

# **CHRIST IN HIS CHURCH**

## **A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS**



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**PREPARED BY  
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# CHRIST IN HIS CHURCH

## A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS

### LESSON ONE: BACKGROUND OF THE BOOK



#### Introduction to the Study

As Christians it is important for us to understand the concepts of salvation, the church, and practical living in holiness. These concepts are shown clearly in the Book of Ephesians. This series of lessons will take us through this book and will help us to appreciate God's spiritual blessings to each of us.

#### City of Ephesus

In many ways, Ephesus would be considered the great crossroads of the ancient world. It boasted the Temple of Artemis (considered to be one of the seven wonders of the ancient world), Acts 19:29-40. The city was wealthy and served as the major port of Asia Minor. Therefore, it operated as a conduit between the Roman Empire and its nearby neighbor Greece going through to the eastern areas of India and Persia. The community also had a synagogue, which signified the presence of a fairly large Jewish population. The wealth of the area is still apparent in the lavish terrace houses found in the ancient remains of the city.

#### Background to the Book

Paul's letter to the Ephesians is different compared to many of the other New Testament letters he wrote. Much like Romans, Ephesians was not written so much to address problems in a particular church, but was written to explain some of the basic themes of the Christian faith.

The Book of Ephesians focuses on the church of Christ and focuses on the role of Christians and God in the Church. Written very near the same time, Ephesians has many similarities with the Book of Colossians. Since Paul wrote both of the books from Roman imprisonment (Acts 28 around 62 AD), his mind was probably still on similar themes.

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#### MEMORY VERSE

*Now to Him who is  
able to do exceedingly  
abundantly above  
all that we ask or  
think, according  
to the power that  
works in us"*

**Ephesians 3:20**



While Colossians focuses on the Christ of the church in opposition to the vertical doctrines common in the day, Ephesians focuses on the church of Christ and its standing in the mind of God.

### History of the Church

On Paul's third Missionary Journey, he passed through the City of Ephesus. Finding some disciples that did not have a full understanding of the gospel, he taught them more fully and helped to establish a congregation there, Acts 19. At that point Paul preached in a local synagogue for a few months and then preached for both Jews and Gentiles for two years in the Hall of Tyrannus. Paul's work was so successful it caused a disturbance among the idol makers of the city. Paul left the city but the church continued to thrive. A little later Paul met with the elders of the church of Ephesus (Acts 20:17-35) and reminded them of his work. He also warned them of the danger of pride and of false teaching. Other places we see the church of Ephesus is in the Book of Ephesians and in the letters written to the young preacher at Ephesus: 1 and 2 Timothy. Also many believe that the Apostle John preached in Ephesus later in his life (1, 2 & 3 John). We also see Ephesus in Revelation 2:1-7, where John speaks of a church well known for its good works and faithfulness to correct doctrine but that has also grown away from its first love of God.

## Major Themes of The Book of Ephesians

1. Every spiritual blessing we have is due to Jesus Christ, 1:3
2. Jesus Christ has saved us through his grace through faith, 2:8-9
3. Christ's work of reconciliation entails the unification of his people across the lines of race and social status, 2:10-22, 3:1-21, 4:1-6.
4. A right relationship with God requires that we pursue a right relationship with our fellow man, 5:22-33, 6:1-3.
5. The Christian is in constant conflict with the ungodly forces of the world, 6:10-22.

**NEXT WEEK'S  
LESSON:**

**OUR  
BLESSINGS IN  
CHRIST,  
EPHESIANS  
1:1-14**



# CHRIST IN HIS CHURCH

## A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS

### LESSON TWO: BLESSINGS IN CHRIST

#### EPHESIANS 1:1-14



#### Introduction

Paul makes the point that every spiritual blessing is found in Christ, 1:3. Paul lists those blessings as being “in him” or “in Christ.”

#### The Blessing

In the original Greek language that Paul wrote this book in, Ephesians 1:3-14 forms on long sentence. In the same way that an opera has an overture that sets the mood of the work, so this passage sets the tone for the rest of the Epistle. The word blessing is rich in Scripture as we see the Blessing given to Jacob and Esau by Isaac (Genesis 27) along with the Blessing given by Abraham to each of his sons (Genesis 49).

#### Our Blessing Described

**In him we are chosen, v. 3.** Even when we were lost in our sins (Ephesians 2:5), God’s grace is extended to us and we have the offer of salvation. This is even more amazing when we realize that God made this decision before sin even entered the world. Christ died for every person, Titus 2:11.

**In him we are predestined to adoption, v. 5.** Not only has God chosen to make us holy, but he grants us full status as his children, with all the benefits, John 1:12. The entire creation must serve God as that is what it was created to do. But we have the option and receive great benefit when we show our love for him.

**In him we have redemption through his blood, v. 7.**

Redemption speaks of buying a slave’s freedom, paying a ransom. The price for our sins, the payment to buy us out of eternal condemnation, was fully paid by the blood of Christ. In

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#### MEMORY VERSE

***Blessed be the God  
and Father of our Lord  
Jesus Christ, who has  
blessed us with every  
spiritual blessing in  
the heavenly places  
in Christ.***

**Ephesians 1:3**



Christ we are no longer slaves to sin, but we become slaves to God. Since we are bought and paid for by his blood, we have an obligation to glorify God in our body and spirit, 1 Corinthians 6:20.

