

The Book Of Ephesians

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In agreement with Paul, my prayer is “That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints” Ephesians 1:16-18

A Brief Introduction:

There's an axiom that says: "Where ever you start, is where you end up." I have seen it demonstrated over and over again. When we approach the Bible with a preconceived doctrinal slant, we will find all we want that proves us right; and more importantly, the other guy wrong. This approach does not discover the "very Word of God" but instead finds the doctrine and traditions of man that was already in us. If that is what you are looking for, that is precisely what you will find.

In reality, it's about whose voice you are listening to. If the voice of pastor Biff and his progenitor's voices drive you, you will confirm their opinions. The book of Ephesians is used by both Calvinist and Wesleyan to prove their doctrines though they be contrary one to another. Where they start, they end up. This kosmos has an endless array of voices clamoring for your attention and allegiance: Some may seem wise, compassionate and kind, some are obviously seducing and evil but they are all rooted in the Satanic kingdom.

There is only one voice that is reliable. The voice of God. You may think God is out crying in the wilderness but He is so very much closer that you might think. Only God can energize and bring to life His own words. Millions of people have been tortured, sawn asunder, fed to the lions and burned at the stake while the Bible was being read or quoted. Those words were not the words of God. They were the evil spew of the devil dancing his religious jig. You choose which voice you hear when you read the book of Ephesians. In your head Pastor Biff's seminary trained voice can guide you. You may choose to allow the religious conceptions you have acquired close your willingness to hear from God.

The Ephesian letter is written to a heavenly race of people. The natural earthly person can not understand because the truths of the Word of God are spiritually discerned. Though the natural man recite the letter from rote memory, the truth, power and peace evades him. The Ephesian letter is written to those of us who have Christ in us and are in Christ. We have the mind of Christ. The voice of God illuminates the words in the Word of God and energizes it in Christ in us. The voice of Christ in you is gently calling. Will you come?

Ephesians Part One

The letter of Ephesians was written by Paul while in prison in Rome. The first three chapters are essential reading for every believer, as these chapters provide revelation knowledge not found elsewhere. Understanding the truths presented in these chapters unlock the rest of the writing of Paul and indeed the rest of the bible. Within these few verses, actually, in the Greek, twelve sentences, Paul lays out the astounding position that God has placed us in. I pray we are able to comprehend the greatness of God's love for us as delivered by the completed work of Christ.

As God's work-men and women, we are told to study. We are to study to rightly divide the Word of Truth. As believers in this time period of Grace, the Book of Ephesians sets forth who we are in Christ and how we are called to allow Christ to live in and through us. He did not call us out because of our talents or good or bad looks. Our social status or lack of social status had absolutely no effect upon God's choice. He called us because it pleased HIM to do so. He sent His son as the total and absolute payment for our sins and shortcomings and declared us justified and righteous. He made us holy so he could extend His most holy grace gift to us.

We are beset by a world around us that operates under the influence of Satan. Yet, we can and are called to walk victoriously as sons and daughters of God. We must walk in and believe what the Word says in spite of the worldly evidence. So, brothers and sisters in victory, come, let's explore the greatness of God's word as it is given to us in

Ephesians. We are going to start in the first verse and work our way into God's revelation to and for us. I pray as we hear and speak God's words, we allow the words of truth to be energized into manifestation in our lives. Read along with me:

1:1 Paul, an apostle (messenger) of Jesus Christ by (dia – through) the will of God, to the saints (hagios) which are at Ephesus, and (kia) to the faithful in Christ Jesus: (believers in)

Paul identifies himself as the writer and an *apostolos* or one sent with a message of and by Jesus Christ. In his first letter to the Thessalonians, Paul reveals that he was called to be a messenger of Jesus Christ by the risen, ascended and glorified Jesus Christ. Paul was not a servant of an organization started and governed by man. His calling, like ours is of and by Jesus Christ. When we submit ourselves to a human hierarchy's authority, our ability to serve the true head is compromised. Jesus said: "No man can serve two masters."

This letter is addressed to "the saints." Do you feel saintly? We have been taught we are poor sinners working to gain the favor of a vengeful and angry God. But that is not God's opinion of us. He sees us as saints; holy and justified righteous. The word translated saints in the KJV is "hagios" or holy. It is the same word used

in “holy spirit.” From God’s perspective we are “hagios,” holy, saints. He sees us through the completed work of His Son Jesus the glorified Christ who shed his blood for us. Once! Once, for all: All who believe.

This letter is not written to unbelievers. Unbelievers can not understand nor manifest the Word of God. They may say the words and act out the instructions in a religious way but they are just playing in a theatric tragedy. For them it is

not real. It’s not of our works but his. Unless our works originate and emanate from “Christ in us” they are futile. The Word says: “anything not of faith is sin.” In the KJV it says “to the faithful in Christ Jesus.” This phraseology could lead one to think that the letter is addressed to “the faithful” in apposed to the less faithful. Performance based religion will get a foothold anywhere you allow it. The Greek word translated “faithful” is *pistois* which is an adjective in the dative case supporting the dative nouns Christ and Jesus. This is best translated “believers in Christ Jesus.” Let’s read the first verse again:

1:1 Paul, a messenger sent with a message of and by Jesus Christ through the will of God, to the holy ones which are in Ephesus, and believers in Christ Jesus:

So! Believers in Christ Jesus: To you: Grace and peace

1:2 Grace [be] to you, and peace, from God our Father, and [from] the Lord Jesus Christ.

The letters of Paul were written with the intent that they would be circulated among the churches and read out loud to the believers. Most people of that time were not able to read. The letters were sent from group to group, read out loud, discussed and sent on. The believers in Thessalonica eventually heard the letter to Ephesus read and vice versa. It continues today. We are greatly blessed that we have all of Paul’s letters bound into one book. This letter originally addressed to the believers in Ephesus was also addressed to all believers. This letter is addressed to you, if so be that you are a believer in Jesus Christ.

Ephesus at the time this letter was written was located on the bank of the Cayster River where it flowed into the Aegean Sea. It was a Roman colony. Ephesus was a busy shipping and lumbering port and a Roman road passed through. The timber from up-river was floated down and tied together to form huge rafts of logs. The logs were sold for construction. The pagan temple of Artemis was about 500 years old at the time and the Artemis cult was the major religion of the area. Archeologists have found a huge gladiator graveyard in the ruins of ancient Ephesus. Over time the harbor filled with silt and the economic power of the city waned with the loss of sea traffic. The great temple was destroyed by the Goths in 263, was rebuild by Constantine and in 614 an earthquake finished off the city.

Paul wrote in a distinct style. He is known for his long sentences filled with clauses. In the original language, the second sentence of this letter starts in verse 3 and continues through verse 14. Of course in English, this would not be proper syntax or grammar. But to see the greatness of the Word we must recognize the fullness of the progression of thought expressed in a sentence containing over 250 words. If we wrench a single clause out of the whole we risk distorting the message.

Paul starts this huge sentence with a summary of what he is about to explain. If you will, he shows us the treasure chest and then methodically shows us each piece of treasure that fills the chest. Verse three is the treasure chest and verses four through fourteen are the treasures.

