

Chosen by Grace

A self-study
course
about the
Epistle
to the
Ephesians

by
Armin J. Panning



Chosen by Grace

*A study of the
Epistle to the Ephesians*

By
Armin J. Panning



Multi-Language Productions

Bringing the Word to the World

About the cover - Jesus speaks about being lifted up as Moses lifted up the bronze serpent in the Old Testament. When Jesus was lifted up on the cross, he demonstrated the undeserved love of God. The grace of God has chosen the believer to be his own and Jesus' love is proof of this.

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Level Two, Book 4

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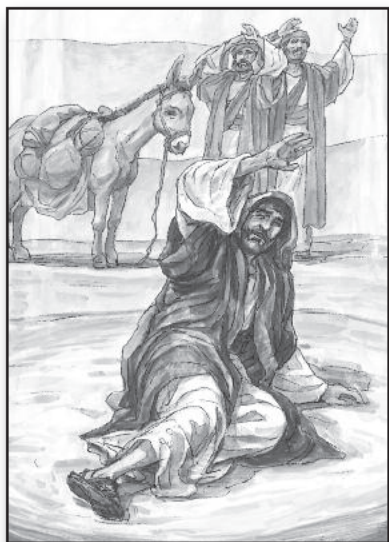
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SECTION 1: Introduction to Ephesians

Ephesians 1:1,2

Chosen by Grace:
A study of the Epistle to the Ephesians

SECTION ONE:

Introduction to Ephesians

(Read Ephesians 1:1,2) (Chapter 1, verses 1 and 2)

I, Paul, am writing this letter. I am an apostle of Christ Jesus just as God planned.

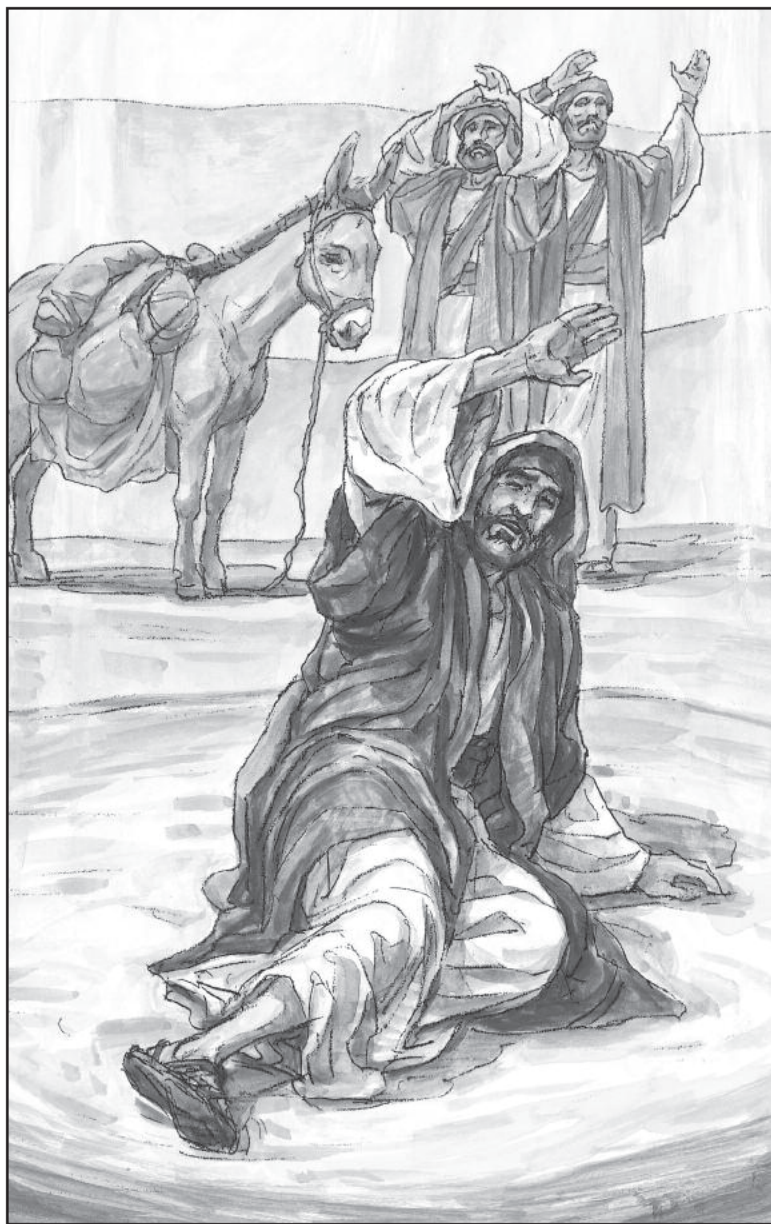
I am sending this letter to you, God's people in Ephesus. Because you belong to Christ Jesus, you are faithful.

²May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.

The New Testament book that we call Ephesians started out as an epistle or letter. According to the ancient way of writing letters, the author named himself at the start of the letter. Here the author calls himself Paul, but that was not always his name. Originally his name was Saul.

Saul belonged to a very strict Jewish group that did not accept Jesus as the promised Messiah (Savior). Saul thought followers of Christ (Christians) were dangerous and should be destroyed. When Stephen, the first Christian martyr, was stoned to death, Saul was on the scene. After that, he often forced his way into homes in Jerusalem and arrested Christian men and women.

Once he even traveled to arrest Christians in the distant city of Damascus. On the road, Jesus blocked his path and knocked him to the ground. "Saul, Saul, why are you opposing me?" Jesus demanded. This is when Jesus changed Saul's life. Suddenly he knew it was wrong to attack Christians. Instead of trying to stop the Christian religion, Saul now accepted God's assignment to preach the Christian message to people. That is why he can say, "I am an apostle of Christ Jesus just as God planned."



Saul on the Damascus Road.

Jesus appointed him to be an apostle. An apostle is someone who is sent out to share a message. God set Paul apart to preach and teach the good news about Christ. As a Christian missionary, Saul changed his name to Paul.

Things to Remember:

1. The author of the letter to the Ephesians first had the name _____ but he later changed it to _____.
2. Saul thought Christians were _____ and should be _____.
3. Saul arrested Christian men and women in _____ and even traveled to the city of _____.
4. On the road to Damascus Jesus met Saul and said to him “Why are you _____ me?”
5. Now Saul knew it was wrong to _____ Christians.
6. Jesus appointed Saul to be an _____.
7. An apostle is someone who is _____ to share a _____.
8. Paul’s message was the _____ about _____.

(Check your answers on page 6)

After identifying himself, an ancient letter writer would name the people to whom he was sending the letter. Here Paul says, “I am sending this letter to you, God’s people in Ephesus.” Ephesus was an important city in Asia Minor (modern Turkey).

The Ephesians to whom Paul is writing were Christians. They believed in Christ Jesus. In fact, God had used Paul’s message to bring them to faith. For three years he preached in their midst. Now, however, Paul is in prison in Rome for preaching the gospel. Therefore, his only way to speak to the Ephesians is by letter.

After the ancient letter writer identified himself and indicated to whom he is writing, it was common to add a



Western Asia Minor

greeting or a blessing. Here Paul says, “May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.”

“Grace” and “peace” are both very important words in the Bible. Grace is the love in the heart and mind of God that makes him eager to give good gifts to undeserving sinners. Peace is the relief the believer enjoys when he realizes that all his sins have been paid for by Christ’s death on the cross. As a forgiven sinner, the believer no longer needs to fear a just and holy God. The peace given by God’s grace is a priceless gift. Notice that grace and peace fit together as cause and effect. God’s grace causes the peace that the believer enjoys.

Things to Remember:

9. For _____ years Paul preached and taught in the city of Ephesus.
10. Now Paul is writing to the Ephesians from _____ in _____.
11. Grace is the love in the heart and mind of _____ that makes him eager to give _____ to undeserving _____.
12. A sinner finds peace when he knows his _____ have been paid for by _____.
13. Grace and peace fit together as _____ and _____.

(Check your answers on page 6)

Things to remember-Answers

1. Saul, Paul; 2. dangerous, destroyed; 3. Jerusalem, Damascus; 4. opposing; 5. attack; 6. apostle; 7. sent out, message; 8. good news, Christ; 9. three; 10. prison, Rome; 11. God, good gifts, sinners; 12. sins, Christ’s death; 13. cause, effect.

TEST - Chosen by Grace
A study of the Epistle to the Ephesians

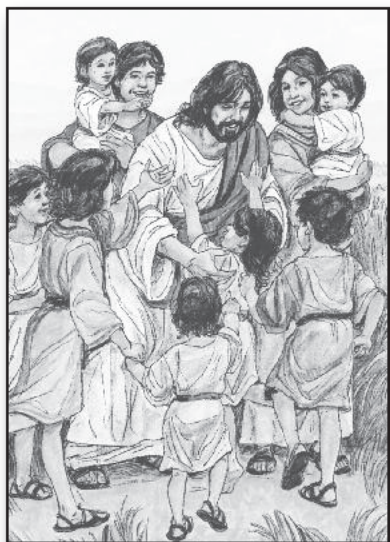
Section 1

Please review "Things to remember."

1. The author of the letter to the Ephesians first had the name _____ but he later changed it to _____.
2. Saul thought Christians were _____ and should be _____.
3. Saul arrested Christian men and women in _____ and even traveled to the city of _____.
4. On the road to Damascus Jesus met Saul and said to him "Why are you _____ me?"
5. Now Saul knew it was wrong to _____ Christians.
6. Jesus appointed Saul to be an _____.
7. An apostle is someone who is _____ to share a _____.
8. Paul's message was the _____ about _____.
9. For _____ years Paul preached and taught in the city of Ephesus.
10. Now Paul is writing to the Ephesians from _____ in _____.

11. Grace is the loving attitude in the heart and mind of _____ that makes him eager to give _____ to undeserving _____.
12. A sinner finds peace when he knows his _____ have been paid for by _____.

(Check your answers on page 162)



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SECTION 2:
The Triune God's eternal plan of salvation

Ephesians 1:3-14

Chosen by Grace:
A study of the Epistle to the Ephesians

SECTION TWO:

The Triune God's eternal plan of salvation

- The plan rests on the Father's choice made in eternity (1:3-6)
- The plan was carried out by the Son's work in time (1:7-12)
- The plan is now sealed by the Holy Spirit (1:13,14)

The Father's choice

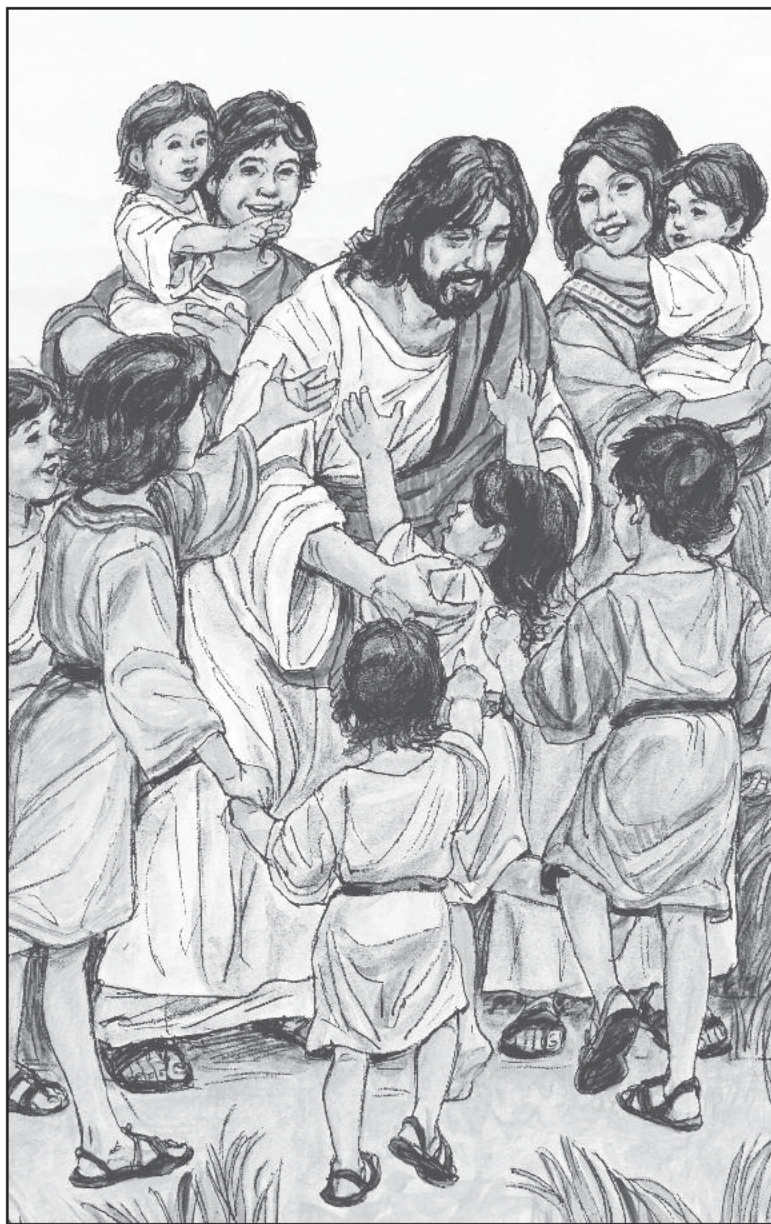
(Read Ephesians 1:3)

³Give praise to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He has blessed us with every spiritual blessing. Those blessings come from the heavenly world. They belong to us because we belong to Christ.

Paul opens the body of his letter with a statement of praise to God the Father. God is a gracious God who gives countless blessings to all people. He gives people life and breath. He feeds and protects them. He blesses their work and grants them great success. But those are temporary, physical blessings. In writing to the Ephesians Paul will be directing their attention to spiritual blessings. He writes, "Those blessings come from the heavenly world. They belong to us because we belong to Christ." Paul will be speaking of special gifts for those who "belong to Christ" namely, believers in Christ.

Things to Remember:

1. God gives countless _____ to all people.
Many of those blessings are _____ and _____.
2. When writing to the Ephesians Paul directs their attention to _____ gifts.



Jesus blesses the little children.

3. In this letter Paul is speaking of God's special gift for those who _____, namely _____.

(Check your answers on page 24)

(Read Ephesians 1:4-6)

God chose us to belong to Christ before the world was created. He chose us to be holy and without blame in his eyes. He loved us. ⁵So he decided long ago to adopt us as his children. He did it because of what Jesus Christ has done. It pleased God to do it. ⁶All those things bring praise to his glorious grace. God freely gave us his grace because of the One he loves.

The title of this study booklet on Ephesians is *Chosen by Grace*. Do you remember our definition of God's "grace"? Grace is the love in the heart and mind of God that makes him eager to give good gifts to undeserving sinners. What great love he has! God gave an awesome gift to the Ephesians even before he created the world. From eternity God chose them to be saved. So amazing is this gift that in verses 4 and 5 Paul refers to it three times in slightly different ways:

⁴**God chose** us to belong to Christ....

He chose us to be holy and without blame.....

⁵**He decided** long ago to adopt us as his children.

God did not choose the Ephesians because they were holy and without blame. He chose them in order to make them holy and blameless. They did nothing to attract God's attention. They hadn't been born yet. In fact, as was said earlier, the world had not even been created when God made his choice. God made his choice in eternity!

What caused God to make his choice? Paul tells the Ephesians, "He did it because of what Jesus Christ has done." Forgiveness of sins and perfect holiness was won for them by Christ, by his perfect life and innocent death. Christ's holiness makes believers holy and without blame in God's eyes. God adopted them into his family because of Christ, on

Chosen by Grace

account of his saving work.

So great a gift makes our head spin. So Paul adds a further explanation for God's gracious action. He says of God's choice, "It pleased God to do it." The short and simple answer is: God did it because he wanted to. That's grace!

Such grace can result in only one response, "All those things bring praise to his glorious grace."

Things to Remember:

4. The special gift God gave the Ephesians was that from _____ God _____ them to be _____.
5. The Ephesians did _____ to cause God's choice. God's choice was a _____.
6. God's choice of the Ephesians was based on what _____ has done for them.
7. A believer's response to being chosen for salvation is to _____ God for his _____.

(Check your answers on page 24)

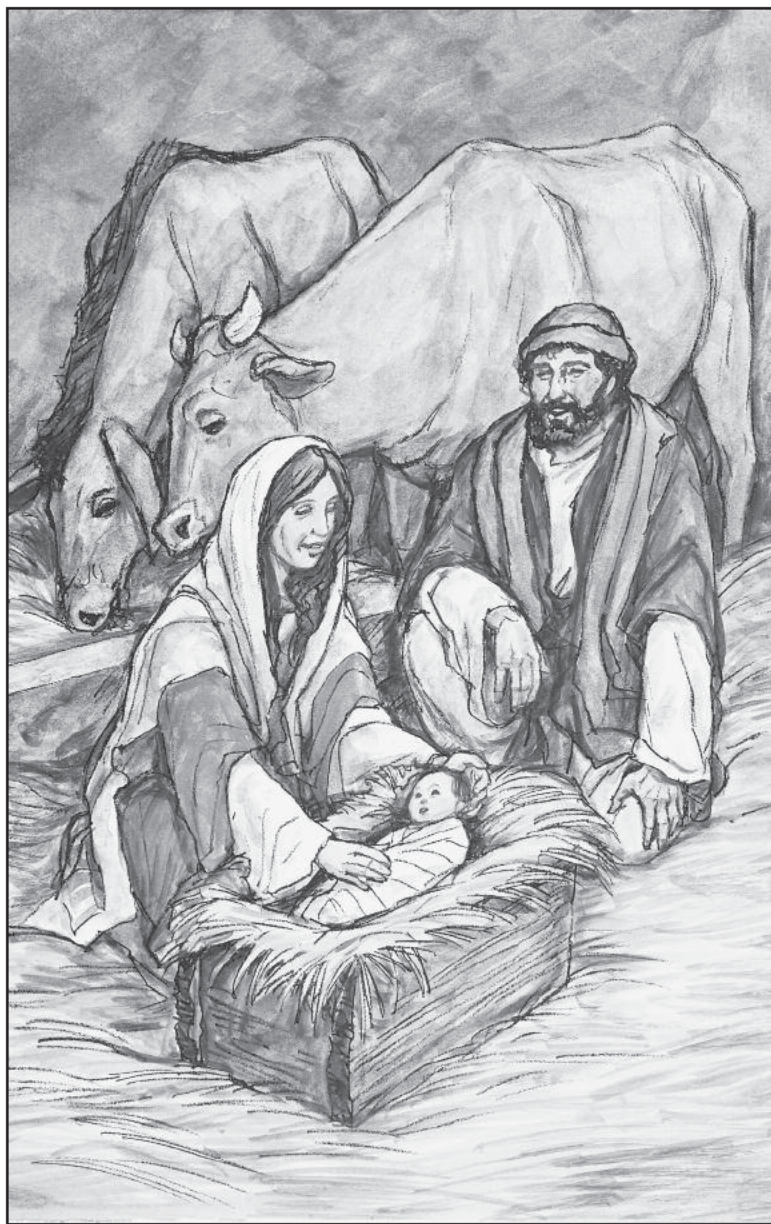
The Son's work in the Father's plan

(Read Ephesians 1:7,8)

⁷We have been set free because of what Christ has done. Through his blood our sins have been forgiven. We have been set free because God's grace is so rich. ⁸He poured his grace on us by giving us great wisdom and understanding.

