

EPHESIANS

CHAPTER ONE

1) [This letter is from] **Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus, according to God's will**, [and is being sent] **to the saints** [i.e., God's holy people] **at Ephesus** [Note: This was a major city in the western province of Asia Minor, and is now a part of Turkey. The words **at Ephesus** are omitted in some manuscripts, suggesting it was a circular letter], **and the faithful ones in** [fellowship with] **Christ Jesus** [everywhere else?]. 2) **May you have unearned favor and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

3) **May the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ be praised, for He has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms in** [fellowship with] **Christ.** [Note: The phrase **heavenly realms** is used somewhat differently throughout this book. Here it refers to Christians as part of the church on earth]. 4) **Even before the creation of the world God chose us, who are in** [fellowship with] **Christ, to be dedicated** [to Him] **and to be without just blame in His sight. Out of love** 5) **God predetermined that we should be** [considered] **His adopted children through** [fellowship with] **Christ. This is what pleased God and is what He wanted,** 6) **so that we would praise His glorious, unearned favor, which was freely given to us through the One whom God loved** [i.e., Christ]. 7) **In** [fellowship with] **Christ we have redemption** [i.e., we have been bought back from Satan] **through His blood, and have forgiveness of sins according to the abundance of God's unearned favor,** 8) **which He lavished on us.** [He used] **wisdom and understanding,** 9) **in doing what He intended through Christ, to make known to us His secret plan, according to what pleased Him.** 10) [He did this] **to fulfill His plan at the proper time, by bringing together everything** [in the universe] **under Christ's headship --- things both in heaven and on earth.**

11) **It is in** [fellowship with] **Christ that we** [Jewish Christians] **also were selected as** [God's] **inheritance** [i.e., to receive His never ending blessings], **having been predetermined according to the plan of God, who works out everything in harmony with what He wants.** 12) **The end** [i.e., of being so predetermined] **was that we**

[Jewish Christians], who had previously placed our hope in Christ, should bring about the praise of God's splendor. 13) You [Gentiles] also, who are in Christ, after having heard the message of truth, the good news about your salvation, and [after] believing in Him, were sealed [i.e., as evidence of ownership] with the promised Holy Spirit. [or, the Holy Spirit who brings promises@]. 14) He is a down payment of our inheritance, until God's own possession [i.e., His people] receives redemption. [Note: Here redemption@ refers to receiving a new body in heaven]. May this bring about praise to God's splendor!

15) For this reason also, since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all of the saints [i.e., God's holy people], 16) I do not stop thanking [God] for you. I keep asking, in my prayers, 17) that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, will give you a spirit [i.e., a disposition] of wisdom and revelation [or, give you the spiritual gifts of wisdom and revelation@], so you can have full knowledge of God. 18) I pray that your minds will be enlightened so that you will know what the hope is, to which God has called you, and what the glorious abundance is, of God's inheritance in the saints [Note: Paul wanted them to appreciate the value God placed on them], 19) and what God's tremendous power [working] in us believers is. [This power is] the same as that utilized by God's mighty strength, 20) which He exerted when raising Christ from the dead and seating Him at His right side in the heavenly realms [i.e., heaven itself]. 21) [There He is exalted] high above all rulers and authorities and powers and dominion and every name [i.e., title of honor] that can be given, not only in this present age but [also] in the one to come. 22) And God placed everything in subjection under His [i.e., Christ's] feet, and appointed Him to be head over all things to the church, 23) which is His [spiritual] body. The church is completely filled by Christ [or, Christ is completely filled by God@], who completely fills everything in every way.

CHAPTER TWO

1) And you [Gentiles] were once [spiritually] dead because of your shortcomings and sins. 2) You practiced such things when you lived according to the evil ways of this world, and according to the ruler of the [spiritual] powers of the air. [Note: This refers to Satan, whose influence permeates life around us]. He is the [evil] spirit