1:3 Blessed (adorable 2128) [be] the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly [places] in Christ:

To continue with the treasure chest metaphor, the treasure chest that God has blessed us with is full of every possible spiritual blessing. None are left out. There is no unfinished business here. God has blessed us with all spiritual blessings. He didn't give us a down payment or an IOU that we need to collect at a later date. We have the treasure: All of it, in Christ. In Second Corinthians Paul tells us we have this treasure in earthen vessels. In Colossians, Paul refers to the treasure as "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

So now that we have seen the treasure chest, let's move on to explore the spiritual blessings in the following 10 verses: Verse 3 again: "Blessed [be] the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:"

1:4 According as he hath chosen us (1 John 4:10-11) in him (Christ) before the foundation (conception) of the world, (kosmos) that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

We have been chosen, picked, or selected. The choosing is not going on now. Unlike some would lead you to think, God is not out searching for lost souls. He has already made his choice. It was completed in the past. It has nothing to do with what you had for breakfast or how much you drank last night or any other thing you might be trying to do to impress God. He didn't choose us then watch us for a while to see how we would perform. He already knew and chose us anyway. He chose us before the foundations of world were placed down. He chose us to be holy.

You may ask: how could I possibly be considered holy. He has made us holy in Christ and in Christ we are without blame. Romans 8:1 boldly shouts: There is therefore now NO condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. Stop! There is none! In Christ we are holy. Holy means clean, pure, blameless, or faultless: We are holy because God made us holy in Christ. It's not of our works! We boldly go

where no natural man has ever gone before. In Christ, we are continually in attendance before the most holy God in love because He has chosen us in Christ.

1:5 Having predestinated (4309 To determine before) us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, (by His choice and plan)

Predestination has been the subject of controversy from the time this letter was first read. There is an unanswered paradox in the question of where free will and predestination merge. But, if God chose us before the foundation of the world and knew that He was going to make us holy then of course we were predestinated. He determined before that we were going to be his children in Christ. The word translated “adoption of children” literally means placing as a son. We know that not all children are planned. But God has no unplanned children. He knew all there is to know about us before He chose us. And yet it was His plan and pleasure that He decided to make us His holy sons and daughters.

1:6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he (God) hath made us accepted in the beloved; (Christ)

In Christ the beloved, God made us accepted. If God can speak the universe into being and say let there be light and the light was, He can make us acceptable to Himself. He did it in His beloved, Jesus the Christ.

1:7 In whom (in whom? God’s beloved) we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness (remission) of sins, according to the riches (abundance) of his grace;

Peter wrote (1Pe 2:24) God’s beloved son took our sins in his own body on the cross and by his stripes we were healed or made whole. He paid the full price of our ransom. In God’s beloved we have, not might have or will someday have, but we have right now, redemption. We are redeemed, delivered through his blood. His blood was and is the ultimate sacrificial price and payment for our pardon from our sins. We are forgiven in accord with God’s abundant grace.

1:8 Wherein (where? In His grace) he hath abounded (4052 to super-abound) toward us in all wisdom and prudence; (good sense)

He has lavished his grace into us in all wisdom and good sense. The word translated here as “toward” is the Greek preposition *eis* which means “into.” God’s grace gift that He has placed into us is of course “Christ in you the hope of glory.” In Christ is all wisdom, knowledge and prudence.

1:9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

Ephesians is the book of the *musterion*: Translated “mystery” in the KJV, the word means “secret.” Chapter three will give us much more detail about God’s secret that was kept until it was given to Paul. We have the privilege of being the people of God’s great secret. The secret is freely revealed to all who believe.

1:10 That in the dispensation (oikonomia Administration Luke 16:2) of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; [even] in him:

1:11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, (NOW! 1 John 3:2) being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

1:12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ;

1:13 In whom ye also [trusted,] after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed (mark of ownership) with that holy Spirit of promise,

The word *sphragizō* which is translated “ye were sealed” in the KJV, is a lumber term. The timber merchants used a heavy cast metal mark of ownership (most likely bronze) that was imprinted into the end of each of their logs. The “seal was held against the log end and a large mallet was used to drive the seal into the wood. No matter how mixed up the logs got in the harbor the owners marks were permanent. This is the mind picture conveyed in the original language. We were sealed by God as the verse tells us with the Holy Spirit of promise which is the evidence of our inheritance as sons and daughters of God.

1:14 Which is the earnest (evidence or token) of our inheritance until the redemption (complete deliverance) of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

1:1 Paul, a messenger with a message of and by Jesus Christ through the will of God, to the holy ones which are at Ephesus, and believing in Christ Jesus:

1:2 Grace [be] to you, and peace, from God our Father, and [from] the Lord Jesus Christ.

1:3 Blessed (adorable 2128) [be] the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly [places] in Christ:

You just can’t get any more blessed than that!

Ephesians Part Two

We have now worked our way through the first 14 verses of the first chapter of Ephesians. In verse 3 we found out that God has blessed us with ALL spiritual blessings in Christ. Look at verse 15ff:

Eph 1:15 Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints,

Eph 1:16 Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;

Eph 1:17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you {the spirit of wisdom} and revelation in the knowledge of him:

As translated in the KJV, it would seem that God may or may not give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation. The words “may give” has a conditional feeling. The NIV makes it even worse. The word translated “may give” is a form of *didomi* that is in the aorist tense which indicates a completed act in the past. Aorist works like the English simple past tense. It already happened. He gave, we have. Now let’s read verse 16 and 17 again with the proper verb usage in place: Paul says” (I) “Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, [gave] unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:”

Now, with the proper verb usage in verse 17 the thought flows from verse 16, through 17 and on to 18 without derailing Paul’s message and our understanding. The turning of one little verb in this passage has generated all sorts of confusion about the Spirit. Religious folks run around claiming to have the “spirit of wisdom” or the “spirit of revelation” among a multitude of other “spirits” they want to “impart” to you or anyone else that will play their game.

God only gives one Spirit and He only gives it once. He only gives it once because The spirit of Christ can not be improved upon. It is Christ in you the hope of glory. In Christ is ALL wisdom, knowledge and revelation so if you want your understanding to be enlightened ask. We are in Christ and we have Christ in us. No maybes or ifs: God is faithful. If you ask for an egg He won’t give you a scorpion. Now, there are those out there that might just give you a scorpion or want to share their spirits. Romans 8:9 says that “if anyone does not have the spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.”

If you are reading the NIV the intent of Paul’s prayer is completely turned around and leads you away from the truth. This letter is written to believers. Believers have been born of God’s seed and have Christ in them. The spirit of wisdom and revelation is already in Christ in believers. Paul is not asking God here to give believers another spirit or two, but instead he is thanking God that we have the

Spirit of Christ with all wisdom and revelation in us, our understanding being enlightened, so that we may know what is the hope of our calling. If you will remember, Our hope of glory is Christ in us. Any who does not have the Spirit of Christ is not a child of God.

Eph 1:18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the (1)hope of his calling, and what the (2)riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

In verse 18 the word translated understanding is *cardia* which simply means heart but is used here in a figure of speech. “The eyes of your heart” metaphorically means a deep understanding. The verb translated “being enlightened” is in the past perfect tense. The past perfect tense indicates action that started at a defined point in the past but the effects of the action continue on into the present. So, the better way to read this phrase is “the eyes of your understanding having been enlightened that you may know.”

The phrase: “That you may know” gives us the purpose of the letter. Paul wrote by revelation so that we may know about: 1. the hope of his calling; 2 our inheritance and; 3 the exceeding greatness of his power available to us who believe. These are all aspects of the secret or in the KJV, the mystery that God kept hidden until He revealed it to Paul.