Scripture teaches that God is a triune God. That means there are three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in one God. These three persons work in perfect harmony. God the Father formed his plan in eternity. Then, when the time was right, Christ came down to earth to carry out that plan. He was born of the virgin Mary as a human being. Thus he is true God and true man in one person.

Paul describes God the Son's work when he writes, "We



Jesus is born.

Chosen by Grace

have been set free because of what Christ has done.” With the statement, “We have been set free,” the apostle is calling attention to a very important truth. By nature all people are sinners, and sinners are not free. They are slaves of sin and deserve to die. The Bible says, “When you sin, the pay you get is death” (Romans 6:23). The only solution was to have someone take away the guilt of sin by dying in the sinner’s place. And Christ did that by dying on the cross as our substitute.

For that reason, Paul can say, “Through his [Christ’s] blood our sins have been forgiven. We have been set free because God’s grace is so rich.”

Things to Remember:

8. God is a _____ God, _____ persons in _____ God.
9. Jesus Christ is true _____ and true _____ in _____ person.
10. All people are sinful and deserve to _____.
11. Christ took away the guilt of sin by _____ in the _____ place.

(Check your answers on page 24)

(Read Ephesians 1:9,10)

⁹He [God the Father] showed us the mystery of his plan. It was in keeping with what he wanted to do. It was what he had planned through Christ. ¹⁰It will all come about when history has been completed. God will then bring together all things in heaven and on earth under one ruler. The ruler is Christ.

When Paul writes, “He showed us the mystery of his plan,” he does not mean to say that God’s plan is mysterious or hard to understand. Rather, he means that the plan needs to be explained to us. In a thousand years we would never have thought of such a plan. Who would ever have expected

a just and holy God to come down from heaven and take the place of rebellious sinners? This amazing truth needs to be spelled out for us. Paul will be doing that later.

But first there is a “time” detail in God’s plan that needs to be kept in mind. And that is, much of it lies in the future. So far Paul has been looking back to eternity before creation. That is when the Father long ago formed the plan his Son fulfilled in time. But there is also an eternity ahead of us, stretching into the endless future. It too involves the role of Christ, the Son. “It will all come about when history has been completed. God will then bring together all things in heaven and on earth under one ruler. The ruler is Christ.”

Things to Remember:

12. Paul calls God’s eternal plan a _____.
 13. That does not mean the plan is _____ or _____.
 14. Rather, it means that the plan needs to be _____ to us.
 15. God’s eternal plan not only looks back to eternity before creation, but it also includes the _____.
 16. The ruler of this endless future will be _____.
- (Check your answers on page 24)

(Read Ephesians 1:11,12)

We were also chosen to belong to him. God decided to choose us long ago in keeping with his plan. He works out everything to fit his plan and purpose. ¹²We were the first to put our hope in Christ. We were chosen to bring praise to his glory.

Paul now returns to the “mystery” in God’s plan that he spoke of. He will be describing it more completely later in this letter (3:2-13). Here he gives us a look into another detail of God’s gracious plan.

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So far in this letter, when Paul uses the pronouns “we” and “us” he has been including himself with his Ephesian readers. However, in this verse when he says, “We were the first to put our hope in Christ,” he is changing that. Here he is including himself with the *Jewish nation*. Most of Paul’s Ephesian readers are not Jews. They are Gentiles (non-Jews). They are recent converts to Christ. In contrast Paul says of his Jewish countrymen, “God decided to choose us long ago in keeping with his plan.”

What does Paul mean? As far back as the time of Abraham, about 2,000 years before Paul’s time, God’s plan took an important step forward. From all the people in the world at that time God chose one family to be his special people. That was Abraham and Sarah’s family. God gave Abraham three wonderful promises. 1) God promised to make of him a great *nation*. 2) That nation would live in a *land* God would give them. And, most important of all, 3) God promised that the *Savior*, promised long before to Adam and Eve, would be born of his family. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and their descendants or family line gave birth to God’s special people, the Jewish nation.

Then, when the time was right, in keeping with God’s plan the promised Savior, Jesus of Nazareth, was born of the virgin Mary. Jesus was Jewish. He spent his three-year public ministry working only among Jews. It might seem that God’s eternal plan chose only Jews for salvation. But now Paul reveals a central truth of the “mystery” which had so far remained largely unknown. That truth is that salvation is not only for God’s chosen people, the Jews. Salvation is for Gentiles as well as Jews. The Gentile Ephesian believers are an example of the apostle’s point. They too have come to faith in Jesus Christ. Paul will be describing that life-changing event more fully in the next verses. There he tells of the Holy Spirit’s role in the Father’s eternal plan.



Wise men, who are Gentiles, worship Jesus.

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Things to Remember:

17. When Paul writes, “We were the first to put our hope in Christ,” he is including himself with the _____ nation.
 18. God chose _____ to be the father of the Jewish nation.
 19. God gave Abraham three great promises:
 - a) _____
 - b) _____
 - c) _____
 20. When the time was right, the promised Savior, _____, was born of a Jewish girl, the _____. Jesus was _____.
 21. Jesus spent his three-year ministry working among _____.
 22. It could look as though God chose only _____ for salvation.
 23. The “mystery” Paul speaks of is that God has also chosen _____ for salvation.
- (Check your answers on page 24)

The Holy Spirit’s work in the Father’s plan

(Read Ephesians 1:13,14)

¹³You also became believers in Christ. That happened when you heard the message of truth. It was the good news about how you could be saved. When you believed, he marked you with a seal. The seal is the Holy Spirit that he promised.

¹ The Spirit marks us as God’s own. We can now be sure that someday we will receive all that God has promised. That will happen after God sets all of his people completely free. All of those things will bring praise to his glory.

The God of the Bible is the Triune God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. They work in perfect harmony with one another. In eternity God the Father formed the plan of salvation

needed to save sinners from an eternity in hell.

At the right time in history, Christ was born. As true God and true man he lived a perfect life and died an innocent death as the substitute for guilty sinners. On the cross he declared, "It is finished." Payment for sin was completed. The next step of God's plan was to bring that good news to the world of lost sinners. Leading sinners to get the benefit of God's plan is the work of the Holy Spirit. He does this by bringing people to faith in Christ. To create faith in the sinner's heart the Spirit works through the good news of the gospel. Paul calls it "the message of truth."

Things to Remember:

24. On the cross Jesus said, "_____."

25. Teaching people the good news of Christ's finished payment for our sins is the work of the _____.

26. The payment Christ made becomes the sinner's own through _____ in Christ.

27. The Holy Spirit creates faith in people's hearts through the _____.

(Check your answers on page 24)

Speaking about himself and his fellow Jews, Paul in the verse before this one said, "We were the first to put our hope in Christ." But now, addressing his non-Jewish readers in Ephesus, he adds a very important point. He writes, "*You also* became believers in Christ. That happened when you heard the message of truth. It was the good news about how you could be saved."

Recall that for three years Paul preached and taught in Ephesus. From him the Ephesians heard "the message of truth." From him they learned "the good news about how [they] could be saved."

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Salvation comes by believing in Christ and trusting in him as your Savior. Creating such faith in sinners' hearts is the work of the Holy Spirit. It must be the Spirit's doing because the sinner cannot do it by himself. In his letter to the Corinthians Paul states that fact very clearly. He writes, "Without the help of the Holy Spirit no one can say, 'Jesus is Lord'" (1 Corinthians 12:3).

Things to Remember:

28. The _____ were the first to believe in Christ.
29. Later the _____ also became believers in Christ when Paul preached the _____ to them.
30. Actually, it was not Paul but the _____ who brought the Ephesians to faith.
31. No one can come to faith by _____. The _____ must do that.

(Check your answers on page 24)

The work of the Holy Spirit is necessary for anyone to come to faith. This is not a disadvantage but rather a very great blessing. The gift of faith makes a believer perfectly sure that God has come into his heart. Paul goes so far as to say that the Holy Spirit's presence in the life of a believer is the *seal* (guarantee) that God has chosen him/her for salvation. He tells the Ephesians, "When you believed, he [God] marked you with a seal. The seal is the Holy Spirit that he promised. The Spirit marks us as God's own."

God the Father formed his plan in eternity. Christ came down to earth to earn salvation for us about two thousand years ago. The work of redemption (earning salvation) is finished. But the Holy Spirit's work of bringing people to faith in Christ still continues today. He works through the saving message of the gospel as taught in the Bible. The very



God sends the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

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fact that you believe and can say, “Jesus is my Lord,” is a precious gift from the Holy Spirit. It “marks you as God’s own.”

Being sure of belonging to God is a great blessing. It gives us peace of mind and a good conscience. But there is still much more to come. The apostle promises the Ephesians and us, “We can now be sure that someday we will receive all that God has promised. That will happen after God sets all of his people completely free.”

Paul is thinking of the perfect happiness in heaven that all believers will enjoy after judgment day. None of these good things, present or future, are our own doing. We did not earn them. We receive them by grace. They are a gift from God who chose us already in eternity. Reflecting on such undeserved benefits, Paul declares, “All of those things will bring praise to his [God’s] glory.”

Things to Remember:

32. Only the Holy Spirit can create _____ in a sinner’s heart.
33. The Holy Spirit’s presence in the life of a believer is the _____ (_____) that God has chosen him/her for salvation.
34. Belonging to God gives us _____ of mind and a _____.
35. God will give us even greater blessings on _____.
36. For all of his blessings to us God deserves our _____.

(Check your answers on page 24)

Things to remember-Answers

1. blessings, temporary, physical; 2. spiritual; 3. belong to Christ, believers in Christ; 4. eternity, chose, saved; 5. nothing, gift; 6. Jesus Christ; 7. praise, grace; 8. triune, three, one; 9. God, man, one; 10. die; 11. dying, sinner's; 12. mystery; 13. mysterious, hard to understand; 14. explained; 15. endless future; 16. Christ; 17. Jewish; 18. Abraham; 19. a) become a great nation, b) get special land, c) Savior born of his family; 20. Jesus Christ, virgin Mary, Jewish; 21. Jews; 22. Jews; 23. Gentiles; 24. It is finished; 25. Holy Spirit; 26. faith; 27. gospel; 28. Jews; 29. Ephesians, gospel; 30. Holy Spirit; 31. himself, Holy Spirit; 32. faith; 33. seal, guarantee; 34. peace, good conscience; 35. judgment day; 36. praise.

TEST - Chosen by Grace:
A study of the Epistle to the Ephesians

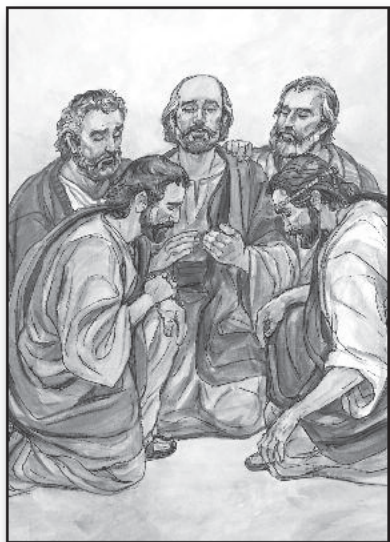
Section 2

Please review "Things to remember."

1. In this letter Paul is speaking of God's special gift for those who _____, namely _____.
2. The special gift God gave the Ephesians was that from _____ God _____ them to be _____.
3. The Ephesians did _____ to influence God's choice. God's choice was a _____.
4. God's choice of the Ephesians was based on what _____ has done for them.
5. God is a _____ God, _____ persons in _____ God.
6. Jesus Christ is true _____ and true _____ in _____ person.
7. Paul calls God's eternal plan a _____.
8. That does not mean the plan is _____ or _____.
9. Rather, it means that the plan needs to be _____ to us.

10. God chose _____ to be the father of the Jewish nation.
11. God gave Abraham three great promises:
a) _____
b) _____
c) _____
12. At the appointed time the promised Savior _____ was born of a Jewish girl, the _____. Jesus was _____.
13. It could look as though God chose only _____ for salvation.
14. The “mystery” Paul speaks of is that God has also chosen _____ for salvation.
15. The redemption Christ accomplished becomes the sinner’s own through _____ in Christ.
16. The _____ were the first to believe in Christ.
17. Later the _____ also became believers in Christ when Paul preached the _____ to them.

(Check your answers on page 162)



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SECTION 3:

**Paul's prayer for the Ephesians to see God's
gracious dealing with them**

Ephesians 1:15-23

Chosen by Grace:
A study of the Epistle to the Ephesians

SECTION THREE:

Paul's prayer for the Ephesians to see God's gracious dealing with them

A prayer of thanksgiving
(Read Ephesians 1:15,16)

¹⁵I have heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus. I have also heard about your love for all of God's people. That is why ¹⁶I have not stopped thanking God for you. I always remember you in my prayers.

Paul's letter to the Ephesians contains two prayers for his readers. One prayer occurs here (verses 15 to 23). The other is at chapter 3, verses 14 to 21.

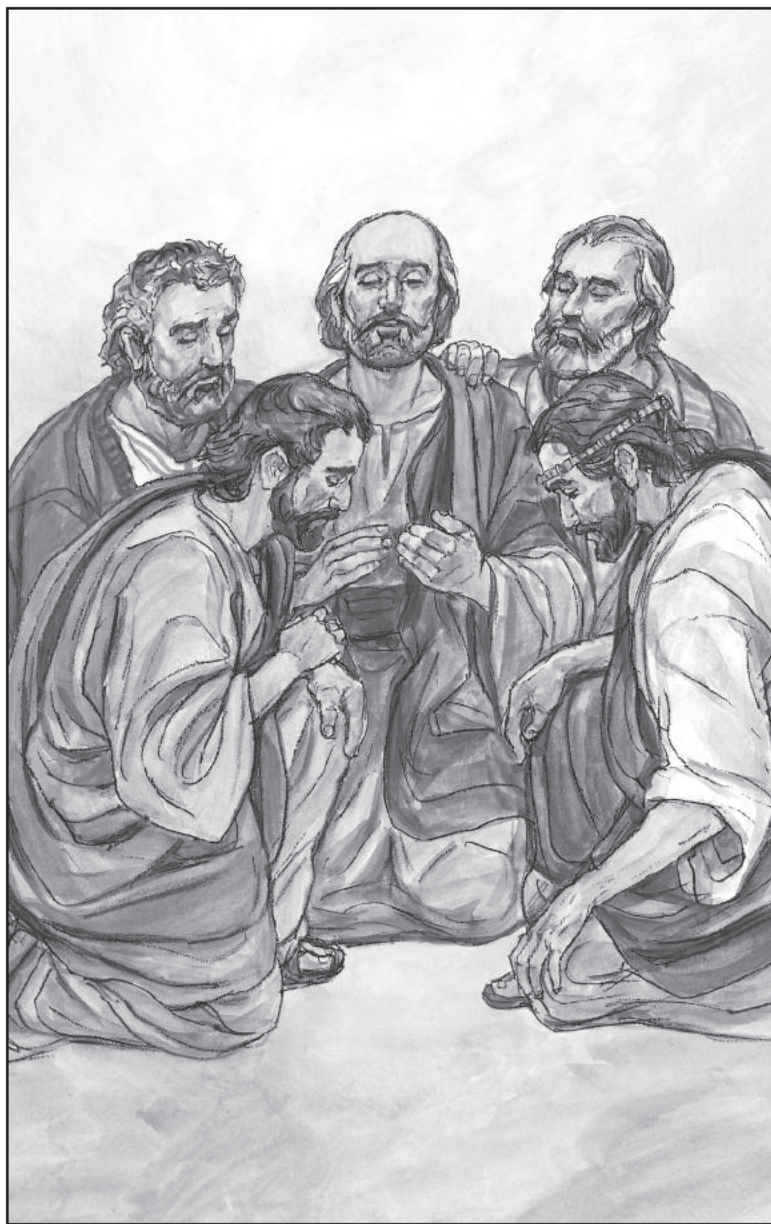
In his letters to the various churches, Paul regularly urges believers to be thankful. The apostle follows his own advice. He writes, "I have not stopped thanking God for you. I always remember you in my prayers."

What makes Paul thankful is that he has heard about their faith and love. The love the Ephesians have shown toward one another proves that their faith is real. Recall that Paul is writing this letter from prison in Rome. He hasn't been with the Ephesians for some time, but reports have reached him about their active faith.

Things to Remember:

1. Paul opens his prayer with a statement of _____.
2. In prison Paul has _____ of the Ephesians' _____ and _____.

(Check your answers on page 34)



Paul prays with the Ephesian believers.

A prayer for wisdom and understanding

(Read Ephesians 1:17-19a)

¹⁷I pray to the God of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is the glorious Father. I keep asking him to give you the wisdom and understanding that come from the Holy Spirit. I want you to know God better.