who is now at work in people who are disobedient [to God]. 3) All of us [Jews] also once lived among such people, fulfilling the improper cravings of our physical being and doing what our bodies and minds desired. In this natural [unconverted] state we were deserving of [God-s] wrath, just like the rest [of mankind]. 4) But God, who has great love for us and abundant mercy [toward us], 5) restored [spiritual] life to us with Christ, even though we were [spiritually] dead because of our sins --- it is by God-s unearned favor that you have been saved. 6) God raised us up with Christ [See Col. 2:12] and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms [i.e., in the church. See 1:3] in [fellowship with] Christ Jesus. 7) This was so that, to future ages [of people on earth and in heaven], God could demonstrate the tremendous abundance of His unearned favor, expressed by His kindness to us in [fellowship with] Christ Jesus. 8) For you have been saved by God-s unearned favor, through [your] faith, and that [salvation] was not the result of your own doing; it was the gift from God. 9) It was not the result of your own [good] deeds [See Titus 3:5], so that no one could boast [about it]. 10) For we [Christians] are the product of God-s workmanship, [re-] created in [fellowship with] Christ Jesus for [the purpose of] doing good deeds. God had previously determined that this should be our practice.

11) So, you Gentiles by birth should remember what you once were. You are called AUncircumcision@ by those who are called ACircumcision@ [i.e., the Jews], (which refers to a physical procedure performed by people). 12) [Remember] that you were at that time without Christ; [you were] excluded from citizenship in the nation of Israel; [you were] foreigners regarding the Agreements of [God-s] promises. You had no hope and were without God in the world. 13) But now [that you are] in [fellowship with] Christ, you [Gentiles], who were once far away [from God], have been brought near [to Him] through the blood of Christ. 14) For Christ is [the source of] our peace. He made both [Jews and Gentiles] one people, and broke down the barrier wall of hostility that divided them, 15) by abolishing in His fleshly body the [entire Jewish] law of commandments contained in decrees. [This was] so that He could create in [unity with] Himself one new person [i.e., the church] out of the two peoples [i.e., Jews and Gentiles], thereby bringing about peace [between them]. 16) [This was also intended] to reestablish harmony between both of these peoples and God in [this] one body,

through [Christ's death on] **the cross. By doing this He put to death the hostility** [between them]. **17) And Christ came and preached peace to you** [Gentiles], **who were far away** [from God], **and peace to those** [Jews] **who were near** [to Him]. **18) For through Him we** [Jews and Gentiles] **both have access to the Father by means of one Holy Spirit.**

19) So then, you [Gentiles] **are no longer foreigners and aliens** [i.e., to God's promises. See verse 12], **but you are fellow-citizens with the saints** [i.e., God's holy people], **and are part of God's family.** **20) [You are] built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets** [See I Cor. 12:28], **with Christ Jesus Himself being the principal stone by which the entire building is aligned.** **21) In** [harmony with] **Him the entire building** [i.e., the church] **is properly assembled, rising into a dedicated temple for the Lord.** [See I Cor. 3:16-17]. **22) In** [harmony with] **Him you people are also being constructed together into a place where God lives by His Spirit.**

CHAPTER THREE

1) This is the reason that I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles, [pray for you. See 3:14-19].

2) [Note: Paul here digresses from his prayer, begun in 1:15-16, to explain the circumstances of his being a prisoner on behalf of these Gentiles]. [I assume] you have heard about my commission [to minister] **to you, which was given to me by God's unearned favor.**

3) [It is] that God's secret plan [i.e., revealed in the Gospel preached to Gentiles. See verse 6] **was made known to me by way of a revelation.** [See Acts 9:15; 22:21]. **I have already written to you** [about this] **briefly** [i.e., probably a reference to 1:9ff]. **4) So, when you read this you will be able to understand my insight into the secret plan of Christ,** **5) which was not told to people of previous generations as it has now been revealed to His** [i.e., Christ's] **holy apostles and prophets by the Holy Spirit.** **6) This secret plan is that the Gentiles** [now] **share in the inheritance along with us** [Jews], **and are fellow-members of the body** [i.e., the church], **and that they share, along with us** [Jews], **in the promise of the Gospel, in** [fellowship with] **Christ Jesus.** **7) I was made a minister** [of the Gospel] **according to the gift of God's unearned favor, which was given to me according to the working of His power.** **8) This favor of**

preaching the unfathomable riches of Christ to the Gentiles was given to me [even though] I am the least significant of all saints [i.e., God's holy people]. 9) [I was given the responsibility] to enlighten all people regarding the working out of God's secret plan, which has been kept hidden for ages in [the heart of] God, who created everything. 10) This was done so that now God's many-sided wisdom could be made known through the church, to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms [Note: AHeavenly realms@ here refers to the world around us, where these angelic beings (good or bad) view the unfolding of God's wonderful plan], 11) according to God's eternal purpose which He carried out through Christ Jesus our Lord. 12) It is in [fellowship with] Christ that we have boldness and confident access [to God] through our faith in Him. 13) So, I am asking you people not to become discouraged over my sufferings on your behalf, for they are for your benefit [eventually].

