in Athens, within which stood a giant statue of Diana that was thought to have fallen from heaven from Zeus (Acts 19:35). It was a politically important city in the Roman empire, and it was a dark and evil city for its idolatry, magic and immorality (temple prostitution). By coming to Ephesus, Paul was going into the heart of Satan's kingdom and attacking it directly.

Acts 19:11-20 says that God worked many unusual miracles by the hands of Paul. Even pieces of cloth that Paul had touched were used to heal the sick and cast out demons.

During the ministry of Jesus the casting out of demons was an important part of the preparation and development of the kingdom of God. Because Satan was defeated at the cross, his head being crushed by the Christ (Gen. 3), it is part of the work of the gospel to clean out the household of God's kingdom. The rolling back of the demonic activity by casting out demons and diminishing the influence of idolatry are all part of what happens when the gospel comes in and begins to transform a culture. During the ministry of the Apostles this work continued as the kingdom grew throughout the world (Mk. 16:15-18). The Satanic influence is much diminished as the gospel has gone forth into the world. This work of making manifest Christ's victory over Satan continues today as the gospel is spread into the world, and societies are being impacted by the gospel. The Devil lies and seeks to establish a kingdom of deception and destruction of the truth and holiness of God in the world. But Christ is at the right hand of the Father and is progressively putting all his enemies, including the demonic forces, under his feet (ruling over them, Eph. 1:20-23; 1 Cor. 15:24-28; Rom. 16:20).

Acts 19:11-20 demonstrates how He is doing this. There was in Ephesus a group of traveling Jewish men that went around trying to cast out demons. Read vv. 13-14. The evil spirit that possessed one man recognized the authority and power of Jesus and Paul (probably in fear), but declared that the unbelieving Jews were no cause for fear for the evil spirit. The demon that possessed man jumped on the men and beat them up and they escaped, but were naked and wounded.

After people heard about this, many people feared the Lord and praised the name of Jesus. Having believed in Jesus, they turned away from the magic practices that the Ephesians were famous for. They took their books of magic and burned them, and confessed the secrets of their magic, showing that they were now followers of Jesus (apparently it was believed that the power of the magic was in the ability to keep the spells a secret). V. 20 says the word of the Lord grew mightily - and prevailed (the gospel won over, or was victorious over the demons, magic and the idols). As the word goes forth into society today, people will be won to Christ and

they will destroy and turn away from their former ways of thinking and living. They will destroy their former books, tapes, movies, magazines and ways of thinking and living, beginning to love and fear the Lord.

In Acts 19:23-41 Luke presents a story that illustrated that pagan society is basically one of violence, confusion and foolishness, which becomes evident to everyone when the gospel is preached. What happened is that, Demetrius, a wealthy and powerful silversmith who made idols for the shrines of the goddess Diana, called together other men of the same occupation to discuss the problems that the preaching of Paul had caused them as people became believers in Christ. The Christians rejected the goddess Diana because she is of course no god at all, being made with human hands. As these men talked about the problem (as they saw it), they began shouting, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." V. 29ff says that the whole city became filled with confusion and seized two of Paul's Christian traveling companions and rushed into the large theatre in Ephesus to have a city meeting. Paul heard about it and wanted to go and help his friends, but he was kept from doing so. V. 32 says that these people did not even know why they were there, and some said one thing and some another. It was like a riot, out of control and serving no good purpose. Eventually the leader of the city calmed the crowd down and convinced the people to leave (vv. 35-41). After the uproar had ceased Paul left Ephesus for Macedonia (20:1).

Paul, at the end of his third missionary journey, met with the Elders of the Ephesian church (Acts 20:17-38). Paul went on from Troas to Miletus, where he sent word to the elders of the church at Ephesus to meeting him there. Before he went on to Jerusalem, Paul wanted to encourage the elders of the important Ephesian church to shepherd and take care of the flock of God. He reminded them about his own ministry among them, and encouraged them to be faithful to continue the ministry. When Paul told them that they would never see them again (Paul must have been given prophetic messages, cf. 20:22-23), they were filled with love for him and sorrow, and wept and hugged and kissed him, and he departed to go to Jerusalem.

## **B. Introduction and Greetings – Ephesians 1:1-2**

The book of Ephesians was written by Paul while he was a prisoner (possibly while imprisoned in Caesarea for two years, Acts 24:27, or Rome, Acts 28:16f (the more likely option); see Eph. 3:1; 4:1; 6:20). He probably also wrote epistles to the Philippians, the Colossians and to Philemon at the same time. Tychicus (Acts 20:4; Eph. 6:20; Col. 4:7; 2 Tim. 4:12; Tit. 3:12), who served as a kind of apostolic delegate to these churches, was accompanying a runaway slave, Onesimus, who

had recently come to faith and was begin taken back to his master Philemon in Colossae. Tychicus seems to have been carrying the letter to the Ephesians with him at the same time, and perhaps also a letter Paul calls “the letter from Laodicea” (Col. 4:16). This letter was to be read to the Colossian church, and the letter to the Colossians was to be read by the Laodiceans. This letter was probably written in the 50’s AD.

The letter to the Ephesians begins with Paul’s characteristic introduction of himself as an Apostle. Like the letter to the Galatians, Paul said that he was an Apostle by the will of God – probably asserting that he was not made an Apostle by the appointment of men (Gal. 1:1). “It is worth remembering who and what Paul was. He was an amazingly influential Christian, but he was often persecuted in the world and demeaned and despised within the church. In his own eyes he was ‘the very least of all the saints’ (Eph. 3:8). Ancient literature provides us with only one physical description of Paul, in a work composed in the second century, *Acts of Paul and Thecla*: He was ‘a man of little stature, thin haired upon the head, crooked in the legs, of good state of body, with eyebrows joining and a nose somewhat hooked’ (Ferguson, p. 2). It was by the will of God that Paul was an Apostle of Jesus. When he preached, taught and planted churches Paul did it all as Christ’s representative.

The readers of this letter were addressed in several ways in v.1. They are described in two ways (Saints & faithful), and in two places (In Ephesus & In Christ Jesus).

Saints – “holy ones,” set apart as holy, sanctified. All Christians are saints

In Ephesus – The saints he wrote to lived in the city/region of Ephesus, just as we have places in the world that we live. We are to live for Christ as holy ones in the world.

Faithful – Their response the Father’s work through Christ Jesus is to live faithfully.

In Christ Jesus – We are saved by grace through faith in Christ Jesus, and we continue to live “in Christ.” We are united to Christ by His Spirit so that all that He achieved for us becomes ours. In Him, we have every spiritual (i.e. by the Spirit) blessing by the Father’s will.

This forms a thematic structure for the whole book: In the first half (1:3-3:21) Paul describes the work of God in setting apart the Ephesians as saints. In the second half of the book (4:1-6:20) he summons them to live faithfully as those who are set apart to God. The first part of the book contains statements in which the verbs are almost all descriptions of what God has done for us “in Christ Jesus.” Only once does Paul urge us to do anything, and that is to “remember” what we once were but

no longer are (2:11). The second part of the book is full of command verbs. Everything Paul commands us to do in the second half is dependent on everything he tell us God has already done. Our faithfulness is a response to God's grace.

The saints (all of us Christians) are seen as being in two places at once: They/we are "in Christ Jesus," and "in Ephesus"/world. In Ephesians 1-3 Paul described what it means to be "in Christ." In Ephesians 4-6 Paul described how to live faithfully in Christ while still living at Ephesus/the world.

## V. 2 Grace and Peace

Grace = God's unmerited love and favor – a summary of the first three chapters

Peace = Shalom, the wellbeing of our whole lives, health, wholeness – a summary of the last three chapters: Reconciliation in Christ creates a unity and peace in the church, the new community, new humanity in Christ that transforms the way we live and provides the strength to live in the spiritual battle of being in Christ in Ephesus/the world.

Interestingly, Paul's conclusion (6:23-24) reverses the order of the introduction. There he blesses them with peace and grace. Grace will lead to peace; and peace will always rest in grace.

The thematic outline we will use for the book of Ephesians contain all of these elements in 1:1-2.

### ❖ **Outline of the book of Ephesians:**

- A. Introduction: Grace and Peace (1:1-2)
- B. Saints By Grace in Christ (1:3-3:21)
- C. Faithful and Peaceful Living in Ephesus (4:1-6:20)
- D. Conclusion: Peace and Grace (6:21-24)

**Homework assignment:** Read the whole book of Ephesians. Come prepared to discuss what it means to be saints, saved by grace in Christ.

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### **A. The Biblical and Historical Context of the Epistle to the Ephesians**

Acts 18-19

### **B. Introduction and Greetings – Ephesians 1:1-2**

Prisoner in Rome (Acts 28:16f; see Eph. 3:1; 4:1; 6:20)

Tychicus and the surrounding churches (Acts 20:4; Eph. 6:20; Col. 4:7; 2 Tim. 4:12; Tit. 3:12)

Apostle

Saints – “holy ones”

In Ephesus

Faithful

In Christ Jesus

Grace and Peace

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# **The Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians**

## **Lesson 2: Praise and Prayer – 1:3-23**

**Objective – To learn what God (the Father, Son and Holy Spirit) planned from eternity past for us who are in Christ Jesus: to gather together in one all things in heaven and on earth in Christ and the Church – His Body.**

### **❖ Memory verses for Ephesians: Ephesians 2:8-9 and 4:4-6**

2:8-9 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.