**In him we have the forgiveness of sins, v 7.** Closely related to redemption, this looks at the other side of the coin. In paying the ransom for our sins, the debt of sin was canceled, and we were forgiven.

**We have knowledge of his will in himself, v. 9.** God has given us wisdom and insight through his word and has shown us his desire to bring all things together to glorify Christ. Since all of creation was made by him and for his good pleasure (Revelation 4:11), the completion of his plan is when everything and everyone is brought in line to glorify him. By aligning ourselves with him by faith, we become part of his perfect plan and purpose.

**In him we have an inheritance, v. 11** This inheritance is described in 1 Corinthians 2:9: “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither has entered into the heart of an, the things which God has prepared for those that love him.” The rights of glory, the presence of God, the eternal home—these don't even scratch the surface of all the blessings that belong to our inheritance.

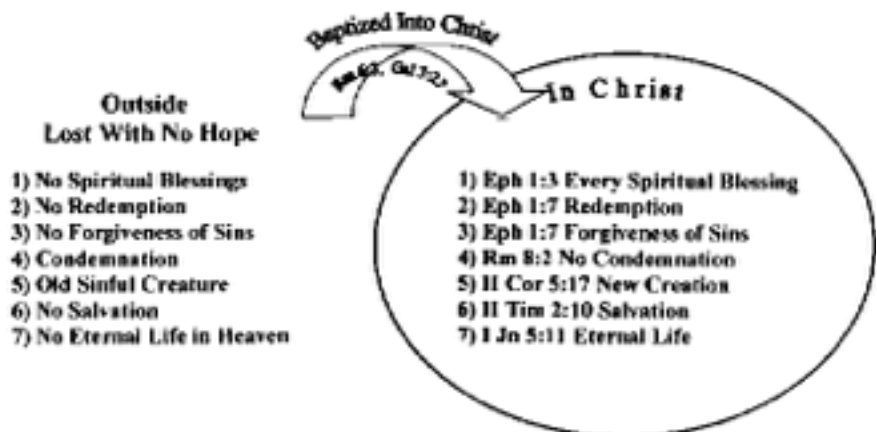
**In him we are sealed with the Holy Spirit, v. 13.** When we become God's children, we now belong fully to God. We are under his full authority and he promises to be with us in all things as long as we remain faithful.

### How Do We Get Into Christ?

The Bible is clear concerning how people are added to the body of Christ in this day. Romans 6:4 tells us that “as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death.” And Galatians 3:27 reminds us that “As many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” In other words, those who have obeyed the gospel and are a part of the Lord's church receive the benefits of the Blessings of Christ.

## NEXT WEEK'S LESSON:

## THANKSGIVING AND PRAYER, EPHESIANS 1:15-23



# CHRIST IN HIS CHURCH

## A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS

### LESSON THREE: THANKSGIVING AND PRAYER

#### EPHESIANS 1:15-23



#### Introduction

This section, like Ephesians 1:3-14, is a single sentence in the original Greek language. After discussing our spiritual blessings we receive in Christ, Paul prays for the church to gain a deep insight of the power of Lord's powerful working and rich gifts in Christ.

#### Paul's Prayer for Christ's Wisdom, 15-17

It is amazing to see the Apostle's reliance on prayer. Paul understood the need for prayer in his life. His prayers included such as the purpose of sharing his weaknesses with the Lord (2 Corinthians 12), his desires to preach the gospel in new places, and praises to God. He understood that as James wrote, the fervent effective prayer of a righteous man avails much, James 5:13.

As Paul often would do, he prayed for his readers in a way that encouraged them and taught them as well. He never ceased to give thanks to God for his converts. He understood they were only beginning their journey in Christ and that they were facing difficult situations. His prayer for them focused first on the need for their knowledge. Knowledge here refers to communication from God to man and its importance over the knowledge man can gain from earthly sources. God's ways are higher than our ways, Isaiah 55:8-9. Therefore it is important that we remember that our source for authority needs to rest in God's communication with us (the Scriptures for us) rather than in man's philosophy and opinion.

#### Prayer For Christ's Knowledge, 18

Paul continues his prayer by asking that the hearts of his readers may be enlightened or open so that they could see the hope and riches that are found in Christ. Their eyes and ears needed to be open to hearing and receiving the gospel.

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#### MEMORY VERSE

***Therefore I also, after  
I heard of your faith  
in the Lord Jesus and  
your love for all the  
saints, do not cease  
to give thanks for  
you, making mention  
of you in my prayers:  
in Christ.***

**Ephesians 1:15-16**

There are many who hear the good news but don't listen to it or take the time to apply it to their lives. Much like the parable of the soils in Luke 8, some have hearts that are hardened, crowded, or shallow. But when the word of God falls on honest and open hearts, it will produce a wonderful harvest.

Our hope is not like the modern thought of those who wishfully think something may happen. Biblical hope is an earnest expectation that God will keep his promises. And while some spiritual blessings may not yet be received, the Christian lives in confidence that God will keep his word, for he is true and faithful.

### **Prayer For Christ's Power, 19-23**

As Paul moves his prayer to a conclusion, he focuses on the power of Christ and the blessings we receive from that power. Power over supernatural forces and the occult was of great concern in ancient Ephesus, Acts 19:19-20. Paul is reminding the Ephesians that Christ has much more power than all the idols of Ephesus. This power of God will always be victorious over temptation, persecution or the evil forces of darkness that face the Christian.

