

Introduction to the Ephesians Letter

By David Malick. See © note at the end of the outline.

I. **AUTHOR:** The Apostle Paul

A. **External Evidence:** All tradition takes the epistle as being Pauline until it was first disputed by Erasmus (fifteenth century) and by later eighteenth-twentieth century critics. This tradition is unassailable in its unanimity.

1. Marcion included it in his canon, although under the title of Laodiceans (c. AD 140).²
2. It was in the Muratorian Canon under the Epistles of Paul (c. AD 180).
3. It is under the Epistles of Paul in the earliest evidence from the Latin and Syriac versions.
4. It probably preceded the Epistle of Clement of Rome to the Corinthians (AD 95) because of its development of thought.³

B. **Internal Evidence:** Although later critics, such as Erasmus (fifteenth century) and eighteenth-twentieth century scholars, questioned Pauline authenticity over internal evidence⁴, these arguments have reasonable answers,⁵ and do not override the external evidence.

1. **Self-Claims:** The author of Ephesians claims to be the apostle Paul with personal knowledge of his readers:
 - a. The author claims to be Paul in the **opening** address much like Galatians, 2 Corinthians, and Colossians 1:1.
 - b. The author claims to be Paul in the **body** of the letter in 3:1 just as in 2 Corinthians 10:1; Galatians 5:2, Colossians 1:23, 1 Thessalonians 2:18; Philemon 9.
 - c. The letter abounds with statements in the first person.
 - d. The author describes himself as one who has personally heard of the readers (1:15), who thanks the Lord for them (1:16), who is a prisoner of Christ Jesus (3:1; 6:1), received a mystery from God (3:3ff), was divinely appointed to ministry (3:7), presently suffers (3:13), intercedes for the readers

(3:14ff), affirms the readers' need for a new way of thinking and living against a Gentile background (14:17ff), interprets the mystery (5:32), appeals for prayer on his behalf (16:19-20), and concludes with a personal salutation (6:21-22).

2. **Pauline Structure:** The letter has distinct affinities with Paul's other epistles:
 - a. Pauline sequence: opening greeting, thanksgiving, doctrinal exposition, ethical exhortations, concluding salutations, and benediction.
 - b. The basing of moral appeals upon previous theological arguments is an integral part of the apostle's approach to problems
3. **Pauline Language and Literary Affinities:** Similarity of words, vocabulary, and style support Pauline authorship.
 - a. Many words are common with this letter and other Pauline letters which are also not found in the NT.
 - b. The vocabulary is close to earlier Pauline letters.
 - c. Ephesians has Pauline characteristics such as paradoxical antitheses (6:15,20), free citations of the OT (1:22; 2:13,17; 4:25; 5:2; 6:1-3; cf. 1 Cor. 3:9).
 - d. Striking similarities exist between Ephesians and Colossians (which few modern scholars doubt), therefore, Ephesians seems to be Pauline too.
4. **Theological Affinities:** This letter has been called the crown of Paulinism due to its rich Pauline theology:
 - a. Although the "Church" is a new emphasis in the letter, there is a clear background of Pauline theology.
 - b. God is glorious (1:17), powerful (1:19ff), and merciful (2:4ff).
 - c. The Believer is "in Christ" (1:3,10,11, etc.).

- d. The cross has a reconciliatory value (2:13ff).
- e. The Holy Spirit has a similar ministry (2:18; 3:5; 4:1ff, 30; 5:18).
- f. God's counsel is predestining (1:5ff).

5. **Historical Data:** The evidence here is negative rather than positive:
- a. There is no mention of the fall of Jerusalem even though the dividing wall between Jews and Gentiles is destroyed.
 - b. There is no mention of the persecution of believers.
 - c. There is no mention of ecclesiastical organization.

II. **DESTINATION:** Most probably Ephesus, but a circular letter is also possible to the churches of Asia minor with Ephesus as the primary church addressed.

A. **Tradition has** handed down the letter as one sent to the Ephesian church.

- 1. All known manuscripts except for five⁶ have *at Ephesus* (1:1).
- 2. The expression "to the saints who ..." is always followed by a place name in parallel Pauline passages (cf. Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Cor. 1:1; Phil. 1:1).
- 3. Paul seems to have a particular group of people in mind (1:15ff; 6:22).
- 4. Perhaps the words *at Ephesus* were deleted early in some manuscripts in order to adapt the epistle for use in other churches. Apparently this happened to the book of Romans since Codex G (ninth century), 1908 (eleventh century), and 1739 all delete "in Rome" at Romans 1:7.
- 5. If Paul meant this letter to be sent to the churches of several cities, why did he not say so as in Galatians 1:2?
- 6. The title of the letter, *To the Ephesians*, is attached to all of the Greek manuscripts even though 1:1 is not agreed upon.

B. **Modern criticism** has strongly disputed Ephesus as the destination:

- 1. The words *at Ephesus* are not in the best Alexandrian manuscripts (P46, [AD 200], a [AD

400], B [AD 400]).

2. The letter has an impersonal tone which does not reflect Paul's writing to the Ephesians whom he knew so well (1:15; 3:2; 4:21). Even the benediction is impersonal since it is not addressed to "you" but to the "brethren" and to "all those" (6:23,24). To not mention any of the individuals of the church is unusual in view of the fact that Paul ministered among the Ephesians for three years (Acts 19:1--20:5), and developed a close relationship with the elders (Acts 20:17-38).
3. The words *at Ephesus* seem to have been omitted from Marcion's text since he considered it to have been addressed to the Laodiceans, not the Ephesians. But Marcion may only have had parts of the letter without the introduction, therefore the ascription may have only been a guess from Colossians 4:16.

C. Possible Explanations:

1. **Blank Space:** It is possible that Paul left a blank space in the original manuscripts to be filled in by each church as they read it. This would make the five manuscripts with "*in Ephesus*" copies of the original. However, there are no parallels of this in ancient literature. However, this does not explain why all the rest of the manuscripts which survived have "*in Ephesus*" rather than some other place noted. The blank might be more plausible if the *in* was not also missing.
2. **Circular Letter:** Paul wrote the letter as a circular letter to all of the churches of Asia, but it came to be generally known as the letter to the Ephesians early on because Ephesus was the major city of Asia. Therefore, early scribes inserted "*in Ephesus*" into the text.⁷ However, Paul does not include a greeting of a general kind as in Colossians. However, if separate copies were made for each church, why did the scribe not fill in the church name?
3. **To Ephesus:** The letter was written to the

Ephesians and addressed to them even though Paul wrote it in a form which would make it suitable for other churches. It was intended to be circulated, and as it was a few scribes deleted the words “*in Ephesus*” as some also did with Romans. The encyclical nature of this epistle may account for why Paul urged the Colossians to “read the letter from Laodicea” (Col. 4:16). Therefore, it is possible that the three Alexandrian Greek manuscripts do not contain the best reading for the following reasons:

- a. All of the versions include the words without exception.
- b. The geographical distribution of the majority of Greek manuscripts which do include “in Ephesus” is wide.
- c. No manuscripts of this letter mention any other city in place of Ephesus.
- d. No manuscripts have only the word “in” followed by a space to insert the cities name.
- e. “To the Ephesians” appears on all manuscripts of this epistle.
- f. All of the letters Paul wrote to churches include their destinations.
- g. The early church fathers Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian all understood the letter to be to the Ephesians. ⁸
- h. The absence of names:
 - 1) Perhaps Paul did not wish to single out certain persons in this short letter since he knew so many.
 - 2) If the letter was also circular, Paul would have left specific Ephesian names out for the sake of relevance to the readers from Laodicea and Colosse.

III. DATE and PLACE: AD 60-62 during Paul’s first Roman imprisonment.

- A. **Since Clement** of Rome cites Ephesians, it must be dated earlier than AD 95.
- B. **Paul identifies himself** as a prisoner at the time of

his writing Ephesians (3:1; 4:1; 6:20).

- C. **It is possible that Paul could** have written the letter when he was imprisoned at Caesarea ⁹ (Acts 24:27, AD 57-59), or in Rome (Acts 28:30, AD 60-62).
- D. **Early in Paul's first** Roman imprisonment seems to be the most likely time when he wrote Ephesians:
1. It is thought that Paul wrote a group of epistles called the "Prison Epistles" at the time of his imprisonment in Rome:¹⁰
 - a. Ephesians.
 - b. Philippians (1:7).
 - c. Colossians (4:10).
 - d. Philemon (9).
 2. Ephesians is placed in this time period because of its close association to Colossians-Philemon and the probability that Tychicus delivered both letters (Eph. 6:21-22; Col. 4:7-9).
 3. Ephesians gives no hint of Paul's release from prison as does Philippians (1:19-26) and Philemon (22); therefore, it may well have been written in the early part of his stay, or around AD 60.
- E. **Following Paul's release from Rome:**
1. He traveled.
 2. He wrote 1 Timothy and Titus.
 3. Paul was arrested again in Rome.
 4. Paul wrote 2 Timothy.
 5. Paul was martyred in Rome.

IV. A DESCRIPTION OF EPHESUS:

- A. **A leading center** in the Roman Empire
- B. **Paul visited Ephesus twice:**
1. Paul visited Ephesus a short time on his way back to Antioch from his second missionary journey (Acts 18:19-22)
 2. Paul stayed in Ephesus on his third missionary journey for three years (Acts 20:31)
- C. **While Paul was in Ephesus on his third missionary** journey several remarkable things occurred:
1. Paul baptized about twelve of John the Baptist's followers (Acts 19:1-7).

2. Paul had discussions in the hall of Tyrannus (Acts 19:8-10).
3. Paul performed unusual miracles (Acts 19:11-12).
4. Paul performed exorcisms (Acts 19:13-16).
5. Sorcerers were converted (Acts 19:17-20).
6. Paul was part of a city riot by threatened temple workers (Acts 19:23-41).
7. Paul gave the Ephesian leaders a farewell address in the town of Miletus (Acts 20:13-34).

V. PURPOSES OF THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS

- A. **No particular problem** is raised in the book unlike many of Paul's other letters.
- B. **Some suggest that Paul's** time in imprisonment enabled him to develop an "exalted Christology and a high appraisal of the privileges of believers in Christ."¹¹
- C. **Hoehner understands "love" to be the issue** that needs to be stressed with the saints in Ephesus because even though the church succeeded in keeping out false teachers (cf. Acts 20:29-30 with Revelation 2:2), they were losing the "vibrancy of their first love for Christ" (Rev. 2:4) and other saints (cf. also 1 Tim. 1:5).¹²
 1. The theology of chapters 1--3 focuses upon the need for the Ephesians to increase in their awareness of God's love so that they will imitate it to God's glory.
 2. The application of chapters 4--6 are specific expressions of love for one another in view of God's love.
- D. **Paul is encouraging the church** to maintain their position of unity:¹³
 1. The Ephesian theology is centered on God's provision which leads to unity in the church.
 2. Paul writes to encourage the Ephesians to continue in their unity through obedience, love, and spiritual warfare.

¹ Much of what follows is adapted from Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, pp. 479-521, T. K. Abbott, *A Critical and*

Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles to the Ephesians and to the Colossians, ICC, pp. i-xxiii, Harold W. Hoehner, "Ephesians," in BKC, pp. 612-614, Brevard S. Childs, *The New Testament as Canon: An Introduction*, pp. 311-328.

2 This makes Pauline origin undisputed at this time since Marcion acknowledged only Paul as having authority.

3 See Abbott for a more in-depth discussion of the church fathers (Ephesians, pp. ix-xiii).

4 Guthrie, NTI, pp. 482-490; Abbott, Ephesians, pp. xiii-xxix.

5 Guthrie, NTI, pp. 490-507.

6 The five are P46, c*, B* 424c, 1739 as well as manuscripts mentioned by Basil and the text used by Origen (see Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the New Testament*, p. 601; T. K. Abbott, Ephesians, pp. iff).

7 See Abbott for a full discussion of this hypothesis (Ephesians, pp. i-ix).

8 Adv. Haer. 5.2.36; Stom. 6.65; Adv. Marc. 5.11.17.

9 For a discussion of the Caesarean origin see Abbott, Ephesians, pp. xxix-xxxi.

10 This imprisonment was actually a time when Paul was kept under guard in rented quarters (Acts 28:30). Therefore, these letters could also be called the "House Arrest Epistles".

11 Guthrie, NTI, p. 515. See also A. Skevington Wood, "Ephesians" in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, p. 17.

12 Harold W. Hoehner, "Ephesians" in BKC, p. 164.

13 In his own way Childs affirms the same type of focus, but emphasizes that Paul has the new generation of Christians in view. As he writes, "Paul is desirous that the new generation of Christians understand the nature of God's present exercise of power in their lives according to the divine purpose which he accomplished in Christ and which encompasses the entire universe" (*The New Testament as Canon*, p. 325).

This emphasis upon the "new" generation of believers might explain why Paul uses a second-hand reference to the Ephesians in 1:15 et cetera (Ibid, p. 326). But it is also true that five years have passed since he was last with the Ephesians, therefore, it would be natural to hear of things which he had not recently experienced.

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Introduction:

1. One of the tests of inspiration is to see how a book being examined harmonizes with known inspired writings. The book quotes from the Old Testament 13 times. It passes that test very well.
2. “Hetty” Green was known as “America’s Greatest Miser.” She died in 1916, leaving an estate worth more than \$100,000. Yet it is said that she ate oatmeal cold, because it cost to heat it. And her son’s leg was amputated because she delayed too long while looking for a free clinic. She lived the life of a pauper when great wealth was at her fingertips.
3. This describes many Christians. They admit to having little, but do not tap the riches that are in Jesus. Ephesians was written to clear this up, to open our eyes to the riches we possess. Ephesians 1:18.
4. Those **riches** (vs. 7) includes the brotherhood of believers **in Christ**.

1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God, to the saints that are at Ephesus, and the faithful in Christ Jesus:

- A. **Paul.** Because these books were scrolls, the author nearly always put his name at the front so the scroll did not have to be unrolled to identify the sender.
- B. We know **which Paul** is meant: The one that was “sent from Jesus Christ.” Paul’s authority to speak for Jesus had been spelled out in earlier events, even at the time of his conversion. Acts 9:15 – *“But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings, and the children of Israel: 16 for I will show him how many things he must suffer for my name's sake.”* ASV
- C. Stepping back even further, Paul had been picked from birth (Galatians 1:11-17) to deliver this message to Gentiles.
- D. **Will of God.** God decided on the appointment and executed it through Jesus. (Acts 9:11-16) Those at Ephesus did not appoint him and he did not appoint himself.

- E. **Paul** is writing from house arrest in Rome. Acts 28:16; Eph. 3:1; 4:1; 6:20. A guard is present when he writes. This was a unique way to get the gospel into Caesar's personal guard. Phil. 1:12 - *Now I would have you know, brethren, that the things (which happened) unto me have fallen out rather unto the progress of the gospel; 13 so that my bonds became manifest in Christ throughout the **whole praetorian guard**, and to all the rest ; 14 and that most of the brethren in the Lord, being confident through my bonds, are more abundantly bold to speak the word of God without fear.* ASV
- F. **In Christ** and similar constructions are used many times in Ephesians. (Mark Copeland says there are 27 cases.) This is the key to understanding *who* is qualified for *what* in this text. To pass over this prerequisite leads to vagueness and uncertainty.
- G. Baptism is the route **into Christ**. Galatians 3:26 - *"For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ."* ASV Also Romans 6:1-9.
- H. They are **saints**. All of them, not just the Jewish segment of the church.
- I. They are people of faith in Christ Jesus. That is the sense of being **faithful**.

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

- A. This is a normal greeting for Paul's letters. **Grace** is meaningful to the Gentiles while **peace** hits the mark with the Jews.
- B. Here the words form a universal greeting, but there's more. The theme of **grace** begins unfolding in verse 6 and continues throughout the letter. Likewise, **peace** is discussed in 2:14 and then frequently through the remainder of the letter.
- C. Jews and Gentiles have a Father in common. **Our Father**. That makes *brothers* of Jews and Gentiles. This may have been difficult for the Jewish Christians to accept.

- D. Jesus is **Lord**, Master to the Gentiles and **Christ**, Messiah to the Jews. Bible writers frequently, but not always, note this distinction. See that the word **Christ** does not appear in Acts 17, Paul's sermon on Mars Hill. Gentiles were not looking for a Messiah. Paul told them who was **Lord**.

PAUL IDENTIFIES SOME BLESSINGS FROM THE FATHER.