Eph 1:19 And what [is] the (3)exceeding greatness of his power (dunamus sp) to us-ward who believe, according to the working (energizing) of his mighty power, (strength) (Mark 3:20; 11:24)

If you read verse 19 in the order that it is written in the Greek the literal translation would be: “and the exceeding greatness of the power (dunamis) of Him into(eis) us, the ones believing in accordance with the energizing (energia) of the might(kratos) of his strength.(ischus)

Eph 1:20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set [him] at his own right hand in the heavenly [places,]

Eph 1:21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world,(eon) but also in that which is to come:

Eph 1:22 And hath put all [things] under his feet, and gave him [to be] the head over all [things] to the church,

Eph 1:23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

He is head over all to the church. The word “church” has taken on a whole set of meanings that have nothing to do with the word that it is translated from. The Greek word is *eklasia* and means “the called out ones.” The “called out ones” are

the body of Christ and Christ fills all who are called. If you've been filled by Christ in you, there is no more room for filling because he fills all in all. The spirit of Christ supersedes the Twinkie little lying spirits out looking for people to confuse and corrupt. Christ fills all: In all who believe.

All who believe have been called into the body of Christ. We who were dead in our sin, under the influence and bondage of the devil, have been called, believed and birthed into God's family, born of His seed, and made alive. The KJV calls it "quickenened." In the book of John it is called being born again. We have been quickened or made alive in Christ.

Eph 2:1 And you (the called out ones who are filled) [hath he quickened,] who were dead in trespasses and sins;

Eph 2:2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: (apathia)

The spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience who have not believed and answered God's call: The god of this world, the devil, Satan and his angels: Beelzebub. The verb that is translated "worketh" is in the present tense active. He worketh NOW. Actually the Greek word is *energeO* the word we get energize from. He is working now. Jesus on the other hand is the head of the called out ones who are his body. Unbelievers are not under his rule. Unbelievers dance to the tune of the god of this world no matter how socially acceptable, moral or religious they may seem.

Eph 2:3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

Eph 2:4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,

Eph 2:5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

Eph 2:6 And hath raised [us] up together, and made [us] sit together in heavenly [places] in Christ Jesus:

We as believers should pay very close attention to this verse because it highlights our position in Christ. The seminal question of who we are and our place in the kingdom of God is definitively answered. Do you remember the disciples arguing among themselves as to who would sit at his right side and who would sit at his left? They were jockeying for position in an earthly kingdom of course, and they were looking for personal power and position based on their effort and worthiness. Our position far exceeds any position the disciples could have dreamed about. We

are not at the king's side but instead we are IN him. We are a part of his body. When we were spiritually birthed, God elevated us to the heavenly realm, but placed us IN Christ who is at his right hand. We are IN Christ IN the very throne room of God, continually in the presence of God together. Now, just think about that for a while and let it sink in. We are holy. We are IN Christ. Christ is IN us and fills all in all. His exceeding power is exercised in us and energized in us.

We did not come to God with our worthiness and negotiate a position in the kingdom. We had no worthiness before God made us worthy. We had no power before God filled us with power. We had no position before God raised us up and made us to sit IN Christ in heaven. We could and can do nothing to earn or maintain our position, power and glory. It is ALL by the grace and mercy of God. So, why do we allow Satan's little deceiving spirits to distract us?

Eph 2:7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in [his] kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

Eph 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: [it is] the gift (doron offering Heb 10:10) of God:

The word "gift" is the Greek word *doron* which was used to mean a sacrificial offering. Hebrews 10:10 says: "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all*." The gift of God or literally the offering of God was Jesus Christ. The grace-gift by which we are saved or made whole is Christ in you. We receive the grace-gift through believing. By believing or in King James wording, by faith we are called, forgiven, justified and made righteous by the grace-gift. The grace gift or God's sacrificial offering was the payment in full of the ransom to set us free from the power of the devil so God could extend His grace to us. Keep your finger in Ephesians and turn to First John Chapter four verse nine. Lets read what John had to add to this concept of God's Grace-gift.

1Jn 4:9 In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

1Jn 4:10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation (or full payment) for our sins.

1Jn 4:11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

1Jn 4:12 No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

1Jn 4:13 Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.

1Jn 4:14 And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son *to be* the Saviour of the world.

Eph 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: [it is] the gift of God:

Eph 2:9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Eph 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

We must take very careful notice of verse nine. It give us a very important key to our freedom and rest in Christ. It is Not of our works. Our works died with Christ. In the flesh, our works are dead. The works of Christ Jesus are a horse of a different color, they are quite another thing, as they are altogether alive, powerful and effective.

For instance in the flesh, we do not have the capacity to forgive. The harder we think about forgiving an offence against us the more we think about the offence and are offended all over again. We can push the thoughts out of our conscience mind and get High blood pressure and anxiety we can't identify, but that is certainly not forgiveness. Now, if we could just forgive in the flesh, we would have somewhat to boast about. But we have nothing to boast about in the flesh. Forgiveness is just one example of all our fleshly works which are futile.

Forgiveness to be effective and real must originate and emanate from Christ in you. Real forgiveness happens when the mind is renewed to the profound truth of Christ taking our sins upon himself and forgiving us all our trespasses. The renewed mind is where five senses knowledge has been energized and made real to us by revelation knowledge.

Revelation knowledge is far more available than scripture. We have Christ in us. There is a never ending, never wavering and always available source of healing, blessing and knowledge from God in us: It is Christ in you. The nine manifestations are how we experience and walk in the works of Christ. The nine manifestation are the tools we have been given to carry out the ministry of reconciliation which is the ministry of Christ. (in us)

The works of Christ are the works that we have been created anew to walk in. The old man is dead and we have been made anew. It is the new man: Christ in you that is our hope of glory.

The best that the old man can muster is religion. Religion is self righteousness which is the righteousness that is compared filthy rags in the Old Testament. The struggle between the old dead fleshly man and the born anew spiritual man is well documented in the seventh chapter of Romans. We have detailed revelation scattered throughout the writings of Paul, specifically teaching us how to renew our minds to the truth of God's Word and words. In the new man, we operate based in heaven, seated in the presence of God, in Christ. In the flesh, well, here we are.

We choose moment by moment, thought by thought, whether we renew our mind to God's opinion or our fleshly opinion. So, we have a choice: All spiritual blessings, powerful believing by grace; or self misery. We choose

Ephesians Part Three

Please turn with me to the second chapter of Ephesians. We have, in the past two sessions worked our way through the first chapter and up to the tenth verse of the second chapter.

In the first chapter we discovered that God has given us every spiritual blessing there is, in Christ. We of course have not fully comprehended the majesty and glory of the ALL spiritual blessings that dwell in us in Christ. But we do know that Paul, the writer of this book, by revelation set a prayer in motion almost 2000 years ago, thanking God that we would fully comprehend the height, depth and expanse of the exceeding power that God has placed in us in Christ. I hereby claim God's promise that if any two agree, believing, that whatsoever we ask shall come to pass. I set myself in agreement with Paul and invite you to join in the agreement in believing that we will come to a full comprehension of all that we have in Christ, in us.

In the first few verses of the second chapter we have learned that we are God's handy-work. Our pride is embarrassed to admit that we are not self-made at all. Our work, effort and intelligence had nothing to do with our being in Christ nor can our ignorance remove us because it is entirely by God's grace. We have utterly nothing to boast about apart from the love mercy and grace of God.