¹⁸I also pray that your mind might see more clearly. Then you will know the hope God has chosen you to receive. You will know that the things God's people will receive are rich and glorious. ¹⁹And you will know his great power.

Paul's thanksgiving is followed by a request. He says, "I keep asking him [God the Father] to give you the wisdom and understanding that come from the Holy Spirit. I want you to know God better. I also pray that your mind might see more clearly."

Paul is not saying there is anything wrong with the Ephesians' wisdom or understanding. After all, they have been taught by the Holy Spirit. But, like us, they can still grow. They can get to know God better.

Knowing God better will help them to see more clearly what great things God's grace is giving them. He lists three things:

- a) Then you will know the hope God has chosen you to receive.
- b) You will know that the things God's people will receive are rich and glorious.
- c) And you will know God's great power.

First he mentions the hope that God has chosen them to receive. When the Bible speaks of "hope" it is not talking about a mere wish or a dream. We might say, "I hope it doesn't rain on our picnic." We wish for something, but we're not at all sure of getting it. Not so with the "hope" Paul prays for. This hope is the wonderful future that certainly lies ahead of them in heaven. Paul prays that the Holy Spirit will open their eyes so they understand what God is promising to them.

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The next thing on Paul's prayer list is that they see how rich and glorious the inheritance is that God has prepared for believers. Receiving that inheritance, living eternally with God in heaven, has to wait until judgment day. But it is sure to come. Every believer can be sure of that promised inheritance. It is guaranteed by the third item on Paul's list, the great power of God. The apostle wants his readers to see and trust the great power of God. He will be saying more about God's power in the next section.

Things to Remember:

3. Paul prays that God would give the Ephesians _____ and _____. He wants them to _____.
4. Paul prays that the Ephesians see more clearly what God has promised them in _____. Heaven is what Paul has in mind when he talks about the sure _____ ahead of them.
5. A believer's inheritance in heaven lies in the _____.
6. God's great _____ makes our promised inheritance sure.

(Check your answers on page 34)

God's mighty power

(Read Ephesians 1:19,20)

It [God's great power] can't be compared with anything else. It is at work for us who believe. It is like the mighty strength ²⁰God showed when he raised Christ from the dead.

The Bible teaches us many things about God that our human minds can't understand. God is eternal (without beginning or end). He is omniscient (knows everything). He is omnipresent (present everywhere at the same time).

Here Paul directs our attention to God's omnipotence. That means he has all power. We can't imagine that. There is nothing like it. God's omnipotent power cannot be compared to anything else. The best Paul can do is to say that God showed some of his great power when he raised Christ from the dead.

The apostle's point here is that God's mighty power "is at work for us who believe." Do people wonder if God can keep his promises to us? He can. His power is unlimited.

Things to Remember:

7. Saying God is omnipotent means he has _____.
8. This power is like the power God used to _____.
9. Today God uses his power for the benefit of _____.

(Check your answers on page 34)

God has put Christ in charge

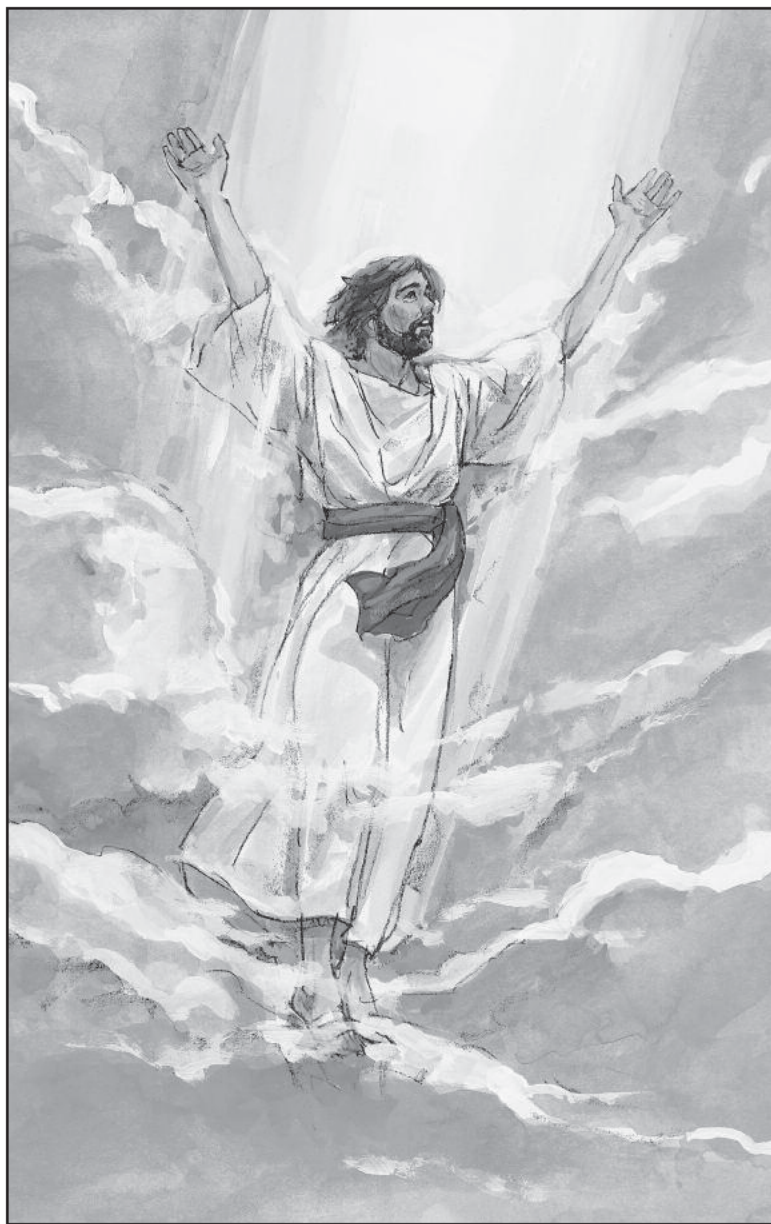
(Read Ephesians 1:20-23)

He [the Father] seated him [Christ] at his right hand in his heavenly kingdom. ²¹There Christ sits far above all who rule and have authority. He also sits far above all powers and kings. He is above every title that can be given in this world and in the world to come.

²²God placed all things under Christ's rule. He appointed him to be ruler over everything for the church. ²³The church is Christ's body. It is filled by Christ. He fills everything in every way.

God the Father used his almighty power not only when he raised Christ from death, but also when he "seated [Christ] at his right hand." Sitting at someone's right hand means to receive power and authority.

After God raised Christ from the dead and had him return to heaven, God seated him at his right hand. God put him in



Jesus ascends into heaven.

charge of everything. Paul writes, “Christ sits far above all who rule and have authority.” It makes no difference whether they are rulers “in this world or in the world to come.” All are under Christ’s control. He controls the present and the future.

What did God want Christ to do when he put him in charge? He appointed him ruler over everything *for the church*. A short time ago we noted that God uses his mighty power for the benefit of his believers. Here Paul says the same thing, only with different words. The “church” is another word for “all believers.” Christ is its head. The church is his body. Later in the letter Paul will be saying more about the close connection between Christ and his church.

Things to Remember:

10. God seated Christ at his _____ .
That means God gave him _____ and _____ .
11. Christ is in charge of all rulers in _____ world
and in the world to _____ .
12. Christ controls everything for the benefit of his _____ .
13. Christ is the _____ ; the church is his _____ .

(Check your answers on page 34)

Things to remember-Answers

1. thanksgiving; 2. heard, faith, love; 3. wisdom, understanding, know God better; 4. heaven, hope; 5. future; 6. power; 7. all power; 8. raise Christ from the dead; 9. believers; 10. right hand, power, authority; 11. this, come; 12. Church; 13. head, body.

TEST - Chosen by Grace:
A study of the Epistle to the Ephesians

Section 3

Please review "Things to remember."

1. Paul opens his prayer with a statement of _____.
2. In prison Paul has _____ of the Ephesians' _____ and _____.
3. Paul prays that God would give the Ephesians _____ and _____. He wants them to _____.
4. Paul prays that the Ephesians see more clearly what God has promised them in _____. Heaven is what Paul has in mind when he talks about the sure _____ ahead of them.
5. A believer's inheritance in heaven lies in the _____.
6. God's great _____ makes our promised inheritance sure.
7. Saying God is omnipotent means he has _____.
8. This power is like the power God used to _____.
9. Today God uses his power for the benefit of _____.

10. God seated Christ at his _____ .
That means God gave him _____ and
_____ .
11. Christ is in charge of all rulers in _____ world
and in the world to _____ .
12. Christ controls everything for the benefit of his
_____ .
13. Christ is the _____ ; the church is his
_____ .

(Check your answers on page 162)



Chosen by Grace

SECTION 4-Part 1:
God's saving plan for both Jews and Gentiles

Ephesians 2:1-10

Chosen by Grace:
A study of the Epistle to the Ephesians

SECTION FOUR-Part 1:

God's saving plan for both Jews and Gentiles (Ephesians 2:1-10)

God's saving plan for both Jews and Gentiles

(Read Ephesians 2:1-3)

2 You were living in your sins and lawless ways. But in fact you were dead. ²You used to live as sinners when you followed the ways of this world. You served the one who rules over the spiritual forces of evil. He is the spirit who is now at work in those who don't obey God.

³At one time we all lived among them. We tried to satisfy what our sinful nature wanted to do. We followed its longings and thoughts. God was angry with us and everyone else because of the kind of people we were.

A universal problem

Paul opens this paragraph by saying two things that seem to disagree. He tells his Gentile readers, "You were living... but in fact you were dead." Physically they were very much alive, but before becoming Christian, they were dead spiritually because they did not love God. They "used to live as sinners when [they] followed the ways of this world." They were dead in sin. They were serving "the one who rules over the spiritual forces of evil." That, of course, is Satan. He is "the spirit who is now at work in those who don't obey God."

But Gentiles were not the only ones who led a sinful life. The Jews had the same problem. The apostle admits, "At one time we all lived among them. We tried to satisfy what our sinful nature wanted to do. We followed its longings and thoughts."

The lives of the Gentiles may have been more wild and wicked than the Jews, but any amount of sin is deadly. Evil



*Moses smashes the stone tables containing
the Ten Commandments.*

desires and thoughts made the Jewish nation just as guilty as the Gentiles. The result for both was the same. “God was angry with us and everyone else because of the kind of people we were.”

Note that what Paul says of Jews and Gentiles is still true today. All people, including us, are born sinful and lead sinful lives. God is angry with sinners because of the kind of people they are. If Paul’s letter ended here with nothing more than the bad news of God’s anger against us, this letter would be a terrifying message. Thankfully, there is a solution.

Things to Remember:

1. At one time Paul’s Gentile readers were _____ alive but dead in _____.
2. The Jewish nation was just as _____ as the Ephesian Gentiles.
3. Also today, all people are _____.
4. A just and holy God must be _____ with sinners.

(Check your answers on page 45)

God’s solution

(Read Ephesians 2:4-7)

But God loves us deeply. He is full of mercy. ⁵So he gave us new life because of what Christ has done. He gave us life even when we were dead in sin. God’s grace has saved you.

⁶God raised us up with Christ. He has seated us with him in his heavenly kingdom because we belong to Christ Jesus. ⁷He has done it to show the riches of his grace for all time to come. His grace can’t be compared with anything else. He has shown it by being kind to us because of what Christ Jesus has done.

Paul says plainly, all people are sinners. God has every right to be angry with them. If that were all Paul had to tell us, we would be terrified at God’s anger and helpless to avoid

Chosen by Grace

his punishment. But thank God, Paul can continue his message with the little three-letter word “but.” We deserve punishment, “**BUT** God loves us deeply. He is full of mercy. So he gave us new life because of what Christ has done. He gave us life even when we were dead in sin. God’s grace has saved you.”

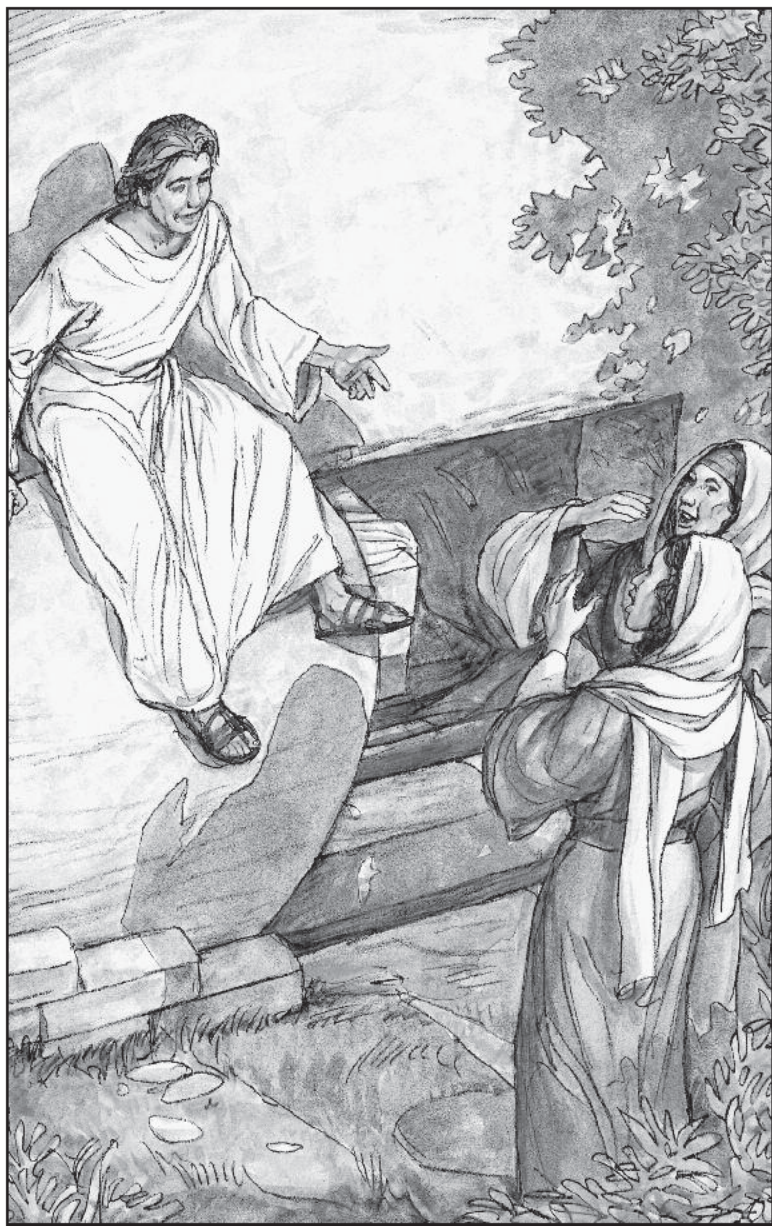
All of this is possible “because of what Christ has done.” Paul explains that more fully by saying, “God raised us up with Christ. He has seated us with him in his heavenly kingdom because we belong to Christ Jesus.”

Remember, Paul wrote that God used his mighty power to raise Christ from death. This proved that God the Father had accepted his Son’s innocent death as payment for all of the world’s sin. Forty days after Easter, Christ returned to heaven. There the Father seated him to his right hand, giving him power and putting him in charge of everything. Christ uses his position of power to benefit his believers, the church.

Now Paul says something amazing. What God the Father did for his Son, he also promises and does for believers in a spiritual way. Paul includes himself with the Ephesians when he says, “God raised us up with Christ. He has seated us with him in his heavenly kingdom because we belong to Christ Jesus.” Being seated in God’s heavenly kingdom is Paul’s way of saying that he and the Ephesians can be sure of eternal salvation in heaven. We can be sure of a home in heaven only because of what Christ has done.

What moved the Father to do this? The apostle explains, “He has done it to show the riches of his grace for all time to come.” First and foremost, God did it to reveal how great his grace is. The example of how God saved Paul and the Ephesians proves that salvation is purely a gift.

But there is another point we should not miss. The gift of being saved by grace and seated with God in heaven is not just for Paul and the Ephesians. God also gives us salvation as a gift because of what Christ has done. This is God’s



An angel tells the women that Jesus has risen from death.

Chosen by Grace

ongoing plan of salvation. It is as true for us today as it was for believers in Paul's day. And "for all time to come" it will continue to be God's plan to save sinners by grace to give believers salvation as a free gift.

Things to Remember:

5. God raised us up with _____. He has seated us with him in his _____.
6. Being seated in God's heavenly kingdom means being sure of _____ in heaven.
7. God brought the Ephesians to faith to show the _____ of his _____.
8. Giving believers salvation as a gift is God's plan for _____.

(Check your answers on page 45)

Grace, not works

(Read Ephesians 2:8,9)

⁸God's grace has saved you because of your faith in Christ. Your salvation doesn't come from anything you do. It is God's gift. ⁹It is not based on anything you have done. No one can brag about earning it.

Salvation is by grace. It is a gift from God. Salvation by grace is so important and so often misunderstood that Paul feels the need to explain it more fully. Sometimes, to make something really clear and understandable it is not enough just to say what something IS. It is equally important to say what it is NOT. Paul does that here.

Paul makes the positive statement, "God's grace has saved you." But then he continues with three negatives to show what did not save you.

- Your salvation does NOT come from anything you do.
- It is NOT based on anything you have done.
- NO ONE can brag about earning it.

It is impossible to state more clearly that the sinner's salvation is a gift. It is all God's doing. A sinner can do nothing to earn heaven by his own good works. But that does not mean believers don't do good works. Paul will point that out next.

Things to Remember:

9. Your salvation does not come from _____.

10. No one can _____ about earning salvation.
(Check your answers on page 45)

A believer's good works

(Read Ephesians 2:10)

¹⁰God made us. He created us to belong to Christ Jesus. Now we can do good things. Long ago God prepared them for us to do.

The triune God is our Creator. He has made us. As his creatures we owe him obedience. However, since Adam and Eve's fall into sin, all people are born sinners. They are dead in sin. They are unable and unwilling to do what God wants.