(Verses 3 - 6)

3 Blessed (be) the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly (places) in Christ:

- A. In the Greek text, verse 3 - 12 form one sentence. English does not handle this well. Some translators have wisely made multiple sentences.
- B. **Blessed**. We could say, "Praise be to God who has blessed us . . ." Such wonders he had done for us!
- C. **Blessings** to Israel in the Old Testament were largely material blessings such as land, crops, flocks, herds and children. Now God's blessings to His people are primarily in the realm of the **spiritual**.
- D. **Heavenly places** is used five times and only in Ephesians. It probably means the religious or spiritual realm where Christ is the highest. Since this form of the word "heaven" does not appear elsewhere in the New Testament, it must have been a local term meaningful at Ephesus.
- "The expression 'in the heavenlies' (the dative plural) is peculiar to the epistle to the Ephesians." - Charles Welch in the *Berean Expositor*.
- E. **In Christ**, we have been lofted to the highest place in the spiritual realms because of the Lord's blessings. We are at the top now. There is no higher place to go. The top of Mt. Everest is not a launching pad for a higher climb.
- F. If people of faith have **every spiritual blessing**, all that is necessary is to become aware of the immense potential.

BLESSINGS FROM THE FATHER - continued

4 even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blemish before him in love:

- A. **Choosing us** was not a spontaneous act of the Father. He planned it long before the world was formed. Some mistakenly connect spontaneity with being spiritual. "I don't plan things, I let the Spirit lead."
- B. It is the Father's **love** that focused on us and it is the Father's **love** that enables us to be **holy and without blemish**.
- C. The usual question is whether God **chose** us as individuals or as a group. If individuals were selected, then we cannot control our destiny. But the letter was addressed in verse one to the class of those **in Christ** and the present statement is clear that we are to be **in him**.
- D. This group has long been **chosen** for ultimate perfection. Being in the group is our choice, but we know the outcome of the group.

5 having foreordained us unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ unto himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

- A. There are some things that cannot be avoided and one is that once believers are in **Christ**, they are **adopted** into the family as **sons** just as Jesus is a Son in the family.
- B. The cause of this **adoption** is the **will of God**. We didn't earn it, were not "worth it." Rather than being a concession that the Father made, he took great **pleasure** in making the **adoption** possible.
- C. **Adoption** is always an expression of grace by the adopting family toward the one being adopted. The child cannot earn the right to be adopted.
- D. Believers have been **adopted** and adopted children have the same rights as those who are born into the family. None of us are second-class members of the family of God. None.

BLESSINGS FROM THE FATHER - continued**6 to the praise of the glory of his grace, which he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved:**

- A. If we are not worth this superb treatment and did not earn it, then what is the source? The **grace** – the unearned favor – of God. The word was introduced in the greeting of verse two.
- B. **Freely.** He wasn't stingy with grace either. Because we are in the **Beloved**, we get it all.
- C. This **grace** and adoption are to lead us to **praise** and celebrate the Father and the Son – the **Beloved**. This is a title of the coming Messiah in Isaiah 44:2. *Beloved* translates the Hebrew *Jeshurun* in the Greek Septuagint translation of the Old Testament.
- D. Now we learn more of the character of the Father. He loves the Son so the Son is characterized as the **Beloved**.

Summary: Blessings from the Father include:

1. Our having been chosen by God. 1:4
2. Our being foreordained by God. 1:5-6

Speaking of the Beloved . . .

PAUL IDENTIFIES SOME BLESSINGS FROM THE SON.

(Verses 7 - 12)

7 in whom we have our redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace,

- A. The implication is that we are people in need of **forgiveness** and **redemption**. Rather than being *worthy* of God's promised blessings, we are *guilty* of breaking His laws.
- B. **Redemption:** "A releasing effected by a payment." The Jewish readers were familiar with **redemption** because their nation had been redeemed from Egypt. Exodus 15:13; Deuteronomy 7:8. That release was connected with the **blood** of a lamb.

BLESSINGS FROM THE SON - Continued

- C. The Gentile readers were acquainted with **redemption** from the slave market place where at times a slave would be purchased and freed.
- D. It is in the death of the **Beloved** that we can be forgiven of our **trespasses** and **redeemed** from our just due. The one that is the natural Son and Beloved of the Father shed his blood for us.
- E. Grace and more grace. Such riches we have!

8 which he made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence,

- A. And this grace is not in just-get-by quantities. It **abounds**. We can sing of **abundant grace**. The hymn *Wonderful Grace of Jesus* is on the next page.
- B. **Wisdom** is the knowledge which sees into the heart of things and **prudence** is the understanding that leads to right action.
- C. As William Barclay puts it, "Christ gives to men the ability to see the great ultimate truths of eternity and to solve the problems of each moment of time."

9 making known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he purposed in him

- A. Once a **mystery**, now **his will** has been made clear. He takes **pleasure** in making plans for our salvation. More about this later in the book.
- B. Mystery religions were common in the first century and they claimed to disclose great truths only to the initiated. Paul says that **God's will** is known to those **in Christ**.
- C. The arrangement works only because Jesus is involved. He is the key to the plan.

BLESSINGS FROM THE SON - continued

10 unto a dispensation of the fulness of the times, to sum up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens, and the things upon the earth; in him, (I say,)

- A. Based on Galatians 4:4 - 5, the time of Jesus on earth began the **fulness** of time. Galatians has the same Greek word for **fulness**.
- B. We are only saved **in Christ**. We are a part of his family. This lets **him** become the center of the universe, both the **heavens** and our planet.
- C. We are still exploring the riches in Christ in these statements.

11 in whom also we were made a heritage, having been foreordained according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his will;

- A. Rather than being made *into* a **heritage**, many translators say we have *received* a **heritage**. This agrees with verse 14. We have something worthwhile for time and eternity.
- B. Other translators see us as a gift *to* God based on God's eternal will. We choose "A."
- C. The adopted sons (here Israel primarily) have an **inheritance** coming and it can't be deflected. The **inheritance** (or **heritage**) was a common Old Testament theme. Exodus 32:13; Numbers 33:54; Deuteronomy 1:38; 12:10; 19:14.
- D. **God's will** has predestined (or **foreordained**) this spiritual **inheritance**. What could be more reliable than that? God does what he chooses. There is no higher authority.

BLESSINGS FROM THE SON - continued**12 to the end that we should be unto the praise of his glory, we who had before hoped in Christ:**

- A. **We who had before hoped** is clearly referring to Israel. Their hope was in the promised coming Messiah. Psalm 2. Isaiah 53.
- B. The role of the believer is to **praise** our glorious God for what he has done. Let us include regular praise in our days.
- C. These early remarks have been primarily aimed at the Jewish believer. He or she could relate to them. Now we look to the other group in the Ephesian church.
- D. We have been clued in to the big picture of world events. They make sense to the knowledgeable believer.

Summary: Blessings from the Son include:

1. Our having been redeemed by his blood - his death. 7a
2. Our being forgiven through grace. 7b - 8
3. Christ is to become supreme. 9 - 10
4. We have a heritage in Christ. 11 - 12

PAUL IDENTIFIES SOME BLESSINGS FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT.

(Verses 13 - 14)

13 in whom ye also, having heard the word of the truth, the gospel of your salvation,-- in whom, having also believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,

- A. **Ye also** brings the Gentiles brethren into the scope of the riches in Jesus.
- B. They **heard** and **believed**. There can be no exceptions to the formula.
- C. See that the blessing is **in Christ** for the Gentiles as well. This appears twice in one sentence in the form of **in whom**.

BLESSINGS FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT – Continued

- D. The idea of **sealing** comes from the King's signet ring. It was the symbol of the highest authority on official documents. One translator aptly says "were marked" in place of **sealed**.
- E. Every believer receives the **Holy Spirit** at immersion. Acts 2:38 - 39 and Ephesians 3:16 shows that all believers have the **Spirit**.
- F. The **Holy Spirit of promise** could look back to a promise like Acts 2:38-39, but probably looks forward. They may not have had access to Acts at that point in time. Consider the next verse and Ephesians 4:30.

14 which is an earnest of our inheritance, unto the redemption of (God's) own possession, unto the praise of his glory.

- A. God makes a down-payment (**earnest** money, first installment) on the wonderful things coming by giving *all believers* the Spirit. The Jewish Christians were hearing that the Gentiles have the Holy Spirit, too. We wonder how they processed that truth.
- B. This **inheritance** identified for the Jewish Christians in verse 11 is here restated for the Gentiles as well. The point is clear. God's plans include the Gentiles and on an equal footing.
- C. In one sense, we are **redeemed** now, but later a day of **redemption** awaits believers. Ephesians 4:30.
- D. Here is one more reason to **praise our glorious God**. Each of the sections: The Father, the Son and the Spirit ends with this statement.

15 For this cause I also, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which is among you, and the love which (ye show) toward all the saints,

- A. These Gentiles saints were people of **faith in the Lord** and they **loved** their Jewish brethren. They were active and Paul **had heard of their faith**.

- B. Notice that the “Christ” component of the Divine name is omitted in addressing the Gentiles in the church.
- C. They had a **love** that crossed the deep racial divide that existed between Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians. Some of the barriers included choice of foods, non-Jewish customs and more. Imagine the social problems of marriages and the events leading up to Jewish/Gentile marriages.

16 cease not to give thanks for you, making mention (of you) in my prayers;

- A. Paul **thanked** God for them regularly. It was a habit of his life.
- B. This writer from jail **thanked** the Lord for such a wonderful development of the faith as he had heard in them. It was exciting. His life work was producing results.
- C. Paul **prayed** for them just as he did for two other churches that he wrote to at this time. Philippians 1: 9 - 11; Colossians 1:9 - 12.
- D. The **thanks** were accompanied by the following request:

17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him;

- A. He prayed for increased **wisdom** for them. Wisdom was probably the process of using the information that they already had about Jesus. Processing what we already know into what we are doing takes wisdom.
- B. He also prayed for them to have increased **knowledge**. They needed to acquire more information about the **Lord**, perhaps from the prophets. In our day of the completed **revelation**, we call it Bible study.

18 having the eyes of your heart enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

- A. This letter they were receiving was designed to show their acquired **riches** in Jesus. This is a step toward answering the prayer.
- B. **Enlightenment.** Paul prayed for their inner vision so they would understand the **hope** they had because they had been **called** by God. Life, and especially its ending moment of death, take on an entirely new dimension.
- C. **Hope** has been defined as *desire with expectation*.
- D. We are **called** by the gospel of Jesus. It is not through a personal appearance of Jesus by night or by day.
- E. Paul prayed that they would understand this **inheritance** God has for all of the **saints**. It is the difference between a wasted life and a meaningful eternity. **Inheritance** looks forward to eternity.
- F. They needed to acquire a clear vision of their own place and purpose in life. Even in the church now, few grasp the purpose of life in Christ. We need to get that focus and keep it.

**19 and what the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to that working of the strength of his might
20 which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and made him to sit at his right hand in the heavenly (places),**

- A. God has incredible **power** to help each believer. He raises us from the dead. Ephesians 2:1 - 6. No other **power** could do this!
- B. God demonstrated his **strength** by **raising Jesus from the dead**, power that we cannot even grasp. He can provide **power** for our special needs.
- C. Not only was Christ restored to where he was, he was elevated to the **right hand of the Father**, the place of universal rule. The only one greater in authority is the Father himself. This fulfills the prophecy of Psalm 110:1 - 7.

21 far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:

- A. **Every name.** Jesus ranks above the deities at Temple of Diana or at any of the little temples on Harbor Street. God has made him infinitely superior in the realm of the spirit. Yet Paul does not attack the Harbor Street deities, either. This might have been counterproductive.
- B. No Caesar (guard, are you reading this?), no proconsul, no premier and no president is above Jesus.
- C. His is not a four-year term, but he rules in the **coming world** as well. The Father has settled that.

22 and he put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church,

- A. The language of **putting things under his feet** is drawn from the expansive Psalm 8, specifically verse 6. It was not a new revelation with Paul.
- B. The lofty role of Jesus is more than ceremonial. He is in charge of everything and actually **head of the church**. While most of humanity may not acknowledge his headship now, the church does.
- C. When we are *in Christ*, and in the **church**, all things work out for our benefit. Romans 8:28. Also consider Romans 8:35 - 39.

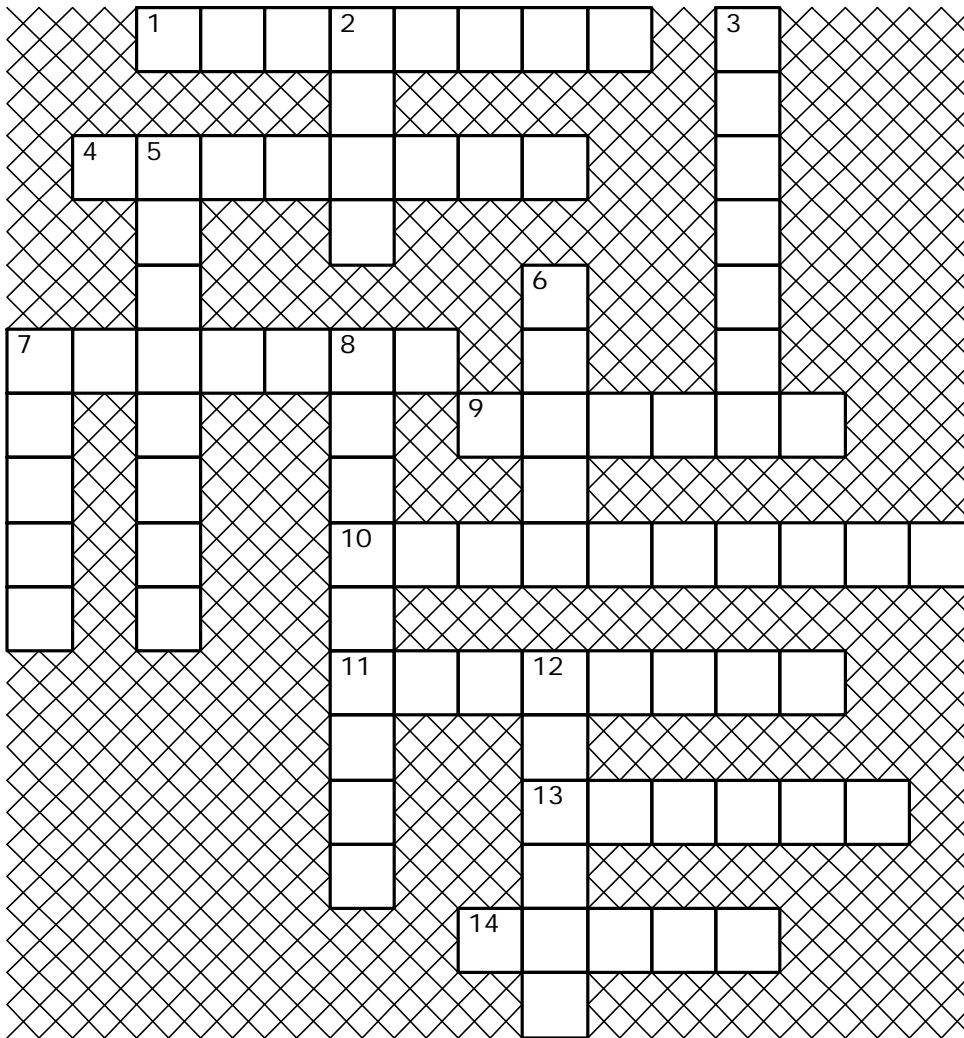
23 which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

- A. **His body.** The presence of Christ on earth is in his church.
- B. Hendriksen has an interesting comment here:

“As to his divine essence, Christ is in no sense whatever dependent on or capable of being completed by the church. But...”

- 1) “as a bridegroom he is incomplete without the bride”
- 2) “as a vine he cannot be thought of without the branches”
- 3) “as shepherd he is not seen without his sheep”
- 4) “and so also as head he finds his full expression in his body, the church” (*New Testament Commentary, Exposition of Ephesians*, William Hendriksen, p. 104)

Ephesians Notes Chapter 1
by Lois Dailey



Feb 5, 2001

Across

1. The time of Jesus on earth began the ____ of time.
4. Blessing in the Old Testament were largely ____ blessing.
7. The route into Christ.
9. Jews and Gentiles have a _____ in common.
10. A releasing effected by a payment.
11. The number of Old Testament quotations in Ephesians.
13. Jews referred to Jesus as _____.
14. It is in the _____ of the Beloved that we can be forgiven.

Down

2. Gentiles referred to Jesus as _____.
3. Christ is to become _____.
5. This _____ is the will of God.
6. Adoption is an expression of _____ by the adopting family.
7. Paul had been picked from _____ to deliver the message to the Gentiles.
8. Some mistakenly connect spontaneity with being _____.
12. Ephesians was written to open our eyes to the _____ we possess.