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- C. Faithful and Peaceful Living in Ephesus (4:1-6:20)
- D. Conclusion: Peace and Grace (6:21-24)

### **❖ Review:**

- 1) On which missionary journey did Paul stay in Ephesus for more than 2 years?  
[3<sup>rd</sup> missionary journey – Acts 18-20; Paul began in the synagogue and then after opposition arose, withdrew the disciples and taught in the school of Tyrannus. He did miracles that caused great changes to happen in the city.]
- 2) Where was Paul when he wrote the Epistle to the Ephesians?  
[He was in prison, possibly while imprisoned in Caesarea for two years, Acts 24:27, or Rome, Acts 28:16f (the more likely option); see Eph. 3:1; 4:1; 6:20). He probably also wrote epistles to the Philippians, the Colossians and to Philemon at the same time.]
- 3) In 1:1-2 Paul described the Ephesians in two ways and says they are in two places. What are these?  
[The are: Saints/holy ones & faithful; and In Ephesus & In Christ Jesus.]
- 4) Review the memory verses and the outline of Ephesians.

The church in Ephesus (likely multiple churches in the city or region around Ephesus) was composed of both Jews and Gentiles (Paul began his ministry in the Jewish synagogue and then withdrew the disciples to teach them apart from the synagogue when they were opposed). The word of the Lord Jesus spread throughout the region and both Jews and Gentiles believed (Acts 19:8-10). When people came to faith in Christ it was not just a private matter, but had a dramatic impact on the culture in the time that Paul was there.

Paul wrote to the Ephesians (and the other letters written to the other city churches) to help them to form a distinctly Christian culture while living in the midst of a radically anti-Christian culture. The Ephesian Christians faced opposition from the Jews, as well as the pagans around them. Ephesus was a highly political city of the Roman world, and the message of Jesus being the Lord was not a welcome one to a people that held firmly to the Imperial cult (i.e. a belief in that Caesar was a god). When the gospel had an impact on the economic life of the city because fewer people were buying idols – a riot broke out. Ephesus was not only a dark and wicked city; it was a powerful city that was used powerfully by Satan in the Roman world. Thus, the Ephesians needed to understand how they were to live faithfully as saints/holy ones in Christ Jesus while living in the world. This is the same challenge we have as well. We too need to learn to live as a Christian counter-culture in the midst of an unbelieving world – Not as a way of being insulated from the world, but as a means of transforming the world around them. This transformation can only happen because of what God has done for us in Christ Jesus.

### **I. The Christian's Doxology (Praise to God) – 1:3-14**

Unlike most of Paul's letters, Ephesians does not begin with thanksgiving to God for the churches he was writing to (1 Cor. 1:4; Phil 1:3; Col. 1:3; 1 Thes. 1:2; 2 Thes. 1:3). Rather, he waits until 1:15 to express his thanksgiving for them because he begins with an elaborate series of praises to God. The sentence beginning in verse 3 continues to verse 14 and is over 200 words long. It is a doxology ("praise to God") that explains the grace of God in saving us from our sins. Paul not only teaches us here the most profound truths of Christian theology, but he also teaches us how we ought to study them--on our knees, giving praise to God.

By repeating three times the phrase "to the praise of" (1:6, 12, 14), Paul seems to be specifically calling attention to the Trinity (see the Father 1:3, the Son 1:5, the Holy Spirit 1:13). He speaks in verse six of "the praise of the glory of his grace," and in verses twelve and fourteen of "the praise of his glory." From verse three to verse six Paul is speaking primarily of the Father's plan for our salvation, from verses seven through twelve of the Son's work for our salvation, and from verse

thirteen to fourteen of the gift of the Spirit as the crown of our salvation. Blessed be the Triune God!

### **A. Blessed by God who has blessed us – 1:3-6**

This prolonged doxology (“praise to God”) begins by blessing God (meaning, to “speak well of” someone) and ends with “to the praise of His glory.” The reason we bless God is because he has blessed us. We speak well of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ because, in Christ (the living Word of God), He has spoken well of us.

V. 3 says that we are blessed “with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.” Spiritual blessings are not non-material, non-physical blessings – they are blessings that come to us by the Holy Spirit. The word “spiritual” means “by the Spirit.” While we are on earth (Ephesus/world), we are given blessings by the Spirit. But while we are on earth we receive blessings that have their source in heaven. Five times in this letter Paul refers to “the heavenly places” (1:3; 1:20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12). Christ, having accomplished all that the Father planned for our salvation, now sits in the heavenly places and rules all things for our sakes. We sit with him there by the Spirit, enabling us to have wisdom and power over the powerful forces in this world. Being blessed in the heavenly places means that we can live as Christ’s body, representing Him in the world. We have all the blessings that the Spirit can give us in Christ to live for Him in this world – we lack nothing, in Christ.

Christ Himself is the source of all of our blessings: It is “in Christ” that the Father blesses us. Without being in Christ we have nothing from the Father. What follows is how God has blessed us in Christ.

V. 4 tells us that God the Father chose us in Jesus Christ before the foundation of the world. V. 5 says that we were predestined (meaning to determine beforehand) before creation. These are very hard words (chose & predestined) for people to both understand and accept, but Paul makes it clear that we have blessings from God only because he chose and predestined us. But why did he choose us? Because He loved us from eternity past. There is nothing in us that made Him choose us, rather, v. 4 says that we are predestined because He determined beforehand to set His love upon us. The reason for His love is in Himself – not us. He is free to love whom He will; and he wills to love those whom He has chosen. Before we believed, God loved us. Before we chose Him, He chose us. It is all by grace that we are made holy and sons of God.

We see in these verses what purpose He had in choosing us and setting His love upon us: v. 4 so that we should be holy and without blame before Him, v. 5 so that

we can be adopted as sons, and v. 6 so that by our acceptance in the Beloved (i.e. Jesus Christ) we would be the cause for the praise of the glory of His grace.

Jesus is the means by which all of God's plans are realized: The Father's plan is for us to be saints (holy ones) that are faithful sons of God, just as Jesus is the faithful Son of God. What Jesus has accomplished is ours if we are "in Christ." What is true of Him becomes true of us. And it is all by God's choosing and His grace (v.6) that we are brought into the loving fellowship of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. This is a very great comfort to us, and a motivation to praise and worship.

### **B. The mystery of His will made known to us – 1:7-12**

The list of blessings continues in vv. 7-12. In Christ Jesus we have redemption through His blood. The word redemption presupposes the condition of slavery and refers to the ransom that must be paid to free the slave. When Adam rebelled against God, he made himself and the entire race the slaves of Satan. The promise of salvation, therefore, was first given in the form of judgment on the devil (Gen. 3:15). Man's voluntary slavery to sin and Satan means that one of the fundamental aspects of salvation is deliverance from slavery. The entire book of Exodus gives us an historical picture of redemption. The Law of Moses includes numerous laws relating to slavery and redemption whose ultimate purpose was clearly to teach the nature of salvation, not merely to give social guidance. The basic elements of the exodus theme reflect the situation of the children of Adam in general. Just as man by his sin has become a slave to Satan, so the people of God because of their sins, or, sometimes just because they are sinners, are made the slaves of Satanic rulers. Just as man cries out to God for salvation from sin and God delivers him from the devil, so also the people of God cry out to God for redemption from slavery to the Satanic ruler and He frees them from bondage. When God redeems us from Satan, He sets us free from sin so that we can serve Him. This is what He did for Israel when He redeemed her from Egypt.

Delivery from slavery costs money. Jesus' death on the cross was the ransom that had to be paid to deliver us from slavery to sin and Satan. To be redeemed from Satan means to be redeemed from sin. This is first of all redemption from the judicial guilt of sin, as Paul says in Ephesians 1:7 when he seems to equate redemption with the forgiveness of our transgressions. Unless Christ took the penalty of our sins for us, we could not escape making the payment ourselves. Salvation does not mean a relaxing of God's justice.

Redemption also means deliverance from the power of sin. This is not particularly in view in Paul's passage in Ephesians 1:7, but it does receive emphasis in Ephesians 2 and in the Biblical message of redemption in general. God has not

taken us out of Egypt in order to kill us in the wilderness. We are redeemed from the power of sin so that we may bear the fruit of righteousness for His kingdom.