So today we will begin reading in the eleventh verse of the second chapter of Ephesians. Paul calls on the Ephesian believers (and us) to remember where and what we were redeemed from:

Eph 2:11 Wherefore remember, that ye [being] in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;

It is important to note here that Paul asks the Ephesian believers (and us) to remember that we were in times past gentiles. How often we divide Christians into camps by label: Gentile Christians, Jewish Christians, and in our time we hear about the "black church" and the Armenian church and the Catholic Church and the Baptist Church and the emerging church and, and, and ... There is only one kind of believer in Jesus Christ: Redeemed, justified, forgiven and birthed-into-God's-family believers. The divisions are all from a fleshly point of view. Galatians 3:28 says that there is neither Jew nor Greek, male nor female in Christ. Keep your finger in Ephesians but flip back a few pages to Galatians Chapter three. We will begin reading in verse 22:

Gal 3:22 But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

All are under sin. Who is "all" referring to here? All who have not believed and received Christ.

Gal 3:23 But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.

Gal3: 24 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster *to bring us* unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

Gal 3:25 But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

Why are no longer under the schoolmaster, which is the law? Because we have received Christ and are now a new redeemed race:

Gal 3:26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

Gal 3:27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

Gal 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

Gal 3:29 And if ye *be* Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Abraham was not an Israelite. Abraham's grandson, Jacob whose name was changed to Israel was the father of the Israelites. Abraham died before the Jews came into being. Abraham is the father of many nations that are still fighting among themselves to this day. Abraham believed God and God made His covenant of promise to Abraham. In Christ we inherit the promise of the blessings of Abraham. In Christ we are birthed into a new race, a new family with a new family tree. Our father is God and our joint heir and brother is Jesus Christ. We are no longer Gentiles. The Jew that becomes born again is no longer a Jew. All who have Christ in them become new. We will see as we read on that Jesus abolished the law of the commandments, was preached to both the Jews and the gentiles and made one new man or body from both. It is the body of Christ.

If we truly saw one another as fellow heirs and brothers and sisters and sons and daughters in God's new family, the fear, hate, anger and guilt would dissipate. Instead we focus on the flesh and identify ourselves and divide ourselves by our past and fleshly associations. Our past is dead, gone and covered by the blood of Jesus Christ. God is interested in what you believe right now and how your believing will effect your future.

Eph 2:12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:

Eph 2:13 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

Eph 2:14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;

Eph 2:15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, [even] the law of commandments [contained] in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, [so] making peace;

We just read in Galatians that we are no longer under the schoolmaster and here it is said again: Jesus abolished the enmity (or the state of being enemies) which was the laws and commandments. They are done away with, abolished, they are just history. For example: Our country has a history of slavery. At great cost and conflict slavery was abolished. It is history. If you decide to practice slavery in this country you will be arrested and put in jail because it has been abolished and does not apply any more. The same is true of the laws of Moses. We are a new man, anew race, free, not enslaved by Satan anymore. We have been redeemed, justified and made to sit at the right hand of God in Christ. Now that's what I call making peace!

Eph 2:16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

Eph 2:17 And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.

Eph 2:18 For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

Eph 2:19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

Eph 2:20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;

Eph 2:21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:

We are the building, we are the temple where God lives in Christ. (in us) We are the replacement for buildings built with hands. We are God's workmanship. The Jews had the tabernacle, which over time was replaced by the temple with alters of sacrifice. In the communities further than a "Sabbath days journey," there were synagogues which were representations of a "holy place" for local Jews.

The pagans had temples with sacrificial alters where animals and sometimes humans were offered to the devils that they worshiped. They also had holy places.

In addition they had mounts, shrines and statues and images of the devils they worshiped.

Neither of these groups of people are in the body of Christ. When we are called into the family of God, the body of Christ we are no longer Jew or Gentile but instead we have been born of God's seed and are part of a new race: The people of the mystery, the body of Christ. We are the building, we are the temple, we are body, we are God's Spiritual Army and we are God's grace and peace in action.

The laws, traditions and taboos of the Jews have been superseded by the freedom and liberty of Christ. The temple and sacrifices were made obsolete by the once-for-all sacrifice God offered up to Himself in the death of Jesus the Christ. At the moment of Jesus death, the curtain protecting the holy of holies in the Jewish temple was miraculously torn from the top down to signify the end of the priesthood and the new open door policy of God for all those who believe.

When we understand our position in Christ, the futility of religion becomes very evident. In Christ, we are in at the right hand of God at all times. With Christ in us, we are never apart or separated from Christ. There is no need to beg, cry or summon God as the Pagan, Jewish and modern religious tradition was and is.

The Jewish believers, just following the day of Pentecost, continued in the Jewish traditions. They continued going to the temple, sacrificing and doing the law. They continued in the belief that they had to stay separate from gentiles and religiously were very exclusivist. They assumed that Christianity was an extension of the Jewish religion. This misunderstanding was universal among the Jewish Christians for several years as the numbers swelled as people believed in the messiah Jesus. The mystery had not been revealed yet.

The first big shock to the Jewish church was Peter's experience with Cornelius, the Roman Centurion. Cornelius was an unsaved Gentile that was praying to God when he was visited by an angel. An angel was required because Cornelius did not have Christ in him yet. Yet Peter having Christ in him had a revelatory vision in which he had direct communication with the risen Jesus Christ. The Jewish church accepted Cornelius and his household because they became proselytes and followed the same laws and traditions that the Jewish Christians did.

It was not until Paul's revelation of the mystery that the freedom and liberty in Christ, the one body and the household of faith was known. The idea that Gentiles and Jews alike were called out of their religious pageantry and taboos troubled and enraged the traditionalists.

The traditionalists in the Jewish church fought hard to snuff out the freedom of those who were called under the teaching of Paul's mystery gospel. They were mostly successful because near the end of his life Paul said that most everyone had turned away from him and his gospel. Yet, there have always been a few who understood the great freedom, liberty and power that we have been called into.

Over the first three centuries after the day of Pentecost the law and tradition group spread across the Roman empire. Around 300 AD Constantine the Roman emperor combined the Christian Religion with the various pagan religions to create a Roman controlled religion. Of course Constantine appointed himself as the head of the church. I don't think anything could be further from the simplicity of Christ in you the hope of glory.

The hold and terror of the Roman Church is well documented in the history of Europe, the middle east, and Asia minor. The Roman Church has tortured and killed more Christians over the past two centuries than any other governing body. No group has spent more energy and financial resources to squelch the truth of God's word. For hundreds of years only the elite were allowed access to bible.

Christianity in the middle ages was a religion of fear, guilt and duty. Failure to comply meant loss of property and usually death by burning or other horrible public torture. In much of the world the physical torture has stopped but the emotional pressure is still rampant. Even in the most benign of denominations there are the unwritten and written laws, traditions and peer pressure that keeps people under stress, fear and guilt.

If guilt and fear were removed, denominations would shrivel up and vanish like the wicked witch of the west when Dorothy splashed water on her. The great seminaries would have to discard their miters and swaggers. Without fear, guilt and duty the religion called Christianity could not survive. True Christianity however continues to thrive in the hearts of those who believe.

Now, I ask you: Who is the father of guilt and fear. My bible tells me that there is therefore now NO condemnation for those in Christ Jesus. In the last session we saw in verse 6 of the second chapter that to was God who MADE us to sit in Christ. It's not of our works. (or fear or guilt or duty or ..)