Introduction:**Next memory work: Eph. 3:16.**

1. The first chapter describes the wonderful blessings that were for the Jewish believer and shows they apply equally to the Gentile believers.
2. In order to fully appreciate the blessings *in Christ*, readers need to understand where they were prior to making Jesus their Lord. The contrast will deepen the appreciation. To comprehend their *present wealth*, they must understand their *former poverty*.
3. A component of the contrast is to describe the realm of the spirit that contains a number of deities. Jesus is superior to all of them. This was a local concept and Paul is using their understanding of the spiritual realm to show the excellence of Jesus. It is informative that Ephesians is the only book that talks about the *heavenly places*.
4. The best-known local god was Diana of the Ephesians. But there were small temples all up and down Harbor Street. There is a photo of one in the introduction to these notes. Behind every idol was a very real demon. 1 Corinthians 10:19-21. The *heavenly places* at Ephesus were extensively populated.
5. Paul acknowledges the realm of spiritual powers inhabited by demons and says that Jesus is the *ruler* of the spiritual realm. He is above all others.

2:1 And you (did he make alive,) when ye were dead through your trespasses and sins,

- A. **And you.** Paul is directing his statements to the Gentile segment of the church. The language is too severe to describe the conscientious Jewish synagogue members. Their part comes in verse three.
- B. . . . **did he make alive** has been added here by the translators to make the English read properly. In the Greek text, this verb is in verse 5.
- C. **Dead** here is not *separated* from God as in many other places, but *corpse-like* (nekroús). Gentiles were the walking dead.

The British John Stott's comments are informative here:

This biblical statement about the 'deadness' of non-Christian people raises problems for many because it does not seem to square with the facts of everyday experience. Lots of people who make no Christian profession whatever, who even openly repudiate Jesus Christ, appear to be very much alive. One has the vigorous body of an athlete, another the lively mind of a scholar, a third the vivacious personality of a film star. Are we to say that such people, if Christ has not saved them, are dead?

Yes, indeed, we must and do say this very thing. For in the sphere which matters supremely (which is neither the body, nor the mind, nor the personality, but the soul) they have no life. And you can tell it. They are *blind* to the glory of Jesus Christ, and *deaf* to the voice of the Holy Spirit. They have *no love* for God, *no sensitive awareness* of his personal reality, *no leaping* of their spirit towards him in the cry, 'Abba, Father', *no longing* for fellowship with his people.

They are as unresponsive to him as a corpse. So we should not hesitate to affirm that a life without God (however physically fit and mentally alert the person may be) is a living death, and that those who live it are dead even while they are living.

- D. **Trespasses** are events that go beyond God's boundaries and **sin** is missing God's target or mark. Neither is acceptable conduct.
- E. Some people believe in *total hereditary depravity*, that without conversion to Jesus, the individual is incapable of doing one good thing. God even has to convert them! This is not the case in this Scripture as we see next.

This doctrine is refuted in that many converted to Christ were already worshipers of God in some way. Conversions came from among "devout" Jews in Acts 2:5. The Ethiopian treasurer was returning from a long worship trip. Acts 8:27-28. Cornelius "prayed to God always." Acts 10:2. Lydia was a worshiper of God. Acts 16:13-14. Paul himself had been a zealous worshiper of God. Philippians 3:4-6.

2 wherein ye once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the powers of the air, of the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience;

- A. The **ye** separates the listeners from Paul, showing that he has in mind the Gentiles.
- B. Any Jewish reader would recognize **walk** (periepatésate) as being like the Hebrew word Halakah that referred to the oral law of the rabbis. This is where they taught the uninformed how to live. These were part of the traditions spoken of by Jesus in Mark 7:3, 5 and Paul in Galatians 1:14.

Halakah (Hebrew, "path" or "way"), in Judaism, the body of traditional law that is based on rabbinical interpretation and supplements the scriptural law contained in the Pentateuch, the Law of Moses. Transmitted by word of mouth by the highest rabbinical authorities, these supplementary laws were first written down in the Talmud, during the first five centuries of the Christian era, and in the Midrash, or scriptural exegesis. The Halakah is the purely legal content of these works, the illustrations and amplifications of the ethical, political, and religious principles involved in the laws being set down in the Haggada.

"Halakah," Microsoft Encarta Online. Encyclopedia 2000. <http://encarta.msn.com> c 1997-2000. Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

- C. They used to live (or **walk**) that way when they served the demon spirits. Whatever **prince** Satan said, they did. They were controlled by popular opinion where Satan is in control. "Everybody is doing it."
- D. **Sons of disobedience** are those who have not chosen to obey God but obey prince Disobedience. They serve a person, too. The Devil is more than a principle.

3 among whom we also all once lived in the lust of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest:--

- A. But this is true of more than Satan-obedient Gentiles. "**We** Jews," Paul says, "had the same problems." No one is holy by nature. If he were with us today, Paul would not be a Humanist that sees good in everyone and ignorance as the only problem. Sin, not ignorance, is our greatest problem.
- B. **We** did what we felt like - driven by **the desires of the flesh** equals being driven by feelings. "How do you feel about it" is heard

everywhere as the lynchpin for deciding right from wrong. This problem crosses all racial lines.

- C. . . . **the desires of the flesh** here are wider than merely desire for food, water, comfortable temperatures and sex. Self-centeredness may be a one-word description.
- D. **Nature** need not be from birth. Consider Romans 2:14. *Thayer's Lexicon* says:
 - c) a mode of feeling and acting which by long habit has become nature.
- E. **Even as the rest.** Being a descendent of Abraham was not a defense against sin. In many ways, Paul says, "We Jews are just like you Gentiles."
- F. The sin includes whatever the wicked mind could dream up to do. Our entertainment industry leads the way in making wicked practices widely understood and desirable.

4 but God, being rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,

- A. The natural, human condition was hopeless, but God broke in.
- B. Both Gentiles and Jews were destined for God's wrath. But then, there was the **love** of God that outweighed his wrath. Love is God's greatest quality.
- C. From that **love** flows his **mercy** towards us. His love is the root cause of his mercy. John 3:16.
- D. Thayer says of **mercy**: kindness or goodwill toward the miserable and the afflicted, joined with a desire to help them.
- E. God did not **love us** because we were loveable, but because He is loving. Consider 1 John 4:7 - 12. To sense the reality of this, let us call to mind the most repulsive person that we have met. We certainly cannot love him because of his charm.

5 even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace have ye been saved),

- A. Notice the continuing use of **we** and **us**, Jews and Gentiles. God reached down to give us life.
- B. We moved from being spiritual corpses (**dead**) into a **life** coupled **with Christ**. This is a resurrection by definition.
- C. The resurrection was not our doing, but the **grace** of God.

6 and raised us up with him, and made us to sit with him in the heavenly (places), in Christ Jesus:

- A. From a tiny beginning of life, we were **raised** (resurrected) with Jesus and now **sit** ourselves in **heavenly places**. (Discussed in detail in 1:3.) Believers are beside **Jesus** on His throne.
- B. That being true, the local deities are beneath all believers.

7 that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus:

- A. We haven't heard the whole story yet. It hasn't played out. There is much more to come in **ages to come**. God is making history for all to see.
- B. It would be wonderful to see that believers will enjoy the **riches of God's kindness**. But Paul says they are more than riches, they are **exceeding riches** towards us because we are **in Christ**.
- C. **Kindness** is love in action.

8 for by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, (it is) the gift of God;

- A. Believers are saved by **grace**. This is God's part. And so were *love* and *mercy* God's part. It was God that **made us alive and raised us up**. (Verses 5 and 6)
- B. Calvinists point out that even **faith** comes from God and we could not be saved without his choice of us. This is contradicted by the

footnote in the *New American Standard Bible* that reads: *that salvation*. To rephrase: “Ye have been saved through faith; and that salvation is not of yourselves . . .”

- C. We are not able to save ourselves. It is totally by God and from God. It is His gift to believers.

9 not of works, that no man should glory.

- A. We cannot earn salvation. Our baptism in order to identify with Christ is not a **work** of merit. Its value is symbolic and not meritorious. If merit was our objective, it would be better to mow a widow’s lawn than to be immersed. The mowing is active while the immersion is passive.
- B. If a few good people could earn salvation, they would really have something to talk about – to **glory** in.

10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them.

- A. **Workmanship.** God is making something meaningful and worthwhile out of us. Our purpose in life is now of his making. This being true, we could not have had a part in creating or earning salvation.
- B. We are not saved *by* good works, but **for good works**.
- C. **Afore.** This is not a recent idea from heaven either, but is part of the God’s great plan of the ages.
- D. **Walk** has been defined and illustrated in verse 2.

11 Wherefore remember, that once ye, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called Circumcision, in the flesh, made by hands;

12 that ye were at that time separate from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of the promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

- A. **Uncircumcision.** There was name-calling between Jews and Gentiles that had to be overcome in the Church. Name-calling, using religious terms, is a very crafty system of verbal abuse. Pharisee, antinomian and liberal are examples.
- B. Commentator William Barclay shows the depth of the *alienation*:

The Jew had an immense contempt for the Gentile. The Gentiles, said the Jews, were created by God to be fuel for the fires of hell. God, they said, loves only Israel of all the nations that he had made . . . It was not even lawful to render help to a Gentile mother in her hour of sorest need, for that would simply be to bring another Gentile into the world. Until Christ came, the Gentiles were an object of contempt to the Jews. The barrier between them was absolute. If a Jewish boy married a Gentile girl, or if a Jewish girl married a Gentile boy, the funeral of that Jewish boy or girl was carried out. Such contact with a Gentile was the equivalent of death.

- C. This writer was present one evening in San Jose, California. It was 1951 and Felix Freedman, a solid citizen of the Jewish community, responded to the invitation at the end of Brother A. Word's preaching. He accepted Jesus as the Messiah. It was reported that the Jews had his funeral and that he broke off with the Jewish community entirely.¹
- D. Before their life of faith, **Gentiles** had missed out on five crucial relationships:
1. They were **separate** from the Messiah of Israel. The Scriptures had pointed to Him over and over as the way of salvation. They were missing out entirely. A very few had become proselytes to Judaism.
 2. They were **alienated from** God's people Israel. Even though Israel was rejecting their Messiah, their lifestyle was far superior to that of the Gentiles.

¹ *Voice of Thunder, Heart of Tears* by Victor Knowles. Page 448. College Press.

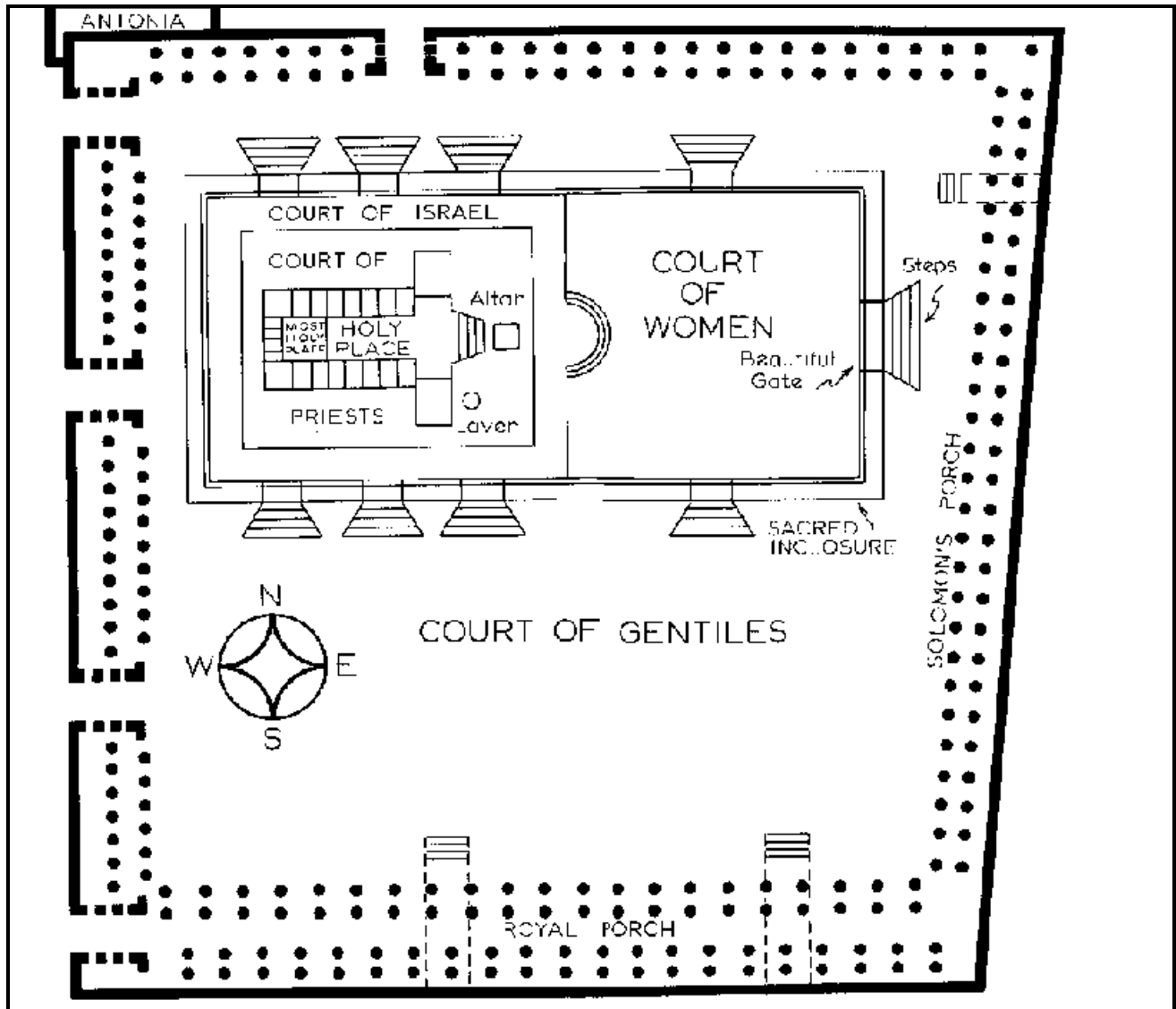
3. They had not even heard of the **covenants** that God had with His people Israel. Names like Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were unknown to them. In their culture, they learned the names of various gods and their escapades.
4. Life was without a purpose. There was **no hope** beyond death's inevitable door. They could not rightly answer the question, "Why are we here?"
5. Their deities were local idols that could not offer help. Diana was the best known of them, but Harbor street was lined with small idol temples. They were **without God**.

13 But now in Christ Jesus ye that once were far off are made nigh in the blood of Christ.

- A. Their new position is **in Christ**. Paul does not let them forget.
- B. The shed **blood** of **Christ Jesus** for both Gentiles that **were far off** and Jews brought all close to God first, and then to each other.

14 For he is our peace, who made both one, and brake down the middle wall of partition,

- A. Jesus' first word to his disciples after his resurrection was **Peace**. John 20:19. He is **peace** in person, **peace** on two feet.
- B. Probably **one** new race of men and they were in one body – death was abolishing death. The death of Jesus abolished the age-old enmity of Jews and Gentiles. The reasons for separation were abolished.
- C. Any Jew would have understood this **middle wall of partition** allusion. Herod's Temple at Jerusalem was partitioned. Jews could go in the inner areas, but the Gentiles were banned on pain of immediate *death*.



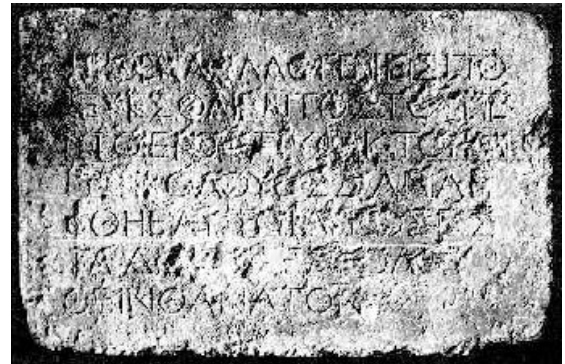
Warning signs were at the top of the steps.

D. The great historian Josephus describes what he saw:

When you go through these [first] cloisters, unto the second [court of the] temple, there was a partition made of stone all round, whose height was three cubits: its construction was very elegant; upon it stood pillars, at equal distances from one another, declaring the law of purity, some in Greek, and some in Roman letters, that "no foreigner should go within that sanctuary" for that second [court of the] temple was called "the Sanctuary," and was ascended to by fourteen steps from the first court. *Wars of the Jews*, V.5.2.

E. Two of the actual signs have been located. We are not left to guess what they may have contained. Here is a photo and a translation.