V. 7 says that out of the riches of God's grace we are redeemed from slavery and given forgiveness of sins. God's grace abounds to us in all of His wisdom (v.8). Vv. 9-12 tells us that God has revealed to us the mystery of His will: that in the fullness of time (stretching back from God's choosing of us, to creation, through history until Christ) He intended to gather together in one all things in Christ in heaven and on earth. V. 11 says that we have received an inheritance because of the predestination of God. He chose us to be holy sons not just that we could be saved; It is part of His larger project/plan of bringing all things under the rulership of Christ. The events of history and even of our individual lives are never outside of His will and purpose. He is working out all things according to His good pleasure. One of the most important things He is bringing together is all of humanity into one body – the body of Christ. He will explain this more in later in the book, but he is saying that both Jew and Gentile are now brought together into one. The mystery of God's will is that all the distinctions between men will be dissolved and humanity will be brought together into one body.

### **C. Our inheritance guaranteed – 1:13-14**

One of the blessings that we have received by grace is the promise that we, as sons, will inherit the blessings of God. To be a son means to be an heir. God predestined us unto adoption before the foundation of the world so that we could be co-heirs with Christ (Eph. 1:5). Christ Himself is the seed of Abraham to whom the promises were made (Gal. 3:16) and in whom all of God's promises are fulfilled (2 Cor. 1:20). Those who are in Christ share with Him the inheritance (Gal. 3:27-29; 4:7). As the children of God, Christians inherit the world and, far more importantly, God Himself: "The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together" (Rom. 8:16-17). Our salvation is spoken of as "inheriting" God to teach us to hope unto the end. This would be important to the Ephesians because their faith in Christ was probably very costly to them (politically, economically, and relationally).

Paul describes the Spirit as a "pledge" (Greek, arrabon) of our inheritance. The Greek word refers to a down payment that is both part of the principal and a pledge of future payment. Through the Spirit, we have already received the adoption as sons that we will receive more fully in the future. We are already holy, "saints" (1:1), already enlightened in the knowledge of God. Through the Spirit, we already

know the power of Jesus' resurrection (1:19). All that we will have has begun to be realized in our lives now by the Spirit.

In all of these things we see why Paul begins his letter with doxology. The most important thing we can do in life is to worship and praise God for His grace in our lives; because all that God has done for us is to the praise of His glory.

## **II. Paul's Prayer for the Church – 1:15-23**

In vv. 15-23 we see that Paul finally gives thanks to God for the Ephesians and praying for them. When we are loved by God and give Him praise for His love for us, we will love one another and pray for one another.

### **A. Reasons to pray 1:15-18**

He prays not only words of thanksgiving to God for them (without ceasing) – but also prays for them because he knows their needs are great. He prays that they understand more and more who God is and what He has done for them, and us. He prays that we should be given wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of God the Father (Phil 1:9; Col. 1:9-10; Philemon 6). He wants them to know God as their Father, just as He is the Father of our Lord Jesus. He also prayed that we 1) know the hope of our calling, 2) the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints, and the 3) greatness of His power toward us. Before the Ephesians Gentiles believed, they had no hope (cf. 2:12) because they were strangers to the covenant promises of God. In Christ, we have hope for the future because they are assured by the Spirit that they are called to be sons of God in Christ. We also have inherited the riches of God in Christ, but, interestingly, v. 18 implies that we are God's rich inheritance. We are His treasured inheritance, and He is our inheritance.

### **B. The Power-Full Church: The Body of Christ 1:19-23**

Finally, in vv. 19-23 we see that Paul prayed that we would have wisdom and insight into the exceedingly great power of God toward us who believe. The Ephesian Christians, like us, likely felt very powerless in the face of so much opposition to the gospel. Politically, economically and socially they were outside of the power base of society. Paul wants them, and us, to know that, in Christ, great power is available to us. We have power that the unbelieving world around us knows nothing of. Paul goes into detail about the power that has come to expression in 1) the resurrection of Christ, 2) the exaltation of Christ, and 3) the victory of Christ over the powers throughout the universe (vv. 20-21). The resurrection was not just a historical fact. It was an act of transformation in which we now share (2:5) by the Spirit. Although we have not been resurrected/transformed bodily, the power of the resurrection is operative in us. Somehow also we are also exalted and sit together with Christ in the heavenly

places (2:6), which means that because He rules all things – we have the power and authority to rule as well. All things are being placed under his feet because He seated in the heavenly place and rules over all earthly and heavenly powers. Since we are His body on earth representing Him – We are used by Him to subdue the powers that would overcome the Church. In fact, v. 22 says that He is ruling so that all things are placed under Him for the sake of the Church. We are His body – We are His visible representation – We represent His fullness in the world. This, as we saw in verse 10, He is gathering all things together in one.

We have no reason to fear either for ourselves or for the Church. If it is true that Christ is on the throne ruling all things, nothing can happen except by His express permission and will – Thus, the all powerful Jesus is making all things happen for the glory of the Father and for our sakes. We are not powerless in the world – We are power-full in the world because we are united to Christ, the ruler, who is above all other powers.

**Homework assignment:** Read the whole book of Ephesians. Come prepared to discuss the ways we have been united to Christ, and how He is uniting the human race into a new household of God.

## **The Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians**

## Lesson 2: Praise and Prayer – 1:3-23

**Objective – To learn what God (the Father, Son and Holy Spirit) planned from eternity past for us who are in Christ Jesus: to gather together in one all things in heaven and on earth in Christ and the Church – His Body.**

❖ **Memory verses for Ephesians: Ephesians 2:8-9 and 4:4-6**

2:8-9 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.

4:4-6 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

❖ **Outline of the book of Ephesians:**

- A. Introduction: Grace and Peace (1:1-2)
- B. Saints By Grace in Christ (1:3-3:21)
- C. Faithful and Peaceful Living in Ephesus (4:1-6:20)
- D. Conclusion: Peace and Grace (6:21-24)

❖ **Review:**

- 1) On which missionary journey did Paul stay in Ephesus for more than 2 years?
- 2) Where was Paul when he wrote the Epistle to the Ephesians?
- 3) In 1:1-2 Paul described the Ephesians in two ways and says they are in two places. What are these?
- 4) Review the memory verses and the outline of Ephesians.

### **I. The Christian's Doxology (Praise to God) – 1:3-14**

#### **A. Blessed by God who has blessed us – 1:3-6**

"to the praise of" (1:6, 12, 14)

“the heavenly places” (1:3; 1:20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12)

Chosen and predestined in love – to be holy sons

Redemption from slavery and forgiven by grace

The mystery of His will: to gather together in one all things in Christ

**B. The mystery of His will made known to us – 1:7-12**

**C. Our inheritance guaranteed – 1:13-14**

**II. Paul's Prayer for the Church – 1:15-23**

A. Reasons to pray 1:15-18

B. The Power-Full Church: The Body of Christ 1:19-23

**Homework assignment:** Read the whole book of Ephesians. Come prepared to discuss the ways we have been united to Christ, and how He is uniting the human race into a new household of God.

# **The Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians**

## **Lesson 3: The New Humanity In Christ – Ch. 2-3**

**Objective – To understand that the gospel is about God’s formation of a new humanity. This is true in two senses: First, in Jesus, the Last Adam, believers are made new Adams and Eves; and, second, in Jesus the divided human race is united into a new family, the temple of God.**

### **❖ Memory verses for Ephesians: Ephesians 2:8-9 and 4:4-6**

2:8-9 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.

4:4-6 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

### **❖ Outline of the book of Ephesians:**

- A. Introduction: Grace and Peace (1:1-2)
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- C. Faithful and Peaceful Living in Ephesus (4:1-6:20)
- D. Conclusion: Peace and Grace (6:21-24)

### **❖ Review:**

- 1) Chapter 1 begins with praise to God. In what sense is our salvation a reflection of the Trinity? [v. 3 – Father; v. 3 – His Son Jesus, v. 5 We are sons; v. 13-Holy Spirit]
- 2) What are some of the words used to describe God’s initiative in saving us? [v. 3 blessed us; v. 4 chose; v. 5 predestined & His will; v. 7 grace; v. 8 made to abound; v. 9 made known; v. 13 sealed]
- 3) What are some of the words used to describe the purposes of God in saving us? [v. 3 blessed in heavenly places; v. 4 holy & without blame; v. 5 adoption as sons; v. 6 to praise His grace & acceptance; v. 7 redemption & forgiveness & grace; v. 9 make known the mystery of His will; v. 10 gather all things together; v. 12 & 13 praise of His glory]
- 4) How has God shown His mighty power toward us (vv.18-23)? [Raised Christ from the dead, seated Him as the right hand; above powers, ruling for His body the Church.]