In the unrenewed mind, we have a lack the vision to see and comprehend our position and standing in the body Christ. The unrenewed mind only sees the flesh and it's selfishness. In the flesh we want to jockey for position, impress others with our pseudo holiness and control one another. It's called religion. Religion began as Eve listened to the serpent and Adam sunk his teeth into the fruit.

Religion is part of the kosmos, the world system that is controlled by the prince of the power of the air. It is a world class deception to take our attention off the simplicity of Christ in us and us in Christ. Religion is the fleshly way to of self righteousness.

Eph 2:22 In whom ye also are buildd together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

We are God's spiritual "house," the temple made without hands, the habitation or dwelling place in the Spirit. It is God in Christ in us. Look at Romans chapter eight verse six:

Rom 8:6 For to be carnally minded *is* death; but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace.

Rom 8:7 Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

Rom 8:8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

Rom 8:9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

Rom 8:10 And if Christ *be* in you, the body *is* dead because of sin; but the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness.

Rom 8:11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

Rom 8:12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.

Rom 8:13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

Rom 8:14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

Rom 8:15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

It's Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Ephesians Part Four: The Mystery of Paul

The writings of Paul have always presented a challenge to those who are bound in performance based religion. From the beginning the Jewish church choked on Paul's Gospel of the mystery. Late in his life, Peter wrote to the churches in Galatia and surrounding areas, to warn them to pay close attention to the letters written by Paul. Peter refers to the letters of Paul as scripture.

Peter wrote his second letter late in his life when he knew that he was about to be killed by the Romans. Most place the date of writing at AD 67 which is about the same time as Paul wrote Second Timothy from prison in Rome. They were both executed under the Roman Caesar Nero's brutal rule shortly after these letters were written.

Peter's struggle to accept the gospel of grace to the gentiles is clearly documented in the book of Acts. Peter's famous roof-top oxymoron of "not so Lord" typifies his hesitancy to move on from the elitist laws of Moses to the all inclusive grace by faith of Paul's gospel. Yet he did accept the truth of the mystery even as most of the Jerusalem church remained zealous for the law. Those who deny the gospel of the mystery and discount the writings of Paul should give heed to the testimony of Peter. Read with me:

2Pe 3:15 And account *that* the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom [revelation] [being] given unto him*, hath written unto you;

*Given unto him: Aorist Passive: Aorist "being given;" was given in the past with a continuous action to the present. Passive: It wasn't Paul's wisdom but wisdom that he was receiving by revelation.

2Pe 3:16 As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, [pervert] as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.

2Pe 3:17 Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness.

2Pe 3:18 But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him *be* glory both now and for ever. Amen.

Peter states that those who are unstable and unlearned pervert the scriptures including the writings of Paul which they don't understand to their great loss. He warns the Galatians and all other believers to not be led away with the error of the wicked. The wicked ones Peter refers to here are the judizers from the Jerusalem

church who were aggressively attempting to snare and bind believers to the law. Peter said to beware! Peter tells them and us to stay steadfast in the things they were taught before by Paul.

If you find yourself struggling to understand “all that you should do” to be a good Christian, then you have been beguiled. Search out the gospel presented through Paul in the first three chapters of Ephesians. It will take you 5 minutes to read. I double dog dare you! Then take 10 minutes to read the little letter of Colossians. You will discover that Christ has done it all, once, for all. He nailed our sins and works to his cross.

I personally spent years in a supposedly grace based denomination’s schools and seminary but was never taught the simplicity of the mystery. Instead I was taught “all that I should do” to be a good denominational pastor. When we discover that it’s not about “all that I should do” but it’s about all that HE has done. What a savior! What love! What a freedom! Not of works lest any man should boast What a God! The letter to Titus says: “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost”

Come along with me to the book of Romans, chapter eleven. We will begin in verse 25 and discover together the mystery that was revealed by revelation to Paul by Jesus the risen Christ. Paul does not want us to be ignorant of the mystery as most of Israel was.

Rom 11:25 For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.

One of my college professors believed that the mystery of Paul could not be known because it was after all, a mystery. Many religious groups take this position, being wise in their own conceits, but Paul clearly tells us that the mystery that was a secret kept from the time that the world began, had been revealed to him to proclaim. The word is Strong’s G3466 mustērion. Paul wanted us to not be ignorant of the mystery. He prayed for boldness to preach it, suffered jail, beatings and was stoned and left for dead because he insisted on preaching it. He finally was executed because he just would not be shut up. Paul’s gospel of freedom in Christ so enraged the religious Jewish Christians, that they mercilessly persecuted him and his followers. The religious hierarchy sent missionaries out to mislead those that he taught. They plotted against him politically, religiously and privately. But Paul persisted. He said it was not in his power, but Christ in him.

Have you ever wished that the Bible would be more specific in defining what it was talking about? Well, when it comes to the mystery, it does. Paul himself defines clearly what the mystery is in Colossians chapter one starting in verse 25. Before we read the verses, let me list what he is going to tell us specifically about the mystery:

1. It was hidden from the ages and generations. No one knew.
2. It is NOW revealed to His saints. (Notice it is revealed to his saints, not to everyone. The natural man receiveth not the things of God.)
3. God will make known the riches of the glory of the mystery to His saints
4. The mystery is Christ in you. A simple statement but a phenomenal truth. Stop! Don't be adding anything. It is Christ in you!
5. Christ in you is THE hope of glory. (there is none other)
6. The mystery of Christ in you includes all who believe, Jew or gentile.

Colossians 1:25 in the middle of one of Paul's long compound sentences, it would be a good idea to go back and read the whole letter of Colossians to get a fuller understanding of the context. But, for now we will start in verse 25.

Col 1:25 Whereof I am made a minister,[diakonos –servant] according to the dispensation [administration or stewardship] of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil [finish or fill to the top] the word [logos]of God;

So God choose Paul to be his servant to finish the logos, or God's Word with the gospel of the mystery:

Col 1:26 Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages [eons] and from generations, but now is made manifest[made to appear] to his saints:

[His saints can see it, experience it and live it but the natural man does not, can not comprehend nor experience the mystery.]

Col 1:27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles;[who believe] which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:

So, our only hope of glory is Christ in you, which is the secret that God kept hidden for all ages and generations until He revealed it to Paul. What a surprise for the devil! Christ in every believer! Christ's power and authority in every believer; in every corner of the world at the same time. Look at First Corinthians Chapter two verse seven and eight.

1Co 2:7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:

1Co 2:8 Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known *it*, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

Now let's let Paul further enlighten us about the mystery. In Ephesians chapter three Paul explains the mystery further:

Eph 3:1 For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,

Eph 3:2 If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:

Eph 3:3 How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words,

Eph 3:4 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)

Do you see? Paul wants us to understand his knowledge of the mystery.]

Eph 3:5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;

Eph 3:6 That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:

Eph 3:7 Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.

Eph 3:8 Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;

Eph 3:9 And to make all *men* see what *is* the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:

Eph 3:10 To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly *places* might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,

Eph 3:11 According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:

Eph 3:12 In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.

Eph 3:13 Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.