F. **"NO MAN OF ALIEN RACE IS TO ENTER WITHIN THE BARRICADE WHICH SURROUNDS THE TEMPLE. ANYONE WHO IS CAUGHT DOING SO WILL HAVE HIMSELF TO BLAME FOR THE PENALTY OF DEATH THAT FOLLOWS."**



G. Paul was accused of bringing a Gentile into the Temple area and would have been killed had not the Roman military intervened. As a matter of fact, the man he was accused of bringing in to the Temple was from Ephesus. Acts 21:27 - 31. Certainly Paul was thinking of this threat to his life as he wrote this verse.

15 having abolished in the flesh the enmity, (even) the law of commandments (contained) in ordinances; that he might create in himself of the two one new man, (so) making peace;

A. The Old Testament system of laws and ordinances for the Jews were **abolished** by the sacrifice of Jesus. This ends the keeping of special days, the observance of special diets, and the keeping of the sabbath days. Eating the proper food is no longer the way to God. Peter had to learn that in Acts 10.

16 and might reconcile them both in one body unto God through the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

A. The keeping of the *ordinances* of the Old Testament caused a deep enmity between Jews and Gentiles. Jews looked on the Gentiles with contempt as pagans, and the Gentiles thought of the Jews as narrow-minded religious fanatics. Now they were **reconciled in one body** – the church.

17 AND HE CAME AND PREACHED PEACE TO YOU THAT WERE FAR OFF, AND PEACE TO THEM THAT WERE NIGH:

- A. The idea of being **far** and near (**nigh**) was common in the Old Testament. See Deuteronomy 4:7 as an example. The passage quoted is drawn from Isaiah 57:19 but is not a precise quotation.
- B. If Israel was the **near** group, then the Gentiles were those **far off**.

18 for through him we both have our access in one Spirit unto the Father.

- A. **Both** groups have the same **Holy Spirit**, giving us all access to the **Father**. Having **access** to the Ruler of the Universe is not a trivial matter. Most of us do not even have access to the mayor of our own town. Corporations and other groups pay enormous sums of money to lobbyists for access to law makers. Access is life or death to many organizations. Bill Gates of Microsoft thought that lobbying was unnecessary and his company became the object of a government anti-trust suit.

19 So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God,

- A. Earlier in verse 12 it was established that they were **strangers**. They did not know God or His chosen people.
- B. They had been **strangers** or **sojourners**. In no way could they be considered citizens of God's great kingdom. Not even visitors.
- C. Now they are **fellow-citizens**. They are not in the kingdom with a passport, they are in it with citizenship papers.
- D. **Household**. Now they are family. Even adopted children inherit with natural-born children.

20 being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone;

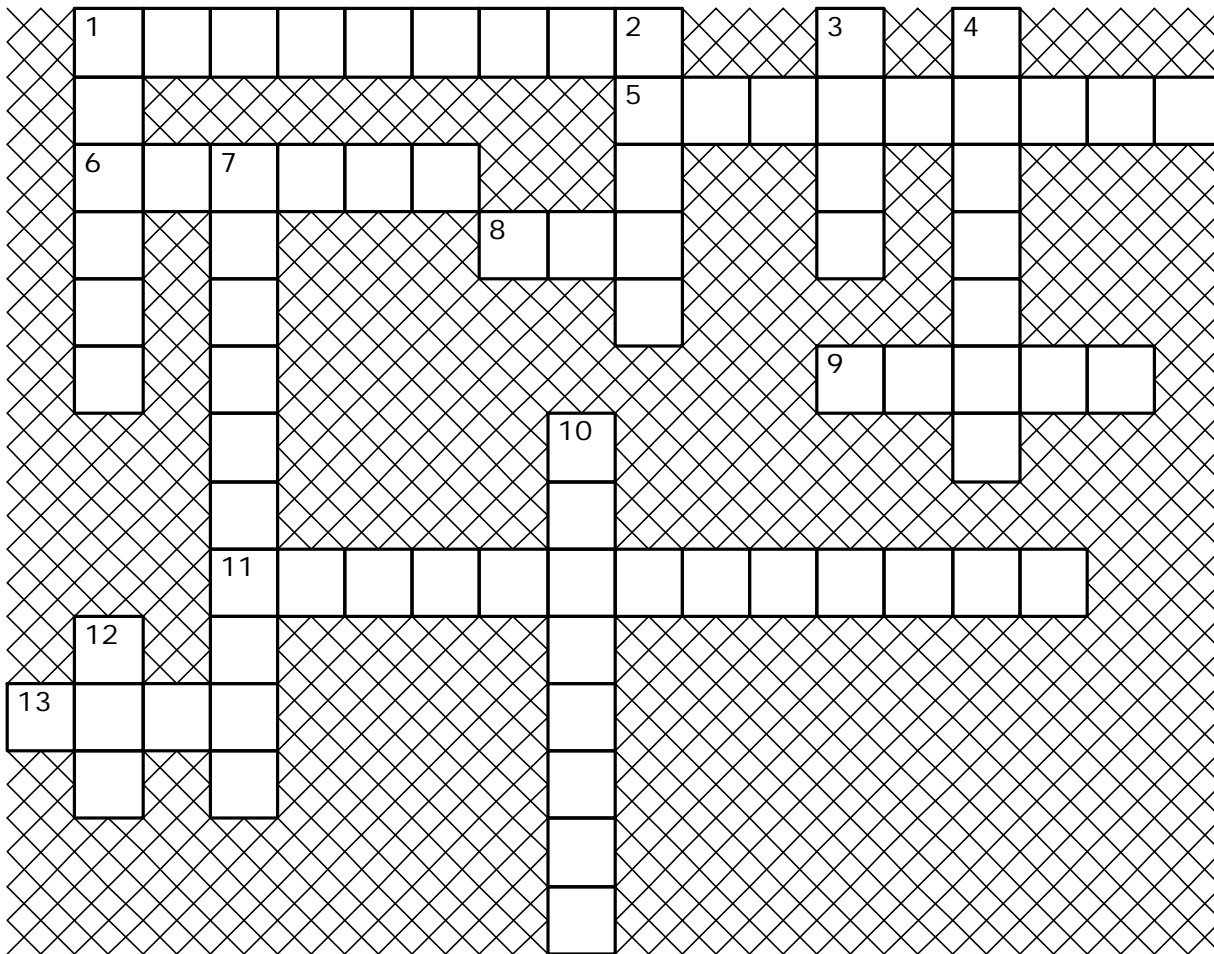
- A. The **foundation** was the verbal and written message, not the persons, of the **apostles** and **prophets**. The 12 were promised inspiration to get the story of Jesus right. John 14: 26; 16:13 -14.
- B. **Prophets** eventually included in writing the message were Mark, Luke, James and Jude.
- C. The Church is built on the *written record* of the **apostles and prophets**. This has provided the stability to the message that has lasted nearly 20 centuries. Both Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches rely on tradition, both oral and written, rather than on the written record of the **apostles and prophets**.
- D. It is Jesus that holds the story together – makes it cohesive. He is the **corner stone** that must be in place before the foundation is laid.

21 in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord;

- A. The church is like a **temple** that is being built (**groweth**). It is not material and not in one place. It is international. And construction never ceases.
- B. The **temple** is **holy**. Our conduct in the day-to-day world must not include much of its entertainment and the values created by that entertainment

22 in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit.

- A. **Habitation**. It is the temple of the Lord (Jesus, vs. 21), God (the Father) dwells in it by his **Spirit**. The Father, Son and Spirit are all involved.
- B. Paul spoke of the Christians as a group. This is far removed from the individualism of today where people claim to love Christ but stay away from “organized churches.”



Feb 15, 2001

Across

1. Gentiles were _____ from Israel.
5. Humanists see _____ as the only problem.
6. Dead, here, means like a _____.
8. Man's greatest problem.
9. Jesus is _____ in person.
11. The church is _____.
13. God's greatest quality.

Down

1. Jews and Gentiles have _____ to the Ruler of the Universe.
2. The best known local diety.
3. No one is _____ by nature.
4. Jewish oral traditions.
7. Jews and Gentiles are _____ in the church.
10. Love in action.
12. Not BY good work but _____ them.

Introduction:

1. The first chapter reviews the wonderful blessings available to the Jewish believer and shows the blessings apply equally to the Gentile believers.
2. It concludes on the theme that Christ is the head of the church and is present in all of us – both Jews and Gentiles – through the Spirit.
3. In the first half of chapter two, we learned that both Jews and Gentiles are God’s work of art, created for good works. But not saved by good works. The last half of the chapter discusses the breaking down of the wall of separation between Jews and Gentiles by Jesus’ death.

3:1 For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus in behalf of you Gentiles,--

- A. **For this cause.** Probably refers to the previous sentence where **Paul** said they were becoming a temple of God in 2:19-22, The chapter and verse divisions are not original but are late additions for convenience in handling the text.
- B. Ephesians was among the group of letters that **Paul** wrote while under house arrest in Acts 28. He was not in a prison, as such. But he was a **prisoner**. Robinson says, “He hears, as it were, the clink of his chain and remembers where he is and why he is there.”
- C. While it was Emperor Nero (54-68) who was holding Paul captive, he was there because of **Christ Jesus**. He was there by the will of his Master.
- D. Further, he was there because he stood for the rights of **Gentiles** to be saved. This is clear when we read Acts 21:27 – 22:22. Paul had been arrested over a **Gentile** issue (Acts 21:17-34) and threatened with death (Acts 22:21-24) because he said that God sent him to the **Gentiles**. Acts 26:12-23. The readers needed to know this bit of history.

- E. Paul interrupts his flow of thought at the end of verse 1. It repeats and continues in verse 14. This is an indication that he was dictating the text to a secretary, not writing it out.

2 if so be that ye have heard of the dispensation of that grace of God which was given me to you-ward;

- A. There is a clue here that Paul was writing for a wider audience than just the Ephesian Christians. Or, he may have been writing to a new generation at Ephesus. “. . . **if indeed you have heard . . .**”
- B. **God’s grace** is seen here in two ways:
1. That God would select Paul as a mouthpiece. “. . . **given to me . . .**” Galatians 2:7-9.
 2. That God would include the Gentiles in his plan for the ages. **“you-ward”**

3 how that by revelation was made known unto me the mystery, as I wrote before in few words,

- A. Paul had a special assignment from God. It was to make known God’s **mystery**.
- B. In English, a **mystery** is something dark, obscure, secret or puzzling. The Greek idea is different. John Stott: “More simply, a *myst’rion* is a truth hitherto hidden from human knowledge or understanding but now disclosed by the revelation of God.”

musterion ^{^3466^}, primarily that which is known to the mustes, “the initiated” (from mueo, “to initiate into the mysteries”; cf. <Phil. 4:12>, mueomai, “I have learned the secret,” RV). In the NT it denotes, not the mysterious (as with the Eng. word), but that which, being outside the range of unassisted natural apprehension, can be made known only by divine revelation, and is made known in a manner and at a time appointed by God, and to those only who are illumined by His Spirit. In the ordinary sense a “mystery” implies knowledge withheld; its Scriptural significance is truth revealed. Hence the terms especially associated with the subject are “made known,” “manifested,” “revealed,” “preached,” “understand,” “dispensation.” The definition given above may be best illustrated by the following passage: “the mystery which hath been hid from all ages and generations: but now hath it been manifested to His saints” <Col. 1:26>, RV.

(from *Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words* © 1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers.)

- C. Paul is claiming direct **revelation** from God. He is God's spokesperson - an apostle of Jesus Christ. His writings guided the church of his time and they still guide us. The message traveled from God to Paul to pen to reader.
- D. "**Wrote before.**" Probably *not* referring to a previous epistle to them, but to an earlier part of this one. So A. T. Robertson in *Word Pictures* and many other commentators. It may refer to 1:9. Also consider verse 4 that follows.

4 whereby, when ye read, ye can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ;

5 which in other generation was not made known unto the sons of men, as it hath now been revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit;

- A. The members of the body could **read**. Those who picture them as illiterate people miss the mark. Paul intended they could **read** and **understand** the former **mystery**.
- B. This is yet another claim that Paul is writing an inspired message.
- C. It is true that the Old Testament foretold that Gentiles would be included in God's plans. This is repeated frequently and does not depend on just a sentence or two. Psalm 67 is a case.
- D. But now some very important additions have been made to these predictions. An entirely new society has come into being.
- E. God has **revealed** some new truth through **his apostles and prophets**. The **Spirit** of God has done this.
- F. Paul is not the sole revealer. It was not his private message, but all of the **apostles and prophets** agreed.

6 (to wit), that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs, and fellow-members of the body, and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel,

- A. In three ways the **Gentiles** are on a par with the Jewish believers.
1. They are **fellow-heirs**. They are not servants that are allowed into heaven, but they have the same standing as saints in Israel.
 2. Gentiles are **fellow-members** of the body. There is no two-tier system with the Jews sitting at the front and the **Gentiles** in back as they did in the synagogues.
 3. The Gentiles are **fellow-partakers** of the promise. There is no difference.
- B. **The promise is in Christ Jesus.** Earlier we have discussed how to be united with Him.
- C. So the union is double – (**fellow-**) with each other and with **Christ**.
- D. The mystery revealed *to* Paul (vs. 4) is the same as the **gospel** proclaimed *by* Paul.
- E. John Stott's comment is useful here:

“But what neither the Old Testament nor Jesus revealed was the radical nature of God's plan, which was that the theocracy (the Jewish nation under God's rule) would be terminated, and replaced by a new international community, the church; that this church would be ‘the body of Christ’, organically united to him; and that Jews and Gentiles would be incorporated into Christ and his church on equal terms without any distinction. It was this complete union of Jews, Gentiles and Christ which was radically new, and which God revealed to Paul, overcoming his entrenched Jewish prejudice.”

7 whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of that grace of God which was given me according to the working of his power.

- A. It was God that made Paul a **minister** and empowered his ministry. A guard was almost certainly chained to him at the moment.

B. Paul had the privilege of a personal commission.

8 Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, was this grace given, to preach unto the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;

- A. **Least.** This may be a play on Paul's name. *Paulus* in Latin means *small* and he was said to be small in stature.
- B. Paul sees God's **grace** as overwhelming. He sees himself as **the least of the saints** because of his earlier opposition to Christ, his message and his followers. 1 Corinthians 15:9; 1 Timothy 1:12-15. Yet God chose him to deliver the good news to the **Gentiles**.
- C. His commission was to evangelize the **Gentiles**. He is, to some degree, doing that in the letter he is writing here. Think how personally degrading this could have been to a highly-trained Pharisee such as Paul.
- D. **Unsearchable.** They cannot be "tracked out."
- E. **Riches:** 1:4, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13; 2:5, 6, 13, 16, 18, 19, 22.
- F. Hear John Stott:

"What these riches are we may judge from Paul's exposition in Ephesians 1 and 2. They are riches freely available because of the cross. They include *resurrection* from the death of sin, *victorious enthronement* with Christ in the heavenlies, *reconciliation* with God, *incorporation* with Jewish believers in his new society, the *end of hostility* and the *beginning of peace*, *access* to the Father through Christ and by the Spirit, *membership* of his kingdom and household, being an integral *part of his dwelling place* among men, and all this only a foretaste of yet more riches to come, namely the riches of the glory of the *inheritance* which God will give to all his people on the last day."

9 and to make all men see what is the dispensation of the mystery which for ages hath been hid in God who created all things;

10 to the intent that now unto the principalities and the powers in the heavenly (places) might be made known through the church the manifold wisdom of God,

- A. **Make all men see.** Some translations have “. . . bring to light . . .” This is an interesting figure of speech from Paul’s pen. Certainly it was a physical light on the road to Damascus that enabled a spiritual light in his soul. His life was dedicated to bringing light to the Gentiles (**all men**).
- B. God is the creator of all things and now he has again **created**. This time it is a *new class of people* from the ruins of their own past. They are in the **church** and it is through the church that **God** is showing his **wisdom**.
- C. Their former religions could not bring anything to light. Idols and their demon backers cannot redeem men and women, cannot lift them, cannot give them hope, cannot free them and cannot solve their conflicts.
- D. In our day of “everyone doing his own thing” and hearing that it is only “our personal relationship with Christ that counts,” the inspired apostle says that the **church** is God’s show piece to all of humanity, both by what it is and what it teaches.
- E. Organizations that we create to accomplish good in place of the **church** are suspect. Lodges for fraternal encouragement, mission societies as sending agencies, organizations like *World Vision* for help with disasters. Somehow, these can be done through the church so the Lord gets the glory directly.
- F. John Stott puts it graphically:

“The church as a multi-racial, multi-cultural community is like a beautiful tapestry. Its members come from a wide range of colorful backgrounds. No other human community resembles it. Its diversity and harmony are unique. It is God’s new society. And the many-coloured fellowship of the church is a reflection of the many-coloured (or ‘many-splendoured’, to use Francis Thompson’s word) wisdom of God.