But all of that changes when the Holy Spirit uses the gospel to create faith in a person's heart. He creates new life in us by giving us faith that Jesus earned forgiveness for our sins and made us holy. Through faith in Christ, we who were dead in sin start to live a new life of love for God. As believers, we are able to show that we are thankful for God's grace. Or as Paul says, "Now we can do good things."

But the believer not only *can* do good things, he is *eager* to do them. He wants to do what God wants. He does not do these good things in order to earn salvation. That has already been done for him by Christ. Rather, the believer wants to show his thankfulness to his Creator God who chose him from eternity and now is showering him with his grace.

Chosen by Grace

Things to Remember:

11. The triune God is our _____. All creatures owe him _____.
12. Since Adam and Eve's fall all people are _____.
13. Sinners are _____ and _____ to do what God wants.
14. Through the message of the gospel the Holy Spirit creates _____ in the sinner's heart. Such faith creates the spiritual life that makes it possible for the believer to do _____.
15. A believer does not do good works to _____ salvation. That has already been done for him by _____.
16. A believer does good works to show his _____ for what God's grace has done for him.

(Check your answers on page 45)

Things to remember-Answers

1. physically, sin; 2. sinful; 3. sinners; 4. angry; 5. Christ, heavenly kingdom; 6. eternal salvation; 7. riches, grace; 8. saving sinners by grace; 9. anything you do; 10. brag; 11. Creator, obedience; 12. born sinners; 13. unable, unwilling; 14. faith, good things; 15. earn, Christ; 16. thankfulness.

**TEST -Chosen by Grace:
A study of the Epistle to the Ephesians**

Section 4-Part 1

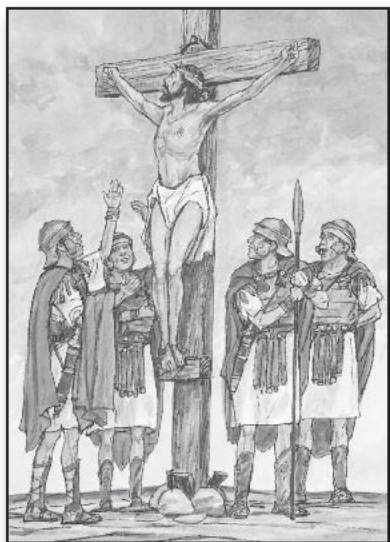
Please review "Things to remember."

1. At one time Paul's Gentile readers were _____ alive but dead in _____.
2. The Jewish nation was just as _____ as the Ephesian Gentiles.
3. A just and holy God has to be _____ with sinners.
4. God raised us up with _____. He has seated us with him in his _____.
5. Being seated in God's heavenly kingdom means being certain of _____ in heaven.
6. Giving believers salvation as a gift is God's plan for _____.
7. Your salvation does not come from _____. No one can _____ about earning salvation.
8. The triune God is our _____. All creatures owe him _____.
9. Since Adam and Eve's fall all people are _____.

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10. Sinners are _____ and _____ to do what God wants.
11. Through the message of the gospel the Holy Spirit works _____ in the sinner's heart. Such faith creates the spiritual life that makes it possible for the believer to do _____.
12. A believer does good works to show his _____ for what God's grace has done for him.

(Check your answers on page 162)



Chosen by Grace

SECTION 4-Part 2:
God's plan of salvation for both Jews and Gentiles

Ephesians 2:11-22

Chosen by Grace:
A study of the Epistle to the Ephesians

SECTION FOUR-Part 2:

God's saving plan for both Jews and Gentiles (Ephesians 2:11-22)

(Read Ephesians 2:11-13)

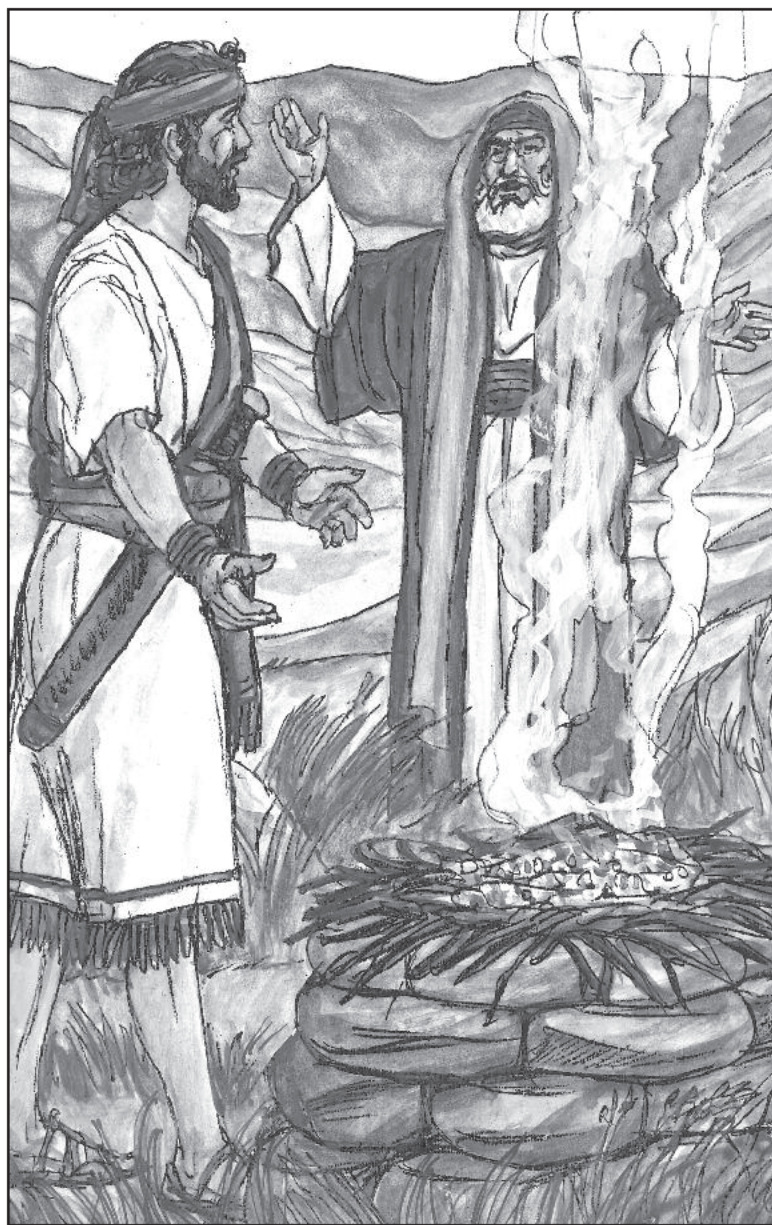
¹¹You who are not Jews by birth, here is what I want you to remember. You are called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "circumcised." But they have only been circumcised in their bodies by human hands.

¹²Before you believed in Christ, you were separated from him. You were not considered to be citizens of Israel. You were not included in what the covenants promised. You were without hope and without God in the world. ¹³At one time you were far away from God. But now you belong to Christ Jesus. He spilled his blood for you. That has brought you near to God.

We have seen that many years earlier God chose Abraham and Sarah for three special blessings. God promised to make a great nation of their family. This nation would live in a special land, and from their descendants the promised Savior would be born.

All three of these things happened just as God predicted. Abraham's descendants were the Jewish nation. They became a great nation while living in Egypt, where they moved in order to avoid a famine. After living there some 400 years, they had become a great nation of about two million people.

Now it was time for God to lead them out of Egypt and into the promised land of Palestine. On the way there, at Mount Sinai in the desert, God made an important "covenant" or agreement with them. If they would agree to the requirements of his covenant, they would be his special people. The main thing God expected was that they trust his promise of a Savior. He also asked them to show their faith



Special rules guided the life and worship of the Jews.

by following certain laws and commandments. In addition to the Ten Commandments, they were also to keep some rules and regulations, such as having certain festivals and sacrifices, not working on the “Sabbath” (Saturday), not eating unclean food, like pork, etc. These rules and regulations were to keep the Jews separate from the heathen nations around them.

To show that they accepted the details of this covenant, male Jews were to be circumcised. Thus circumcision became a sign and seal that they were God’s chosen people. It showed that God separated them from others. And the Jews were quick to brag about the importance they thought they had. They looked down on their non-Jewish Gentile neighbors and called them “uncircumcised.” That was a hateful word in their mouths. It stirred up bad feelings between the two groups.

Paul does not use the word “uncircumcised” in a hateful way. But he does remind his non-Jewish Ephesian readers that there was some truth in the Jewish insult. Gentiles as a group were not enjoying the benefits the Jews had.

The apostle puts it this way, “Before you believed in Christ, you were separated from him.” He then echoes what he has said with four more negatives:

- You were not considered to be citizens of Israel.
- You were not included in what the covenants promised.
- You were without hope.
- You were without God in the world.

Paul says it is true that they were hopeless and helpless before. But it’s different now. Paul urges them to make a “before and after” comparison. That is what he does in order to lift them up with the new truth. “At one time you were far away from God. But now you belong to Christ Jesus.... That has brought you near to God.”

Chosen by Grace

What is it that has brought them near to God? Answer: the “spilled blood” of Christ, the Savior who was promised centuries earlier in God’s covenant.

Things to Remember:

1. God promised to make a great nation of _____’s descendants.
2. That nation was the _____ people. They became a great nation while they were slaves in the country of _____.
3. Under the leadership of Moses, God led them to the promised land of _____.
4. On the way to the promised land, God made an important _____ with the Jewish people at Mount _____.
5. This covenant required the Jews to keep some special _____.
6. Male members of the Jewish nation showed that they accepted the details of this covenant by being _____.
7. Being circumcised was the _____ and _____ of being God’s special people.
8. Circumcised Jews often looked down on _____.

(Check your answers on page 64)

We just heard Paul invite his readers to do a “before ... after” comparison. He encouraged them to see the difference, “*At one time* you were far away from God. *But now* you belong to Christ Jesus.” The Ephesians have been brought “near to God.”

The change from being “far away from God” to now being “near to God” was huge. It was a life-changing event. Paul helps them to see the power and love of God hidden in it by answering three important questions:

- 1 How did God bring about this change?
- 2 Why did he do it?
- 3 What are the blessed results?

How did God bring about this change?

(Read Ephesians 2:14,15)

¹ Christ himself is our peace. He has made Jews and non-Jews into one group of people. He has destroyed the hatred that was like a wall between us. ¹⁵Through his body on the cross, Christ put an end to the law with all its commands and rules.

We have seen that at Mount Sinai the Jewish nation agreed to a covenant with God. Some of the regulations in that covenant, like the Ten Commandments, applied to all people in the world. But most of the rules applied only to the Jewish nation. These rules, such as what to eat, what to wear, when to worship, when to work, were given only to the Jews to keep the Jewish nation separate from their heathen neighbors until the promised Savior was born.

These laws worked very well for keeping Jews and Gentiles separate, but they also caused a lot of bitterness. Often the Jews proudly gave themselves credit for being the people of God, but they thought of non-Jews as “Gentile sinners” who were forever locked outside of God’s family. Paul goes so far as to say the special rules caused “hatred” between the two groups.

The special rules that God wrote only for the Jews were not permanent. They were necessary only until Christ came. After Christ came to earth and did his saving work of paying for the sins of the world, there no longer was any need for those rules. There was no need to set the Jews apart from other nations any more. The Savior had come! So Paul can write, “He [Christ] has destroyed the hatred that was like a wall between us. Through his body on the cross, Christ put an end to the law with all its commands and rules.”

Things to Remember:

9. The special rules God gave the Jewish nation at Mount Sinai were not _____. They were necessary only until _____.
10. Paul says these special rules caused _____ between Jews and Gentiles.
11. Christ by his death destroyed the hatred that was like a _____ between Jews and Gentiles.
12. Christ put an end to the _____ with all its _____ and _____.

(Check your answers on page 64)

Why did God put an end to the law with its commands and rules?

(Read Ephesians 2:15b-17)

He wanted to create one new group of people out of the two. He wanted to make peace between them. ¹⁶He planned to bring both of them as one body back to God because of the cross. Christ put their hatred to death on that cross. ¹⁷He came and preached peace to you who were far away. He also preached peace to those who were near.

The commands and rules of which Paul is speaking were started by God at Mount Sinai. But they were not permanent. They were meant to be in force only until Christ came to earth. When Christ died on the cross, he could cry out, "It is finished." With those words, first of all, Jesus announced that he had finished his work of saving the world. But his cross also marked the end of the Old Testament regulations that began at Sinai. They were no longer needed.

Ending these rules and regulations removed the wall of separation that had been the reason for hatred between Jews and Gentiles. Paul says, "Christ put their hatred to death on that cross."

With hatred being "put to death" by Christ's completed work, there could now be peace between Jews and Gentiles.

But this peace was not to be just the end of arguing and name-calling among the “circumcised” and the “uncircumcised.” God’s plan was not merely to produce a cease-fire. God wanted to create something entirely new, a group of all the people who belonged to him now because of the cross.

The apostle explains, “He [God] wanted to create one new group of people out of the two... He planned to bring both of them as one body back to God because of the cross.” God wanted to join Jews and Gentiles into one new body. As we will learn next, the “one new group of people” he is talking about is the New Testament Christian Church.

Things to Remember:

13. When Christ on the cross said, “It is finished,” he was announcing, first of all, that he had finished his _____ of _____ the world.
14. Christ’s death also marked the end of the _____ that began at Mount Sinai.
15. After Christ’s completed work, there could now be _____ between Jews and Gentiles.
16. God wanted to join Jews and Gentiles into _____.
17. This one new group is the _____.

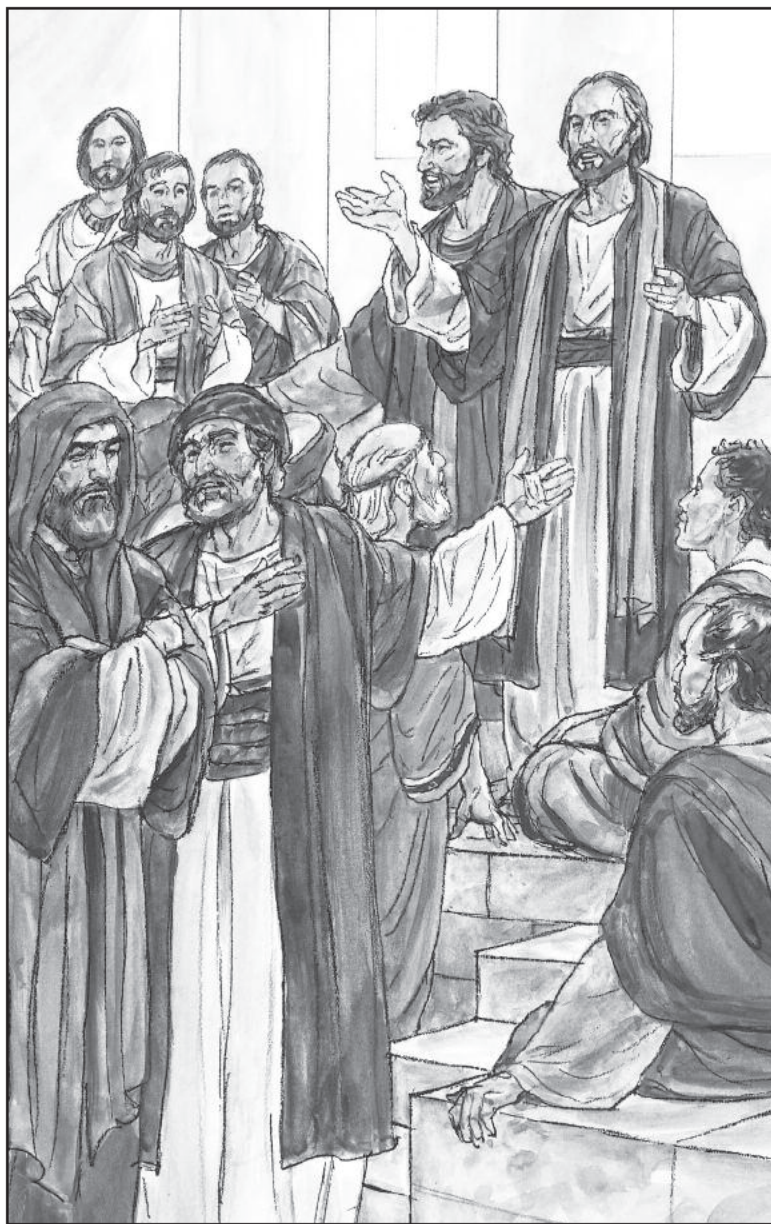
(Check your answers on page 64)

The blessed results of Christ’s work

(Read Ephesians 2:18,19)

¹⁸Through Christ we [Jews and Gentiles] both come to the Father by the power of one Holy Spirit. ¹⁹So you [Gentiles] are no longer strangers and outsiders. You are citizens together with God’s people. You are members of God’s family.

In the past, the Old Testament rules and regulations that were meant only for the Jewish nation caused separation and



Paul and Barnabas preach to Jews and Gentiles.

hatred between Jews and Gentiles. But God no longer required these rules to be kept after Christ's coming. That made exciting new things possible. Paul describes the new peace that now unites the Jews and Gentiles in a number of ways.

The first thing Jewish and Gentile believers share is the saving work of the Holy Spirit. The same Spirit has been at work in both groups. Including himself with the Gentile Ephesians, Paul says, "Through Christ we both come to the Father by the power of one Holy Spirit." The Holy Spirit has given them faith in Jesus as their Savior. With such faith they can come boldly into God's presence. In fact, they can call God their Father. This wonderful change allows Paul to tell his readers, "You are members of God's family." You are children of God.

A second picture expands on that thought. Not only are believers connected to God, but they are also closely united with each other. Their unity with other believers is like the unity of citizens living in the same country. Paul can assure the Ephesians, "So you are no longer strangers and outsiders. You are citizens together with God's people."