As illustration Paul begins to pile Greek words for power on top of one another. As a matter of fact, Ephesians 2:19-21 is one of the more difficult passages of the New Testament to translate into our modern language because it is difficult to give the meaning of each of these terms. Paul uses the word "DYNAMIS" to speak of God's ability to accomplish his will against incredible odds. The word "ENERGEIA" shows that God's power is always in motion and is a force that cannot be stopped. "KRATOS" looks toward God as all powerful and having dominion over the created world. And finally "ISCHYS" points to God's inherent strength and might as the Almighty creator and sustainer. As Paul uses each of these terms, he then goes beyond the use of specific words to describe God's power to its ultimate accomplishment—the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. While many of the pagan temples in Ephesus offered tonics and prayers for those who were sick, only Christianity guarantees a resurrection by the proof of the Son of God's rise from the dead.

The resurrection of Christ proves that God is in complete control over the entire earth. He truly has authority over all things, Matthew 28:18. His authority is not only over creation, he is head over the church which is his body. Christ's power today is in many ways seen in his church and its accomplishments. The word fullness is key in Ephesians 2:23 as it shows that Christ is fully seen best in the work of the Church. Christ meets our every spiritual need and this is our work in enacting his work in our community.

**NEXT WEEK'S  
LESSON:**

**GRACE THROUGH  
CHRIST,  
EPHESIANS 2:1-10**



# CHRIST IN HIS CHURCH

## A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS

### LESSON FOUR: GRACE THROUGH CHRIST EPHESIANS 2:1-10



#### Introduction

After concluding his prayer of blessing in chapter one, Paul continues his discussion of the blessings we receive by being “in Christ” from Ephesians 1:3. In so doing, he writes what is perhaps one of the most beautiful passages of all of Scripture. Grace is one of the foundational concepts of Christianity. It is a description of unearned, unmerited favor. While this grace has appeared to all people, Titus 2:11, it is the vehicle that allows us to know God’s great plan for us and to help us become Christians.

#### Our Sordid Past

Our sins and trespasses have led us to a spiritual death, for that is what sin earns us, Romans 6:23. Paul reminds us that when we were outside of Christ, our walk—or our habits—were like other worldly people. That is, we were selfish and cruel to one another. Apart from Christ, we are servants of the spirit of the air, which is Satan, 2 Corinthians 4:4, John 14:30.

Ephesians 2:1-3 is a description of a life without God. This life is (1) lived according to the world’s values rather than God’s, (2) lived under Satan’s control, (3) a life of disobedience apart from God’s plan for us, (4) a life that’s lived at the mercy of our selfish desires, (5) a life full of following the works of the flesh, and (6) a life that deserves the wrath of God. This life is one filled with regret, pain, and loss.

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#### MEMORY VERSE

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



And sadly this is a valid description of those who refuse to follow Jesus.

## **Our Wonderful Present Day**

But God is rich in mercy and loved us in spite of our sins (Romans 5:8). As we die to sin we are raised up and made to sit together in the heavenly places in Christ. Ephesians 2:5-6 is a picture of what happens to us during our baptism for remission of sins. We were dead in the world, we are buried in water and then raised up to walk in newness of life, Romans 6:3-4.

As you read Ephesians 2, notice how Paul continually repeats the phrase “in Christ.” He is emphasizing to us that our salvation, our walk, and every part of our lives must be filled with Jesus. We are saved by grace through faith, not faith alone, James 2:24. Grace is unmerited favor. It’s seen in our day by how God gives us this way of salvation that we do not deserve.

We cannot earn our salvation. But obedience to God is not earning our salvation; it is making our salvation focus on Christ and his work. As we obey Christ we show our complete and utter dependence on him and his work. The focus on our salvation must be on Christ and not ourselves.

## **Our Powerful Duty**

We are his workmanship. This word refers to how an apprentice would copy exactly the work of his master. By imitating the master fully, the student would soon produce work that would imitate closely what the master had done. In many ways, we do the work of Christ on this earth and are therefore called Christians.

We do good works for Christ. Good works are what godly people do, John 9:4. Our actions are the evidence of our salvation and the proof of our continued faithfulness to God, Romans 2:6-9.

### **NEXT WEEK’S LESSON:**

**THE TWO ARE  
MADE TO BE ONE,  
EPHESIANS 2:11-22**

## **Conclusion**

God’s grace is clear evidence of his superior nature and his loving kindness. Our Lord took us from the depths of sin and destruction and brought us to a living hope through Christ. Thanks be unto God for his indescribable gift!

# CHRIST IN HIS CHURCH

## A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS

### LESSON FIVE: OUR FOUNDATION IN CHRIST EPHESIANS 2:11-21



#### Introduction

The first chapter of Ephesians discusses the blessings we have in Christ in an individual sense. As chapter two continues on, we see the blessings we have in Christ as a community. The rest of chapter two is based on Ephesians 2:10 stating that we are the workmanship of Christ and made for good works. Based on Christ's work in us, we have responsibilities to fulfill in the body of Christ. The focus here is on what Christ's death means for us today concerning the church's unity.

#### Brought Near By His Blood, v. 11-15

Under the Old Covenant of Moses Jews and Gentiles were kept apart from one another. The Jews considered the Gentiles to be beyond God's saving grace and without hope. The Gentiles resented the Jews exclusivity. Christ revealed the sinfulness of the Jew and the Gentile and then offered salvation to both. Christ breaks down the walls of prejudice, reconciles all believers to God, and makes us to be one body.