“So then, as the gospel spreads throughout the world, this new and variegated Christian community develops. It is as if a great drama is being enacted. History is the theater, the world is the stage, and church members in every land are the actors. God himself has written the play, and he directs and produces it. Act by act, scene by scene, the story continues to unfold.”

- G. The **church** was not an afterthought, but a central part of God’s plan to demonstrate his **wisdom**. The alternate view says that Israel rejected God’s kingdom so he temporarily substituted the church until he could try again.

11 according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:

12 in whom we have boldness and access in confidence through our faith in him.

- A. God showing His wisdom through the church was not a spontaneous idea. It was a part of his **eternal purpose**.
- B. **Boldness**. Carries the idea of *freedom of speech*. Paul uses the word again in 6:19. It is used many places including Acts 4:31.
- C. Again, the subject of **access** has come up. *We can* each reach God on our own and we *cannot* benefit from a special class of priests, such as in the Roman Catholic system.
- D. This **access** is amazing to other world religions that rely on a priesthood to connect worshipers with the deities.
- E. John Stott paints a new picture of history:

“Secular history concentrates its attention on kings, queens and presidents, on politicians and generals, in fact on ‘VIPs’. The Bible concentrates rather on a group it calls ‘the saints’, often little people, insignificant people, unimportant people, who are however at the same time God’s people and for that reason are both ‘unknown (to the world) and yet well-known (to God)’.

“Secular history concentrates on wars, battles and peace treaties, followed by yet more wars, battles and peace treaties. The Bible

concentrates rather on the war between good and evil, on the decisive victory won by Jesus Christ over the powers of darkness, on the peace-treaty ratified by his blood, and on the sovereign proclamation of an amnesty for all rebels who will repent and believe.

“Again, secular history concentrates on the changing map of the world, as one nation defeats another and annexes its territory, and on the rise and fall of empires. The Bible concentrates rather on a multi-national community called ‘the church’, which has no territorial frontiers, which claims nothing less than the whole world for Christ, and whose empire will never come to an end.”

13 Wherefore I ask that ye may not faint at my tribulations for you, which are your glory.

- A. When his friends thought of Paul in chains, they may have been discouraged. But the route to **glory** passes through the land of **tribulation**. It did with Jesus and it may with us.
- B. The devil would be delighted if they had such feelings for Paul’s troubles they just quit and went back to the world.
- C. The sentence ends with this verse.

**14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father,
15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named,**

- A. Paul had started a prayer in verse one. After interrupting his own thoughts, he returns to them this new sentence.
- B. **Bow my knees.** The posture in prayer is not critical, but Jews generally stood for prayer, Mark 11:25. David sat, 1 Chron. 17:16. Jesus fell on his face, Matthew 26:39.
- C. Because Paul has access (verse 12), he can pray effectively.
- D. Verse 15 is difficult to understand as translated in the ASV.

The Living Bible says, “When I think of the wisdom and scope of his plan, I fall down on my knees and pray to the Father of all the great

family of God - some of them already in heaven and some down here on earth . . . ”

“ . . . from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name.” NIV

“ . . . from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named . . . ” NKJV

Rather than saying that *every family in heaven and on earth derives their name from God*, he is saying that *the entire family of God on earth and in heaven derives their name from God*.

16 that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, that ye may be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward man;

- A. *Prayer requests:* **Strength** for the **inner** man (vs. 16); that Christ may dwell in their hearts, (vs17); that they may comprehend Christ’s love; that they may be filled with God (vs. 19).
- B. The **power** to be successful in the face of fierce opposition from Satan and the other religious forces comes straight from God. Paul prays for their **strength** in the face of resistance. The means is by God’s **Spirit** in our inner person. He grants the **power** to say NO at critical times.
- C. Perhaps this is why so many denominational “superstars” fall to financial scandal or immorality. They preach well, but lack the help of the Holy Spirit.

17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; to the end that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,

- A. How does the literal **Christ dwell** in us? Always by means of His Spirit that he gives when we are baptized into Him. Acts 2:38. Since we cannot be specific about how our own spirit dwells in us, we are not able to be more specific about how the Holy Spirit dwells there either.

- B. The **inner man** of verse 16 is identical to **your hearts** in verse 17. Both are talking about our spirits.
- C. **Dwelling** is a word showing *residence* rather than just lodging overnight as we might at a motel. Learning Christ makes us stable, reliable people.
- D. **Rooted** is drawn from the orchard. Many trees put down deep roots to withstand the elements. So must we.
- E. **Grounded** is drawn from building construction. We are to be fastened deeper and deeper in Christ as we grow more and more in **love**. Tall buildings go many stories down into the earth.

**18 may be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,
19 and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled unto all the fulness of God.**

- A. The **love** will enable us to **comprehend** (a better word here) the dimensions of what God has done for us.
- B. Paul wanted all of the saints to grasp the scope of **Christ's love**. Compare Romans 8:37-39. **Christ's love** is measureless.
- C. John Stott says,

“. . . the love of God is 'broad' enough to encompass all mankind (Especially Jews and Gentiles, the theme of these chapters), 'long' enough to last for eternity, 'deep' enough to reach the most degraded sinner, and 'high' enough to exalt him to heaven.”
- D. Paul ran out of words. The **love of Christ** is greater than we can express because language is inadequate. **Surpassing** is a favorite word for Paul. Eph. 1:19 - “and what is the **surpassing** greatness of His power toward us who believe.”

Eph. 2:7 - “so that in the ages to come He might show the **surpassing** riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”

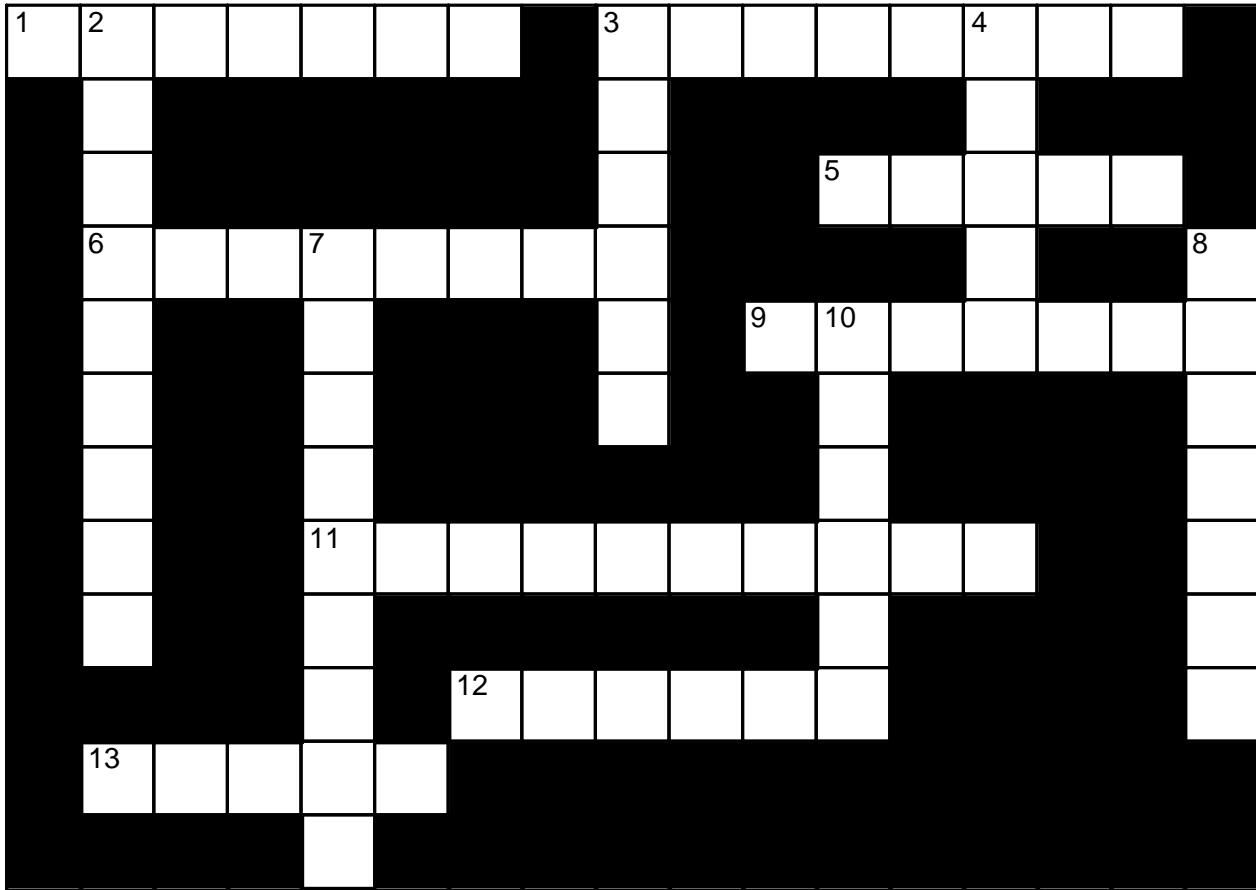
- E. Each of us needs to have our **comprehension** of Christ's love expanded. It is **love** that enables us to become God-like.
- F. It seems that our goal for growing is to become like God – and we never will.
- G. Mystery religions touted **knowledge** as the ultimate. Paul says “no,” **love surpasses knowledge**.

20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

- H. Not only can God answer our prays, He can go way beyond our wildest imaginations. We can't even dream up the things that he can actually do. He is a God of super abundance.
- I. God can accomplish these wonderful things through saints as individuals and the church as a whole.

21 unto him (be) the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations for ever and ever. Amen. ASV

- A. The grand climax of history will be the total focus on the **glory** of God by the **church**. The *Living Bible* says, “May he be given glory forever and ever through endless ages because of his master plan of salvation for the Church through Jesus Christ.”



Mar 5,2001

Across

1. The idea of being rooted is drawn from an _____.
3. Paul was to evangelize the _____.
5. Paul was likely chained to one.
6. Paul is writing an _____ message.
9. Emperor Nero was holding Paul _____.
11. Paul had a special _____ from God.
12. Helps us to resist Satan.
13. Gentiles are fellow _____ with Jewish believers.

Down

2. Dwelling is a word showing _____.
3. Paul's writing _____ the church of his time.
4. Paul calls himself the _____ of all the saints.
7. Gentiles are fellow _____ with the Jewish believers.
8. Gentiles are fellow _____ of the body.
10. Paul was under house _____.

Introduction:

1. For three chapters, Paul has been demonstrating God's wisdom in creating a new society composed of Jews and Gentiles.
2. Paul sees an alienated humanity being reconciled, a fractured humanity being united, even a new humanity being created. It is a magnificent vision.
3. Because God has done all of this, he expects new standards of living, both as individuals and as groups of saints in the church.
4. The subject moves now from doctrine to duty.
5. This new society has two major characteristics: It is ONE people, the family of God and it is HOLY people leading to purity of life. The first subject is discussed in verses 1 - 16 and the second begins in verse 17.
6. This is the second of two classic New Testament passages on unity, the other being Jesus' prayer in John 17.
7. These verses about *oneness* can be outlined:
 - A. Oneness of the body depends on the love in each person's character. 1-2.
 - B. Oneness comes from the unity of our God. 3 - 6
 - C. Oneness is enriched by the diversity of our gifts. 7-12
 - D. Oneness is the outgrowth of teaching and maturity. 13-16

4:1 I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called,

- A. **I therefore.** The doctrinal section forms the basis for the duty section. The desired changes in conduct cannot be obtained by starting at this point in the book.

- B. Francis Foulkes says. “. . . in these remaining chapters he is going to write about the quality and kind of life that is demanded of them individually and in the fellowship of Christ’s Church.”
- C. This **prisoner** reminds them of the cost of their new state and Paul begs them to live in harmony with their **calling**. **Beseech** is a strong word, both in Greek and English.
- D. **Walk** is that word familiar to the Jews, reminding them of their oral law. See comments on 2:2. “Match your life style with your calling by God”

2 with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;

- A. **Lowliness** is required. Some translations use **humility** here. It was despised among the Greeks. For them, it described how a slave would behave. Philippians 2:8 shows that Jesus humbled himself and in the gospels he called for humility among his followers. Matthew 11:29 - 30. It is a step toward living in harmony with other believers. The word appears in Philippians 2:6-8 describing Jesus.
- B. **Humility** enables us to recognize the worth and value of other people. This would be a problem in the Jewish / Gentile church. It may still be a problem even where we do not have such a good excuse.
- C. **Meekness** is required. Some translations have **gentleness**. It is the gentleness of the strong whose strength is under control. It is the absence of the disposition to *assert personal rights*. Jesus said that he combined these two traits. Matthew 11:29.
- D. **Longsuffering** is required. This is the idea of being longsuffering toward people who aggravate us. Patience is easy toward those we love deeply.
- E. **Forbearing** or **tolerance** is required. The very word implies that things will be going on that we do not like. Things will not be done our way.

- F. **Love** is required to make the four qualities work. While we all agree to this, how is it applied?

Love helps the other person to be right. Listen for our own responses.

Do they begin with “Oh no, that’s not right”?

Do they open with “Yes, but”

Do they open with “That’s foolish.”

We need to encourage one another rather than find fault with each other.

3 giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

- A. **Being diligent** means to “spare no effort.” The command is not passive, but active. It is our responsibility.
- B. There are two kinds of **unity** here. The **unity of the Spirit** in verse three, and the **unity of the faith** in verse 13. We have been given the unity of the Spirit and need to **preserve** it. We work toward attaining the **unity of the faith**.
- C. **Bond of peace.** At times small churches self-destruct because the members cannot get along with each other. Most church issues can be handled in a peaceful way.

4 (There is) one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all.

- A. There is **one body** (one church) because there is
- B. **One Spirit.** The nature of God (unity in the godhead)) controls the nature of the church. See 1 Corinthians 12:13.
- C. The **calling** has been discussed earlier in Ephesians. The **hope** of that calling is eternal life with Jesus Christ.

- D. There is **one Lord**. Jesus has no competition. He claimed to be THE Way. Only Jesus overcame death by resurrection. He is Lord.
- E. There is **one faith**. There is only one system of belief suitable for the God that we serve.
- F. There is **one baptism**. The word, when not modified by anything, means immersion in water. This rules out the continuation of Holy Spirit baptism.
- G. There is **one God and Father**. He is everything to everybody. He is all pervasive.
- H. These *seven great truths* are the foundation of the Christian faith.
- I. **Who is over all, . . .** We live in a God-created, God-controlled, God-sustained and God-filled world.

7 But unto each one of us was the grace given according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

- A. Christ is passing out gifts to his church. It is not his intention that every believer be identical with every other believer. In this sense, there is unity in because of our diversity.
- B. Most of the gifts of Romans 12:3-8 were not the temporary miracle-working type. They are gifts that we might have personally.

8 Wherefore he saith, WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH, HE LED CAPTIVITY CAPTIVE, AND GAVE GIFTS UNTO MEN.

- A. This verse from Psalm 68:18 was associated in the synagogue lectionary with the reading at Pentecost. (Bruce) It is reasonable to understand it as a prophetic reference to Christ's ascension.
- B. Some have understood this to mean that he recaptured those who had been taken captive. A case of this occurred in Genesis 14:14-16 and one in Judges 5:12.
- C. From the bounties of war He gave out gifts to the former captives.

9 (Now this, He ascended, what is it but that he also descended into the lower parts of the earth?)

10 He that descended is the same also that ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.)

- A. John Stott believes this refers, not to events in space, but to the humiliation that Jesus faced. There is some evidence of this in that he was exalted above the heavens - probably the pagan religions.
- B. *The Living Bible* uncomplicates the thought by saying, "The psalmist tells about this, for he says that when Christ returned triumphantly to heaven after his resurrection and victory over Satan, he gave generous gifts to men. 9 Notice that it says he returned to heaven. This means that he had first come down from the heights of heaven, far down to the lowest parts of the earth. 10 The same one who came down is the one who went back up, that he might fill all things everywhere with himself, from the very lowest to the very highest." TLB

11 And he gave some (to be) apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

- A. An apostle here is one of the 12 **apostles** of Christ. That office was a gift to the church. They spoke and wrote the will of Jesus. John 16:13. After the original apostles died, they were not replaced.
- B. **Prophets**, when included with apostles, refers to that class of men that were connected to the apostles, but not part of them. Easy examples are Mark and Luke. Luke wrote more of the New Testament than any other writer if Hebrews is not assigned to Paul. As the New Testament Scriptures were written and distributed, apostles and prophets were not replaced.
- C. **Evangelists** were, and are, men with the gifts of spreading the message of Christ to unconverted, unchurched people. Not so many have this gift. Those who do are generally tied down by internal church responsibilities. Unlike the Apostles and Prophets, they are not inspired spokesmen.