Things to Remember:

18. Jewish and Gentile believers share the saving work of the _____.
19. After coming to faith, Christians can call God their _____. They are members of God's _____.
20. The unity of Christians with other believers can be compared to the unity of _____ living in the same country.

(Check your answers on page 64)

Chosen by Grace

In the first two examples of peace between former enemies, Paul compares this peace with the unity found in certain groups of people (family and citizenship). In a third illustration of the new and peaceful connection between Jewish and Gentile believers, he uses the picture of a building.

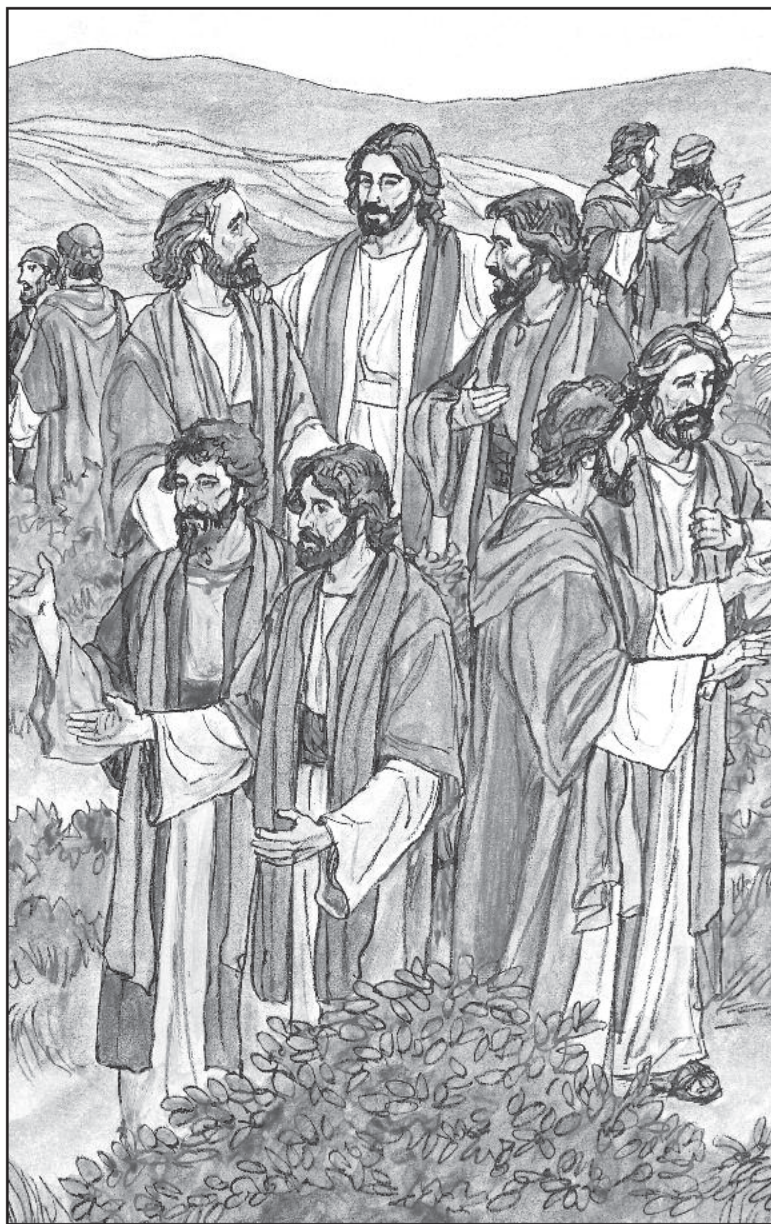
(Read Ephesians 2: 20-22)

²⁰You are a building that is built on the apostles and prophets. They are the foundation. Christ Jesus himself is the most important stone in the building. ²¹The whole building is held together by him. It rises to become a holy temple because it belongs to the Lord. ²²And because you belong to him, you too are being built together. You are being made into a house where God lives through his Spirit.

In this section, Paul asks his readers to picture themselves as bricks or building blocks of a building. But it's not an ordinary structure that is being built. It's a spiritual building, and believers are being built into it. They are the building material.

What Paul is describing is the New Testament Christian Church. Paul writes, "You are a building that is built on the apostles and prophets. They are the foundation." In Old Testament times, God sent many prophets to remind people of the Savior who was coming. They preached God's message to the people of their time. They also wrote down for future generations what God wanted them to write. Their writings are the 39 books of the Old Testament.

When Christ came and started his three-year public ministry, he chose twelve disciples to whom he gave special training. At the time of his ascension into heaven, Jesus told these hand-picked men to share the good news: Tell the world that God has kept his word and sent the promised Savior. By sending out his disciples, Jesus made them into "apostles" (sent ones). Like the Old Testament prophets, these New



Jesus sends out his disciples.

Chosen by Grace

Testament apostles also brought God's message to their hearers and wrote down for future generations what God caused them to write. Their writings are the Gospels and epistles. We usually call the collected 27 books of the apostles the New Testament.

Jesus later added Paul to the Twelve when he called him on the road to Damascus and made him an apostle. Note that in writing this letter to the Ephesians, the apostle Paul is adding to the foundation on which the New Testament Church still rests today.

The apostles and prophets are the foundation on which the building, the New Testament Church, is being built. But they are not the most valuable part of the building. Paul makes that very clear when he says, "Christ Jesus himself is the most important stone in the building. The whole building is held together by him."

Many years ago, the first stone to be laid in a building project was the cornerstone. From it, all the lines and angles of a building were laid out and then built. In a real sense Paul can say of this important stone (Christ), "The whole building is held together by [it]."

In the mental picture that Paul draws for us, he wants us to see Jesus as the main part of this building project. The whole building is held together by him. But Christ does more than hold the church together. He directs an ongoing construction project. "It rises to become a holy temple because it belongs to the Lord." Let's think, for a moment, about that ongoing building project.

In eternity, before creation, God in his grace chose believers to be saved. When those people are born over the centuries, the Holy Spirit brings them to faith through the gospel in God's Word and the sacraments. As believers, they become the "building." By the addition of more and more believers in Jesus, the holy Christian Church "rises to become a holy temple." Thus the Church is constantly growing.

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit; the holy Christian church, the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

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In the Apostles' Creed, Christians confess, "I believe in the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints." Those last four words become more understandable when translated, "I believe in the holy Christian Church, *the gathering of all believers.*"

The Christian Church is made of all believers in Christ: past, present, and future. That is why Paul can tell the Ephesians, "And because you belong to him, you too are being built together. You are being made into a house where God lives through his Spirit." Becoming Christians has made the Ephesian believers into building blocks, not of stone, but of flesh and blood that are joined together in this rising "temple."

From what Paul tells the Ephesians, we can draw a very encouraging truth. The Lord's grand building project is still going on today... and we are part of it. All of you who trust Jesus Christ as your Savior are building blocks in the Lord's "temple." The apostle's encouraging words to the Ephesians apply also to you. "You are being made into a house where God lives through his Spirit." It is another display of God's amazing grace to us!

Things to Remember:

21. Paul describes the New Testament Christian Church by comparing it to a _____.
22. The foundation on which this building rests is the Old Testament _____ and the New Testament _____.
23. Individual _____ are the building blocks, but _____ is the most important block. He holds _____.

24. The Christian Church is made of _____
_____ in Christ. That includes those who lived
in the _____; those who _____ now,
as well as those who will be added in the _____.
(Check your answers on page 64)

Things to remember-Answers

1. Abraham; 2. Jewish, Egypt; 3. Palestine; 4. covenant, Sinai; 5. rules;
6. circumcised; 7. sign, seal; 8. uncircumcised Gentiles; 9. permanent,
Christ came; 10. hatred; 11. wall; 12. law, commands, rules; 13. work,
saving; 14. Old Testament rules; 15. peace; 16. one new group; 17. New
Testament Christian Church; 18. Holy Spirit; 19. Father, family;
20. citizens; 21. building; 22. prophets, apostles; 23. believers, Christ,
everything together; 24. all believers, past, are living, future.

TEST - Chosen by Grace:
A study of the Epistle to the Ephesians

Section 4-Part 2

Please review "Things to remember."

1. God promised to make a great nation of _____'s descendants.
2. That nation was the _____ people. They became a great nation while they were slaves in the country of _____.
3. Under the leadership of Moses God led them to the promised land of _____.
4. On the way to the promised land God made an important _____ with the Jewish people at Mount _____.
5. Male members of the Jewish nation showed that they accepted the terms of this covenant by being _____.
6. Circumcised Jews often looked down on _____.
7. The special rules God gave the Jewish nation at Mount Sinai were not _____. They were necessary only until _____.
8. When Christ on the cross said, "It is finished," he was speaking primarily of the completion of his _____ of _____ the world.

9. Christ's death also marked the end of the _____
_____ set up at Mount Sinai.
10. God intended to join Jews and Gentiles into _____
_____.
11. This one new group is the _____
_____.
12. After coming to faith, Christians can call God their
_____. They are members of God's
_____.
13. Paul describes the New Testament Christian Church by
comparing it to a _____.
14. The foundation on which this building rests is the Old
Testament _____ and the New Testament
_____.
15. Individual _____ are the building
blocks, but _____ is the most important
block. He holds _____.
16. The Christian Church consists of _____
_____ in Christ. That includes those who lived
in the _____; those who _____ now,
as well as those who will be added in the _____.

(Check your answers on page 162)



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SECTION 5:
The “mystery” of God’s plan revealed

Ephesians 3:1-13

Chosen by Grace:
A study of the Epistle to the Ephesians

SECTION FIVE:

The “mystery” of God’s plan revealed (Ephesians 3:1-13)

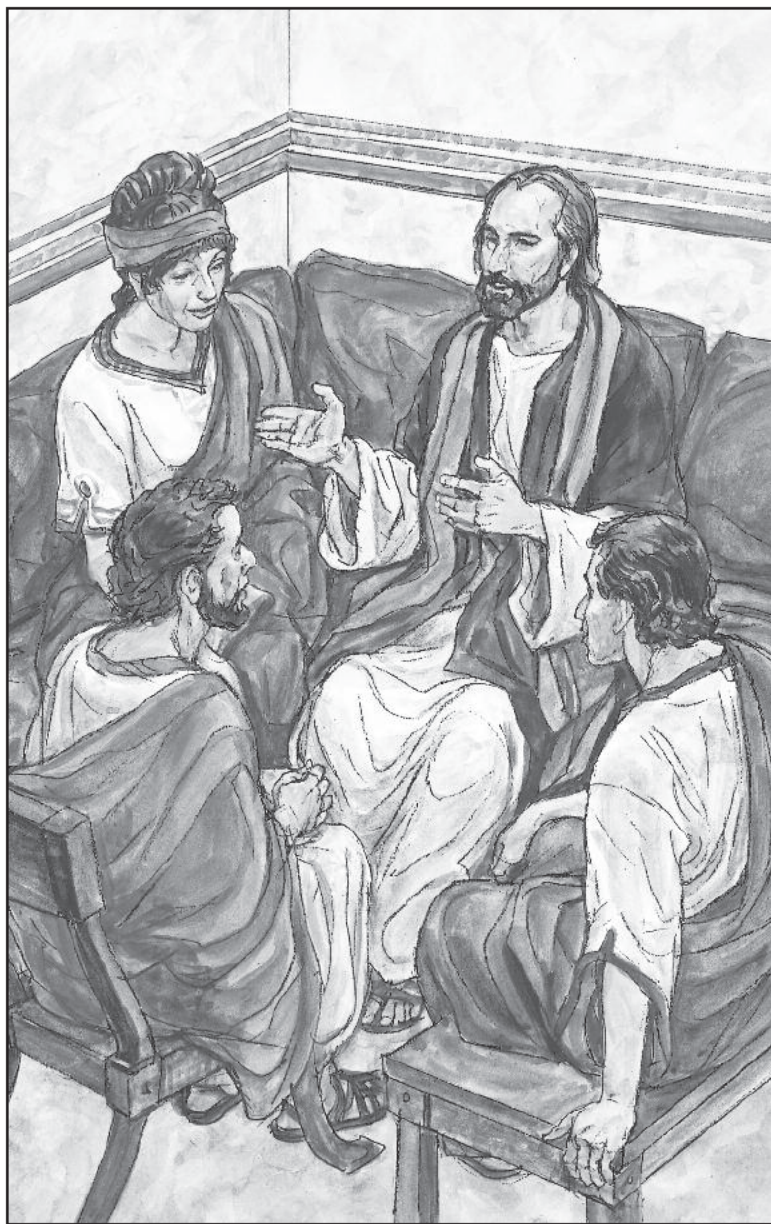
(Read Ephesians 3:1)

3 I, Paul, am a prisoner because of Christ Jesus. I am in prison because of my work among you who are not Jews.

Paul has spoken about peace between Jews and Gentiles. But he clearly said that it was a peace *in Christ*. It is enjoyed by those who accept Christ as the Savior promised by the Old Testament. Where Christ is not accepted, the old hatred continues.

Paul was made very much aware of that hatred whenever he preached in a Jewish synagogue. Usually, a small number of his hearers accepted Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ, the promised Savior. Most of the synagogue worshippers, however, became angry at Paul’s teaching and drove him out of their synagogue. What angered these synagogue Jews even more was that Paul then took his gospel message to the Gentiles.

There was one time when the Jews in Jerusalem stirred up a crowd to attack Paul. It was only by the quick work of some Roman soldiers that Paul’s life was spared from the mob. But now the apostle found himself caught in the Roman legal system. To get himself cleared, Paul asked for his case to be heard by the emperor’s court in Rome. It is from prison in Rome that Paul is now writing this letter to the Ephesians. In a very real sense, Paul can say that his work of preaching the gospel to Gentiles has gotten him into this legal trouble.



Paul speaks to Gentiles.

Things to Remember:

1. Paul wrote this letter from _____ in the city of _____.
2. Many Jews were angry with Paul's teaching when he taught in their _____.
3. Paul was in prison because of preaching the gospel to _____.

(Check your answers on page 76)

The “mystery” revealed to Paul

(Read Ephesians 3:2-6)

²I am sure you have heard that God appointed me to share his grace with you. ³I'm talking about the mystery God showed me. I have already written a little about it. By reading it you will be able to understand what I know about the mystery of Christ.

⁵The mystery was not made known to people of other times. But now the Holy Spirit has made it known to God's holy apostles and prophets.

⁶Here is the mystery. Because of the good news, God's promises are for non-Jews as well as for Jews. Both groups are parts of one body. They share in the promise. It belongs to them because they belong to Christ Jesus.

Remember that in the opening verse of this letter Paul said, “I, Paul, am writing this letter. I am an apostle of Christ Jesus just as God planned.” An apostle is someone who has been “sent out” by an important person. He does not bring his own message. He speaks for the one who sent him. Paul believes that his readers understand this when he says, “I am sure you have heard that God appointed me to share his grace with you.” Here the word “grace” could also mean “gift.” God has appointed Paul to share a gift. He hints at what that gift is. “I'm talking about the mystery God showed me.”

Giving them the explanation to a “mystery” is Paul's gift to the Ephesians. He doesn't give them the explanation just yet. Rather he stirs up their interest by saying, “I have already written a little about it. By reading it, you will be able to

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understand what I know about the mystery of Christ.”

We need to read verse 6 for the apostle’s explanation. There he says plainly, “Here is the mystery. Because of the good news, God’s promises are for non-Jews as well as for Jews. Both groups are parts of one body. They share in the promise. It belongs to them because they belong to Christ Jesus.”

Paul can share the good news that God sees no difference between Jews and Gentiles. In Christ, both are acceptable to him. Both are being built into that “building” he spoke of earlier. (You may want to review the comments made at Chapter 2, verses 20-22 describing the holy Christian Church.)

The apostle writes, “The mystery was not made known to people of other times. But now the Holy Spirit has made it known to God’s holy apostles and prophets.” What Paul calls a “mystery” is not something dark and mysterious. It is not something hard to understand. Rather, it is something that a person could not figure out by himself. It has to be explained to him. Once the hearer learns the explanation, everything becomes clear.

It is such an explanation that Paul brings. For a long time it could have seemed that God cared only for his chosen people, the Jewish nation. People might have thought that God wasn’t interested in saving Gentiles. It is Paul’s great privilege to correct that false idea.

Things to Remember:

4. As an apostle, Paul brings the message of the one who _____.
5. Paul brings the explanation of a _____.
6. As Paul uses the term, a “mystery” is not something _____ and _____. Rather, it is something that has to be _____.

7. After a mystery has been explained, everything becomes _____.

(Check your answers on page 76)

The Bible study section you just read had the title, “The ‘mystery’ revealed to Paul.” This next section could have almost the same heading, with one small change. Instead of the mystery being revealed to Paul, these next verses speak of the mystery revealed through Paul. It is an honor and a gift from God for Paul to be permitted to share with the world the mystery that had been hidden for ages.

The “mystery” revealed through Paul

(Read Ephesians 3:7,8)

⁷I now serve the good news because God gave me his grace. His power is at work in me. ⁸I am by far the least important of all of God’s people. But he gave me the grace to preach to the non-Jews about the wonderful riches that Christ gives.

We have made it clear that an apostle does not bring his own message. He speaks for the one who sent him. Paul has that in mind when he says, “I now serve the good news because God gave me his grace. His power is at work in me.”

Throughout his life, Paul never forgot that he was not worthy of God’s love. He had hated Christ. He had attacked Christians. Ashamed of his past, the apostle says, “I am by far the least important of all of God’s people.” But that only helps us see how wonderful God’s grace is. Even though he is not worthy of God’s love, Paul can say, “God gave me the grace (gift) to preach to the non-Jews about the wonderful riches that Christ gives.”

Things to Remember:

8. Paul felt unworthy because he had hated _____ and attacked _____.

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9. Paul believed that it was a _____ from God for him to be permitted to preach the gospel to the _____.

(Check your answers on page 76)

(Read Ephesians 3:9-11)

⁹ God told me to make clear to everyone how the mystery came about. In times past it was kept hidden in the mind of God, who created all things.