## I. New Creation – New Life In Christ 2:1-10

The chapter break between Ephesians 1 and 2 obscures the point Paul was making. His statement begins in 1:18-19, where he mentions in his prayer that the Ephesians would grasp the “surpassing greatness of His power to us who believe” (v. 19a). This was very important for the Ephesian believers because they were likely feeling powerless, even fearful, in their world. From what we have already seen, Ephesus was an important city of Roman imperial power, filled with demons (Acts 19:11-20), pagan idolatry, that when challenged by the gospel caused a violent reaction (Acts 19:23-41), and were opposed and persecuted by the Jews. Paul said to them, and us, that the mighty working of God’s power, that raised Jesus from the dead and seated Him above all principalities and powers, is the same power that enable us to overcome the Satan powers that threaten believers. This work of making manifest Christ’s victory over Satan continues today as the gospel is spread into the world, and societies are being impacted by the gospel. The Devil lies and seeks to establish a kingdom of deception and destruction of the truth and holiness of God in the world. But Christ is at the right hand of the Father and is progressively putting all his enemies, including the demonic forces, under his feet – for us (ruling over them, Eph. 1:20-23; 1 Cor. 15:24-28; Rom. 16:20).

When Paul describes the exaltation of Jesus (1:19-23), he reaches back to the language of Genesis 1. Adam was called to “fill” the earth, and to “have dominion” over the rest of creation (Genesis 1:28). All of creation was to be subject to Adam under God. But by his fall, the whole human race was plunged into rebellion and subject to the dominion of Satan. In Ephesians 1:4 Paul begins with saying that we have been chosen by God before creation. This choosing is necessary because of the sin of Adam in the Garden of Eden. By God’s grace, in Christ, we are made holy and blameless, adopted as His sons and daughters, given redemption from slavery to sin and Satan, received forgiveness of our sins, and became inheritors of the riches of God.

Jesus has now been given the dominion mandate, being exalted above all ruler and dominion (1:21), subjecting all things under his feet (1:22; cf. Psalm 8:3-8), and filling all things (1:23). By His resurrection and exaltation, Jesus has become the Last Adam for our sakes. Being in Christ, united to Him, we too will have dominion over Satan and all of the principalities and powers of the world.

In chapter 2 Paul then says the Ephesians “were dead in trespasses and sins” (2:1). Obviously, Paul is using the word “death” with a meaning different from what is usual. What did he mean when he said that the Ephesians were dead? And what did

he mean in vv. 1, 5 that God “made us alive?” To answer this question, it is necessary to consider the Bible's teaching about both life and death.

After God created Adam and Eve, He pronounced everything good (Gen. 2:18; 1:31). At the end of the sixth day of creation man enjoys life in the full sense of the word. His experience of life was immature, but it was perfect. Adam had a right relationship with God, a right relationship with Eve, and a right relationship with the created world around him. But Adam sinned. And all of this was lost.

God warned Adam, "in the day that you eat of it you will surely die" (Gen. 2:17). Adam died in several different ways. **First**, he began to die physically the day that he sinned. **Second**, he died through a substitute. Actual physical death was postponed by the grace of God. God furnished a substitute for Adam and Eve so that they could live long enough to bear children and labor for His kingdom. The animals that were killed for Adam's and Eve's clothing provided a constant reminder of God's grace and the just penalty for their sins. The ceremonial death of the animals saved Adam and Eve from full physical death. **Third**, Adam died also in the sense that his relationship with Eve and the rest of humanity was ruined by sin. **Fourth**, man's relationship with the creation too was ruined. Man, who should have enjoyed and faithfully ruled the creation for God, must now struggle with it to live. All of this is to say that life and death are covenantal realities. Death is a covenantal curse. Marching in submission to the Devil, final death is the end toward which all the “living dead” move toward. But in Christ (the last and greater Adam), God gives this chosen ones life that was lost by the first Adam: New Creation life.

Those who are not in Christ are those who walk/live according to the course/patterns established by the world and Satan (“the prince of the power of the air”). All unbelievers are dead to God and are under the curse of death. They live in Satanic inspired rebellion to God in their trespasses and sins (vv. 2-3). Both Gentiles (referred to by Paul as “you” in 2:1-2) and Jews (referred to by Paul in v. 3 as “we”) are children of wrath (under the anger and judgment of God).

But because of all that Paul had said in chapter 1 (chose us to be holy and without blame before Him in His love, predestined to be adopted sons, redeemed by the blood of Jesus, our inheritance sealed by the Holy Spirit), 2:4-10 tells us that God the Father has made us alive. He was motivated to do all of this (1:3-23) because of the great love that He had for us, not in anything in us. By His grace (i.e. His undeserved favor) He made us alive together with Christ. (2:5-6) What is true of Christ becomes true of us. Just as Jesus was dead because of trespasses and sins, we were dead and under God’s wrath. Just as Jesus was raised from the dead, so too we are made alive from the dead. Just as Jesus was raised up and sits as the

right hand of the Father, we too are somehow raised and sit in the heavenly places with Him. Far from being under the principalities and powers of the world – we now sit with Christ and rule with Him in the world. That means that in the Last Adam, Jesus, we are all remade as Adams and Eves, empowered by His resurrection to have dominion over sin and to complete the task given to Adam at creation. By faith we know that we are part of the new creation in Christ, and are seeing the powers of the world overthrown by the power of Christ.

All of this is by God’s grace to us. We have been saved by grace through faith alone, apart from anything from ourselves. All that God has done for us is a gift to us – and nothing that we could have gained by our works apart from Him. Even our faith is a gift of God (v. 8). We have nothing to boast about.

Review the Memory Verses: 2:8-9

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”

He are His workmanship – His art project – and we have been re-created so that we can do good works; good works that He has prepared for us to do before the foundation of the world. The good works that we do in faith are contrasted with the works that we done as sons of disobedience (2:2). No longer under the workings of Satan (2:2); no longer walking rebelliously to fulfill the lusts of our flesh and mind; no longer walking as those who are under God’s wrath – we walk as those who do the good work of those who are saved by God’s loving grace. We will have dominion under Christ, the last Adam, because we have been made alive by grace and do the good works God has prepared for us as the means of subduing the world.

## **II. New Humanity – New Temple 2:11-22**

Read 2:11-13. The other point that Paul emphasizes in chapter 2 is that in Jesus the human race has been reunited in Christ. To understand what Paul is saying in 2:11-22, we need to go back to the beginning of the Bible. God made of one blood all nations of the earth. Yet in the ancient world, men were divided: Greeks despised barbarians and slaves; Romans considered non-Romans to be inferior; men such as Aristotle considered women to be defective and inferior males, and Aristotle believed that some people were naturally slaves.

But the division of the human race was not merely a result of human bigotry and sin. God Himself divided the race. He scattered the nations at Babel, confusing their languages so that they could not cooperate in their rebellion against Him (Genesis 11). Soon after Babel, he chose one nation among those scattered nations and lived among them (Genesis 12). He gave them the Torah, the Law of Moses, which distinguished them from the other nations. The Law itself brought division.

As soon as Yahweh commanded Abraham to cut his body and the bodies of his sons with circumcision, the body of the human race was also cut in two. On the one side is the “circumcision”; on the other side is the “uncircumcision.” Throughout the Old Testament, the body of the human race was a corpse lying out on the earth, divided between Israel and the nations, Jew and Gentile. The human race was dead, waiting for a resurrection.

The issue of circumcision is repeatedly dealt with in the New Testament. Circumcision was the sign of the Abrahamic covenant, the sign of the priesthood of Israel. The sign of circumcision divided Israel as a nation of priests from Gentile laymen. It was not intended to distinguish the saved from the unsaved. Indeed, the children of Abraham were chosen as priests for the specific purpose of the salvation of the world (Gen. 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 27:29; 28:14; Acts 3:25; Gal. 3:8). Although many Gentiles did convert to the true God through the witness of Israel, the fact remains that the majority of the Gentiles in the world through most of their history were unbelievers. By the time of Christ the Jewish leaders had forgotten the true meaning of circumcision. Rather than regarding themselves as having a special responsibility to evangelize the Gentiles, they saw themselves as the race chosen to salvation and the Gentiles as condemned. This was a perversion of their historical mission and the covenantal sign.

The message of Paul in 2:11-13 is that the division between Jew and Gentile has been removed in Christ. “Without Christ (Messiah)” (v.12) was the condition of Gentiles in so far as they were not part of the Messianic nation, Israel. The expressions "excluded from the commonwealth of Israel" and "strangers to the covenants of promise" refer to the Gentiles not belonging to the priestly nation. The Gentiles were removed from God. The meaning of these phrases is physically demonstrated in the laws of exclusion alluded to in v. 14. The Gentiles were not allowed to permanently own land in Israel, except for a house in a city. They were not allowed to participate in certain of the ceremonies. They were excluded from the temple. They were, in other words, condemned to know God only at a distance. Gentiles were those who had “no hope and without God in the world.” But now in Christ Jesus, Gentiles are brought near to God and His covenant people by His blood. The book of Ephesians begins and end with the peace and grace of God; here in 2:14-17 (and 4:3) we see that the goal of grace is to bring peace and hope to all men so that there is one new man in Christ Jesus.

## **ISRAEL’S FAILURE**

Read 2:14-22. God had selected one nation out of all the nations of the earth to be His special possession, His holy nation. Israel was supposed to be the people that would reverse the sin of Adam by worshiping God and Him alone; they were

supposed to reverse the sin of Cain by living with their brothers in harmony; they were supposed to remain unstained by the world, and not intermarry with idolatrous Gentiles. By living this way, they were supposed to be the model of how all men and women everywhere were supposed to live.