- D. **Pastors** – the word means shepherds. The shepherds in the church were the elders. 1 Peter 5:1-4. It is best to use the word that way.
- E. **Teachers** were those who could communicate the will of God from oral or written sources to the untaught listener. Acts 13:1; 1 Corinthians 12:29; Hebrews 5:12.

12 for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ:

- A. All of the above leaders – apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers – have one goal: To equip the church for service. The leaders are not to **do** the work, but they are to **equip** others to do it. Naturally, in order to teach others, they must have had some experience of their own.
- B. **Ministering** or service is a major purpose of the **body**. Ephesians 2:10.

13 till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

- A. Our other goal of unity is the **unity of the faith**. We are to develop and learn to be more like **the Son of God**.
- B. Maturity includes **unity** and **knowledge**. This does not mean that we settle on the lowest common denominator. One line of thinking has it that leaders should teach little more than the very basics of the Christian faith. A controlling principle here should be to teach the whole counsel of God over time. Acts 20:26-27.
- C. This way the church will be more and more like **Christ**.

14 that we may be no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error;

- A. Learning to be like Christ brings stability. There are some admirable traits of **children**, but unchangeableness is not one of them. They change their minds all of the time.

- B. **Tossed** like a cork in a storm, untaught saints follow every wind in their belief system. First, they have gone into this, then that, then a third thing.
- C. **Sleight** is related to our word dice.
- D. There are schemers that want to trick the untaught to follow them, usually for their money.

15 but speaking truth in love, we may grow up in all things into him, who is the head, (even) Christ;

- A. John Stott puts the balance to **speaking the truth in love.**

“Thank God there are those in the contemporary church who are determined at all costs to defend and uphold God's revealed truth. But sometimes they are conspicuously lacking in love. When they think they smell heresy, their nose begins to twitch, their muscles ripple, and the light of battle enters their eye. They seem to enjoy nothing more than a fight.

Others make the opposite mistake. They are determined at all costs to maintain and exhibit brotherly love, but in order to do so are prepared even to sacrifice the central truths of revelation. Both these tendencies are unbalanced and unbiblical.

Truth becomes hard if it is not softened by love; love becomes soft if it is not strengthened by truth. The apostle calls us to hold the two together, which should not be difficult for Spirit-filled believers, since the Holy Spirit is himself ‘the Spirit of truth’, and his firstfruit is ‘love.’ There is no other route than this to a fully mature Christian unity.”

16 from whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in (due) measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love.

- A. Paul’s traveling companion for a few years was Dr. Luke. Now he uses a metaphor drawn from Luke’s profession.

- B. *The Living Bible* is smooth here: “Under his direction, the whole body is fitted together perfectly, and each part in its own special way helps the other parts, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.”

17 This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye no longer walk as the Gentiles also walk, in the vanity of their mind,

- A. We are hearing straight from the Lord here. Talk about authority!
- B. It is clear that learning of the Lord would lead to some very specific life changes. Some of these are now set forth in detail.
- C. Certainly not all Gentiles could be described this way, but the Gentile lifestyle had these elements and was commonly seen.

18 being darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardening of their heart;

- A. The Gentiles lived based on their lack of understanding on how to live. Such conduct leads to a callous heart. Numerous failures at living finally cause one to be hardened in heart.

19 who being past feeling gave themselves up to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

- A. They are driven by their senses and this leads to the oft-heard justification, “If it feels good, do it.”
- B. **Lasciviousness** is translated as *sensuality* in the NASVU.
- C. Their sexuality become the driving force in their lives and they don’t care who gets hurt. Sex is a wonderful gift from God that is capable of leaving very deep scars when it is misused.

20 But ye did not so learn Christ;

21 if so be that ye heard him, and were taught in him, even as truth is in Jesus:

- A. Being “in Christ” leads to a **learning** process. That means reading and taking classes or whatever it takes to learn. Christianity, unlike nearly all others, is a **learning** religion. We must **learn** Christ by study or from the example of others.
- B. Home study is important and church classes are important. This leads to enlightenment as compared to the Gentiles in verse 18 that had a darkened understanding. While **learning** about Jesus is not all facts and data, yet these cannot be ignored in favor of merely experiencing a relationship with Jesus.

22 that ye put away, as concerning your former manner of life, the old man, that waxeth corrupt after the lusts of deceit;

- A. There are some lifestyle items to lay aside. The Greek text does not say that it is to begin now, but that they are already in the process.

**23 and that ye be renewed in the spirit of your mind,
24 and put on the new man, that after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth.**

- A. The **renewal** starts in our **spirits**. Passing laws has only limited value in correcting conduct.
- B. **Holiness of truth**. This is an interesting phrase that points us back to God and his **holiness**. Such is the leading characteristic of God and appears in Scriptures in triplet form: Holy, Holy, Holy. Isaiah 6:1-3. More than live, justice or power, our God is Holy.
- C. Since He is separated (for that is the definition of holiness) from all wickedness, He reveals only **truth**.
- D. Now Paul lists six examples of relationships within the church and each has a negative prohibition followed by a positive replacement.

25 Wherefore, putting away falsehood, SPEAK YE TRUTH EACH ONE WITH HIS NEIGHBOR: for we are members one of another.

- A. Straightforwardness is called for. But this is not an excuse to gossip or be critical, either. Sometimes these are done in the name of “honesty.”

- B. Zechariah 8:16 is the source of the quotation. It may be well to examine it in context.
- C. We have a close bond in Christ and must act that way. We are members of the same body. See 4:12 - 16.

**26 BE YE ANGRY, AND SIN NOT: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:
27 neither give place to the devil.**

- A. The quotation is from Psalm 4:4 in the LXX. That's why the capital letters.
- B. Being **angry** may not be entirely controllable, but it is the doorway to sin. Jesus was recorded as being angry in Mark 3:5, but He didn't stay that way.
- C. Brooding over **anger** is forbidden. (Except in Nome, Alaska!)
- D. **Anger**, retained over time, becomes **wrath**. *Generally* in the New Testament, anger is the first reaction to something we do not like and wrath is retaining the anger over time. God's wrath will be seen at Judgment.
- E. The devil likes to redirect angry people into malice, revenge and attitudes that are similar.

28 Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing that is good, that he may have whereof to give to him that hath need.

- A. The Greek word for **steal** is where businesses get "stock shrinkage." Ho klépton. We are not discussing armed robbery, but picking up little things.
- B. Things that fit this: tax evasion, copyright violations (Napster), doing poor work or even sleeping on the job.
- C. Instead of improving our net-worth by stealing a few things, we are to work to provide for others. That person that never has enough to

help the needy is both violating the Word of God and missing a blessing in life.

- D. Probably controlling the impulse to acquire all of the time will make the giver come off in a stronger financial position.

29 Let no corrupt speech proceed out of your mouth, but such as is good for edifying as the need may be, that it may give grace to them that hear.

- A. Unwholesome words are prohibited. We are not even to quote the other person's vulgarities!
- B. Notice that this is not limited to swearing.
- C. Further, we are to say only **edifying** things, comments that build. Proverbs 12:18.
- D. Our rule: Does our conversation leave the listener built up or depressed because things are so bad.

30 And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, in whom ye were sealed unto the day of redemption.

- A. Notice that the **Spirit is Holy**. The conduct Paul has just listed is not holy.
- B. Anger, stealing and bad language are not just breaking God's rules, they are personally **grieving** the Holy Spirit.
- C. God has put his **Spirit** in us until the **day of redemption**.

31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and railing, be put away from you, with all malice:

- A. **Bitterness** is sour speech and a sour spirit.
- B. **Clamor** is quarreling, shouting and related conduct.
- C. **Slander** is speaking about another person, especially behind his back.

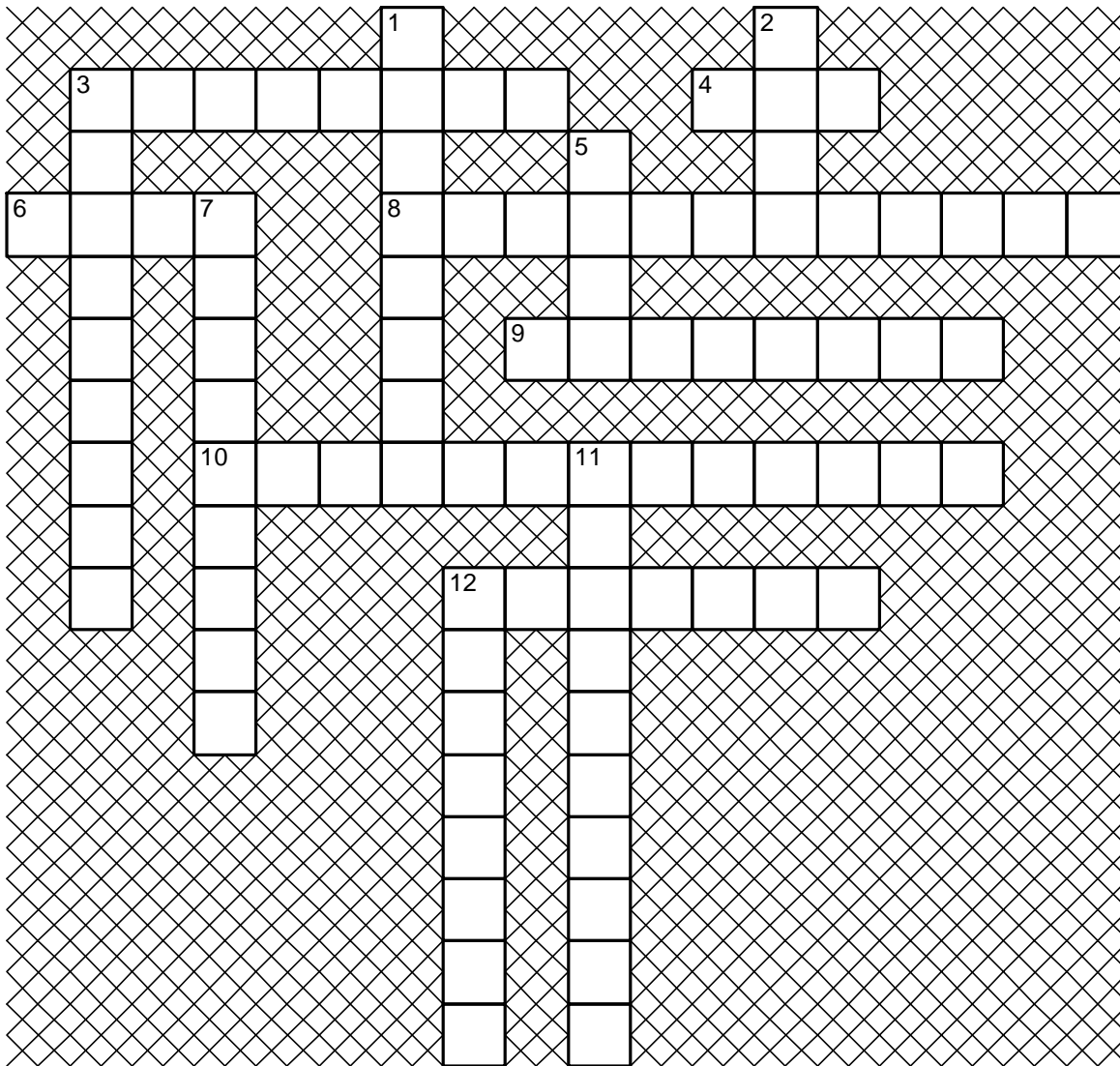
D. **Malice** is wishing or plotting ill-will toward another person.

32 and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you. ASV

A. Our rule in dealing with other Christians: **kindness.**

B. We *will* be offended. **Forgive.**

C. The example has been set: **We** have been **forgiven.**



Mar 12, 2001

Across

3. Another word for pastor.
4. Is over all.
6. A word familiar to the Jews.
8. Only Jesus overcome death by it.
9. When the apostles died they were not _____.
10. Required when people aggravate us.
12. Paul begs the Ephesians to live in it.

Down

1. Being in Christ is a _____ process.
2. Helps the other person to be right.
3. Learning to be like Christ brings it.
5. Paul's travel companion.
7. Maturity includes unity and knowledge.
11. We must be _____ when things go on that we do not like.
12. A trait despised by the Greeks.

Introduction:

1. Paul has been demonstrating God's wisdom in creating a new society composed of Jews and Gentiles.
2. Paul sees an alienated humanity being reconciled, a fractured humanity being united, even a new humanity being created. It is a magnificent vision.
3. Because God has done all of this, he expects new standards of living, both as individuals and as groups of saints in the church.
4. Paul has just laid down some rules for conduct as believers:
 1. Don't tell lies, but tell the truth.
 2. Don't lose your temper but be sure your anger is righteous.
 3. Don't steal, but work and give.
 4. Don't use the gift of speech for evil, but good.
 5. Don't be unkind or bitter, but kind and loving.
5. This new chapter also opens with **therefore**. Based on God's example of forgiveness, this is how we should live:

5:1 Be ye therefore imitators of God, as beloved children;

- A. Such a lofty Father to **imitate!** The command is not simply *avoiding sin*, but **be imitators God**.
- B. **Children imitate** their parents in many ways such as mannerisms and thought patterns, especially when they know they are **loved**.
- C. Our example of how **God** would live is to see how Jesus DID live. We must be familiar with his life. What is the route to knowing the life of Jesus?

2 and walk in love, even as Christ also loved you, and gave himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for an odor of a sweet smell.

- A. **Walk** is a Hebraism for lifestyle. Ours should now be centered in **love**.

- B. The model: **Christ** who **loved** us and **gave up** life itself **for us**.
- C. The idea of the **sacrifices** of God's people being a sweet smell is a common one in the Old Testament. So the sacrifice of Jesus was pictured as a pleasing aroma to the Father.
- D. Examples: Genesis 8:21; Exodus 29:18; Leviticus 1:9, 13, 17; 3:16; Amos 5:21; 2 Corinthians 2:15

3 But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as becometh saints;

- A. The opposite of *walking in love*, verse 2, is misuse of our sexuality. This gets mixed up with love such as in "making love." There may be only one use of the word in that sense in Scripture. Proverbs 7:18. Otherwise, love is a lofty word.
- B. **Not even be named.** We set up euphemisms that take the force out of God's warnings. Instead of **fornication**, we use *affair*, *with*, and *together*. Even *premarital sex* may not be correct if it is implying that the couple will get married when that is not true.
- C. Probably all three words - **fornication, uncleanness and covetousness** - related to a sexual theme and not money. The Jew was not to covet his neighbor's wife. (Tenth commandment.) This was a financial word but describing a human relationship.
- D. This rules out porn and *adult* videos for Christians. With the availability of the Internet, an increasing number of men (some of them preachers) are becoming addicted to pornography.

4 nor filthiness, nor foolish talking, or jesting, which are not befitting: but rather giving of thanks.

- A. **Foolish talking** is rendered as *silly talk* in the NASV. What would the television industry do without it sitcoms?
- B. **Jesting** is translated as *coarse jesting* in the NASV. Coarse language and jokes are not allowed about sexual themes. T.V. writers take note and T.V. watchers change channels.

- C. Paul is writing to people who used to worship Diana of the Ephesians, goddess of fertility. John Stott says that sexual orgies were regularly associated with her worship.
- D. We are to **give thanks** for sex. It is a gift from God. This raises its value rather than degrading it as the world does by their humor.
- E. While we are not to make humor of sexual themes, the Christian was not told to ignore the subject as though it did not exist.

5 For this ye know of a surety, that no fornicator, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

- A. **Know for a surety** may be a subtle reference to those with a Gnostic background. They specialized in **knowing**.
- B. There is judgment ahead for the **fornicator, unclean person, and covetous man** whether in the church or out.
- C. **Idolatry** is closely connected with immorality. Our most notoriously immoral entertainers are called **idols** regularly in our media.
- D. The future phase of the church is always called **inheriting the Kingdom**. It is drawn from the picture of Israel crossing the Jordan River to **inherit** the promised land.