¹⁰He wanted the rulers and authorities in the heavenly world to come to know his great wisdom. The church would make it known to them. ¹¹That was God's plan from the beginning. He has worked it out through Christ Jesus our Lord.

Paul considered it a great honor that God chose him “to make clear to everyone how the mystery came about.” Already in eternity God planned to save sinners by sending his Son as the sinner’s substitute. God didn’t form his plan slowly after the fall into sin. It was there before creation, but “in times past it was kept hidden in the mind of God, who created all things.”

God knew all along what he was doing, but it was unclear to the people of the Old Testament world how his plan was unfolding. He chose the Jewish nation for a special reason. The Savior would be born of them. He gave them special rules. That made it look as though Jews were the only ones he was interested in.

In that connection, it is important for us to remember something else. Throughout the Old Testament, people were always saved by faith in the promised Savior. That included Gentile believers. But when Gentiles accepted the promise of a coming Savior, they also put themselves under the covenant rules and regulations that God used to hold the Jewish nation to himself.

During that time, it looked as though no one could receive God’s grace unless they joined the Jewish nation. But God

had a broader plan in place. Instead of Gentiles “backing into the kingdom” through Judaism, Paul can speak of something quite different. After Christ’s coming, God ended the old rules, which had served their purpose, and he started a grand new development. He began to build the New Testament Christian Church where Jew and Gentile stand together on the same level.

Now God wants the church to explain what in the past had been a “mystery.” That role of the church becomes very clear if we rearrange the word order of verses 10b and 11: “God’s plan from the beginning was that the church would make it (the mystery) known to them.”

But who does Paul mean when he says, “them”? Who are the ones that will see the wisdom of God as soon as they understand the “mystery”? Listen Paul says, “He [God] wanted the rulers and authorities in the heavenly world to come to know his great wisdom. The church would make it known to them.”

Paul does not fully say who these rulers and authorities are, but probably he is thinking of angels. Scripture tells us that they are very interested in the unfolding of God’s plan of salvation. For example, speaking of Old Testament prophecies, the apostle Peter says, “Even angels long to look into those things” (1 Peter 1:12).

The role of the New Testament Christian Church clearly shows the wisdom of God. When there was a serious problem of hatred and ill will between Jews and Gentiles, God’s plan not only took away the ill will between them; in Christ, he actually made the two of them “one people.” Recall Paul’s picture of a building to tell us what the Church is like. Christ is the most important stone, but each believer, regardless of race or nationality, is a valued building block in the “temple” that is rising as evidence of God’s grace and wisdom.

Things to Remember:

10. Throughout the Old Testament, believers in the _____ were saved by that _____.
 11. Gentile believers put themselves under the _____ rules that bound the Jewish nation.
 12. The new development after Christ's coming was the building of the _____ where _____ and _____ stand on the same level.
 13. God wants the church to _____ the mystery that was hidden for ages.
 14. The role of the New Testament Christian Church clearly shows the _____ and the _____ of God.
- (Check your answers on page 76)

(Read Ephesians 3:12,13)

¹²Through him [Christ] and through faith in him we can approach God. We can come to him freely. We can come without fear. ¹³So here is what I'm asking you to do. Don't lose hope because I am suffering for you. It will lead to the time when God will give you his glory.

Paul has just said what a great honor it is for the church to explain the mystery that had long been hidden. But sometimes the church doesn't look so glorious. After all, Paul was in prison for preaching the message that God wants Gentiles as well as Jews in his church. Naturally, the Ephesians were concerned about Paul and about themselves. Paul tells them not to worry. As Christians they can come to God in prayer "freely" and "without fear." It will all turn out well. In fact, "It will lead to the time when God will give you his glory." That will happen on judgment day.

Things to remember-Answers

1. prison, Rome; 2. synagogues; 3. Gentiles; 4. sent him; 5. mystery;
6. dark, mysterious, explained; 7. clear; 8. Christ, Christians; 9. gift,
Gentiles; 10. promised Savior, faith; 11. covenant; 12. New Testament
Christian Church, Jews, Gentiles; 13. explain; 14. grace, wisdom.

TEST - Chosen by Grace:
A study of the Epistle to the Ephesians

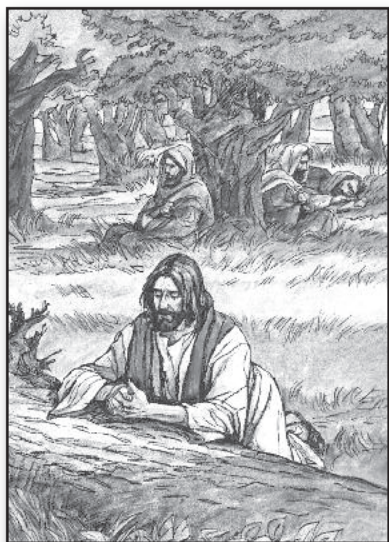
Section 5

Please review "Things to remember."

1. Paul wrote this letter from _____ in the city of _____.
2. Many Jews rejected Paul's teaching when he taught in their _____.
3. Paul was in prison because of preaching the gospel to _____.
4. As an apostle, Paul brings the message of the one who _____.
5. Paul brings the explanation of a _____.
6. After a mystery has been explained, everything becomes _____.
7. Paul felt unworthy because he had opposed _____ and persecuted _____.
8. Paul considered it a _____ from God to be permitted to preach the gospel to the _____.
9. Throughout the Old Testament, believers in the _____ were saved by that _____.

10. The new development after Christ's coming was the establishment of the _____ where _____ and _____ stand on the same level.
11. The role of the New Testament Christian Church clearly shows the _____ and the _____ of God.

(Check your answers on page 163)



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**SECTION 6:
Paul's prayer for the Ephesians**

Ephesians 3:14-21

Chosen by Grace:
A study of the Epistle to the Ephesians

SECTION SIX:

Paul's prayer for the Ephesians (Ephesians 3:14-21)

(Read Ephesians 3:14,15)

¹ I bow in prayer to the Father because of my work among you. ¹⁵From the Father his whole family in heaven and on earth gets its name.

In one of the verses before this one, Paul assured the Ephesians that they can come to God “freely” and “without fear.” In the present verse he now gives them an example of fearless praying. Do you notice the reason Paul gives for his boldness? He says that “the whole family in heaven and on earth gets its name from the Father.” If God is our father, then we are his children. Note how widely Paul applies this name. All believers, those already in heaven and those still living here on earth, all are children of God. They are family members. They may come boldly in prayer bringing their requests to their kind and dearly-loved Father.

Paul confidently asks his heavenly Father to give the Ephesians three things: 1) a strong faith, 2) a clear understanding, and 3) spiritual riches. The prayer closes with a doxology, a statement of thanks and praise.

Strong faith

(Read Ephesians 3:16,17)

¹⁶I pray that he [God] will use his glorious riches to make you strong. May his Holy Spirit give you his power deep down inside you. ¹⁷Then Christ will live in your hearts because you believe in him.

God has all power. He is also the creator and owner of all things. Paul asks God the Father to use “his glorious riches”

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for the benefit of his children. The way in which God comes to people is through the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit uses the message of the gospel in the Bible and the sacraments, first, to create faith in the heart and then to strengthen that faith. Paul can assure his readers that when this happens, as it has in the life of the Ephesians, “then Christ will live in your hearts.”

Things to Remember:

1. God comes into people’s lives through the work of the _____.
2. The Holy Spirit uses the message of the gospel in the _____ and the _____ first to _____ faith in the heart and then to _____ that faith.
3. The Holy Spirit causes _____ to live in the believer’s heart.

(Check your answers on page 87)

Clear understanding of Christ’s love

(Read Ephesians 3:17b,18)

And I pray that your love will have deep roots. I pray that it will have a strong foundation. ¹⁸May you have power with all God’s people to understand Christ’s love. May you know how wide and long and high and deep it is.

In this section, Paul uses picture language to make some important points about Christian love. Paul prays for the Ephesians, asking that their love may have deep roots. He is comparing Christian love with a strong, growing plant, supported by deep and healthy roots. Or the Ephesians’ love can be pictured as a building. In that case, Paul prays that their love will have a strong foundation.

And the apostle immediately reveals what the foundation of true Christian love is. Paul prays, “May you have power

with all God's people to understand Christ's love." Christ's love for an unworthy world of sinners is the one thing that God's people must know and understand. Out of love for lost souls, Christ willingly died to earn forgiveness for them and pay for the guilt of their sins.

Christ's love, of course, is not something that can be touched or measured. It does not have width, length, height, or depth. But Paul uses that kind of language to impress on us the greatness of Christ's love for us. He prays, "May you know how wide and long and high and deep [Christ's love] is."

Even though believers can't measure Christ's love, they react to it. They reflect it in their lives. The apostle John wrote, "We love because he loved us first" (1 John 4:19). Paul says the same in writing to the Corinthians, "Christ's love controls us" (2 Corinthians 5:14).

Things to Remember:

4. Paul prays that the love the Ephesians have will have deep _____.
5. Paul also prays that their love may have a strong _____.
6. For a person to have Christian love, he must understand the love _____ had for a sinful world.
7. Believers reflect _____ in their lives.

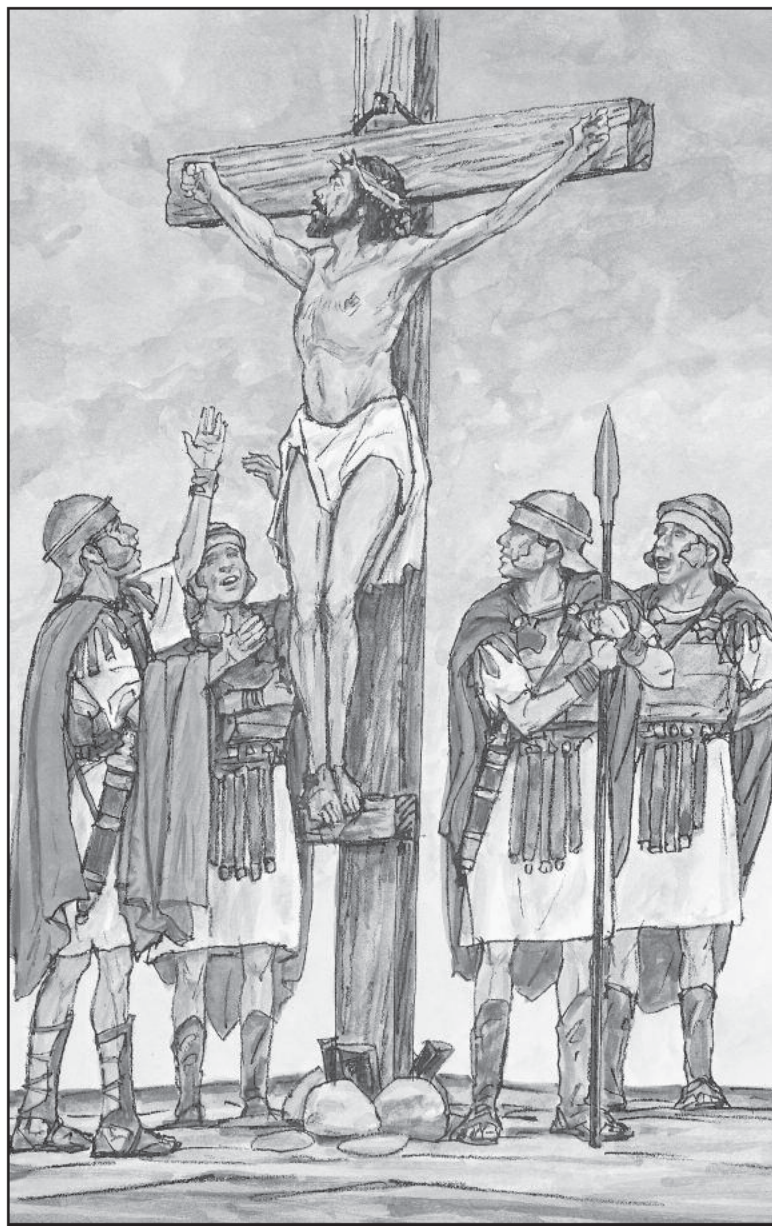
(Check your answers on page 87)

Spiritual riches

(Read Ephesians 3:19)

¹⁹And may you know his love, even though it can't be known completely. Then you will be filled with everything God has for you.

With our limited human understanding we can never fully understand the love that led a just and holy God to leave



Jesus prays for his enemies.

heaven and come down to earth to save sinners. But that is exactly what Scripture teaches, and faith accepts this truth. Accepting this truth, even if it cannot be understood completely, gives the child of God spiritual riches. Paul promises, "Then you will be filled with everything God has for you."

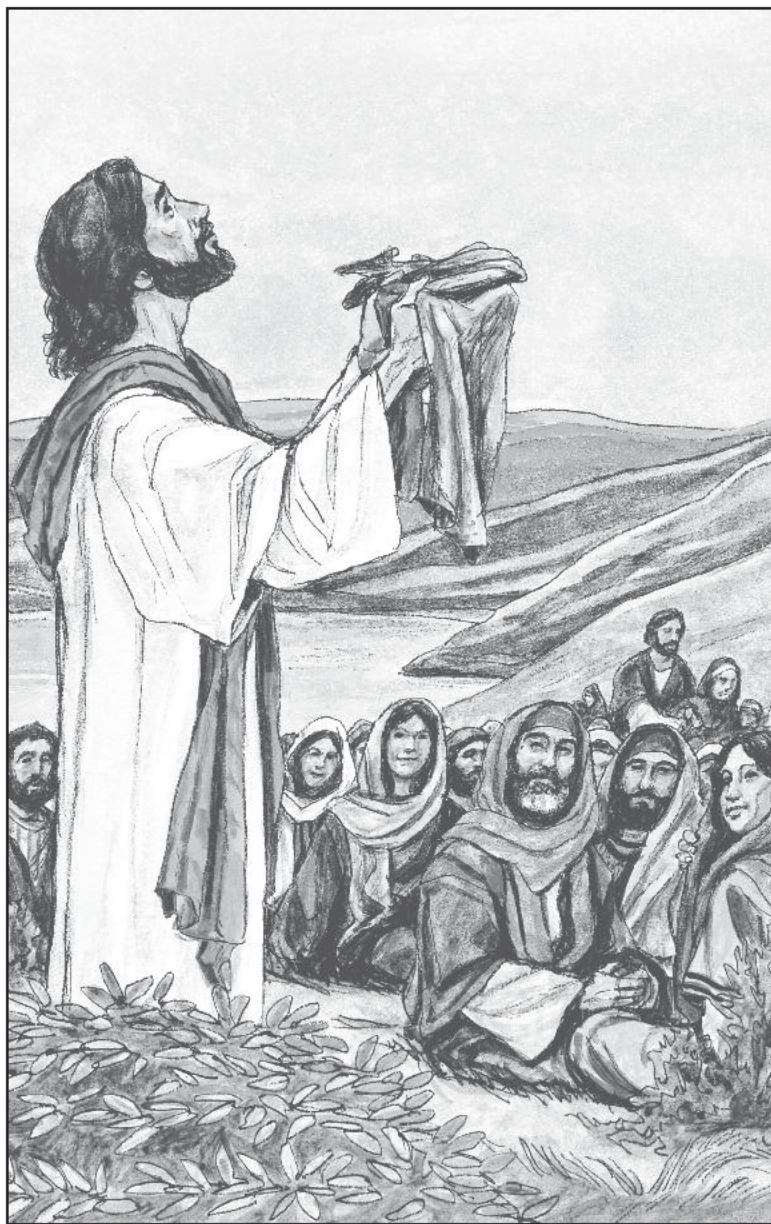
God daily gives many gifts to all people, believers and unbelievers alike. From him they receive life and health, food and clothing, family and friends, and many other good things. These are precious gifts. But in this portion of his prayer Paul is asking for a special gift for his Ephesian readers. He prays that they may have a clear understanding of Christ's love for them. Then they will be filled with everything God has for them, the spiritual gifts that God wants all believers to have.

The greatest of these gifts is the forgiveness of sins. Being forgiven gives us a good conscience and peace with God already here and now. But that is only part of what God has in mind for his children. In heaven they will be filled with everything God has for them.

Things to Remember:

8. The riches Paul prays that the Ephesians receive are the _____ God gives to believers.
9. A believer's greatest gift is the _____.
10. Being forgiven gives the believer a _____ and _____ with God.
11. In _____ believers will be filled with everything God has for them.

(Check your answers on page 87)



Jesus gives thanks as he feeds the 5,000.

A closing statement of praise (Doxology)

(Read Ephesians 3:20,21)

²⁰God is able to do far more than we could ever ask for or imagine. He does everything by his power that is working in us. ²¹Give him glory in the church and in Christ Jesus. Give him glory through all time and for ever and ever. Amen.

As we said before, God is omnipotent. That means he has all power. There is nothing he cannot do. What a powerful reason that is for us to pray boldly. We can never ask too much. Paul goes so far as to say that “God is able to do far more than we could ever ask for or imagine.”

It is easy to think of God and to ask for help when we are in trouble. But sometimes we forget about him after he has heard our prayer and helped us. That is why Paul urges his readers, “Give him [God] glory in the church and in Christ Jesus. Give him glory through all time and for ever and ever.” We give God glory when we thank him for his goodness and then, in loving respect, try to lead a life pleasing to him.

Paul ends his prayer with “Amen.” This is a statement of confident faith. It means “I am sure that what I have prayed for will happen.”

Things to Remember:

12. God’s great power encourages us to _____
_____.
13. Paul urges us to _____ to
God.
14. We give glory to God by _____ him
and by leading a _____ that pleases him.
15. “Amen” is a statement of _____
_____.

(Check your answers on page 87)

Things to remember-Answers

1. Holy Spirit; 2. Bible, sacraments, create, strengthen; 3. Christ; 4. roots; 5. foundation; 6. Christ; 7. Christ's love; 8. spiritual gifts; 9. forgiveness of sins; 10. good conscience, peace; 11. heaven; 12. pray boldly; 13. give glory; 14. thanking, life; 15. confident faith.

TEST - Chosen by Grace:
A study of the Epistle to the Ephesians

Section 6

Please review "Things to remember."