Paul shows the three ways that the Gentiles were separated from God apart from Christ. First they were excluded physically in that they were not circumcised. The act of circumcision was designed to be an identifier of the Jewish male. Secondly the Gentile was separated politically. In the Old Testament if you were not the descendant of Abraham and specifically of Jacob, then you were not considered to be a Jew. Thirdly they were separated spiritually. The gentiles were without hope and were for the most part without God. Salvation came through the Jews, John 4:22.

But while both Jews and Gentiles found themselves to be apart from God, Christ had different plans for us. We see in verse thirteen that Christ's blood brings together both the Jew and those who were far off or away from the Mosaic covenant (Acts 2:39, John 10:16). Verse fourteen says that he himself is our

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#### MEMORY VERSE

**But now in Christ  
Jesus you who  
once were far off  
have been  
brought near  
by the blood  
of Christ.  
Ephesians 2:13**



peace. This word was very important to the Jew as the word SHALOM referred to harmony and fellowship with God and with one another in the church. Through Christ the wall of separation was completely destroyed. In the physical temple of Jerusalem, the Gentiles had a wall that kept them out with a sign on it that said they only had themselves to blame for their death if they passed beyond it to the inner courts. The destruction of this wall is seen symbolically in the ripping for the veil, Matthew 27:51, and in the prophecy of Jerusalem's destruction, Mark 13:2.

## **Christ's Reconciliation, v. 16-18**

As Christ reconciled the Jews and Gentiles by his death, he has violently put to death the enmity that existed among the different races of people. There are few things that the Lord dislikes more than discord among brethren, Proverbs 6:19. We have now been brought together in peace. This word peace is repeated many times in this passage as an allusion to the prophecy of Isaiah 57:19 which refers to how God would rebuild his people after the Temple's destruction. Jesus is the prince of peace, Isaiah 9:6. Verse eighteen refers to all three members of the Godhead bringing mankind into peace as an example of the unity that must exist among his people to bring peace to the church today.

## **Christ, Our Cornerstone, v. 19-21**

Through Christ, we are given three illustrations of unity. In verse nineteen we are shown that we have citizenship in the Kingdom. Here is speaking the language of the Roman Empire world. Those who were strangers had no rights and were not allowed to be active in the daily affairs of state. But those who were citizens had full protection under law and had to be treated with respect (see Acts 16:20-23, 35-39 for an example). A second illustration is of the households common in that day. A person who lived in a household was given the respect and honor due to the head of that house. Similarly all those who are Christians today should be treated by us as Christ himself would be treated, Matthew 25:45. The third illustration used is of a holy temple. Christ is the cornerstone or foundational block of this temple and then all Christians are positioned in him and rest upon the foundation of the apostles and the prophets due to their writings that we follow in our New Testament. While the old temple was destroyed due to the Jews' unfaithfulness, the new temple (the church) has been established to reign until the end of the age, Isaiah 28:16.

### **NEXT WEEK'S LESSON:**

### **PAUL'S JOURNEY IN CHRIST, EPHESIANS 3:1-13**

## **Conclusion**

When Christ died on the cross, he took the divisions of mankind away. Today there is no room for division among us due to race, economic status, or our past. Each Christian is now an integral part of the Church who has been bought by the blood of Christ and is to be treated with the greatest level of respect.

# CHRIST IN HIS CHURCH

## A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS

### LESSON SIX: PAUL'S JOURNEY IN CHRIST

#### EPHESIANS 3:1-13



### Introduction

As Paul begins this section, the context of the third chapter still is focusing on the unity of the church (Jew and Gentile as one body) that was proclaimed in chapter two. In order to more fully explain the importance of the church's unity, Paul spends time explaining the mystery (main focus) of his preaching and how his life experiences played a role in his work. It is through his life that we can see the amazing power of God that is effective even today.

### The Amazing Mystery, 3:1-7

When Paul wrote the Book of Ephesians he was in prison waiting for a trial before Emperor Nero. While it may have appeared that the Romans and the Jewish leadership had put him there, in Paul's mind this was all part of God's plan. God controlled the events in Paul's life to put him in places where he needed to be in order to be effective in his work. Therefore, he was truly a prisoner of Jesus Christ. Paul saw his life experience and his ministry working together to use him as a communicator of the true mystery of Christ. In the New Testament the word "mystery" usually refers to a doctrine that is specific for the Church Age that was not fully revealed in Old Testament times. The mystery Paul is looking to here is that both Gentiles and Jews are equal in the Church. God's plan was hidden from previous generations, not because God wanted to keep something from his people, but because he would reveal it to everyone in

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### MEMORY VERSE

**"To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ."  
Ephesians 3:8**



his perfect timing. It had been known in Old Testament times that the Gentiles would receive salvation (Isaiah 49:6); but it was not revealed in the Old Testament that all Gentile and Jewish believers would become equals in the body of Christ. How equal one may ask? Verse six says they are fellow heirs, part of the same body, and partakers of the promise through the gospel. In other words, they were equal in every way, Galatians 3:28.

Paul's role in this matter was as a minister. The term minister refers to a servant, usually one with a public and vocal role. This means Paul had the responsibility to proclaim and teach this truth concerning the Gentiles. He was duty bound to preach (1 Corinthians 9:16), and was thankful for the opportunity of God's grace and the message's power. Paul was considered to be an Apostle to the Gentiles because his focus was on going to areas where the Gentiles were and establishing congregations.