6 Let no man deceive you with empty words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the sons of disobedience.

- A. Some teachers would say that a loving God would not punish anyone. Some tout their *great freedom in Christ* which seems to have no measurable limits. These are **empty words**.
- B. Francis Foulkes writes: “But neither Law nor Prophets in the Old Testament, nor Gospels nor Epistles in the New Testament, allow men to regard lightly the sins that break the bonds of marriage, destroy the sanctity of the family, and cause children to be brought to birth without parents to be responsible for their nurture and training.”

- C. John Stott concludes: “Let no one say that doctrine does not matter! Good conduct arises out of good doctrine. It is only when we have grasped clearly who we are in Christ, that the desire will grow within us to live a life that is worthy of our calling and fitting to our character as God’s new society.”
- D. It is unpopular to discuss the **wrath of God** on anyone except our worst enemies. However, God is saving his anger for those who continue to disobey him. **Sons of disobedience** may contrast with *beloved children* in verse one.

7 Be not ye therefore partakers with them;

- A. Break off with people who make excuses for sin. They may lead us astray. They should not be our entertainers or preachers – like those who teach that everyone is a child of God.

8 For ye were once darkness, but are now light in the Lord: walk as children of light

9(for the fruit of the light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth),

- A. Rather than saying that they were formerly IN darkness, he says they WERE darkness, but have become Light in the Lord.

10 proving what is well-pleasing unto the Lord;

- A. Our task as Christian is not so much trying to figure out what is sin and avoiding it as it is trying to learn **what is pleasing to the Lord.**

John 8:28-30 So Jesus said, “When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me. 29 And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are **pleasing to Him.**” 30 As He spoke these things, many came to believe in Him.

Rom. 12:2 “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is **good and acceptable and perfect.**”

1 Cor. 10:5 “Nevertheless, with most of them God was **not well-pleased**; for they were laid low in the wilderness.”

2 Cor. 5:9 “Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, **to be pleasing to Him.**”

Phil 4:18 “But I have received everything in full and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, **well-pleasing to God.**”

Col 1:9-10 “For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, 10 so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, **to please Him in all respects**, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God”

1 Thess. 4:1 “Finally then, brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us instruction as to how you ought to walk and **please God** (just as you actually do walk), that you excel still more.”

Heb 11:5-6 “By faith Enoch was taken up so that he would not see death; AND HE WAS NOT FOUND BECAUSE GOD TOOK HIM UP; for he obtained the witness that before his being taken up **he was pleasing to God.** 6 And without faith it is impossible to **please** Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.”

1 John 3:22 “and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and **do the things that are pleasing** in His sight.” NASU

- B. There is a world of difference between merely trying to avoid breaking a law and choosing which of two alternatives would **please the Lord** the most.

11 and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather even reprove them;

- A. Whatever is meant by not having **fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness**, surely we are not to have people with values of **darkness** as our bosom friends. The other extreme is isolation.
- B. The believer is to be active in exposing the **works of darkness**. We are to warn others of the **darkness**. But not too specifically (verse 12).

12 for the things which are done by them in secret it is a shame even to speak of.

- A. Some sin is too graphic to even talk about in detail. Not every sin needs to be vividly described.
- B. We don't have to become experts in their sin.

13 But all things when they are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for everything that is made manifest is light.

- A. All that our eyes can see is **light** reflected from material objects. Perhaps he means that exposing evil to the **light** is the best means of turning it to something useful.
- B. *The Living Bible*: "But when you expose them, the light shines in upon their sin and shows it up, and when they see how wrong they really are, some of them may even become children of light!"

**14 Wherefore (he) saith,
Awake, thou that sleepest,
and arise from the dead,
and Christ shall shine upon thee.**

- A. The *source* of the quotation is not clear. It may have been modified from the prophets or it may have been a line from a hymn they were using.

- B. There are three metaphors: a sleeping person awaking, a resurrection from the dead and a light shining on the subject person. This may be a continuation of the thought of verse 13.

**15 Look therefore carefully how ye walk, not as unwise, but as wise;
16 redeeming the time, because the days are evil.**

- A. Our style of life (**walk**) needs to be **wisely** chosen, not merely borrowed from those we like that are nearby.
- B. Our **time** needs to be conserved and used in a way that will benefit God and His people. Each person is assigned 168 hours per week.
- C. What are some ways we might balance and conserve our **time**?

17 Wherefore be ye not foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

- A. We must move away from the **foolish** use of our lives including our time. Sadly, it is easy to replace the wise use of time with the total conservation of money. Both are valuable commodities, but time takes priority.
- B. We must move toward understanding what **the Lord** would have us be doing. This takes some investment of time itself.

18 And be not drunken with wine, wherein is riot, but be filled with the Spirit;

- A. **Drunkenness** is banned. Rather than be **filled** with spirits, we are to be **filled** with **The Spirit**. Alcohol is a depressant. The **Spirit** of God is a stimulant to become like our Lord.

19 speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord;

- A. Some of our music is directed **to one another**. Can we name songs like that?

- B. **Psalm:** *W. E. Vine* - psalmos NT:5568 primarily denoted “a striking or twitching with the fingers (on musical strings)”; then, “a sacred song, sung to musical accompaniment, a psalm.” It is used
- (a) of the OT book of “Psalms,” Luke 20:42; 24:44; Acts 1:20;
 - (b) of a particular “psalm,” Acts 13:33 (cf. v. 35);
 - (c) of “psalms” in general, 1 Cor 14:26; Eph 5:19; Col 3:16.

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- C. **Hymn:** humnos NT:5215 denotes “a song of praise addressed to God” (Eng., “hymn”), Eph 5:19; Col 3:16, in each of which the punctuation should probably be changed; in the former “speaking to one another” goes with the end of v. 18, and should be followed by a semicolon; similarly in Col 3:16, the first part of the verse should end with the words “admonishing one another,” where a semicolon should be placed.

Note: The psalmos denoted that which had a musical accompaniment; the ode (Eng., “ode”) was the generic term for a song; hence the accompanying adjective “spiritual.”

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- D. The method of being filled with the Spirit includes music that is centered on **the Lord**. Bare navels are witnesses of the impact of youth goddess Brittany Spears on girls' choice of clothing or morals.
- E. Our **singing** should occupy an important place in the worship assembly.

20 giving thanks always for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father;

21 subjecting yourselves one to another in the fear of Christ.

- A. **Giving thanks always for all things** is a very broad statement. If we can learn to do this, there should not be cause for despondency.
- B. **Subjecting yourselves one to another** shows that a fellowship is people is implied and not independent individualism.
- C. There are four things the believer is to do:
 Fellowship. Speaking to one another.
 Worship. Singing to the Lord.

Give thanks. The grumbling spirit is squelched.
Be **subject to one another.**

22 Wives, (be in subjection) unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

- A. Being married was assumed. People just living together in any culture destroys the home foundations in the culture. Marriage is always a legal contract.
- B. Equality of men and women is implied. Otherwise they would already be subservient to their men and no command would be required.
- C. Be subject to your **own husbands.** A lady is not to be **subject** to any other man. Other men may prove to be more exciting and conversational. They may even have better judgment. The Christian wife's task is to build up her own husband.
- D. In the same way **as unto the Lord.** Being a believer is voluntary and being **subject to one's husband** is voluntary in just the same way.
- E. There is no requirement for a **husband** to get his **wife** into line.

23 For the husband is the head of the wife, and Christ also is the head of the church, (being) himself the saviour of the body.

- A. The **husband** is the leader of the **wife**, the captain of the ship.
- B. He should encourage her to be the kind of person that she wants to be. Suppressing a wife's development is not an act of righteousness.
- C. He is not her boss and trainer and he is not superior by design, but he may be more aggressive by temperament or training.
- D. **Christ is saviour of the body** because of his personal sacrifice. This implies self-sacrifice by a husband on behalf of his wife.

24 But as the church is subject to Christ, so (let) the wives also (be) to their husbands in everything.

- A. The illustration is mixed with the thing being illustrated. There is instruction and guidance both directions.

- B. The church is to be **subject to Christ** by means of His Word.
- C. This illustrates that the **wife** is to be subject to her husband. He is not to force her into **subjection**.
- D. The implication in the illustration is that the husband leads into *right*, not *sin*. Her subjection is conditional. Note the case of Abigail in 1 Samuel 25.

25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it;

- A. The **husband is to love his wife**. The implication is that he is not to love another woman in the same way.
- B. The **husband is to love** (*agape*) **his wife** instead of *phileo* her or *erao* her.
- C. The husband is to love like **Christ loved**.
- D. Christ laid down his life for the **Church**. This raises a high standard for the **husband**.
- E. The **husband's love**, like Christ's, sacrifices in order to serve.

26 that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word,

- A. Christ's purpose was to **sanctify** the church. **Having cleansed** designates a point in time, not an ongoing process.
- B. The **washing** in the passage refers to baptism. Foulkes writes, "How does the washing of water, the Christian sacrament of baptism, help to effect sanctification, and the cleansing of the heart from sin? The two are connected again in Titus 3:5. Calvin no doubt gives the true meaning when he says, 'Having mentioned the inward and hidden sanctification, he now adds the outwards symbol, by which it is visibly confirmed; as if he has said that a pledge of our sanctification is held out to us by baptism.'"

27 that he might present the church to himself a glorious (church), not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

- A. We have a picture of Christ, the bridegroom, preparing his bride for glory. **Glory** is to set a person forth in their best possible light.
- B. All flaws would be removed from the bride by his sacrifice.

28 Even so ought husbands also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his own wife loveth himself:

- A. Self-love is presented: **Love your wives as your own body.**
- B. A husband cares about his wife's pain, physically and emotionally.

29 for no man ever hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as Christ also the church; 30 because we are members of his body.

- A. It is possible for a man to **hate** his wife because Paul brings up the subject. He must work at **nourishing and cherishing** her. This means he must not focus on what she does that he does not like.
- B. Notice the present tense of **nourisheth and cherisheth**. This is not a wedding day event, but ongoing.

31 FOR THIS CAUSE SHALL A MAN LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER, AND SHALL CLEAVE TO HIS WIFE; AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH.

- A. The passage is quoted from Genesis 2:24. Note that polygamy is not in sight in this statement.
- B. Parents are to become secondary.
- C. The example of the first marriage is presented. These words were spoken before there were **fathers and mothers**. They were prophetic.
- D. **Becoming one flesh** means they are glued together.

- E. To **Cleave**, Cling — dabaq OT:1692, “to cling, cleave, keep close.” Used in modern Hebrew in the sense of “to stick to, adhere to,” dabaq yields the noun form for “glue” and also the more abstract ideas of “loyalty, devotion.” Occurring just over 60 times in the Hebrew Old Testament, this term is found very early in the text, in Gen 2:24: “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.” This usage reflects the basic meaning of one object’s (person’s) being joined to another.
(from Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright (c)1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers)

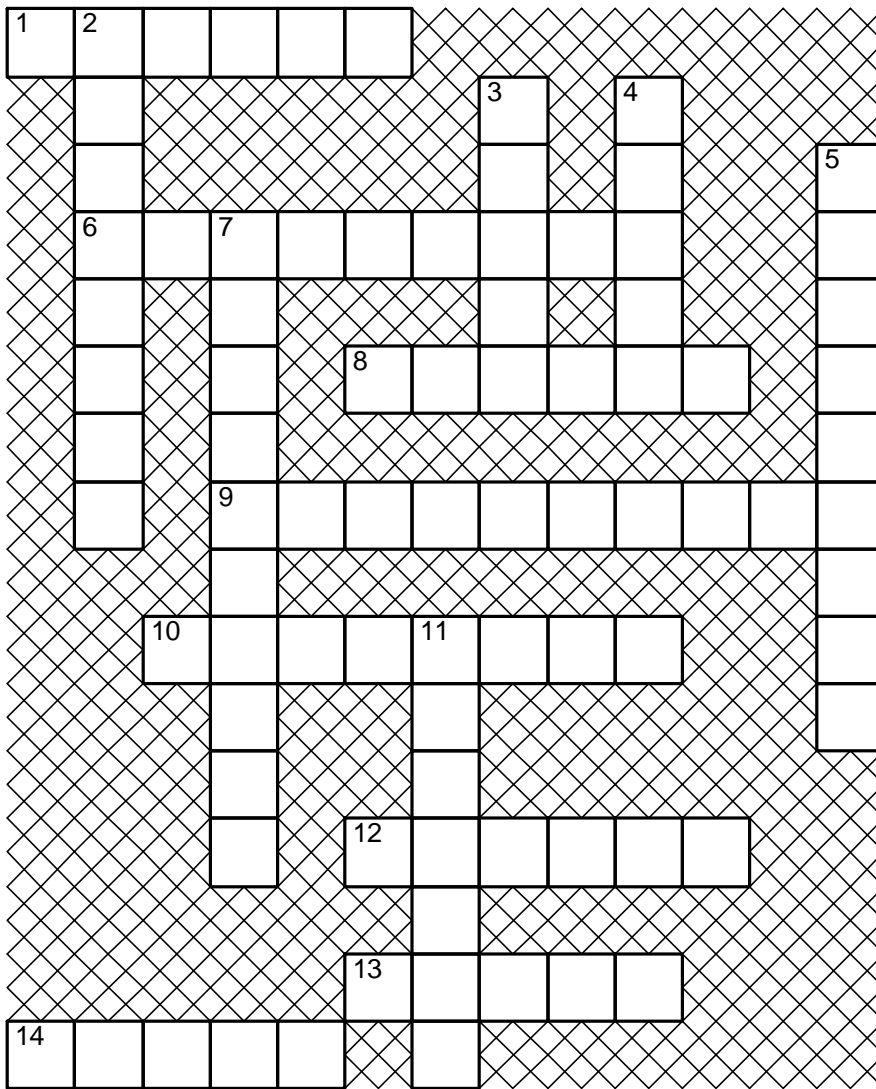
32 This mystery is great: but I speak in regard of Christ and of the church.

- A. Paul’s main purpose: To teach about the **church**.

33 Nevertheless do ye also severally love each one his own wife even as himself; and (let) the wife (see) that she fear her husband.

- A. Even though the words are here primarily to teach about the relationship between Christ and the Church, they also instruct us regarding the **husband and wife**.
- B. Note the carefulness of Paul saying **his own wife**.
- C. The **wife** is to speak well of her **husband** and speak **respectfully** to **her husband**.
- D. **Fear**, in the sense of reverence.
- E. For that matter, the man must speak **respectfully** of his wife.

Ephesians 5
Lois Dailey



Mar 19,2001

Across

1. A euphemism for fornication.
6. We are to be _____ of God.
8. Forbidden language.
9. Paul sees alienated humanity being _____.
10. Learn what is _____ to the Lord.
12. We are to be _____ with the Spirit.
13. We learn of Christ's life through _____.
14. We have become _____ in the Lord.

Down

2. We must become _____ with Jesus' life.
3. Jesus' sacrifice was a pleasing _____.
4. He modeled godly living.
5. In marriage, parents are to become _____.
7. Idolatry is closely connected with it.
11. Christians are God's new _____.

Introduction:

1. To understand why we will discuss subjection and obedience, notice the earlier portion of Ephesians 5:
2. *Be filled with the Spirit -
speaking to
singing and
always giving thanks
be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.*
3. The first section on *being subject* was wives toward husbands along with husbands loving their wives. The duties were reciprocal.
4. Now Paul discusses children, slaves and masters in the light of subjection.

6:1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.

- A. In the new family of God, **children** were important and were in the church assembly. In the Roman society, they were of little value.
- B. Either the **children** could read this epistle or the parents were expected to read it to them. Either way, it was to be part of their training.
- C. The requirement is stronger for **children** than wives. Wives were to *submit* to their husbands – a voluntary choice. However, **children are to obey their parents**. It is not conditional.
- D. **Obey**: “used of one who upon the knock at the door comes to listen who it is . . .” - *Thayer*
- E. The limitation is “**in the Lord.**” For instance, **parents** cannot instruct their **children** to steal from the local grocery store. **Parent’s** authority comes from the **Lord** and therefore cannot contradict the commandments of the **Lord**.

F. Barnes goes a step further. “No parent has a right to forbid a child to pray, to read the Bible, to worship God, or to make a profession of religion.” (from Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft)

G. **This is right.** The inspired Paul had a firm set of values of what is **right**. It was **right** based on the Scriptures of Moses (Deut. 21:18-21) and **right** based on the example of Jesus of Nazareth. That example was becoming Scripture. Luke 2:51.

H. **Children** are to **obey** first, because it is **right**. Now we see reason #2.

2 HONOR THY FATHER AND MOTHER (which is the first commandment with promise),

3 THAT IT MAY BE WELL WITH THEE, AND THOU MAYEST LIVE LONG ON THE EARTH.

A. Paul appeals to **Commandment** five (Exodus 20:12) from the Ten Commandments. Westerners divide the law into two tables: The first four relate to God’s authority and the last six relate to horizontal relationships.