1. God comes into people's lives through the work of the _____.
2. The Holy Spirit uses the message of the _____ and the _____ first to _____ faith in the heart and then to _____ such faith.
3. Paul prays that the love the Ephesians have will have deep _____.
4. Paul also prays that their love may have a strong _____.
5. For a person to have Christian love it is essential that he understand the love _____ had for a sinful world.
6. Believers reflect _____ in their lives.
7. A believer's greatest gift is the _____.
8. Being forgiven gives the believer a _____ and _____ with God.
9. God's great power encourages us to _____.

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10. We give glory to God by _____ him
and by leading a _____ that pleases him.

11. “Amen” is a statement of _____
_____.

(Check your answers on page 163)



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SECTION 7-Part 1:
The blessed result of God's saving grace

Ephesians 4:1-16

Chosen by Grace:
A study of the Epistle to the Ephesians

SECTION SEVEN-PART 1:

The blessed result of God's saving grace (Ephesians 4:1-16)

(Read Ephesians 4:1)

4 I am a prisoner because of the Lord. So I am asking you to live a life worthy of what God chose you for.

Paul's letters often divide naturally into two parts. In the first half of his letters Paul presents some important doctrine (teaching) from God's plan of salvation. In the second half of the letter Paul explains how this truth is now to change and guide the reader's daily life. Chapter 4 of Paul's letter to the Ephesians begins the section that gives guidance for Christian living. The apostle writes, "I am a prisoner because of the Lord. So I am asking you to live a life worthy of what God chose you for."

It is not because Paul is a prisoner that he is able to give the Ephesians advice on how to live. Rather, it is "because of the Lord." Recall how strongly Paul pointed out in the first half of the letter that the Lord had appointed him to explain the mystery long hidden in the mind of God. What was the mystery? From eternity God had chosen Gentiles to be part of his Church. In the New Testament they now are equals with God's chosen Old Testament people. Gentiles are united with the Jewish nation as one people who are being built into a "holy temple" belonging to the Lord (3:21).

As God's apostle, Paul is in a position to ask them "to live a life worthy of what God chose [them] for." In the remaining chapters of the letter Paul speaks of four areas of Christian living. He urges the Ephesians:

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- to live in unity with one another;
- to speak the truth in love;
- to lead pure lives;
- to accept responsibilities.

Things to Remember:

1. Paul's letters often divide into _____ parts.
2. In the first part Paul teaches an important _____.
3. In the second part he instructs people how they are to _____.

(Check your answers on page 105)

Live in unity

(Read Ephesians 4:2,3)

²Don't be proud at all. Be completely gentle. Be patient. Put up with one another in love. ³The Holy Spirit makes you one in every way. So try your best to remain as one. Let peace keep you together.

Jewish and Gentile believers stand on the same level before God. By bringing them to faith in Christ, the Holy Spirit has made them one. They did nothing by themselves. So they have nothing to be proud of. They can be "completely gentle" and "patient" with each other.

In a perfect world there would be 100% harmony. But we live in a sinful world where believers continue to have weaknesses and faults. Paul has that in mind when he urges, "Put up with one another in love." Later in this chapter of the letter he will be pointing to the reason for such loving action when he says, "Forgive each other, just as God forgave you." To people who know their own need for forgiveness, Paul can give the encouragement, "So try your best to remain as one. Let peace keep you together."

Things to Remember:

4. The _____ unites believers by bringing them to faith in Christ.
5. Believers do _____ by themselves. They have nothing to be _____.
6. So they can be completely _____ and _____ with each other.
7. When people know their own need for _____, then they can forgive _____.

(Check your answers on page 105)

(Read Ephesians 4:4-6)

There is one body. There is one Spirit. You were appointed to one hope when you were chosen. ⁵There is one Lord. There is one faith and one baptism. ⁶There is one God and Father of all. He is over everything. He is through everything. He is in everything.



“Triune” means three in one. The Bible never uses the word “triune,” but there are places where it clearly speaks of three persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) in one God. Our human minds cannot understand that, but we believe it because in a number of places Scripture clearly teaches that truth. Verses 4 to 6 are one of the places that describe our Three-in-One God. We usually use the order: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The apostle Paul reverses that order and speaks of Spirit, Lord [Son], and Father.

Remember that Paul has been speaking of unity among believers. Among sinful people, unity is never perfect. With our holy God, however, there is complete harmony among the three persons. In connection with each person, Paul sets three things next to each other. They are different, but they fit together as one.

Chosen by Grace

- There is **one body**. There is **one Spirit**. You were appointed to **one hope** when you were chosen.
- There is **one Lord**. There is **one faith** and **one baptism**.
- There is one God and **Father** of all. He is **over everything**. He is **through everything**. He is **in everything**.

When Paul lists these three groups of three, he is not trying to explain the Trinity to us. It is worth repeating; human reason cannot understand the mystery of the Trinity three persons and yet only one God. Faith accepts it because Scripture teaches it.

Things to Remember:

8. Human _____ cannot understand the mystery of the _____.
9. Faith accepts this mystery because _____ teaches it.

(Check your answers on page 105)

(Read Ephesians 4:7-10)

⁷But each one of us has received a gift of grace, just as Christ wanted us to have it. ⁸That is why Scripture says,

“When he went up to his place on high,
he led a line of prisoners.

He gave gifts to people.” (*Psalm 68:18*)

⁹What does “he went up” mean? It can only mean that he also came down to the lower, earthly places. ¹⁰The One who came down is the same as the One who went up higher than all the heavens. He did it in order to fill all of creation.

In the holy Christian Church, which is made up of all believers, each person has something to give to the unity that brings Christians together. Each believer has some gift from God that he can use for the benefit of others. Not everyone

has the same gift or ability. One person has this strength; another person has a different strength. The gifts differ “just as Christ wanted us to have [them].”

The apostle points out to his Ephesian readers that Psalm 68 speaks of Christ as the one giving out the many gifts needed to serve his church. The psalm writer pictures Christ as a triumphant king coming home from a battle he has won. He is taking his enemies to prison. And to celebrate the victory, he gives out gifts to his loyal subjects.

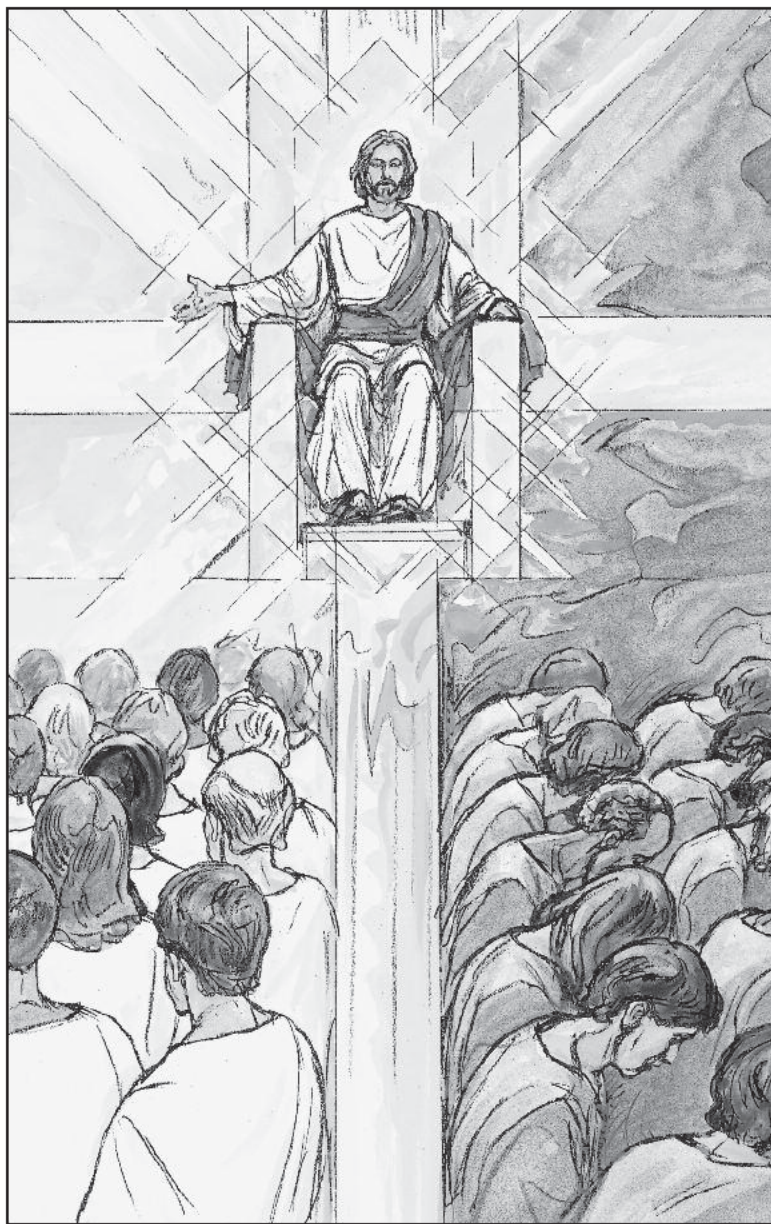
This powerful scene, promised and previewed in the psalm, took place when Christ “went up” to heaven at his ascension. Paul uses the words of the psalm to show us that the triumphant Christ, who is God, is also the human Jesus of Nazareth. He asks, “What does ‘he went up’ mean? It can only mean that he also came down to the lower, earthly places. The One who came down is the same as the One who went up higher than all the heavens. He did it in order to fill all of creation.”

By means of his perfect life and innocent death in our place, the God-man Jesus Christ conquered his (and our) enemies, namely sin, death, and the devil. In complete victory he returned to heaven. The risen and ascended Christ is now fully in charge of everything in the universe. He “fills all of creation.”

Things to Remember:

10. Psalm 68 pictures _____ as a triumphant _____.
11. This triumphant king is taking his _____ to _____.
12. The enemies Christ defeated are _____, _____ and the _____.
13. In heaven the ascended Christ _____ _ _ _ _
_____.

(Check your answers on page 105)



The glorified and victorious Jesus.

(Read Ephesians 4:10,11)

¹⁰The One who came down is the same as the One who went up higher than all the heavens. He did it in order to fill all of creation. ¹¹He is the One who gave some the gift to be apostles. He gave some the gift to be prophets. He gave some the gift of preaching the good news. And he gave some the gift to be pastors and teachers.

The ascended Christ of whom the Psalm writer speaks “went up higher than all the heavens. He did it in order to fill all of creation.” Paul is making the point that Christ is totally in charge of everything, including his church.

But now this powerful ruler over everything does a surprising thing. Instead of doing everything himself, he gives his believers the talents and ability they need to carry out important tasks in the Christian church. Paul gives examples of the church offices that they had in Ephesus. “He [Christ] is the One who gave some the gift to be *apostles*. He gave some the gift to be *prophets*. He gave some [evangelists] the gift of preaching the good news. And he gave some the gift to be *pastors* and *teachers*.”

Let’s look more closely at these four groups of church workers.

An apostle was someone called directly by Christ and “sent out” on a special mission. That would include the twelve disciples, as well as Saint Paul, who was called later.

When we hear the term “prophet,” we usually think of someone foretelling the future. It can mean that, but the office of a prophet was more than that. Prophets were men who brought a message from God. That message could deal with the past, the present, or the future. The apostles and prophets that Paul mentions here are men who served only during the beginning years of the New Testament church.

The next two groups of church workers are more familiar to us. They are not limited only to a small group of men, and these workers continue to the present time. The evangelist’s

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main work may have been to bring new members into the church. Pastors (the word that Paul used means *shepherds*) and teachers, on the other hand, may have worked more with feeding and guiding the faith of the gathered flock.

No doubt some of the new church offices we have today differ from what was found in the churches of Ephesus in Paul's day. In addition to pastors and teachers, we have such positions as chaplains and counselors, staff ministers, and administrators. Yet, the workers who today serve in positions of public ministry in the church still are gifts from the ascended Christ. We owe them honor and respect, particularly because of the important work they do. Paul will be explaining their role in the next few verses.

Things to Remember:

14. An _____ was someone called directly by Christ and "sent out" on a special mission.
15. A _____ was someone who brought a message from God dealing with the past, present, or future.
16. The main work of an _____ may have been to bring new people into the church.
17. Still today pastors and teachers are _____ from _____.

(Check your answers on page 105)

(Read Ephesians 4:12,13)

¹²He did it so that they might prepare God's people to serve. If they do, the body of Christ will be built up.

¹³That will continue until we all become one in the faith and in the knowledge of God's Son. Then we will be grown up in the faith. We will receive everything that Christ has for us.

Paul has made the point that the risen and triumphant Christ has ascended to heaven where he now "fills all

creation.” He is totally in charge, but he doesn’t “run everything” by himself. Rather, in his grace and wisdom, he has created important offices in the church, such as evangelist, pastor, or teacher. He then calls people and allows them to use their God-given talents to serve in those offices.

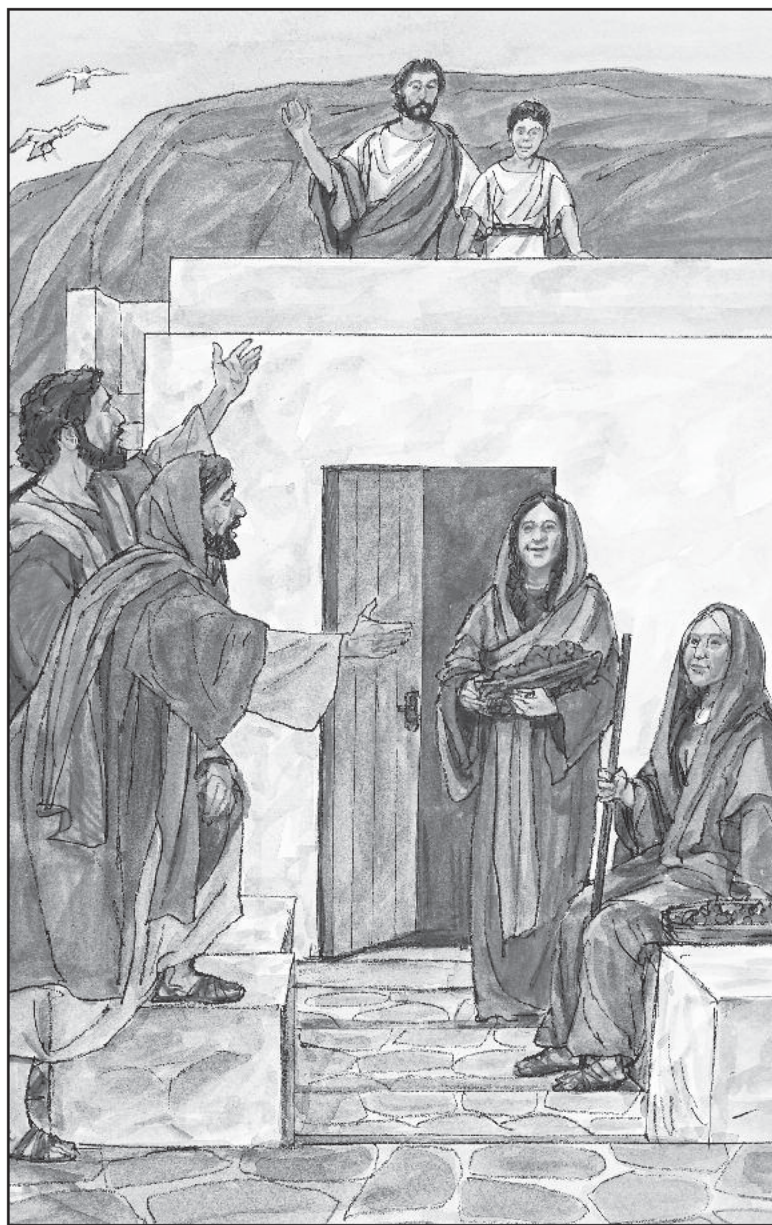
As Christ’s gift to his church, these called workers are important people, but they do not work by themselves or for themselves. Why did Christ put these people into their various offices? Paul answers: “He did it so that they might prepare God’s people to serve.”

Pastors and teachers “prepare” God’s people for service by sharing the gospel with them. When people learn of the love Christ has for them, faith in Christ fills them with love and powers them to do deeds of love and service to others. Deeds of service can include a wide variety of things. One person is good at teaching; another can comfort those who are grieving or encourage those who are discouraged. Some have the time and energy to do charitable work. Others have money they can give to the church. All can pray for others. And when believers serve others with the abilities God has given them, then “the body of Christ will be built up.”

The body of Christ is the Christian church. Everyone in the church has a role to play in helping others to grow in their faith. Serving one another is an ongoing process. Paul says, “That will continue until we all become one in the faith and in the knowledge of God’s Son. Then we will be grown up in the faith.” The blessed result will be that “we will receive everything that Christ has for us.”

Things to Remember:

18. Christ has created important offices in his church, such as _____, _____, or _____.
19. Workers are called into these offices so that they might prepare God’s people to _____.



The holy Christian church grows.

20. Faith in Christ makes God's people want to do deeds of _____ and _____ to others.
21. The body of Christ is the _____.
22. All of God's people have a role to play in helping others to grow in their _____.
23. Serving one another is an _____ process.
- (Check your answers on page 105)

Speak the truth in love

(Read Ephesians 4:14-16)

¹ We will no longer be babies in the faith. We won't be like ships tossed around by the waves. We won't be blown here and there by every new teaching. We won't be blown around by the cleverness and tricks of people who try to hide their evil plans.

¹⁵ Instead, we will speak the truth in love. We will grow up into Christ in every way. He is the Head. ¹⁶ He makes the whole body grow and build itself up in love. Under the control of Christ, each part of the body does its work. It supports the other parts. In that way, the body is joined and held together.

Paul talks about a time when the Ephesians will *no longer* be babies in the faith. By saying "no longer" he makes it clear that they still are beginners in their faith. They are infants, recent converts to faith in Christ. They still need careful guidance and instruction.