### **The Ministry of the Gospel, 3:8-13**

As a teacher, Paul practiced true humility. Because of his sordid past, he considered himself to be lower than the lowest of all Christians. When he describes himself this way he means that without God's grace he would not ever be able to do God's work. Yet God still chose him to share the gospel among with the Gentiles and gave him the power to do it, 1 Corinthians 15:10. Paul used his role as a minister to reveal the mystery of Jesus Christ and his work. This message was to be proclaimed to the Jews, to the Gentiles, and even to the heavenly creatures.

Paul's powerful message rings true even today. Christians should never forget the eternal purpose of God. Accomplished through Christ, this ultimate purpose is the salvation of mankind through obedient faith. This concept should give all Christians boldness and confidence to remain faithful through any trial that we face. God has never lost a battle and he will remain with us regardless of the obstacles that stand before us. As Paul finished this section, he reminds the readers that sufferings should be an encouragement to growth rather than a discouragement.

God will stand by us and keep us.

**NEXT WEEK'S  
LESSON:**

**OUR JOURNEY IN  
CHRIST,  
EPHESIANS 3:14-21**

### **Conclusion**

Paul considered himself as one with a difficult past but with a present filled with grace and opportunity. In this passage he teaches us that we should deeply appreciate the mystery of the gospel, which is that both Jews and Gentiles are brought into one body—the church. This is the eternal purpose of God, that we may be saved from sin through Christ.

# CHRIST IN HIS CHURCH

## A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS

### LESSON EIGHT: THE BODY WORKING TOGETHER EPHESIANS 4:1-16



#### Introduction

Many of Paul's letters have a natural divide in them of doctrine and practice. That is, the first portion of the book will look at things from a doctrinal, teaching perspective while the second part of the book covers a more practical, how-to section of what this teaching looks like in every day life. As we enter the second half of Ephesians, we see that chapter four enters the practical everyday life section of the book. While the first part of Ephesians focuses on our blessings in Christ (1:3) and the grace of God (2:8-9) that leads us to the unity of the church (2:14, 3:20-21), the second half of the book focuses on how God brings about that unity through the church's similarities (4:1-6), in the church's use of leadership (4:7-16), in the new life that we are called to live (4:17-32), in our walk of love (5:1-21), in our family relationships (5:22-6:4), and in our battle against Satan (6:10-24).

#### Unity, 4:1-6

As one who was a prisoner for the sake of the gospel, Paul tells the Ephesians that they should imitate the personality of Jesus Christ. They were to have humility and gentleness with one another and were to be patient and loving towards one another. As Paul moves from the individual to the community aspect of the church again, he reminds them that the source of unity in the church is for each church member to act like Christ.

To emphasize the unity of the church, Paul points out the things that all Christians hold in common. There is one body, which is the church. The idea of denominationalism or many kinds of churches is foreign to Scripture. There is only one body. Likewise there is only one Spirit, which indwells the Christian. While during this time there were miraculous works, in the present day we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit in a non-miraculous way. Every Christian has the same Spirit within us. There is one hope of our calling, that is, that Jesus will reward

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#### MEMORY VERSE

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



those who are faithful. There is one Lord, Jesus Christ. There is one faith, or body of doctrine, and one God the Father who dwells above us, through us and in us. These seven ones show that we must have unity in the body of Christ. There is no excuse for division in the Lord's church today.

## **Spiritual Gifts, 4:7-16**

As Paul continues to emphasize the unity of the church, he brings the discussion to the grace of miraculous gifts. As he quotes Psalm 68, Paul sees Jesus as giving spoils to his people after the destruction of those who opposed him, much in the same way that an ancient king would do. This headship of Jesus shows that Christ is in charge of his church and is leading things in the way he wants them to go. The first way in which the Lord has set up his church is in its leadership. Apostles refer to those specifically chosen by the Lord in setting the church up. It includes the original twelve plus Matthias and Paul. The prophets speak of those who were able to supernaturally speak the doctrines of God. Evangelists are similar to what today we call preachers and pastors are what we often refer to as elders. In addition to these there are teachers who help lead others closer to Jesus. The overall purpose of each of these offices or works is to equip Christians to work for the Lord and to encourage the church in unity and growth.

In the First Century church there were those who had the ability for miraculous works. The purpose of miracles is listed in Ephesians 4:12: to equip the saints for ministry and to encourage the edification of the church. Hebrews 2:4 and Acts 2:22 tells us that signs, wonders, and various miracles were for the purpose of verifying that the speaker who could perform them was verified by God. These miraculous works (listed in 1 Corinthians 12:8-11) were a temporary phenomena that remained until the church reached its mature state, 1 Corinthians 13:8-13. This age of miracles has passed because now all men can refer to their Bibles to know the teachings of God. No longer are we tossed about by every doctrine or trick of false teachers because today we can see whether or not those things taught are according to the Scriptures.

The problem with miracles in the First Century seems to be that sometimes they could lead to pride and discord rather than to unity (1 Corinthians 12-14 and Acts 8:19-23). The more perfect way is to have the Scriptures available to all people so that we all come to the cross from an equal footing.

### **NEXT WEEK'S LESSON:**

**The New Man,  
EPHESIANS 4:17-32**

### **Conclusion**

God intends for there to be unity in his church. As a matter of fact, this is the prayer that Jesus had for each one of us to follow, John 17. Let us each be sure that we are a force for unity and not for division among God's people. The love among the brethren is a mark of being a true disciple.