What the Jews themselves often forgot was that the laws that allowed them to be close to God taught them more than anything else about their distance from God. No Israelite could come close to the holy things, only the tribe of Levi had access. Not just any Levite could enter the temple, only the family of Aaron. Among them, only the high priest could enter the most holy place, and that only once a year for a very short time. The entire temple system taught the Jews that they were far from God, condemned because of sin and defiled.

The law established a wall between Jew and Gentile because of the priestly distinctions between them (Eph. 2:14-15), but even greater than the wall between Jew and Gentile was the wall between God and man. Christ bore the curse of our sin in order to break down all barriers between man and God so that we could approach God through Him. That means that He also broke down all barriers between Jew and Gentile, for they are both reconciled to God through the cross (Eph. 2:16).

But Israel failed. Israel indulged in idol worship almost from the beginning. Instead of living as a single people, Israel quickly divided into Northern and Southern kingdoms. They adopted pagan customs and ways of life. Instead of being a model of how to live faithfully before God, they became a mirror image of the Gentile world. By the time Jesus came, the Jews had made things even worse. Instead of realizing that the human race could not stay divided into two forever, and instead of being humbled by their history of idolatry and apostasy, many Jews had become proud. They believed that Jews could be alive all on their own. They thought God favored them and them alone, and that they didn't need the Gentiles to keep on living.

Paul's gospel is about salvation from sin, but because sin and its judgment divided the human race, Paul's gospel is also the good news that the human race has been restored to unity in Jesus. Paul says that the whole human race would gain access to the Father through the Spirit (2:19), and both Jews and Gentiles would be united as a temple of God, God's dwelling on earth through the Spirit (v. 22). The human race is reunited so that the one human race can draw near to the one God in His one dwelling, the church, and praise Him with one voice. As we strive to form a Christian culture here, we must labor so that the unity of all races, classes, and nations in the one new man is manifested.

### III. Mystery Revealed 3:1-21

At the beginning of chapter 3, Paul begins to apply what he has just taught the Ephesians about the unity of the human race, Jew and Gentile, in the one new man, Jesus (this is the same mystery he referred to in 1:9). But he interrupts himself in mid-sentence, and doesn't resume the application until the beginning of chapter 4. This is evident from the repetition in 3:1 and 4:1: "I . . . the prisoner of the Lord." Paul's exhortations at the beginning of chapter 4 are based on the description of the church in chapter 2. The "calling with which you have been called" (4:1) is the call to unity as the temple of God (2:11-22).

The "digression" in chapter 3 is concerned with the "mystery" of God, and Paul's role in revealing the mystery. In Paul's terminology, a "mystery" is a reality that is kept hidden for a time, but eventually revealed (3:5). And in this case, the mystery has to do with the role of Gentiles in the New Covenant, as Paul explains in 3:6.

What makes this a "mystery"? Weren't Gentiles saved in the Old Testament? Didn't Isaiah and others prophesy of the salvation of the nations? In what sense was this "hidden"? It's true that the Old Testament always pointed to an eventual conversion of Gentiles, and the gathering of the nations to the Messiah is no surprise. What was surprising is the *way* that this happened. The Old Testament prophecies of the nations turning to Yahweh picture them coming to Zion (e.g., Isaiah 2:2-4). The prophecies suggest to the nation of Israel that she will remain central to God's plans even after the Messiah comes. But Paul's message is new: Gentiles are "fellow citizens with the saints" (Ephesians 2:19) and in Messiah Jesus there is neither Jew nor Greek (Galatians 3:28). The mystery now revealed is that "the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 3:6).

Paul sees himself as a steward and agent of this mystery. God revealed the mystery to him (3:3), whether on the Damascus Road or later. Since that revelation, he has been at work as God's herald to the Gentiles, telling the Gentiles about God's "unfathomable riches" and letting everyone know about the new economy that has come in Christ.

**Homework assignment:** Read the whole book of Ephesians. Notice that Paul, based on what he taught in chapters 1-3 about the what it means to be saints in Christ, in chapters 4-6 he teaches how to live for Christ in this world.

## The Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians

### **Lesson 3: The New Humanity In Christ – Ch. 2-3**

❖ **Objective – To understand that the gospel is about God’s formation of a new humanity. This is true in two senses: First, in Jesus, the Last Adam, believers are made new Adams and Eves; and, second, in Jesus the divided human race is united into a new family, the temple of God.**

❖ **Memory verses for Ephesians: Ephesians 2:8-9 and 4:4-6**

2:8-9 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.

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- D. Conclusion: Peace and Grace (6:21-24)

❖ **Review:**

- 1) Chapter 1 begins with praise to God. In what sense is our salvation a reflection of the Trinity?
- 2) What are some of the words used to describe God’s initiative in saving us?
- 3) What are some of the words used to describe the purposes of God in saving us?
- 4) How has God shown His mighty power toward us (vv.19-23)?

**I. New Creation – New Life In Christ 2:1-10**

**II. New Humanity – New Temple 2:11-22**

**III. Mystery Revealed 3:1-21**

**Homework assignment:** Read the whole book of Ephesians. Notice that Paul, based on what he taught in chapters 1-3 about the what it means to be saints in Christ, in chapters 4-6 he teaches how to live for Christ in this world.

## The Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians

### **Lesson 4: Faithful and Peaceful Living In Unity – Ch. 4:1-5:21**

❖ **Objective – To understand that in the final sections Paul teaches us how God in Christ transforms all of our relationships with people as He gathers all things into one. When the body of Christ functions as it should it is able to live faithfully in the world.**

❖ **Memory verses for Ephesians: Ephesians 2:8-9 and 4:4-6**

2:8-9 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.

4:4-6 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

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- D. Conclusion: Peace and Grace (6:21-24)

❖ **Review:**

The book of Ephesians is divided into two main parts. The first half describes how and why God made us holy (saints) in Christ by His grace through faith. In the Paul's gospel the mystery that God has now revealed is that "the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body [of Christ], and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 3:6). Paul was concerned that the Ephesians and us know the exceeding riches of His mercy toward us in Christ Jesus. There is only one command in the first half of the book, and that is to "remember" (2:11). It is essential that we know (1:17-18) and understand who the Trinitarian God (1:3, 13) is and what He has done for us in Christ (1:4, 5, 7, 10, 12, 13). We have been chosen by God from eternity past, and He has set His love upon us, and saved us by grace through faith. Even our faith is His gift to us. All who believe in Christ Jesus are saved and made into one body – both Jews and Gentiles together manifest Christ to the world. This is our calling: Having been gathered into one (1:10, 22; 2:14-18; 3:6, 4:4-6), we are to live in accordance with the new humanity God is creating in Christ.

Paul's gospel is about salvation from sin, but because sin and its judgment divided the human race, Paul's gospel is also the good news that the human race has been restored to unity in Jesus. Gentiles were once separated and far off from God

(2:12), but now have been brought near (2:13). Through the death of Jesus, the wall of Torah that separated Jews and Gentiles has been torn down, reconciling the two in peace (2:15-16). The purpose of this, Paul says, is that the whole human race would gain access to the Father through the Spirit (2:19), and both Jews and Gentiles would be united as a temple of God, God's dwelling on earth through the Spirit (v. 22). The human race is reunited so that the one human race can draw near to the one God in His one dwelling, the church, and praise Him with one voice.

This is the great mystery that God called Paul to reveal (Eph. 3). Paul sees himself as a steward and agent of this mystery. God revealed the mystery to him (3:3), whether on the Damascus Road or later. Since that revelation, he has been at work as God's herald to the Gentiles, telling the Gentiles about God's "unfathomable riches" and letting everyone know about the new economy that has come in Christ.

#### **A. Walking Worthy of our Calling 4:1-32**

For Paul, the revelation of the mystery has direct practical implications for how the church should live. The second half of the book is filled with imperatives (commands) for us to follow in order to live faithfully in this world. In 3:1 Paul said that he was a prisoner "of Jesus Christ" (note: he did *not* say, "for" Jesus Christ) for the Gentiles. His calling was to serve Christ for the preaching of the gospel so that all who believe would be brought into the Church. Now in 4:1 Paul, "the prisoner of the Lord," exhorts us too to walk in a manner worthy of our calling: to live as those who have been made one in Christ by grace through faith.

To do this, we have to cultivate humility (v. 2), because proud people are divisive. Harsh people also break the bond of unity, and so we must cultivate gentleness toward one another. Christians can be as exasperating as anyone, and so we have to be patient and forbearing in order to preserve the unity of the Spirit (v. 3). In context, Paul exhorts us to cultivate these virtues as a way of fulfilling our calling as the unified people of God. Notice: This is a unity that we already have – it is something to be kept (v. 3).

We are the one people united in the one new man, and Paul refers to seven aspects of that unity (body, Spirit, hope, Lord, faith, baptism, Father, vv. 4-6). That means for Paul that we must live together in peace, unity, and love.