Eph 3:14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

Eph 3:15 Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,

Eph 3:16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;

Eph 3:17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,

Eph 3:18 May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;

Eph 3:19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

Eph 3:20 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,

Eph 3:21 Unto him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

We started a list earlier so, lets add to it: Here's some of what Paul has taught us so far:

1. The mystery is hinged upon "Christ in you" and all the other aspects and benefits of the mystery depend upon having Christ in you.
2. The mystery is God's secret that He kept until it was revealed to Paul by the ascended and glorified Christ Jesus.
3. No one knew about it. The prophets didn't know, Moses didn't know, the devil did not know and the disciples did not know while Jesus was walking among them.
4. It is NOW revealed to His saints. His saints are those who have Christ in them. If you have Christ in you, you are one of God's saints and have the mind of Christ!
5. The mystery of "Christ in you" includes the gentiles as well as the Jews, who believe.
6. Those who have Christ in them are a part of God's family, the body of Christ.

The secret that was kept is the entire church age and all that it encompasses. The prophets of old told of the coming king, the messiah, the conquering warrior, coming to liberate and set up his kingdom. Jesus came proclaiming the kingdom of God. His disciples were looking for the prophesied king. That's all they could see because the mystery had not been revealed yet. The conquering Jesus that was prophesied in the Old Testament and the setting up of an earthly kingdom will happen in a future age as shown in the book of Revelations.

We however, are in the time of the mystery. We live in a secret age not known to the ancients. The whole church age, the time of grace that we now live in was not prophesied nor known until it was given to Paul. There is not one single reference in the Old Testament referring to the body of Christ. There is no model of design or example to follow.

The called out ones, those born of God's seed, the body of Christ, the ones called according to His purpose in this mysterious age are the church. The Old Testament hierarchy does not apply. The laws and taboos of the older ages have passed away having been nailed to the cross.

It behooves us to listen to the words of Peter: "...even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the revelation given unto him, hath written unto you; in all *his* epistles, speaking in them of these things; which they that are unlearned and unstable pervert as *they do* also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. Beware lest ye also, be led away with their error. Instead, grow in grace, and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The letters of Paul give us the revelation for this age. The alpha and the omega, everything from the beginning to the end of our age is all about "Christ in you, the hope of glory.

The great mystery is not a mystery any more if you have Christ in you.

Ephesians Part Five

We have now completed a quick review of the first three chapters of Ephesians. We have only briefly summarized some of the profound truths presented by Paul by revelation. An in-depth word-by-word study is warranted because this book is the definitive revelation of who we are and what we are in Christ. Ignorance of these truths is the foundation of our misery. My prayer is that this series of teachings will urge you on to a more thorough study and understanding of the book of Ephesians with the corresponding comprehension of who you are in Christ.

The first three chapters are the basis for the second three chapters and indeed the rest of Paul's writings. In the KJV, Chapter four starts with "I therefore." Paul is saying: "Based on everything I just said therefore I come along side you to help and advise you to live with an appropriately powerful and productive response to the calling where with you have been called. We must help one another.

Eph 4:1 I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

In modern American English, "beseech" has the connotation of begging or pleading. The word translated "beseech" is *parakletos* which is the verb form of the noun *parakletos* (*par-ak'-lay-tos*) used by Jesus in the Gospel of John to describe the Holy Spirit that would be sent on the day of Pentecost. The *parakletos* is the comforter, Holy Spirit, or Spirit of Christ in you. A *parakletos* is a person who advises informs, empowers, comforts and helps you. Every believer will be a *parakletos* to other believers because Christ in us is the definitive *parakletos*.

God made us worthy. We must always keep chapter two verse nine in the fore front of our thoughts: "Not of works lest any should boast." Any time the translation of the Paul's gospel seems to point to our works making us worthy stop and look deeper into the wording. God made us worthy.

Eph 4:2 With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;

Eph 4:3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Supporting one another in the love of God, modestly and gently make effort with urgency to guard the ONE-ness of the Spirit in the ligament of peace.

The word translated unity is *henotes* which literally means oneness. We are one in Christ because we all have the one lord, the one Christ in us. Bond comes from a word that means literally "joint bands" or ligament. The ligaments hold the joint together so that it can articulate and function properly. The bond of peace: Who is

our peace? If you will recall, Ephesians chapter two verse 14 said that HE is our peace and that through him we have access to the father.

Eph 4:3 Endeavouring to keep the oneness of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Eph 4:4 [There is] one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;

Eph 4:5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

Eph 4:6 One God and Father of all, who [is] above all, and through all, and in you all.

Eph 4:7 But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

Do you notice all the ones? There is a point being emphasized here with the repeated use of the word one. To understand the gospel of the Mystery, the oneness must be grasped. Buying into the “many spirits” idea that is so common in the modern Christian religion, clouds the oneness of the body of Christ. Besides the delusion, the idea of many spirits opens the door to the many evil spirits that are eager to oblige.

Each and every person that believes is given the one and only grace-gift according to the measurement of Christ. The gift of Christ is both the measurement and the measure. Colossians 1:27 tells us that we have Christ in us which is our hope of glory. Christ is the gift. There is only one Spirit of Christ. There is only one grace gift: Christ in you.

Eph 4:8 Wherefore he (God) saith, “*When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.*”

Psa 68:18 Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, *for* the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell *among them*.)

Eph 4:9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?

Eph 4:10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)

Eph 4:11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

Eph 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

For the equipping of the holy ones for the work of the ministry. For the edifying building up of the body of Christ. It is the holy ones that is, all believers that do the work of the ministry (singular) of reconciliation. Doing the function of delivering the message or gospel, teaching, prophesying, shepherding and proclaiming the good news is part of living appropriately as a child of God. The “work” of the ministry is the ministry of reconciliation, the ministry of Christ in us. Religion has created a hierarchy of “positions” within their organizations and use these words, but not in a rightly divided way.

A more accurate translation with the word "some" which is not in the Greek removed, Ephesians 4:11, 12 reads as follows: "And he indeed gave messengers, inspired speakers, proclaimers of the gospel, and teaching shepherds, for the equipping of the holy ones for the work of the ministry, (of reconciliation) for the building up of the body of Christ."

These ways to serve one another have been called "gift ministries" but more accurately should be called "serving the of the gift." "As every man hath received the gift, *even so* serve the same one to another ..." 1 Pet 4:10 We each should be serving the gift to one another.

II Corinthians 5:16-17 tells us: "Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet we know him no more. Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: Old things are passed away; behold all things are become new. And all things (new) are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry (or service) of reconciliation." Each of us who are born again of God's Spirit has the gift of Holy Spirit. Our ministry (or service) of reconciliation is part of that gift. Let us, by love, serve the gift to one another.

Eph 4:13 Till we all come in the unity (ONENess) of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

These verses have been misused over the past two centuries to perpetrate the clergy over laity, special anointing and so called “gift ministry” fallacy. Yet here in the same chapter the concept of the oneness of the faith, the oneness and completeness of the gift of Christ in you stands in opposition to the deceit.

Building of organizations based upon a hierarchy, influence and personal power stands in stark contrast to the body of Christ. Building up the body of Christ is not about bigger meetings, political influence and more real estate. The body of Christ is built up when we serve the gift in love to one another.

Eph 4:14 That we [henceforth] be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, [and] cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

Eph 4:15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, [even] Christ:

Eph 4:16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

As others believe and are birthed into the family of God and begin to learn what they have received, we each have the privilege and responsibility to help them understand and walk appropriately in the grace of God.

One:
One Lord,
one faith,
one God our Father.
One body,
and one Christ in us,
who fills all in all who believe.
Just one.

Ephesians Part Six

God has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ! Please turn with me to the sixth chapter of the book of Ephesians. We'll start today in verse ten. You will notice of course that we have skipped over the last half of chapter four and chapter five. We will go back to those verses after learning about our implements of spiritual warfare.