B. However, **honoring** parents, and consequently obeying them, is part of one’s relationship with God because parents are God’s authority in the lives of children. Therefore, this commandment belongs on the first tablet. Read Leviticus 19:1 - 3; 20:9.

C. It is natural for children to believe they know more than their parents. The true revelation of this mistake takes time. Meanwhile, they are to **honor their father and mother** by obeying them. Who ever heard a young person say, “I’m in all of this trouble because I obeyed my parents?”

D. The obedience toward parents is a fundamental part of God’s system of authority. It was under the Law of Moses and failure was punishable by death.

E. **Living long on the earth** is a general rule. Death by accident is obviously excluded. Both the LXX and the Masoretic text say “in the (or on the) land that the Lord thy God giveth thee” rather than “**on the earth.**”

F. It appears that hostility with parents leads to a troubled life. It is best to be *reconciled* with them where ever possible. As a responsible adult no longer living at home, it may not always be possible to *obey* them.

4 And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord.

- A. **Fathers** need to develop the skills of persuasion or diversion rather than constantly relying on force to obtain obedience.
- B. William Barclay adds: “A Roman father had absolute power over his family. He could sell them as slaves, he could make them work in his fields even in chains, he could take the law into his own hands, for the law was in his own hands, and punish as he liked, he could even inflict the death penalty on his child.”
- C. How are **children provoked to wrath?** (Or anger as many translate.)

John Stott:

“Paul recognizes how delicate a child’s personality is. . . . What we do know is that parents can easily misuse their authority either by making irritating or unreasonable demands which make no allowances for the inexperience and immaturity of children, or by harshness and cruelty at one extreme or by favoritism and over-indulgence at the other, or by humiliating or suppressing them, or by those two vindictive weapons sarcasm and ridicule.

“There is a place for discipline, as Paul goes on to say, but it must never be arbitrary (for children have a built-in sense of justice) or unkind. Otherwise, they will ‘become discouraged’. Conversely, almost nothing causes a child’s personality to blossom and gifts to develop like the positive encouragement of loving, understanding parents. Indeed, just as a husband’s love for his wife is expressed in helping her develop her full potential, so parents’ love for their children is expressed in helping them develop theirs.”

- D. **Nurture.** ektrepho. To rear up to maturity. NASV translates “bring them up”

E. **Chastening.** Discipline, paideia. The whole training and education of children (which relates to the cultivation of mind and morals, and employs for this purpose now commands and admonitions, now reproof and punishment). It also includes the training and care of the body. - *Thayer.*

Francis Foulkes: "Discipline is essential in the home; but not unnecessary rules and regulations and endless petty correction by which children are discouraged."

F. **Admonition.** nouthesia. This word carries the idea of confrontation. Consider Eli's failure to confront his sons. 1 Samuel 2:22 - 25; 3:13. There is a style of counseling called nouthetic counseling. It is confrontational in design.

G. *The Living Bible:* And now a word to you parents. Don't keep on scolding and nagging your children, making them angry and resentful. Rather, bring them up with the loving discipline the Lord himself approves, with suggestions and godly advice.

5 Servants, be obedient unto them that according to the flesh are your masters, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ;

6 not in the way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers; but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;

- A. Another class in the social structure of the times was the slaves, translated here as **servants**. The practice of slavery is nearly gone from the earth, but was common when Paul wrote. They were *not* told to rebel against their masters but to be **obedient**. This is the same word used for children in verse 1.
- B. Slaves of that time often were prisoners of war. They were professional people as well as laborers. They were frequently considered *possessions* and no longer people. The condition of slaves in the Roman Empire was improving in Paul's time. In Christ, *they were people* and had standing.
- C. **Fear and trembling** is the opposite of haughty and rebellious. Compare its use in Philippians 2:12.

- D. **Singleness of heart** describes single-minded sincerity. They were not only to *appear to be sincere* in serving, they were *to be sincere*. No games please. Another phase is simply eye service and men-pleasers.
- E. Even with a difficult master, they were to consider themselves as **servants of Christ** and serve from the **heart**.
- F. Most of the instructions fit well for employees today. Instead of telling the boss how we will earn our pay, we should follow their instructions (even if they are wrong.) Most of us know people who go on a new job and try to correct the moss-backed boss. In a few days they are looking for work again.

**7 with good will doing service, as unto the Lord, and not unto men:
8 knowing that whatsoever good thing each one doeth, the same shall he receive again from the Lord, whether (he be) bond or free.**

- A. We should work whether being observed or not. Barclay says, "The conviction of the Christian workman is that every piece of work he produces must be good enough to show God."
- B. The ultimate *bonus* comes from the Lord. This applies to slaves as well as free men. Christ observes all that transpires.
- C. In Christ, slaves had equal standing before God with their masters.
- D. In Christ, slaves were in the same family and brotherhood as their masters. The leveling of the relationships in the church assembly must have had profound effects on both slaves and masters. Perhaps a slave was an elder while the master was a deacon.

9 And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, and forbear threatening: knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no respect of persons with him.

- A. Masters have obligations under the law of Christ to treat their workers properly.
- B. Evidently Christian **masters threatened** their slaves. Others did far worse. Some employers believe the only way to stay in charge is to

constantly threaten their employees. This is against the will of the Lord.

- C. The Lord has the same conduct rules for Masters and slaves. He is not pro-business or anti-business.

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might.

- A. The battle is in full swing. Our new citizenship is not a reason to relax. Becoming a believer is for people willing to fight.
- B. **Be strong**, en-doo-nam-o'-o. The word is related to dynamite.
- C. As throughout Ephesians, we are **in the Lord**.
- D. But we are not without help. Our Commander supplies both strength and equipment for the battles as we see next.

11 Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

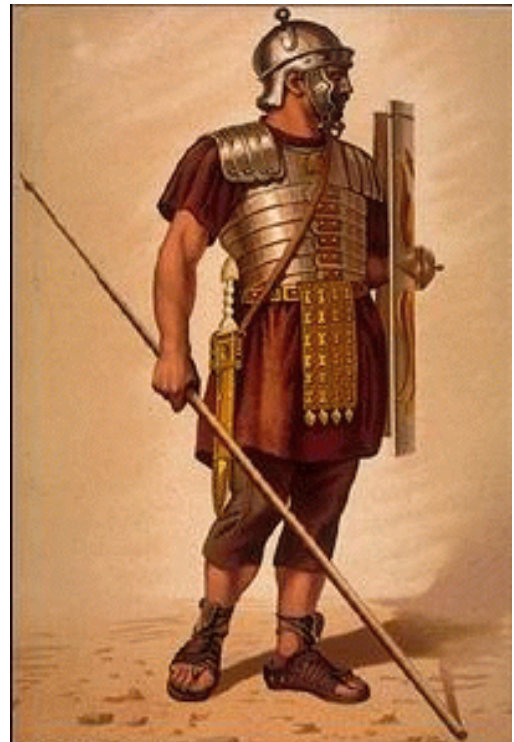
- A. Paul was chained to a Roman soldier. He could get lots of help with this great extended figure of speech if he lacked information although the soldier would not have been in full military dress.
- B. The enemy was not and is not Rome, but the **devil**, Satan. Paul does not give us Satan's background, but assures his existence.
- C. Our newly found peace is with the Lord and our brothers, but never with the **devil**.
- D. **The devil** has many plans (**wiles**, meth-od-i'-ah) for our destruction and we need all of the help that the Lord has to offer.
- E. To deny the existence of the **devil** changes our religious outlook. Popular psychology (street psychology) is brought in to explain away all evil conduct.

12 For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual (hosts) of wickedness in the heavenly (places).

- A. Paul is clear: this is not a typical field battle against a human army.
- B. Our battle is against the forces that rule in the spiritual and religious arenas. Ephesus was a world center of swarming Satanic squadrons. Read Acts 19: 13-20.
- C. We each face hand-to-hand combat with Satan and his representatives. This is implied in the word “wrestling.”
- D. Like Israel of old, we have been assured the promised land, but not without a fight. They took the promised land from its inhabitants city by city. When Israel obeyed God, they did not lose a man.

13 Wherefore take up the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand.

- A. Partial **armor** will not do. A shield without the other items will lead to a quick death. Take up the **whole armor** of a heavily-armed Roman soldier.
- B. There will be an **evil day** or evil days coming.
- C. At this juncture, Paul is not encouraging attack or retreat, but to **stand** firm right where the Christian soldier is located.
- D. Paul now becomes specific about six items of **armor**.



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14 Stand therefore, HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH, and HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS,

- A. These quotations may not be quotations at all, but allusions to similar ideas in the Old Testament. Isaiah 11:5; 59:17.
- B. **Girded** refers to a belt. The belt was usually made of leather. It kept the soldier's clothes in place and held the sword. **Girding up the loins** was to prepare for action.
- C. Later, the sword is the Word of God, so here the **truth** is probably in the sense of sincerity and **truth** in general. Psalm 51:6.
- D. **The breastplate is righteousness.** This may be the imputed righteousness that we have because we belong to the Lord or it may refer to good character and conduct. Read Romans 8:1, 33-34. Since it is something that soldier is to attend to, it probably refers to the latter.
- E. The **breastplate**, thorax (tho'-rax) covered part of the back as well. The idea that the believer has no defense for an attack from behind is novel, but probably is not historical.

15 and having shod YOUR FEET WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE;**16 withal taking up the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil (one).**

- A. As with the section above, this is an allusion to the content of Isaiah 52:7. Paul does not claim to be quoting, but those familiar with Isaiah could enjoy the similarity.
- B. The gospel boots come next. The Roman half-boot had studded soles. They provided firm footing for the fight. A slip could have meant death.
- C. The **shield** was the long shield. **Darts** were dipped in pitch and **fired** at the enemy. The **shield** kept these missiles at a comfortable distance from the body. Though made of wood, the **shield** was covered with leather.

D. Our **faith** forms a **shield** against the Devil's flaming arrows.

17 And take the HELMET OF SALVATION, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

A. Isaiah 59:17 speaks of the **helmet of salvation**.

B. The helmet had hinged ear pieces and a hinged visor. Goliath had left his visor open because he had contempt for the kid that came to fight him.

C. Some **helmets** had distinctive plumes to identify the soldier under them. It also protected the head of the soldier. Salvation protects our heads.

D. The **sword** is the only attack item. The Greek word designated the Roman short sword, a reminder that the battle is hand-to-hand combat.

E. Jesus used the Word from Deuteronomy to ward off the devil's three, formal temptations. Matthew 4:1 - 10.

F. John Stott summarizes:

“Here, then, are the six pieces which together make up the whole armor of God: the girdle of truth and the breastplate of righteousness, the gospel boots and the faith shield, salvation's helmet and the Spirit's sword. They constitute God's armor, as we have seen, for he supplies it. Yet it is our responsibility to take it up, to put it on and to use it confidently against the powers of evil. Moreover, we must be sure to avail ourselves of every item of equipment provided and not omit any. `Our enemies are on every side, and so must our armor be, on the right hand and on the left.’”

18 with all prayer and supplication praying at all seasons in the Spirit, and watching thereunto in all perseverance and supplication for all the saints,

A. Besides the mechanical equipment for this warfare, it is necessary to **pray** and be alert. We need constant field communications with our Commander. It needs to be in all kinds of “weather.”

- B. The disciples of Jesus once had trouble staying awake and **praying** in the heat of battle. Luke 22:46. They were not **watching**.
- C. **Prayer** should include **all of the saints** and Paul requested **prayer** for himself in the next verse. One might be tempted just to **pray** for “our kind” of people. (Maybe Jews or Gentiles?)

19 And on my behalf, that utterance may be given unto me in opening my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

- A. Paul needed skill in **utterance**. It is simple *logos* here. He wanted to be clear and forceful in what he said. It is possible for public speakers to be hazy.
- B. Paul needed **boldness** directly from the Lord. It is possible for public speakers to soften down the claims of Jesus. Perhaps Paul could be freed if he would just “calm down” a bit and quit insisting on a resurrection and proclaiming to gentiles.
- C. He was an **ambassador** for the Lord – with chains. He was duly accredited to represent the Lord at the Imperial Court in Rome.
- D. We do not have a direct statement of Scripture that he spoke to the Caesar, but he was sent there for that reason and the Lord always gets his way.

21 But that ye also may know my affairs, how I do, Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things:

- A. Paul did not include his own condition in the letter, but sent Tychicus to fill them in.
- B. Some commentators believe that Paul had been dictating but took the pen to write these authenticating sentences. If so, then Tychicus was probably the penman.

22 whom I have sent unto you for this very purpose, that ye may know our state, and that he may comfort your hearts.

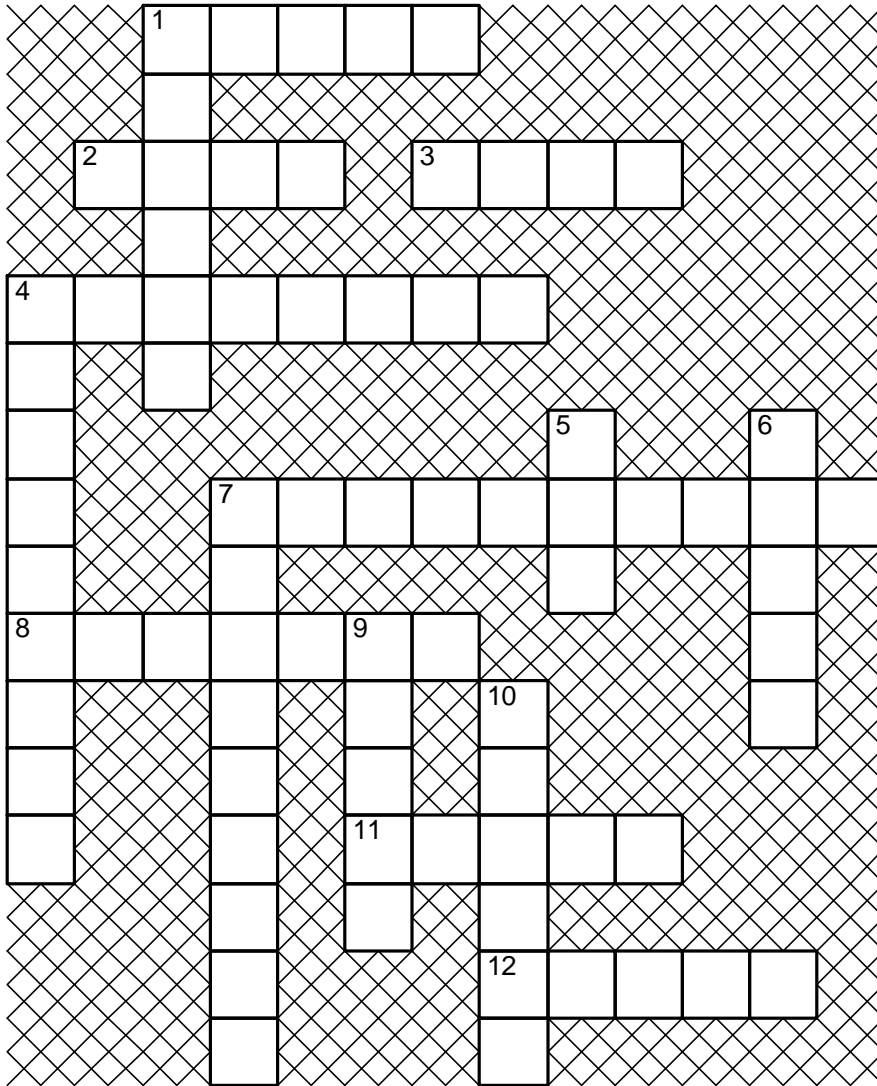
- A. An additional reason for sending Tychicus was to comfort those who read his letter. The written page was not enough.
- B. A very legitimate purpose in the church gathering is to encourage each other to continue in the Faith.

23 Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

24 Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ with (a love) incorruptible. ASV

- A. As Paul opened the letter with the twin themes of **grace and peace**, so he includes them in the final sentences of the letter.
- B. The **love** of the **Lord** is key to serving our God.

Ephesians 6
Lois Dailey



Mar 23,2001

Across

1. Definition of servant.
2. What were the children to do?
3. Source of parent's authority.
4. Important in the new family of God.
7. Confrontation.
8. To rear to maturity.
11. Serve Christ from the _____.
12. Master and slaves were _____.

Down

1. Wives are to _____ to their husbands.
4. The supplier of both strength and equipment.
5. Number of pieces of armor.
6. Father need to use it sparingly.
7. Relationship of parent to child.
9. Reason for children to obey.
10. Field communications.