14) This is the reason that I bow my knees [in prayer] to the Father, 15) from whom every family in heaven and on earth receives its name. [Note: Here Paul resumes the prayer he began in verse 1]. 16) [I pray] that, according to God's glorious abundance, He would empower you to become [spiritually] strong through His Holy Spirit in your inner person, 17) so that Christ will live in your hearts through faith. [I pray] that you will be rooted and grounded in [your] love, 18) so that you, along with all the saints [i.e., God's holy people], will be [spiritually] strong enough to grasp how wide and long and high and deep [Christ's love is]; 19) and to know that His love for us surpasses [our] knowledge, so that you people will be completely filled with the fullness of God.

20) May there be to God, who is able to do infinitely more [for us] than we could [even] ask or think, according to [His] power at work in us --- 21) [I say] may there be praise to God in the church and in [or, Afor@] Christ Jesus throughout all generations of people for ages and ages. May it be so.

CHAPTER FOUR

1) I urge you, therefore, as a prisoner of the Lord, to live in a way that measures up to [the standard required by] God when He called you. 2) Live in a humble, gentle and patient way, showing tolerance [for the weaknesses] of one another out of love [for them].

3) Eagerly try to maintain the unity produced by the Holy Spirit by being bound together in peace. 4) There is [only] one body [i.e., church] and one Holy Spirit, just as God also gave you one hope when He called you [See Titus 3:7]. 5) [There is] one Lord [i.e., Jesus], one faith [i.e., one body of teaching], one immersion [i.e., in water for the forgiveness of sins], 6) and one God and Father of all, who is over all and [works] through all and is in all [obedient believers].

7) But [God's] unearned favor was given to each one of us, according to the gift allotted [to us] by Christ. 8) Therefore, it says [Psa. 68:18], AWhen He ascended on high [i.e., to heaven], He led a procession of captured prisoners [behind Him] [Note: This originally referred to God leading His people in triumph over Israel's enemies, but here is applied to Christ], and gave gifts to [various] people.® 9) (But what does AHe ascended® mean if not that He also [first] descended to the lower parts of the earth [i.e., to the earth below]? [Note: Of the three principal interpretations given to this verse: a) Christ descended to earth, b) Christ descended to the grave, c) Christ descended to Mary's womb. The first is to be preferred. See John 3:13; 6:38, 62]. 10) The One who descended [i.e., from heaven to earth] is the same One [i.e., Christ] who also ascended high above the all the heavens, so that He could fill the entire universe [with His presence]. 11) And He gave some people [the gift of being] apostles; and some people prophets; and some people evangelists; and some people pastors [i.e., elders] and teachers, 12) for the purpose of equipping the saints [i.e., God's holy people] for the work of serving [others], in order to build up the [spiritual] body of Christ [i.e., the church]. 13) [This is to be done] until we all [eventually] arrive at unity of the faith and full knowledge of the Son of God; at complete [spiritual] maturity; at the [full] height of Christ's [spiritual] stature. 14) Then we will no longer be [spiritual] babies, tossed back and forth [by waves], and blown around by every wind of [false] teaching, [deceived] by the clever trickery of people using deceptive schemes. 15) But [instead], we should speak [and practice] truth in a loving way, so that we can, in all respects, grow up [spiritually] into [union with] Christ, who is the head [i.e., of His body, the church]. 16) From Him all [members of] the body are properly joined together by every supporting ligament, as each part contributes to the growth of the body and builds itself up through [mutual] love.