# CHRIST IN HIS CHURCH

## A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS

### LESSON NINE: THE NEW MAN

EPHESIANS 4:17-32



#### Introduction

A botanist identifies plants by many different factors. From color, to the shape of leaves and branches, to the type of fruit the plant produces, each one of these characteristics will show what type of plant the scientist is studying. According to Paul, Christians can also be identified by certain characteristics. When Christians act and speak just like worldly people do, then they are not really Christian. They may 'go to church' and they may claim a label of some sort. But Christians can be identified by what they believe, what they do, and how they talk.

#### The New Man

As Paul has finished his discussion about how every Christian is a part of the body of Christ, he now turns to the lifestyle that is required of each Christian. Now that both Jews and Gentiles are joined as one in the Church, there must be a unique way of life evident in each person who professes Christ. Those who are outside of Christ have futile minds, have their understanding darkened, are apart from God, are ignorant, are blind in their hearts, and are callous as they are filled with uncleanness and greediness. This ignorance, that leads to darkness and alienation, is a strange thing indeed. Both in the First Century and today, those who reject the knowledge of God think of themselves as enlightened (Hebrews 10:32). This ignorance is not due to a lack of education; some are brilliant in their own way, but such brilliance is wasted when combined with the hardness of heart towards Christ. The power of sin will cause people to do things that otherwise would seem to be unthinkable. That's why we must work everyday to rid sin from our lives.

Christians are called to put off certain traits in their lives and to add others. We must intentionally stop doing the

#### NOTES

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#### MEMORY VERSE

**This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind.”**  
**Ephesians 4:17**



things that lead us to sin. No one leaves a sinful life by accident; it is a process that is lead by rational thought and constant action. As we are renewed in our mind by Bible study and good influence, we put on the new man of righteousness and holiness. It is important to note that this new man is created in the image of God, which is very similar language to what we see in the account of creation in the early part of the Book of Genesis. Our growth and dedication to Christ is a reflection of truly being made in the image of God.

### **Do Not Grieve the Spirit**

Starting in verse 25, Paul begins to specifically state what it means to be a new person created in the image of God. Such identity must show itself in action. Christians are not to be liars, for lying is of the devil, John 8:44. Even though lying is considered to be commonplace in society today, Christians do not lie because doing so hurts our neighbor who is a part of the body of Christ. Also, Paul reminds the Ephesians of the danger of anger. Not all anger is sinful, but when the Christian remains in a state of anger and becomes consumed by it, he opens himself up to many different sins, Genesis 4:6-7. Paul uses the thief to illustrate how repentance impact's the Christian's lifestyle. Repentance involves both stopping (negative) and starting (positive). The thief is to stop stealing and start doing honest work so that he can share with others. Christians are also told to watch their language carefully. Bad language and hurtful things such as slander and gossip should be kept far from the lips. Rather, the Christian should be known for uplifting conversations and for their sense of encouragement.

As Christians change their lives, their good works produce the Fruit of the Spirit, Galatians 5:22-23. But when Christians develop habits that look just like the worlds, then the Spirit is grieved. God has great sorrow when his people do not reflect his holiness. Few things were condemned more during the earthly ministry of Jesus than hypocrisy among religious people. Therefore Christians must be sure to put away the old habits of anger, complaining, and evil speaking. Instead Christians should be known for their kindness, grace and forgiving attitudes.

### **Conclusion**

People must be able to see a difference between Christians and non-Christians because of the way Christians live. Paul told the Ephesians to leave behind the old life of sin, since they were followers of Christ. Living the Christian life is a process. Although we have a new nature, often times Christians don't automatically think all good thoughts and express right attitudes in every situation. But as they grow in Christ, Christians will be improving and changing all of the time. Each one of us needs to look at ourselves and be sure that we are consistently putting off our selfish ways of sin and growing more and more like Jesus every day.

**NEXT WEEK'S  
LESSON:**

**Our Walk,  
EPHESIANS 5:1-21**

## LESSON TEN: THE CHRISTIAN WALK EPHESIANS 5:1-21



**“And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.”**  
**Ephesians 5:2**



That is, people who say they love God but truly love the world instead. Many so-called Christians secretly (or not so secretly) lead unrepentant, sinful lives and will eventually face the consequences of their conduct. This condemnation is not speaking of Christians who occasionally sin; it refers to those who habitually live in sin and thereby prove themselves to be children of the devil, 1 John 3:10.

### **Walk in Light, 8-14**

Christians once were under the power of Satan and in sin, but as they obeyed the gospel they became children of light. Now that Christians are saved, they must walk as children of light in goodness, righteousness, and truth. Paul explains how this can be done. First they must discover what is acceptable to the Lord. This is learned by studying the Scriptures and from other Christians what the teachings of the Lord is for us. Christians do not grow naturally, rather they must intentionally study to find God's plan for their lives, 2 Peter 1:3. Secondly, we must not have friendship with the world. Instead of secretly sharing in the sinful practices of others, we must expose them and bring them into contact with the teachings of Christ. Thirdly, we must remain awake. Christians are to remain vigilant and alert against the wiles of the devil.