Memory Verses 4:4-6:

There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

Paul served the God and Father of Jesus, who has sent His Spirit to dwell in us. That is, he is an apostle of the Triune God. That means that Paul does not think of unity as simple unity. Unity does not mean uniformity. Instead, the unity of the church is a unity-in-diversity. This is a reflection of God Himself who is one God in three persons. The diversity of the church does not dissolve the unity; on the contrary, the diverse members of the church work to “attain to the unity of the faith” (4:13). Unity is thus both a reality now, and also something we are aspiring to.

What kind of diversity is Paul talking about? V. 7 tells us that God has given diverse gifts of grace to each one of us. Paul, in v. 8, quoted Psalm 68:18, where God is described as conquering His enemies and giving gifts to His people. Peter Leithart notes that “NT Wright points out that the ascent and descent language in Ephesians 4:7-10 is reminiscent of Moses ascending Mount Sinai and then descending with the tablets of the Ten Commandments. Jesus ascends to heaven, and when He returns He does not bring the law of commandments on tablets of stone, but comes in/as the Spirit who writes on tablets of human hearts. We can put it another way too: Moses went up on the mountain, and came back with a law that was to guide the people of Israel in the way of life. That law ultimately cursed Israel. Israel was not the Adamic race that God called it to be. Torah did not produce a human race that lived before God as God wanted human beings to live. But what the law could not do, God does: What ensures that the church will be the unified new race that God intended? Because the Greater Moses comes with the Spirit, and more concretely with Spirit-filled people. When the Greater Moses Jesus ascends, He comes back with people, not a set of laws. The blessing of the New Covenant is that we have a government of men not laws.”

Here (Eph. 4:7-14), he speaks specifically about diverse ministers or rulers of the church, particularly those who teach in the church (4:11). Elsewhere, Paul expands the list of gifts to the church by including gifts of service, help, mercy, giving, administration, healing, etc (Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, 27-31). 1 Corinthians 12:7 emphasizes that “each one” in the church receives some manifestation of the Spirit to be used for the benefit of all the members. Each organ and limb of the body is necessary if the body is going to be healthy and strong.

Though Paul does not name all these gifts in Ephesians 4, his point is the same: Prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers are given to equip the members of the church for ministry, and their ministry builds up the body of Christ (v. 12). Pastors and teachers are not the only church members who have a ministry. Each member of the church has gifts from the Spirit, and pastors and teachers are given to the

church to equip those members to use their gifts in service to the church and to God. There are no passive members of the church, no one here simply to receive. You are all here both to receive and to give. Look for opportunities to use the gifts God has given you for the edification of the whole church.

When the church works as it should, the result is maturity (v. 13). Mature Christians are not seduced by every new spiritual fad that comes along (v. 14). Mature Christians speak the truth to one another, and speak the truth in love (v. 15). As a result, the church grows, builds itself in love, and becomes what it in fact is – the new human race, unified in Jesus (v. 16).

In this way, we are transformed from our former way of life before we were Christians; or as we would have lived if we had not grown up in the Church. We must walk, not as the unsaved of this world does with: a futile mind, darkened understanding, alienated from the life of God, with hard hearts of ignorance – given themselves over to lawless, uncleanness and greediness (4:17-19). Because we have learned Christ, having heard Him and been taught by Him (by the Spirit) – we need to put off the old man (humanity), and put on the new man (new humanity) because we have been renewed by the Spirit and recreated by God in righteousness and holiness (4:20-24)

What follows in 4:25-32 is a series of very practical commands about how we live faithfully in unity together. Dishonest and prolonged and sinful anger breaks the unity we have, which gives place to the Devil. Therefore, be honest and refuse to allow anger to go one without resolution. This will stop the Devil from causing division among us.

Stealing from one another is not only a crime, but is a sin that shows that we are selfish and greedy like unbelievers (see v. 19). Rather, we are to be hard workers and serve one another. All of our communications must be without corruption (unlike unbelievers, see v. 19) and for the service and imparting of grace to our hearers. Failure to do these things grieves the Holy Spirit, who has sealed us for the day of redemption (see 1:13-14). 4:31-32 summarizes all of these points in the negative (putting away (v. 22) sinful anger, quarrelling and evil speaking) and putting on the new man (v. 24) the virtues of kindness, tenderheartedness and forgiveness, just as God in Christ has given us by his kindness and tenderheartedness towards us.

## **B. Walking Faithfully In Love and In The Light 5:1-21**

In fact, we are to be followers of God – Imitating God just as children imitate their fathers. We are to walk in love, just as Christ loved: by giving Himself for us as

sacrificial offering to God. We are to lay ourselves on the altar, and become an ascension offering that is a sweet smelling aroma to God.

This imitation of God Paul contrasts with the way “the sons of disobedience” walk (5:6-7). There is an interesting structure to vv. 3-5:

But fornication and  
    all uncleanness or covetousness,  
        let it not even be named among you,  
            as is fitting for saints;  
                neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting,  
                    which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.  
For this you know, that no fornicator,  
    unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater,  
        has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

We are not to allow ourselves to be deceived or seduced by empty words that people may use that leads to a futility of the mind (4:17-19), or the kind of living that is characteristic of unbelievers. We are to be children of God, not “the sons of disobedience” who walking in darkness (vv. 6-7).

Apart from Christ, we would be living in darkness. But now we are to live as children of light and wisdom by the Spirit. By living according to the light of the Spirit (the fruit of which is all goodness, righteousness and truth) proves to each other and the world what is acceptable behavior to the Lord.

Not only are we to avoid fellowship with the world, but we are to expose the deeds of darkness. We don't just stay in the light of the Church, but we go out into the world to manifest light and destroy the darkness (vv. 8-14).

Finally, in vv. 15-21 we see that we are to walk wisely, using the time God has given us according to His will. We do this by the Spirit and encouraging one another with songs of the Spirit. In this way we manifest and encourage unity together. It is a unity that submits itself to one another.

**Homework assignment:** Read the whole book of Ephesians. Come prepare to discuss why faithful saints need armor.

## **The Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians**

### **Lesson 4: Faithful and Peaceful Living In Unity – Ch. 4:1-5:21**

❖ **Objective – To understand that in the final sections Paul teaches us how God in Christ transforms all of our relationships with people as He gathers all things into one. When the body of Christ functions as it should it is able to live faithfully in the world.**

❖ **Memory verses for Ephesians: Ephesians 2:8-9 and 4:4-6**

2:8-9 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.

4:4-6 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

❖ **Outline of the book of Ephesians:**

- A. Introduction: Grace and Peace (1:1-2)
- B. Saints By Grace in Christ (1:3-3:21)
- C. Faithful and Peaceful Living in Ephesus (4:1-6:20)
- D. Conclusion: Peace and Grace (6:21-24)

❖ **Review:**

It is essential that we know (1:17-18) and understand who the Trinitarian God (1:3, 13) is and what He has done for us in Christ (1:4, 5, 7, 10, 12, 13)

This is our calling: Having been gathered into one (1:10, 22; 2:14-18; 3:6, 4:4-6), we are to live in accordance with the new humanity God is creating in Christ.

**A. Walking Worthy of our Calling 4:1-32**

**B. Walking Faithfully In Love and In The Light 5:1-21**

5:3-5

But fornication and  
all uncleanness or covetousness,  
let it not even be named among you,  
as is fitting for saints;  
neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting,  
which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.  
For this you know, that no fornicator,  
unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater,  
has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

**Homework assignment:** Read the whole book of Ephesians. Come prepare to discuss why faithful saints need armor.

**The Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians**

## **Lesson 5: Faithful and Peaceful Living In Unity and Power Over Satan – Ch. 5:22-6:24**

❖ **Objective – To understand that, by the Spirit, living faithfully in the world transforms all human relationships and empowers us to powerfully wrestle successfully against all Satanic powers.**

❖ **Memory verses for Ephesians: Ephesians 2:8-9 and 4:4-6**

2:8-9 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.

4:4-6 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

❖ **Outline of the book of Ephesians:**

- A. Introduction: Grace and Peace (1:1-2)
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- D. Conclusion: Peace and Grace (6:21-24)

❖ **Review:**

Ephesians is an overview of history from predestination before the foundation of the world (1:3-14), to the uniting/gathering of all things together into one (1:10), through Christ's union of Jew and Gentile into one new body of Christ, the Church (1:22-23; 2:11-22), Gentiles are brought near by the blood of Jesus (2:13), and Jew and Gentile are united by the cross (2:16). We are saved by grace through faith, and brought to peace with God and all humanity that is in Christ Jesus. That same cross that saves us also transforms wives and husbands, parents and children and servants and master. We are brought to peace with God, and we are brought to unity and peace with one another. But the cross is not merely a past event for Christians and Christian families; the cross is a continuing experience for every believer, so that through the gospel all of the world is transformed. The book of Ephesians ends with instructions about how Christians are to take up God's armor to wrestle against all principalities and powers and stand against Satan (6:10-20).