17) So, I tell you this, and insist [on it] by [the authority of]

the Lord: Do not continue to live with worthless thoughts as [unconverted] Gentiles do. 18) Their understanding [of spiritual things] is darkened and excluded from the [spiritual] life that God gives, because of the ignorance in their minds and the stubbornness in their hearts. 19) They have stopped caring [i.e., about morality], so God has abandoned them to lives of unrestrained indecency and to engage in all kinds of [moral] impurity, with a constant desire for more.

20) But you people did not learn Christ that way [i.e., the above described life is not compatible with a commitment to Christ]. 21) [I am] assuming that you have heard Him [i.e., through the Gospel message] and were taught the truth that is in [harmony with] Jesus. 22) You were [taught] to put away [the conduct of] your former lifestyle, your old person who is being corrupted by deceitful desires, 23) and to be renewed in your inner person. 24) And you should put on the new person who has been [re-] created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

25) So then, put away lying and [Zech 8:16], AEach one should speak truthfully with his neighbor,@ because we are parts of one another [i.e., in the one body]. 26) [Psa. 4:4 says], ABe angry [i.e., at wrongdoing. See Mark 3:5], but do not sin@ [i.e., by harboring bitterness or retaliation]. Do not allow the sun to go down while you are still provoked. 27) And do not give the devil an opportunity [to lead you into sin]. 28) The person who has stolen must stop doing it; instead, he should work hard, doing something worthwhile with his own hands, so that he can have [money] to share with the person who needs it. 29) Do not allow unwholesome [Note: The Greek word for Aunwholesome@ is Arotten, diseased@] language to come from your mouth, but only what is helpful for building up those who need it, so that you can impart favor [i.e., benefit] to those who listen [to you]. 30) And do not grieve God-s Holy Spirit by whom you were sealed [i.e., given evidence of God-s ownership] until the day of redemption [i.e., until you receive your new body in heaven. See 1:14]. 31) So, put away from you all [kinds of] bitterness and anger and wrath and brawling and slander, along with all [kinds of] malice [i.e., bad attitudes], 32) and be kind and compassionate toward one another, forgiving each other, just as God also forgave you [because of your fellowship] in Christ.

CHAPTER FIVE

1) So, as dearly loved children, you people should [try to] be like God. 2) Live in a loving way, just like Christ loved us and gave Himself up [to die] for us as an offering and fragrant smelling sacrifice to God.

3) But you should not even talk about sexual immorality, or any type of [moral] impurity, or greed. [Note: Possibly *Agreed* here means *A*desire for more of such things]. **Such talk is not suitable for saints [i.e., God's holy people]. 4) Nor should obscenity, silly chatter or double-meaning jokes be used, because they are not proper either. But instead, [you should express] thanksgiving. 5) For you [should] know this for certain: No sexually immoral or [morally] impure person, or greedy person, who is [the same as] an idol worshiper, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. 6) Do not let anyone deceive you with empty words, for because of such things, the wrath of God will fall upon people who are disobedient [to Him]. 7) So, do not participate with such individuals, 8) for you people were once darkness [i.e., when living in sin], but now you are light in [fellowship with] the Lord. [So], live like people who belong to light [i.e., who live godly lives], 9) (for the product of light consists of everything good and right and true). 10) Then you will demonstrate [or, *A*learn about] a life that is very pleasing to the Lord. 11) Do not have fellowship with [people who practice] worthless deeds of darkness [i.e., sinful living], but expose them instead. 12) For it is shameful even to talk about the things they do in private. 13) But when all [such] things are exposed by the light [i.e., the truth], they become [clearly] visible [i.e., their true nature is revealed], for everything so revealed becomes illuminated.** [Note: Possibly this means *A*it is light that clearly reveals everything]. **14) So, it says, *A*You who are asleep, wake up and rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you [i.e., illuminate you].** [Note: The foregoing words may have been an early saying, used at someone's immersion, which included the ideas of *A*rising up (See Col. 2:12) and *A*illumination (See Heb. 6:4)].

15) So, be careful how you live. Do not live ignorantly, but wisely, 16) making the most of every opportunity, because these days are evil. 17) Therefore, do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord wants you to do. 18) And do not get drunk on wine, which

results in ruined lives, but be filled with the Holy Spirit. 19) Speak to one another by using psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making music with your hearts to the Lord. 20) Always give thanks to God the Father for everything in the name [i.e., by the authority] of our Lord Jesus Christ. 21) Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

22) Wives, you should submit to your own husbands, as you would to the Lord. 23) For the husband is the [spiritual] head over the church, since He is the Savior of the body. 24) But just as the church submits to Christ, so wives also should submit to their husbands in everything.