### **Walk in Wisdom, 15-21**

As Christians see the struggle that sin causes, they live carefully. They see the importance of spending time wisely and in doing the things that need to be done. The decisions Christians make will often determine their eternal destiny. Rather than being filled with alcoholic "spirits," Paul tells his readers to be filled with the "Holy Spirit." This being filled with the Spirit is seen by our singing to the Lord, by our thankfulness and by our willingness to submit to the Lord and to others.

Ephesians 5:19 (and Colossians 3:16) are classic passages often referred to showing that Christians in the First Century worshipped God through singing without the accompaniment of an instrument. Reading through the New Testament, one sees that the early church engaged in singing often. But we don't read anywhere of an example or command for the mechanical musical instrument to be used in the worship services of the Lord's church.

**NEXT WEEK'S  
LESSON:  
MARRIAGE AND  
THE CHURCH,  
EPHESIANS 5:22-33**

### **Conclusion:**

Christian living demands godly habits in life. God's people must refrain from things such as fornication and idolatry. They must instead engage in holiness and spirit filled worship. As Christians pursue godliness in life, they will be greater and greater blessing in everything that they do.

# CHRIST IN HIS CHURCH

## A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS

### LESSON ELEVEN: MARRIAGE

EPHESIANS 5:22-33



#### NOTES

#### **Introduction:**

There is no more intimate and close relationship than marriage. It is marriage that we show who we truly are and show our belief in mercy and forgiveness. God designed marriage as an example of the close relationship we should feel with Him spiritually. That's why it is important for Christians to always work to make their marriages better.

#### **The Wives' Role in the Marriage, 5:22-24**

Paul continues his commands about submission (5:21) by going immediately to the relationship where this is seen most closely. The submission of wives is not like the obedience children owe parents, nor does this text command all women to submit to all men ("to their own husbands"). Both genders are created equally in God's image, Genesis 1:26-28, and are equal heirs of eternal life, Galatians 3:28. This submission refers to deference to the ultimate leadership of the husband for the health and harmonious working of the marriage relationship. Submission is not slavery; it is an honoring of the husband that encourages him to lead in a Christian way, 1 Peter 3:1-6.

#### **The Church's Role to Christ**

The church is subject to Christ. Since Christ bought her and established her by his own blood, the church lives in deference to Christ and his leadership. The church understands that she cannot live apart from Christ. Christ is the head of the church and is the basis of doctrine, daily life and mindset of the church. May people are willing to accept Jesus as Savior but few are willing to accept him as Lord. It is imperative to be sure that Jesus is the Lord of the church and of our lives.

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#### MEMORY VERSE

**"Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.."  
Ephesians 5:33**

## **The Husband's Role in the Marriage, 5:25-29**

Husbands are told to love their wives. This is more than just an attraction or “being nice” to them. Using the example of Christ to his church, Paul describes the action of this love as giving ones-self up for their wives, presenting their wives in their best light without spot or wrinkle, loving their wives more than their own bodies, and nourishing and cherishing their wives. There is no room here for abuse or lording over a wife. Instead what we see is sacrificial service and consistent love.

Husbands have the responsibility in their family to provide spiritual leadership. They should be the ones mentioning teaching about God, leading in prayer, and participating in worship services of the church. Husbands should also provide financially and emotionally for their families. It is not wrong for wives to work outside the home, but men need to labor and show their love by their work.

## **Christ's Attitude To the Church**

The focus on Ephesians 5:25-29 mentions husbands but the focus is also on what Christ does for his church. Husbands do not “sanctify” (make holy) their wives, though they do all that is in their power to encourage each person in their family to grow closer to the Lord. The term washing of water refers to the cleansing we receive when we are baptized and have our sins removed, 1 Peter 3:21, Galatians 3:27. Christ continually cleanses his church so that we are without spot and blemish, 1 John 1:7. Christ is the perfect example of what sacrificial love looks like in action.

## **The Unbreakable Bond, 5:30-33**

Marriage is considered by many in today's society to be disposable and not permanent. But Paul refers to the “one flesh” statement all the way back in the beginning of the world. The relationship of a husband and wife is stronger than the commitment we have to parents, work, children, or any material thing. The only thing more important than our relationship with our spouse is the relationship we have with God.

As Paul closes this section he refers to key concepts necessary for a fulfilled marriage. Wives often will find happiness with a husband who loves and shows love to his wife. This love must be evident in that it is sacrificial and complete, more than a husband's selfishness or love for himself. Wives are called to respect their

husbands. Many husbands desire to be looked up to and complimented in their work. This measure of respect will help husbands to be fulfilled and satisfied.

It is very necessary to know this Scripture before we marry and to be reminded of it very often. The relationship of a husband and wife is very similar to the relationship of Christ and his church. In recognizing this and in obeying this passage, we bring glory to Christ and his church.

**NEXT WEEK'S  
LESSON:  
RELATIONSHIPS,  
EPHESIANS 6:1-9**





them wisely to walk in the ways of the Lord.

### **Bondservants and Masters, 6:5-9**

It is estimated that slaves comprised at least a third of the population of Ephesus. In many ways slaves would over time be considered a part of the family. Perhaps that is why they are included in this passage here. Paul does not condone the practice of slavery but instead provides instructions to believing masters and servants regarding their relationships with one another and how they were to treat one another. The result of this, as often is observed, is that slavery slowly died out in antiquity through the influence of Christianity. The principles of this passage apply today in terms of submission to any authority: whether work, or school, or government.