As we saw last week, we are commanded by Paul to walk worthy of our calling, that is to endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (4:3), because we are made one in God our Father (4:4-6). He has given us gifts in the Church to be able to walk faithfully and peaceably in this world (4:7-32). And as we walk as imitators of God, we will not be conformed to the world around us, but

walk as children of the light (5:1-14). Finally, we are commanded to walk wisely in this world and be filled with the Spirit so that we submit ourselves to one another. This mutual submission is according to the various relationships we have with people.

### **A. Husbands and Wives – Christ and His Bride, the Church 5:22-33**

Paul, in the remaining part of the book describes how it is that we are able to be so filled with the Spirit that all of life is transformed and we gain the victory over all the powers that would seek to destroy our faith and unity. The first area of transformation is in the context of Christian marriage (5:22-33).

Immediately after commanding us to submit ourselves to one another in the fear of God, he begins to show how that submission looks in marriage. Interestingly, v. 22 does not have the word “submit” in it, but carries on from the previous verse. Literally it could read: v. 21, ‘submitting to one another in the fear of God...wives to their own husbands, as to the Lord.’

Paul draws on two related models to describe the diversity of roles in marriage. The first is the model of Christ and His church. Marriages are inherently symbolic, inherently typological, and for good or ill reflect the reality of Christ’s relationship with His bride. It’s interesting that in v. 23 Paul says that the husband “is” head of the wife; not something that is commanded, it is a created reality. The question is, will a husband be a good head like Christ, or will he be a poor reflection of Christ to his family. The second model comes from Genesis 2, which describes the “one flesh” relationship between a husband and wife. Since Jesus is the Last Adam, Paul understands Genesis 2 to be mainly about Him, so the two models are ultimately one.

One of the links between these two models is the relationship of “head” and “body.” Headship involves authority and leadership, but in Scripture headship always means service. A husband, like Christ, is called to exercise authority in the home, and also is responsible for setting the direction and trajectory of the family. According to Paul, his authority and initiative must be modeled on Christ’s headship over the church. Christ does not exercise authority over the church to advance or preserve His own interests. On the contrary, He exercises authority with a view to the best interests of His bride. He pursues the interests of His bride even to the point of death. The husband’s headship is qualified, empowered and motivated by love. Loving ones wife is to be every bit as characteristic of a good husband and being a good leader. He is only a good leader to the extent that he loves her.

In Genesis 2, one of the key aspects of Adam's headship has to do with being a guard (2:15; the word "keep" means "guard"). A husband not only physically guards his wife, but guards her (and the family) from anxiety, insecurity, and serpents at the door. Adam's sin was a failure to guard his bride (a failure of love by his inaction), and many husbands repeat Adam's fall in their homes every day.

As the church is called to be subject to Christ, so wives are called to submit to their husbands in "fear" (v. 33, just as we are all to submit to one another in fear of God, cf. 5:21). Paul is not saying that wives need only respect their husbands but not love them, nor that husbands should love their wives disrespectfully. He is saying that a wife's love takes a different form than a husband's love. A husband's love takes the form of self-sacrificing leadership; a wife's love takes the form of respectful submission.

In 5:25-28 Paul uses very interesting language to describe the love husband ought to show their wives, and Christ loved His Bride, the Church. He uses a number of sacrificial terms: Husbands are to imitate the Christ who "gave Himself," who "washes" His bride, who presents her without spot or blemish, who sanctifies her. Christ gave Himself to prepare His bride as a suitable sacrifice. The specific language Paul uses connects marriage to the ascension offering. Only the ascension offering is explicitly said to be "washed" (Leviticus 1:9, 13). The husband is described as the "head"; though worshipers placed their hand on the head of animals in every offering, only in the ascension offering is the head offered (Lev. 1:8, 12; cf. 4:11-12). The bride, it appears, is being prepared for ascension.

The "one-fleshness" of husband and wife is symbolized by sexual union, but there's much more to it. Husbands and wives should be pursuing intimacy and unity in every area of their lives together. Many married couples drift, and when they drift they drift apart. Pursuing unity takes time, and that time needs to be taken.

Paul says that this unity of "one-fleshness" is a great mystery that speaks to the unity of Christ and His Bride, the Church.

When Paul talks about the "mystery" revealed in the gospel in Ephesians, he does not confine it to the redemption of sinners from sin. The secret/mystery that had been hidden is about the "summing up of all things in Christ" (1:10) and the inclusion of Gentiles as "fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, fellow partakers of the promise" (3:6). Jesus does indeed redeem through His blood by which we are forgiven (1:7), but this is not the specific content of the mystery. The specific content of the mystery is God's "summation" of all in Christ, and specifically the inclusion of the Gentiles. And this mystery is called the "mystery of the gospel" (6:19). Wonderfully, then, marriage is an illustration to members of

the family, to the Church and to the world of the mystery that God has reveal in the gospel – that all things are being brought together in and under Christ, who is the head of all things for the church (1:22-23).

## **B. Children and Parents 6:1-4**

Paul goes on in the next section to show how being filled with the Spirit and mutual submission works in the relationship between parents and children. He begins, as he did with wives in 5:22, with ones who are to be in submission, and then moves on to those who are in authority.

Paul repeats the fifth commandment, emphasizing that honor to father and mother means obedience (6:1-2). Paul speaks directly to children, expecting them to be in the Christian assembly. God promises that those who obey this commandment will be rewarded with long life. As children grow, the shape of this commandment varies. When a child marries and establishes a new home, parents do not have the right to command. But even grown and married children are required to honor parents in both attitude and in action.

The family is a key to the formation of Christian culture, because it is largely in the family that Christian culture gets passed from one generation to the next. Paul warns fathers not to provoke children to wrath (v. 4). This idea of provoking to wrath (and the exact words used here are also use in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, the Septuagint, or LXX) is something that the Old Testament speaks of God doing to His people in Deut. 32:21 (cf. Rom. 10:19). God was provoked to jealousy by the sinfulness of His people, and then provoked them to jealousy and anger by paying attention to other nations. Although fathers should often imitate God the Father and they parent their children, Paul is saying that this provoking to anger and jealousy is not something that fathers should do with their children. Comparing your children to others (even siblings) in such a way that it provokes them to jealousy and anger is not the way God wants children to be raised.

Paul instructs fathers particularly to raise children in the training and admonition of God (6:4). This Greek word includes the notion of discipline, including corporal discipline, but has the wider connotation of “enculturation.” Christian children learn Christian habits of thought and conduct through the teaching and corporal discipline administered by their parents. Paul singles out fathers; they are primarily responsible for this take. Though mothers clearly have a central role in education and training, raising children is not women’s work.

### **C. Servants and Masters 6:5-9**

Paul goes on in the next section to show how being filled with the Spirit and mutual submission works in the relationship between servants and masters. He begins, as he did with wives in 5:22 and children in 6:1, with ones who are to be in submission, and then moves on to those who are in authority.

Christian culture must extend also to working relationships. In Paul's day, Christian slave-owners were supposed to treat their Christian slaves as fellow-servants of one Master, and Christian slaves were supposed to work hard even for harsh masters (6:5-7; 1 Peter 2:18). It is appropriate to translate this into employer-employee relations in our day. Christian employers must renounce threats and bullying and blackmail, and Christian employees are called to work hard, knowing that they ultimately serve Christ.

### **D. Strong In the Lord to Wrestle Against Satan – The Armor of God 6:10-19**

Finally, in 6:10-20, Paul teaches us to understand how we are to interact with the world that is often so powerfully against God's people. As we learned in the introduction to the book, the Ephesians lived in a very powerful pagan Roman city that was threatened by the progress of the gospel. Persecution was fierce and the enemies of the church were powerful. One of the things that Paul wanted the Ephesians and us to understand is the "the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come" (1:19-21). Paul said that the Ephesians "once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience," meaning Satan and the demonic forces at work in the world. Also in 3:10 said that the mystery of the gospel has been manifested so that the church would make known to the world that Christ rules over "the principalities and powers in the heavenly places."

Here in 6:10-12, Paul describes the church's enemies in various ways. We struggle against "the devil" (v. 11). Our enemies are not "flesh and blood" but rather rulers, powers, forces, spiritual realities (v. 12). The devil is a personal being, not just an "evil principle." But Paul is also talking about institutions, structures, and patterns of life that powerfully shape human behavior. Perverse tradition and custom, ideologies and widespread prejudices, institutions of authority and the influence of symbols and "role models" all come under the heading of "principalities and powers." To put it concretely, Paul was not struggling against individual Judaizers

only, but against a perverse tradition of Judaism. He was not only confronting Caesar when he proclaimed Jesus as Lord; he was confronting an imperial religion and ideology. We face not only individual “liberals,” but an ideology of liberalism that has exalted tolerance and assumes that religion should not make a public display.