The common way to read chapters four, five and six is as a list of things that we are required to do; a to-do list of sorts. I would like to propose a different perspective that is more in line with the writing and intentions of Paul.

In the next session we will look at the second half of chapter four and chapter five through the lens of spiritual warfare. Our armor was given to us for very practical and vital use. The moment we drop our armor and weapons, we are sifted like sand in the hands of the devil. In our ignorance, we live far below our potential as sons and daughters of God.

Eph 6:10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

“Be strong” comes from the verb *endunamoO* which literally should be read as “being enabled” or “being empowered.” Being empowered is present passive, so it is not something we need to try to achieve but something we are. Actually this verse is a profound statement of who we are in Christ. Here is a literal translation of the original in the order of the Greek syntax: “Finally, being empowered IN the Lord and IN the holding of his strength, slip into the armor of god to be enabled to stand ...”

Eph 6:11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

“That ye may be able:” Ye is you-plural: We are all included here if we have Christ in us. The King James phrase; “may be able” has a conditional feel to it but the Greek verb *dunamai* is in the present passive and should be read as “to be enabled” or “to be empowered.” So, we sink into the whole armor of God to be enabled or empowered to stand. It is not that we might be enabled but we are enabled.

The word “wiles” is translated from is *methodeia* which is where we get our word “method” from. The devil has a set of very effective strategies or methods. His “flaming darts” are highly accurate and find the tiniest of chinks in our armor. The armor, or in the Greek, “implements of war” are specifically designed and energized to withstand the *methodeia* of the devil. Of course if we are ignorant of the one gift with all spiritual blessings or when we choose to ignore our implements of warfare we walk about like flaming pin cushions in despair.

Imagine an army going to battle convinced that they have no defensive or offensive weapons. They form up into ranks and march into the arrows of the enemy. They take great pride in who can get filed with the most arrows without stopping. Any who duck or fall must not have been real soldiers anyway or they would have stood. . . . Aren't we foolish!

Very practical, down-to-earth, right-here-where-we-live examples of the wiles of the devil are given in chapters four and five. The verses we are looking at today are an inventory of our weapons for victorious day-to-day life.

Contrary to the religious emphasis on performance at meetings, real Christianity is an always-thing, sleeping or awake, breath by breath, thought by thought way of life. Either we live in the blessings or we live with the devil's darts.

The religious thing to do is to take on the chronic pain of dart wounds as a personal identity. "Oh! Look at me I'm so holy and humble! I suffer terribly! God must be trying to teach me something! What a bunch of Who-Ha!"

Eph 6:12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high [places.]

There is another verse that confirms this:

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 says: For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

To win a battle you must first know who you are fighting. We are not fighting against people. People who come against us are unwitting pawns of the real enemy. If we attack the people, we open ourselves up to sizzling darts. Instead of people we are wrestling against "rulers of the darkness of this world." I want to define what that means.

The word "rulers" in verse twelve is *kosmo-kratOr* which is literally "kosmos holders" or "world system holders." The "holders of the world system" are the principalities and powers of verse twelve. The kosmos is the world system of this age that is ruled by the god of this world: Satan. He is our adversary. He is the kosmos-holder or ruler of the darkness of this world. The religious idea is that God controls everything: Consequently, trouble and pain are from God. Line up and march! Bare your breast, make room for the darts!

Eph 6:13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

The verb behind “take unto you” is *analambanO* which is a form of *lambanO* which is translated “receive” in most cases. *LambanO* is actively receiving something that is given to you. You “take it.” But it is not “take” in the sense of finding something you want and taking it. It must be something already given for the word *lambanO* to apply.

In verse eleven we are told in the King James to “put on” the armor, but the literal of the original is to sink into the armor. In other words, the armor is already on us, we just need to settle into it. In my mind it’s a little like a turtle sinking into its shell. His shell fits perfectly but the turtle has to make the choice of sinking in. He could choose to not sink in when the hungry fox comes sniffing around but he would be damaged. We have to choose to sink into our armor. The hungry fox is out sniffing and snuffling and wants to damage you.

So first Paul tells us to sink into our armor, then here in verse 13 we are told to *analambanO* it. To put this in my words, we are to sink into the armor that God has equipped and empowered us with and then manifest it. We have both defensive and offensive weapons. We were called to victory in Christ. We sink into our armor and draw our sword, strap on our shield and stand against the fox! When we are armored up, he will flee from us because we are armored in Christ.

Eph 6:14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

Eph 6:15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

Eph 6:16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

Let me introduce my friend Joe:

Hello, my name is Joe Dart-Board. You may remember my old uncle Corky. He’s getting old and has lines on his face but he is still famous. I come from a long line of proud dart boards. My great grandpa Bull’s Eye was very religious and started the large WSAL denomination. Our central doctrine is Uh ... What’s that? Oh, sorry: WSAL is an anagram for We-Suffer-A-Lot. It’s the We-Suffer-A-Lot Denomination. Our central doctrine is generational curses because it keeps our shield down and we can be hit by the same darts over and over again. I’ve personally repented 127 times for great aunty Tail Feather’s witchcraft. We as a family take great pride in our ability to attract and hold fiery darts. In fact with out the darts we wouldn’t know who we are. We’re looking for new members

Believers are not designed as dart boards. We have been given the shield of faith. Chapter 2 verse eight says that our faith was a gift of God, so don’t fool yourself into thinking you don’t have enough faith.

A mustard seed is a tiny little seed but it is all it takes. Somebody said that. Uh ... He knew what he was talking about. You know him. In fact you are in Him and He is in you and you have His faith. His faith should be just about enough! But we have to choose to use it. It's His faith, His power, His body. When we choose to believe He works, He energizes, He performs in and through us. Always remember it's not of our works but His. Our works look strangely like a dart board

Eph 6:17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

As a boy one of my jobs was to cut wood for the wood stove. I can remember one Saturday morning standing in the cold with the snow falling around me, chopping wood. I was working hard, and was having a particularly difficult time. My father came out and took the ax from me and said with his characteristic wordiness: "It's dull." We went into the barn and he taught me how to sharpen the ax. He then said: "Keep it sharp." My how the wood chips flew!

The point is swords, like an axes work best when they are honed to a fine edge. The word of God is our sword. The word says iron sharpens iron. Why do you suppose bible study is being deemphasized in religious circles and being replaced by being relevant to society? We are told to study. We are to study to rightly divide the word of truth. A dull sword is no better than a stick.

The sword is most effective in our mind. The battle is in our thoughts and attitude. The renewed mind requires a sharpened sword of the spirit which is the word of God. The Bible wrongly divided is NOT the word of God. The Word of God, the logos, the words, thoughts and intents of God are in us in Christ. Our mission is to renew our mind to Him:

Eph 6:18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints:

Praying always: Always be in the mind set of prayer. No matter what we are doing we can be praying. Pray as we work, pray as we drive, pray as we walk, pray. What is prayer? It's not a position or script. It is a conversation or communing with God. Praying in the spirit is speaking in tongues which is perfect prayer. We are always in the presence of God in Christ. He is always listening and always available. Always be praying in the spirit; Always. Pray for yourself, pray for others pray for guidance in all things. Just pray.

Eph 6:19 And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel.

Eph 6:20 For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

Eph 6:21 But that ye also may know my affairs, [and] how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things:

Eph 6:22 Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs, and [that] he might comfort your hearts.