25) Husbands, you should love your wives just as Christ also loved the church, and gave up His life for her, 26) so that He could dedicate her [to Himself], after cleansing her by means of the washing of water [i.e., immersion], accompanied by the word. [Note: AThe word@here refers either to a persons profession of faith (See Rom. 10:9) or to the Gospel message (See Rom. 10:17), both of which are associated with immersion]. 27) [This is] so He could present the church to Himself in all her splendor, without any kind of stain or wrinkle, but that she should be holy and without [moral] flaw. 28) In the same way also, husbands should love their own wives as they love their own bodies. The man who loves his own wife [actually] loves himself. 29) For no [normal] person ever hated his own [physical] body, but [instead] he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ also does for the church, 30) because we are parts of His [spiritual] body. 31) [Gen. 2:24 says], AFor this reason a man will leave [the home of] his father and mother, and will cling to his wife, [so that] the two will become one flesh [i.e., united in such a close relationship, as to practically constitute one body].@ 32) The secret [truth] of this is great, but I am talking about Christ and the church. 33) However, each of you men individually should also love his own wife the way he loves himself. And the wife should respect her husband.

CHAPTER SIX

1) Children, you should obey your parents in the Lord [i.e., as part of your Christian responsibility], for this is the right thing to do. 2) [Ex. 20:12 says], AShow honor to your father and mother,@

(which is the first commandment that carries the promise), 3) **That things may go well with you and that you will live a long time on earth.**[@]

4) **And you fathers** [Note: This word probably includes both parents], **do not stir up your children to become angry, but bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.**

5) **Slaves, you should obey those who are your earthly masters, out of reverence and eagerness to please them, with a sincere heart, as you would** [obey] **Christ.** 6) **Do not serve them only when you are being watched, just to gain their approval, but as slaves of Christ, doing what God wants from your heart.** 7) **Render your service wholeheartedly, as you would to the Lord, and not** [just] **to people,** 8) **knowing that whatever good deed a person does, he will be rewarded for it from the Lord, whether he is a slave or a free person.**

9) **And you masters should treat your slaves the same way; do not threaten them, knowing that God, who is both their Master and yours, is in heaven and He does not respect any particular person** [over another].

10) **Finally, be** [spiritually] **strong in the Lord and in His mighty power.** 11) **You people should put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to withstand the devil-s schemes.** 12) **For our struggle is not** [actually] **against human beings, but against rulers and authorities and leaders of this world-s darkness, and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.** [Note: ^AHeavenly realms[@] here refers to the struggle against Satanic powers which permeates life around us]. 13) **Therefore, put on the full armor of God, so that you can withstand** [the devil, See verse 11] **when the evil day comes. And, after you have done everything you can, still remain standing firm** [in the faith]. 14) **So, you people should stand firm** [in the faith], **with the belt of truth firmly buckled around you, and with the Aflack jacket[@] of righteousness on your chest.** 15) **And put on your shoes, ready to** [go and] **spread the Gospel of peace.** 16) **And along with everything else, take up the shield of faith, with which you will be able to extinguish all the fire-tipped arrows of the evil one.** 17) **And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Holy Spirit, which is God-s word.** 18) [Then] **offer all kinds of prayers and requests in** [harmony with] **the Holy Spirit at all times, and be alert constantly in making requests for all the saints** [i.e., God-s holy people].

19) And [also pray] for me to be given boldness of speech in opening my mouth to make known the secret plan of the Gospel, 20) for which I am an ambassador in prison. [And pray] that I may be able to proclaim the Gospel boldly, as I ought to.

21) But, so that you people also can know how I am doing and what is going on with me, Tychicus, the dearly loved brother and faithful minister in [the service of] the Lord, will tell you everything. 22) I have sent [i.e., am sending] him to you for this very purpose, so you can know our situation and that he can encourage your hearts.

23) May there be peace and love, with faith, to the brothers [there] from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 24) May God's unearned favor be upon all of those [there] who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love.