We shouldn't conclude that the church has no human enemies. Paul elsewhere talks about human enemies of the church (Romans 11:28; Philippians 3:17-19); when he battled Judaizers in Galatia, he was battling human teachers. Paul is saying that our human enemies are minor characters in a larger story of enmity. The human beings who oppose the church are motivated and directed, ultimately if not consciously, by diabolical spiritual beings and powers, and by the supra-human institutions and forces of ideology and culture.

We must evaluate our opponents and enemies in a double perspective. On the one hand, they are responsible before God for their hostility to the gospel. On the other hand, they are controlled by powers that they don't comprehend, ultimately by Sin, Death, and the Devil. Viewed from the latter perspective, they are victims of oppressive powers, and proclaim liberation in Christ.

Paul urges the Ephesians to “put on the full armor of God” (6:11-17). This is often understood as the armor that the Lord gives us. It is that, but it is also the armor that the Lord wears. Yahweh wears “righteousness like a breastplate,” the “helmet of salvation,” “garments of vengeance,” and “zeal as a mantle” (Read Isaiah 59:16-17). As the Lord goes out at the head of the army, we follow, wearing the same armor that he wears.

The armor Paul recommends doesn't seem very protective. Truth, righteousness, the gospel, faith, the word of God don't seem to be very effective weapons. Despite appearances, the weapons we are given are powerful for destroying the fortresses of wickedness (2 Corinthians 10:1-6). Our weapons are spiritual, and don't have the limitations of the weapons of the flesh.

Prayer (6:18-20) is not a specific piece of the armor of God, but is to infuse all our battles as Christians. We are to speak the truth prayerfully, act in righteousness prayerfully, preach the gospel prayerfully, wield the sword of the Spirit with prayer. Prayer is communion with God, but too often Christians have understood prayer as a retreat from the task of forming Christian culture or battling the enemies of the gospel. That's not how Paul sees prayer. For Paul and for the church as a whole, prayer is one of the key tactics of our warfare. Prayer should be militant. The most militant prayers in Scripture are the Psalms known as “imprecatory Psalms,” or Psalms of cursing. Some of these Psalms are alarming in their ferocity and violence (cf. Psalms 58; 109, 137), and many Christians have

trouble seeing how such prayers are compatible with Christ's teaching about love for enemies (Matthew 5:43-48). No less a Christian thinker than C. S. Lewis called the imprecatory Psalms "wicked," "sinful" and "dangerous."

But these Psalms are part of God's inspired word, and even saints in heaven call on God to avenge their blood (Revelation 6:9-10). Paul commands Christians to "bless those who persecute you; bless and curse not" (Romans 12:14), yet Paul himself curses Judaizers who preach another gospel (Galatians 1:8-9). Jesus commands us to love enemies, but He curses a fig tree that represents Israel (Matthew 21:18-22; Mark 11:15-26). The OT teaches us to love our enemies (Exodus 23:4-5; Leviticus 19:17-18; Proverbs 25:21-22), and yet includes imprecations in thirty-some Psalms. If prayers of imprecation and judgment arise out of vindictiveness and hate, they are sinful. But refusing to pray these Psalms may arise from our sinful tolerance of evil, and our sinful apathy about injustice. When we pray imprecations, we should consciously be praying for something good – the good of God's justice. We should pray seeking the kingdom of God and His righteousness above all.

Paul says that we are to pray at all times, in the Spirit (filled with the Spirit), for all the saints, including himself. He knows that he needs God's grace and strength to speak boldly about the mystery of the gospel that is transforming the world.

#### **E. Peace and Grace 6:21-24**

The book of Ephesians ends must where it began: With the peace that come from the grace of God. His unearned favor, His love toward us in Christ Jesus not only saves us from our sin, but also gives us the ability to live in the world in peace and unity with all those who believe in Christ. We can overcome all opposition from the world and the Devil because we are seated with Christ by the Spirit, taking dominion over all things for His glory.

**The Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians**  
**Lesson 5: Faithful and Peaceful Living In Unity and Power Over Satan – Ch. 5:22-6:24**

❖ **Objective – To understand that, by the Spirit, living faithfully in the world transforms all human relationships and empowers us to powerfully wrestle successfully against all Satanic powers.**

❖ **Memory verses for Ephesians: Ephesians 2:8-9 and 4:4-6**

2:8-9 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.

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❖ **Outline of the book of Ephesians:**

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- C. Faithful and Peaceful Living in Ephesus (4:1-6:20)
- D. Conclusion: Peace and Grace (6:21-24)

❖ **Review:**

**A. Husbands and Wives – Christ and His Bride, the Church 5:22-33**

**B. Children and Parents 6:1-4**

**C. Servants and Master 6:5-9**

**D. Strong In the Lord to Wrestle Against Satan – The Armor of God 6:10-19**

**E. Peace and Grace 6:21-24**

# Ephesians Student Evaluation

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

1) On which missionary journey did Paul stay in Ephesus for 2 years? \_\_\_\_\_  
A. First  
B. Second  
C. Third

2) Where was Paul when he wrote the Epistle to the Ephesians? \_\_\_\_\_  
A. The Temple in Jerusalem  
B. Antioch  
C. In prison in either Caesarea or Rome  
D. With the churches in Galatia

3) When Paul address the Ephesians and us as “saints, meaning “holy ones” in 1:1, he means that: \_\_\_\_\_  
A. There a few very special Christians that are called Saints (like Saint Paul)  
B. There will be a football team in New Orleans called The Saints  
C. All Christians are saints, “holy ones,” set apart as holy, sanctified

4) Outline of the book of Ephesians:  
A. Introduction: Grace and \_\_\_\_\_ (1:1-2)  
B. \_\_\_\_\_ By Grace in Christ (1:3-3:21)  
C. \_\_\_\_\_ and Peaceful Living in Ephesus (4:1-6:20)  
D. Conclusion: \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ (6:21-24)

5) Memory verses for Ephesians: Ephesians 2:8-9 and 4:4-6

2:8-9 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4:4-6 \_\_\_\_\_

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- 6) We are saved: \_\_\_\_\_
- A. By the works God prepared for us
  - B. By grace through faith
  - C. By both grace and works
- 7) The “mystery” the Paul made known was: \_\_\_\_\_
- A. Secret knowledge that only a few could know
  - B. The message of the gospel that Jesus died to save sinners
  - C. That the Gentiles are fellow heirs, one body with the Jews & low partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus
- 8) Ephesians 4-6 is the application section of the letter. Which of the following are **not** people that he spoke about directly? (circle the letter)
- A. Kings and subjects
  - B. Wives and husbands
  - C. Children and parents
  - D. Servants and masters
- 9) The book of Ephesians begins and end with two summary words: \_\_\_\_\_
- A. Jesus Christ
  - B. Faith and love
  - C. Grace and peace

# Ephesians Student Evaluation Answer Key

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

- 1) On which missionary journey did Paul stay in Ephesus for 2 years? C Third  
A. First  
B. Second  
C. Third

[3<sup>rd</sup> missionary journey – Acts 18-20; Paul began in the synagogue and then after opposition arose, withdrew the disciples and taught in the school of Tyrannus. He did miracles that caused great changes to happen in the city.]

- 2) Where was Paul when he wrote the Epistle to the Ephesians? C Caesarea/Rome  
A. The Temple in Jerusalem  
B. Antioch  
C. In prison in either Caesarea or Rome  
D. With the churches in Galatia

[He was in prison, possibly while imprisoned in Caesarea for two years, Acts 24:27, or Rome, Acts 28:16f (the more likely option); see Eph. 3:1; 4:1; 6:20). He probably also wrote epistles to the Philippians, the Colossians and to Philemon at the same time.]

- 3) When Paul address the Ephesians and us as “saints, meaning “holy ones” in 1:1, he means that: \_\_\_\_\_  
A. There a few very special Christians that are called Saints (like Saint Paul)  
B. There will be a football team in New Orleans called The Saints  
C. All Christians are saints, “holy ones,” set apart as holy, sanctified

- 4) Outline of the book of Ephesians:  
A. Introduction: Grace and Peace (1:1-2)  
B. Saints By Grace in Christ (1:3-3:21)  
C. Faithful and Peaceful Living in Ephesus (4:1-6:20)  
D. Conclusion: Peace and Grace (6:21-24)

5) Memory verses for Ephesians: Ephesians 2:8-9 and 4:4-6

2:8-9 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.

4:4-6 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

6) We are saved: B. By Grace through Faith

A. By the works God prepared for us

B. By grace through faith

C. By both grace and works

7) The “mystery” the Paul made known was: C. Gentiles are fellow heirs

A. Secret knowledge that only a few could know

B. The message of the gospel that Jesus died to save sinners

C. That the Gentiles are fellow heirs, one body with the Jews & low partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus

8) Ephesians 4-6 is the application section of the letter. Which of the following are not people that he spoke about directly? (circle the letter) A. Kings and subjects

A. Kings and subjects

B. Wives and husbands

C. Children and parents

D. Servants and masters

9) The book of Ephesians begins & end with two summary words: C. Grace/peace

A. Jesus Christ

B. Faith and love

C. Grace and peace