Paul tells servants to serve fully, not superficially. Rather than being “eye-pleasers” that is, people who only work when their master is watching, they are to work knowing that their service is a reflection of their relationship with the Lord. The Christian should have a work ethic that is second to none. The Lord’s disciples know that what they do on earth will be rewarded in heaven.

In the days that Ephesians was written, slave masters had the power of life and death over their property. They could kill, torture, or beat their slaves with no legal consequences. While it would be financially unwise to do so, there may have been temptation among some to mistreat their slaves. It can be said that true character is displayed by the way we treat those who cannot respond to us. Paul encourages these Christians treat all people with respect, regardless of their social class.

Today slavery is not legal. However there is an employer and employee concept that in some ways is similar to what was happening in Ephesus many years ago. Those who are in serving positions should treat those they are serving with respect and responsibility. And those who are in positions of superiority should treat those under them with dignity and love. The world will learn to identify Christians by the love they show to one another.

### **Conclusion:**

Paul began the practical portion of Ephesians with the command to “walk in a manner that is worthy of your calling” Ephesians 4:1. As Christians examine their lifestyle (or walk) we see that our faith in Jesus flows in the way we treat others. This is especially seen in how we treat our spouses, our parents, our children, and those who are around us. We need to always walk in love and live in a way that brings glory to God.

**NEXT WEEK’S  
LESSON:  
THE ULTIMATE  
BATTLE,  
EPHESIANS 6:10-24**

## LESSON THIRTEEN: THE ULTIMATE BATTLE EPHESIANS 6:10-23



Ephesians is a beautifully written book that shows us the blessings of being in the Lord's church. It starts with the individual blessings we receive by being "in Christ" (1:3) and then moves to the blessings we have as a corporate (group of many) body. In Christ we are made to be unified and we are joined together (2:14, 3:20-21, 4:1-6). As Paul continues the book, he shows the blessings of unity and then moves the focus back to our individual responsibilities in marriage (5:22-33), in relationships (6:1-9), and finally in our individual spiritual conflict. In each aspect in this letter, Paul shows that we are not alone—we have Christ working in us.

As Paul discusses the enemy we face, he places emphasis on the source of our strength: “The Lord and the power of his might.” Jesus has already won our spiritual battle through his atoning sacrifice on the cross. What will determine whether or not we succeed in this fight is the closeness we have to the Lord. That is why we are called to wear or “put on” the armor of God. Paul moves his metaphor of Christian living from the “walk” discussed in chapters five to the “stand” of chapter six. A walk refers to our daily habits while the stand refers to the protective stance that we assume against evil forces that wish to cause us spiritual harm.

## NOTES

[illegible]

**“Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.”**  
**Ephesians 6:13**



## **The Whole Armor of God, v. 14-20**

As Paul describes how Christians are to be covered in Christ, he uses the analogy of the Roman soldier. Perhaps since he was imprisoned as he wrote this letter, Paul may have been next to a soldier wearing equipment such as this as he wrote. Paul mentions the belt of truth. This was more than a modern belt used today to hold up a pair of pants. In Roman equipment the belt was a wide piece of hardened leather used to protect the midsection. In ancient days, before the invention of antibiotics, one of the most fearful of wounds was a puncture wound in the belly. When the intestines or colon is opened, bacteria will move into the body cavity and cause a painful infection that leads to death. Paul relates truth to the belt because of the insidious nature of falsehood in the Christian life. Those who are infected by false doctrine or by hypocrisy die a slow and agonizing spiritual death. Secondly Paul speaks of the breastplate of righteousness. This equipment protected the heart and identified the soldier. As we protect our hearts, Christians are known by their purity or righteousness in life. A soldier of that day needed to protect his feet. A famous battle before Paul's day occurred in the war between Carthage and Rome. In this battle, the Romans won by placing tacks on the ground that inhibited the Carthaginian soldiers and their barefooted elephants. When a soldier does not have the stability to stand, he cannot fight well. In the same way, Christians must have an inner sense of peace if they are to fight off the attacks of the devil. Jesus is that source of peace for us. The shield was important to the Roman soldiers as they gathered together in formation. When fighting from a distance, the Romans would interlock their shields to provide protection from darts and arrows slung by their enemies. In the same way, our faith in God allows us to quench the fiery doubts that the Devil slings toward the Christian. The helmet of salvation represents how our vital parts are protected by Christ. As long as we remain in him we are safe from the Devil's plans. The offensive weapon of the Christian is the Word of God. This weapon is powerful and effective, Hebrews 4:12. And will overcome anything that it goes against, Matthew 24:35. Using the analogy of the Christian armor, Paul clearly shows the advantages of every spiritual blessing we have by being in Christ, Ephesians 1:3.

## **Closing Remarks**

As Paul closes his letter to the Ephesians he commends the man who carried the letter to the church in Ephesus, Tychicus, as a faithful minister who will more fully explain the book to the brethren. Even though Paul was a giant in the faith and had amazing abilities he still understood the need that all Christians have of friends and helpers. We certainly cannot survive the battle of life alone. That is why God made the church, which is the fellowship of all Christians.

Paul closes the book by using the word for love many times; fitting since the book focuses on the power of the church and each individual in it with their love of God, love for Christ and love for their fellowman. Ephesians shows us the importance of the spiritual blessings we have in Christ (1:3, 2:8-9), how those blessings are seen in his church (2:14, 3:20-21, 4:6), and how our Christian walk translates into the way we treat one another (5:22-33, 6:1-4, 6:10).