Eph 6:23 Peace [be] to [you], the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ephesians Part Seven

Do you know how blessed you are? Are you waiting for God to plop a blessing on you? Ephesians 1:3 tells us that we have already received ALL spiritual blessings. All means all, so He did not forget to give us anything. We just have not chosen to believe and manifest what we already have in Christ in us.

In Chapter two we found out that God has placed us in Christ in the heavenlies at His right hand: Not based on our works but on the completed work of Christ. If that was not enough He also has placed Christ in us and declared that we are His workmanship. We have absolutely no basis for boasting in our own accomplishments but can only boast of the wonder, majesty, mercy and grace of God, in Christ, in us.

In Chapter three we learned that the gospel for our age was a mystery or secret that God held hidden within Himself, until it was given it to Paul by direct face to face revelation from the risen and glorified king of kings, Christ Jesus. In the first few verses of chapter four we discovered the oneness of God's plan. We are all one in Christ. Christ is the oneness factor of God's plan. His plan all comes together in the spirit of Christ. We have the one and only hope, Christ in us. We are part of the one body of Christ. We have each been given the one Grace-gift according to measure of Christ.

And of course we then skipped forward to the sixth chapter to learn about our implements of spiritual warfare. Once again we found that it is not of our works but His. Our flesh desperately wants to take prominence in our lives and thoughts but the Word of God declares our fleshly works dead. Our battle is to agree with God that our fleshly works are dead and resist the fiery darts of the devil.

So here we are, ready to launch into the list of strategies that Paul wrote down for us. These verses have been used for two centuries to beat guilt and shame into Christians, but this is a misuse of the Word.

Eph 4:17 This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,

The vanity of unbeliever's minds. The King James word "vanity" is *mataiotEs* in the Greek. (That is Strong's number 3153) It means empty, inutility, or transientness. Their thoughts are transient, that is of no lasting value or worthless. Their thoughts just come and go, come and go, come and go with no value. We all know others who just prattle on and on about nothing important, worrying and fretting about everything.

Eph 4:18 Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:

Now carefully watch verse nineteen: This verse gives us the process of fleshly thinking and the consequences:

Eph 4:19 Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

They have given themselves: Literally they have surrendered themselves. They made the choice. They have decided to give themselves INTO lasciviousness. This is the thought process with a purpose. The purpose is to work or act in the flesh. The intended work is fraudulent, taking advantage of others for personal gain in all areas of life. It is a mindset of selfishness: mine, mine, mine! Look at me, look at me, look at me! My way, my way, my way. Mine!

Eph 4:20 But ye have not so learned Christ;

Do you see what I am driving at? Let's approach it another way: Let's look at Matthew chapter five verse 27. This is a small part of what is known as the sermon on the mount: Jesus says:

Mat 5:27 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:

Mat 5:28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

So as Jesus points out with great clarity, the problem is one of our thoughts. The sin is committed whether the actual act takes place or not. In the time that Jesus spoke these words the listeners were under the laws of Moses. Adultery was a sin punishable by stoning. We in our time, the time of grace, the time of the mystery, have been redeemed from the law and all our sins covered by the blood of Jesus Christ.

Ephesians chapter two shouts that it is not of our works. So, as Jesus points out it is the thought process where the battle with Satan happens. By the time we actually do the deed, we have long since made the decision to give ourselves over to the enemy and follow his ruinous ways. As a believer with Christ in us we are made brand new but we still have this fleshly body that serves as our earth suit for the short while we are here. Romans chapter seven calls our earth suit the old man and likens it to a dead body. God has reckoned it dead as should we.

Back to Ephesians chapter four, verse twenty:

Eph 4:20 But ye have not so learned Christ;

Eph 4:21 If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus:

Eph 4:22 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;

Please notice here that our old man is corrupt (in the process of rotting) according to the deceitful lusts. Our old man the flesh, our earth suit, is corrupt and still subject to the deceit and trickery of the devil. This is why we have to do battle. Every time we let down our guard sizzling darts find their target. The armor of God is all about what we believe. I'll say that again: The armor of God is all about what we believe. Believing equals receiving. The shield of faith or the shield of believing is HOW we quench the fiery darts of the devil. Another way of describing the armor of God is the process of renewing our mind. We are given the put-on put-off dynamic as a tool in renewing our mind. We are to put off the old man and put on the new. This is not works, it is in you mind, believing the promises of God. When we put on the new man and walk out in Christ, the works of Christ are manifested.

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Eph 4:21 If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus:

Eph 4:22 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;

Eph 4:23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;

Eph 4:24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

The new man is truly holy: Justified and righteous. The new man can't try to be better or act better because the new man is in Christ and is perfectly holy. It's that rotting corps the old man that is continually pulling us away from God. In the flesh we can not please God. It is not of our fleshly works. No matter how intended, fleshly works are evil with consequences that damage others. The works that result from the thoughts of Christ in us are holy, powerful and bless others in ways beyond what we can imagine. When we renew our mind we are putting on the thoughts of the new man and putting off the thoughts of the old man.

Here's Paul's next specific example:

Eph 4:25 Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor: for we are members one of another.

Lying, or speaking an untruth is the result of thoughts designed to deceive. (Uh .. who's the father of deceit?) Thoughts to deceive are fleshly thoughts. Thoughts that

have their root in dead flesh, inspired by Satan. Deception always has a victim and evil consequences. There is no deceptiveness in Christ.

Speaking the truth in the new man. We are members one of another. When we damage one another we are damaging our selves because we are one in the body of Christ.

Eph 4:26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:

Eph 4:27 Neither give place to the devil.

Here's the punch line: Don't give the devil a foot-hold. Not even a single dot. Give him no place.

Take your time. Study out the next few verses with examples of our warfare: Look at the thought process behind the statement and how the put-on put-off dynamic applies. It's about changing our thinking and believing. Our attitude is a direct result of our believing. One steals because they believe they have to supply their own need and fear that they cannot: So they take from others. Notice it is about selfishness. The put-on mindset is "I want to give to others that have a need." So I find a job so I can give to others.

Eph 4:28 Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

Eph 4:29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

Do you see? Corrupt communication or fleshly communication comes from the thoughts of the old man. The thoughts that result in edification and minister grace are the thoughts that originate from Christ in you. Put on, put off.

Bitterness is replaced with tenderheartedness, wrath with forgiveness, evil speaking with the words of grace. It's all about what we believe and think. In the renewed mind in manifestation we will see the fruits of the spirit not the fruits of the flesh.

From the same fountain comes both bitter water and sweet. Jesus said it should not be so. It is our choice to renew our mind or not. We have both sources. Either evil or holy. We choose our source and thought by our believing and the results spew forth.

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 says: For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations,

and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

We have ALL spiritual blessings!

Eph 6:12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high [places.]

One of the biggest and most damaging darts of the enemy is self condemnation, but Romans chapter eight verse one says: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, and Ephesians 2:9 shouts: Not of works, lest any man should boast. To have a carnal mindset is a life of living death; but a spiritual mindset is life and peace. The carnal mindset is at war against God: for it is not subject to God, So they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. None.

Ephesians: Written to believers of Jesus Christ: Those born of God's seed, born into a new race, the body of Christ.

Ephesians: Written to those blessed with ALL spiritual blessings. Yes you and me. Blessed beyond all we can imagine by the one grace-gift.

Ephesians: Written so that we can know the how, what and why of victory in Christ. Put it on.

Yes Blessed beyond the curse!

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