Paul switches pictures to give another illustration of their need for help. Ephesus was an important seaport on the Aegean Sea. The Ephesians, as water travelers, would know immediately the helpless feeling of being caught in a fierce storm at sea, tossed about by dangerous wind and waves.

This physical danger is like a similar danger in the spiritual life of the Ephesians. They are in danger of being "blown here and there by every new teaching." There are two kinds of false teachers. There are those who themselves

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believe the “new teaching” which they are making known. They are sincere but not in agreement with Scripture. Such people are a serious threat to new believers.

Even more dangerous are the false teachers who know that they teach wrong doctrine, but do it anyway to gain money or fame for themselves. A modern example would be some televangelists who “by cleverness and tricks... try to hide their evil plans.” Such people were around also in Paul’s day and looked like a genuine threat to the faith of his Ephesian readers.

But there is a way to correct the problem of false teaching. Paul shows what that is when he urges, “Speak the truth in love.” Remember Paul’s line of thought earlier in this chapter. He said that at Christ’s ascension into heaven, he gave “gifts” to his church. These gifts were the people whom he called into church offices such as evangelist, pastor, or teacher. The assignment Christ gave these called workers was to “prepare God’s people to serve.”

A special kind of service Christ expects his believers to be prepared for is that they speak the truth. When they see a weak brother or sister in danger of believing wrong teaching, they are to warn and correct such a person.

The only thing that can successfully correct error is speaking the truth. There have always been false teachers who say that what you believe is not important, as long as you believe it sincerely. They think that all religions lead to the same place. That is not Paul’s view. He points out to the Ephesians that only the truth about the good news of Christ’s perfect sacrifice in the sinner’s place can save.

False teachers and their wrong doctrine need to be corrected firmly. But note the addition of an important point. When God’s people speak the truth, they are to do it in love. The loving goal of speaking the truth must always be to strengthen the weak brother and to turn the false teacher from his error. Then there is unity, and the church grows. Paul

promises, “[Then] we will grow up into Christ in every way.”

The apostle helps us understand this growth in the church by comparing it to what happens in the human body. “He [Christ] is the Head. He makes the whole body grow and build itself up in love. Under the control of Christ, each part of the body does its work. It supports the other parts. In that way, the body is joined and held together.”

The body is made up of many parts. They are all different, but they each provide something to make the body work properly. So it is also in the church. Each person has some gift(s) from the Lord with which to serve the other members of the church. When they do so, the “body of Christ,” the church, is built up. Also the opposite is true. As with the human body, when one part of our body is sick or not working properly, the whole body suffers. So too the church suffers when God’s people do not use their gifts. Every member’s service is important.

Things to Remember:

24. _____ are dangerous.
25. Some false teachers themselves believe the _____
_____ they are making known.
26. Other false teachers try to hide their evil plans by using
_____ and _____.
27. The only thing that can successfully correct error is
_____.
28. False teachers and their wrong doctrine need to be
_____.
29. Christians must always speak the truth in
_____.
30. The apostle pictures growth in the church by comparing
it to what happens in the _____.
Christ is the _____. Believers are the
_____.

(Check your answers on page 105)

Things to remember-Answers

1. two; 2. doctrine; 3. live; 4. Holy Spirit; 5. nothing, proud of; 6. gentle, patient; 7. forgiveness, others; 8. reason, Trinity; 9. Scripture; 10. Christ, king; 11. enemies, prison; 12. sin, death, devil; 13. fills all of creation; 14. apostle; 15. prophet; 16. evangelist; 17. gifts, Christ; 18. evangelists, pastors, teachers; 19. serve; 20. love, service; 21. Christian church; 22. faith; 23. ongoing; 24. False teachers; 25. new teaching; 26. cleverness, tricks; 27. speaking the truth; 28. opposed firmly; 29. love; 30. human body, head, body.

TEST - Chosen by Grace:
A study of the Epistle to the Ephesians

Section 7-Part 1

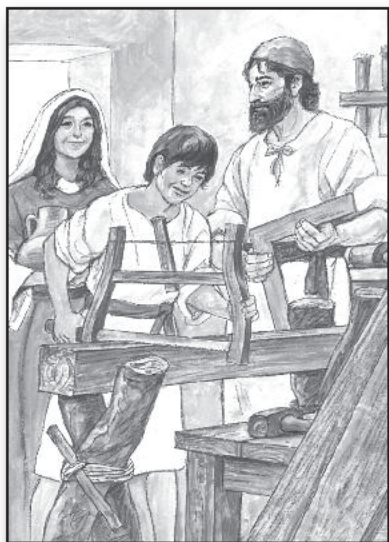
Please review "Things to remember."

1. Paul's letters often divide into _____ parts. In the first part Paul teaches an important _____. In the second part he instructs people how they are to _____.
2. The _____ unites believers by bringing them to faith in Christ.
3. When people are aware of their own need for _____, then they can forgive _____.
4. Psalm 68 pictures _____ as a triumphant _____.
5. This triumphant king is taking his _____ to _____.
6. The enemies Christ defeated are _____, _____ and the _____.
7. An _____ was someone called directly by Christ and "sent out" on a special mission.
8. A _____ was someone who brought a message from God dealing with the past, present, or future.

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9. Christ has created important offices in his church, such as _____, _____, or _____.
10. Workers are called into these offices so that they might prepare God's people to _____.
11. All of God's people have a role to play in helping others to grow in their _____.
12. _____ are dangerous.
13. The only thing that can successfully correct error is _____.
14. False teachers and their wrong doctrine need to be _____.
15. Christians must always speak the truth in _____.

(Check your answers on page 163)



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SECTION 7-Part 2:
Lead pure lives

Ephesians 4:17 5:20

**Chosen by Grace:
A study of the Epistle to the Ephesians**

SECTION SEVEN-PART 2:

Lead pure lives (Ephesians 4:17 5:20)

(Read Ephesians 4:17-19)

¹⁷Here is what I'm telling you. I am speaking for the Lord as I warn you. You must no longer live like those who aren't Jews. Their thoughts don't have any purpose. ¹⁸They can't understand the truth. They are separated from the life of God. That is because they don't know him. And they don't know him because their hearts are stubborn.

¹⁹They have lost all feeling for what is right. They have given themselves over to the evil pleasures of their bodies. They take part in every kind of unclean act. And they always long for more.

In chapters 1 to 3 Paul has reminded the Ephesians of the great things their Savior-God has done for them. In eternity he chose them to be his own. In time he called them to faith through the good news about Jesus Christ. Formerly they were far away from God. Now they are his dear children.

In chapters 4 to 6 Paul helps his readers understand what their reaction to such a gift from God should be. In the opening verses of this chapter he has already urged them to live in unity with one another and to speak the truth in love. Now he moves on to another area. He urges them to live holy lives.

Leading pure lives is not worthless or beside the point. Paul is "speaking for the Lord" when he warns them against the evil life style common "among those who aren't Jews" (Gentiles). Jews had the advantage of being under God's covenant regulations. Gentiles had no such guidance. Lacking a way to tell right from wrong, their thinking was terribly wrong. Paul gives a sad description of their condition:

- Their thoughts don't have any purpose.

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- They can't understand the truth.
- They are separated from the life of God.
- They don't know him because their hearts are stubborn.

Wrong thinking leads to wrong actions. "They [Gentiles] have lost all feeling for what is right. They have given themselves over to the evil pleasures of their bodies. They take part in every kind of unclean act. And they always long for more." Sexual sins were very common among the Gentiles. Far from giving satisfaction, however, they willingly lived in sin. This merely led to a longing for more.

Things to Remember:

1. Paul is speaking for the _____ when he warns the Ephesians against wild living.
2. Jews had the advantage of being under God's _____.
3. Gentiles had no such _____. So their thinking was _____.
4. _____ sins were very common among the Gentiles.
5. Instead of giving satisfaction, willingly living in sin merely leads to a longing for _____.

(Check your answers on page 126)

(Read Ephesians 4:20-24)

²⁰But that [immoral lifestyle] is not what you have learned about Christ.

²¹I'm sure you heard of him. I'm sure you were taught by him. What you learned was the truth about Jesus.

²²You were taught not to live the way you used to. You must get rid of your old way of life. That's because it is polluted by longing for things that lead you down the wrong path.

²³You were taught to be made new in your thinking. ² You were taught to start living a new life. It is created to be truly good and holy, just as God is.

The apostle's line of thought in these five verses becomes clear when we pull out verses 20, 22, and 24. Then we hear Paul saying: [An immoral lifestyle] is not what you have learned from Christ (20).... You were taught not to live the way you used to (22).... You were taught to start living a new life (24).

After the Ephesians “learned the truth about Jesus” it was unthinkable that they simply go on living their sinful life like before. Paul and his co-workers taught them “not to live the way [they] used to.” Rather they needed to get rid of their old way of life because it was “polluted (made rotten) by longing for things that lead ... down the wrong path.”

Remember that the Ephesians were Gentiles. They too were guilty of the wild living that marked the lifestyle of their heathen neighbors. When Paul and his co-workers came to Ephesus, they pointed out to them how ugly their sinful life was to a holy God. It was to pay for sins such as these that the Father required the life blood of his Son on the cross.

As we said before, wrong thinking leads to wrong actions. Paul reminds his readers how that weakness was corrected in their case. He tells them, “You were taught to be made new in your thinking. You were taught to start living a new life.”

Note that this change was not something the Ephesians themselves brought about. It came from the outside. They were taught. Paul of course was their teacher, but it was the Holy Spirit who used the gospel message that Paul preached to work faith in the hearts of the Ephesians. Faith in Christ changed their thinking and made possible a new life that hadn't been there before. That is why Paul can call this new life a *creation*. He says, “It is created to be truly good and holy, just as God is.”

Things to Remember:

6. Paul taught the Ephesians to get rid of their _____
_____.

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7. The Ephesians were taught to be made new in their _____.
8. _____ changed the thinking of the Ephesians.
9. This changed thinking made possible a _____.
10. New life in the Christian is _____ by the Holy Spirit.

(Check your answers on page 126)

Examples of the Christian's new life

(Read Ephesians 4:25-28)

²⁵So each of you must get rid of your lying. Speak the truth to your neighbor. We are all parts of one body.

²⁶Scripture says, "When you are angry, do not sin." (*Psalms 4:4*) Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry. ²⁷Don't give the devil a chance.

²⁸Those who have been stealing must never steal again. Instead, they must work. They must do something useful with their own hands. Then they will have something to give to people in need.

Faith in Christ changed the thinking of the Ephesians and made it possible for them to live a new life. Paul now gives a detailed list of things they can do to show their new life of faith. These things are not done to earn favor with God, but rather out of thankfulness for everything their Savior-God has done for them.

Get rid of lying. Shading the truth a little is a common problem. There is always the temptation to make ourselves look a little better by making our accomplishments seem greater than they are or by downplaying our failures. We are to speak the truth to all people, but especially to fellow believers. By not speaking the truth we are actually harming ourselves, because we and our fellow-believers are all part of the same body.

Don't sin when you are angry. Most anger is sinful, but there are some times when it is not. It is not wrong to be angry when a false teacher spoils the good news of the gospel. Or if someone tempts another person to sin. Or if a bully mistreats a weaker person. Proper anger is not wrong, but it must be handled properly. The person who made you angry needs to be faced as soon as possible (before “sun-down”) and in a loving manner that tries to correct the situation. Don't let the problem get worse. Satan would love to see bad feelings that last a long time.

Don't steal. The attempt to get things by simply taking them is an old problem. Paul suggests a good way to avoid stealing things. Work for them. That will allow the laborer to provide for himself and his family and even to be helpful to those who have less. Note that Paul speaks well of manual labor. In another of his letters he goes so far as to say that the able-bodied person who refuses to work shouldn't eat.

Things to Remember:

11. We are to speak the truth to _____ but especially to _____.
12. Proper anger is not _____, but it must be handled _____. The goal must always be to _____.
13. A good way to avoid stealing things is to _____.

(Check your answers on page 126)

(Read Ephesians 4:29-31)

²⁹Don't let any evil talk come out of your mouths. Say only what will help to build others up and meet their needs. Then what you say will help those who listen.

³⁰Do not make God's Holy Spirit sad. He marked you with a seal for the day when God will set you completely free.

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³¹Get rid of all hard feelings, anger and rage. Stop all fighting and lying. Put away every form of hatred.

Watch your language. With this suggestion Paul addresses an important part of every believer's life, namely his daily use of words. That is why the apostle urges, "Say only what will help to build others up and meet their needs."

Earlier Paul spoke of the ascended Christ giving to his church the pastors and teachers who should prepare God's people to serve. An important part of pastors' and teachers' work is to help individual Christians serve others by sharing their Christian values. One way of doing that is by talking to others. That does not mean that they have to preach from a pulpit. Christians show their faith and share their values with the ordinary things they say every day at home and at work, in social settings, and at play. Paul promises that what Christians say will help those who listen.

Not sharing our Christian beliefs "makes God's Holy Spirit sad." After all, he has brought us to faith. He has marked us with a seal, namely, his dwelling in us. He has made us able to serve others. Through us the Holy Spirit wants to bring people to faith and to keep them in the faith until judgment day.

Not only *what* a Christian says but also *how* he says it is important. Clearly, any speaking that comes from hard feelings, anger, rage, fighting, or lying will not help those who listen. And it will only make the Holy Spirit sad.

Things to Remember:

14. An important part of every believer's life is his use of _____.
15. Speaking to others is one way of sharing our _____.
16. Not sharing our Christian faith and values with others makes the Holy Spirit _____.

17. Not only _____ a Christian says but also _____
he says it is important.

(Check your answers on page 126)

(Read Ephesians 4:32-5:2)

³²Be kind and tender to one another. Forgive each other, just as God forgave you because of what Christ has done.

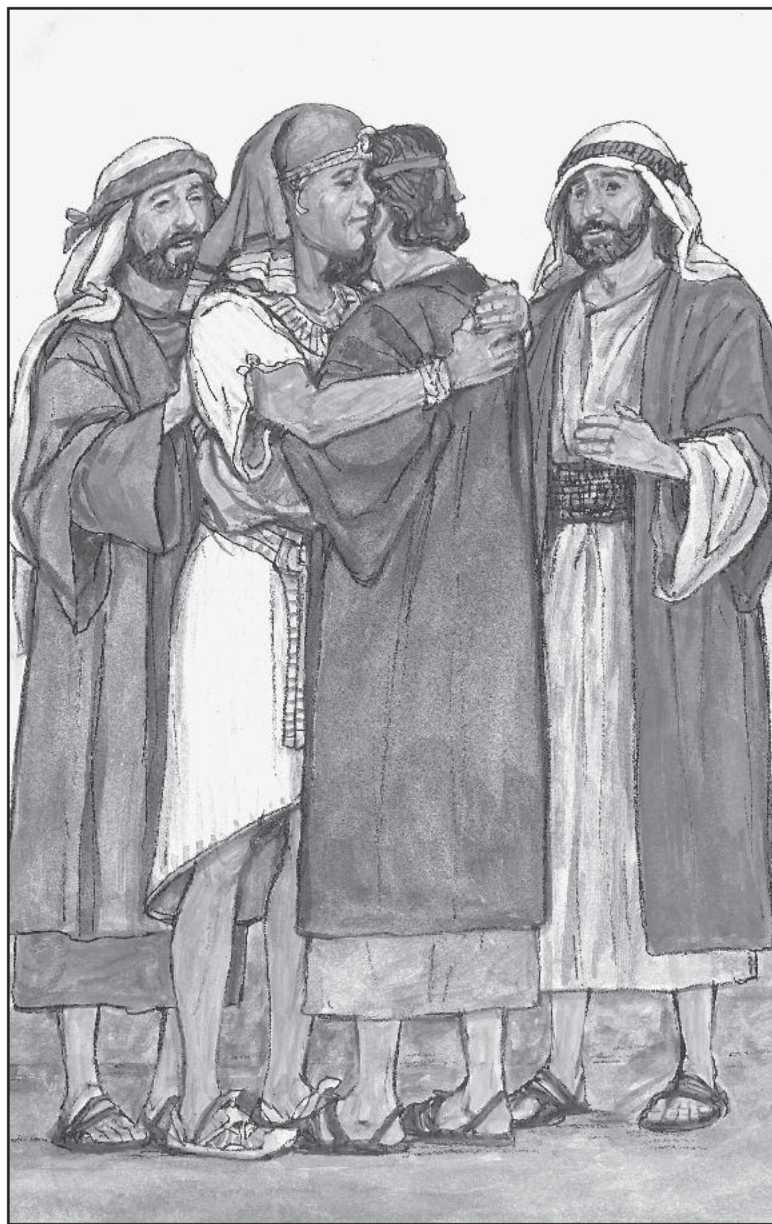
5 You are the children that God dearly loves. So be just like him. ²Lead a life of love, just as Christ did. He loved us. He gave himself up for us. He was a sweet-smelling offering and sacrifice to God.

Forgive each other. That piece of advice from the apostle Paul is not easy to accept or to put into practice. After all, people daily sin against us. They gossip about us. They break their promises to us. They make our life difficult by their laziness and bad habits. Don't we have the right to be angry? How are we ever to forgive them?

Paul has a suggestion: imitate your heavenly Father. We have all seen a toddler try to do what Dad does, whether that is throwing a ball, pounding with a toy hammer, or grabbing the rake handle to "help" rake leaves.

A Christian is constantly, sadly aware of the many sins that he himself still does. Daily he needs to repent of those sins and ask God for forgiveness. He can confidently expect to be forgiven "because of what Christ has done." In thankfulness for daily forgiveness, Paul urges his readers to imitate their Father. "Forgive each other, just as God forgave you."

Lead a life of love. Paul continues the thought of imitation in order to urge another important part of the Christian life, namely showing love to each other. Again he points his readers to Christ. Look at what he did! "He loved us. He gave himself up for us. He was a sweet-smelling offering and sacrifice to God." To people who have been so richly blessed



Joseph forgives his brothers.

by Christ's saving work Paul can rightly say, "Lead a life of love, just as Christ did."

Things to Remember:

18. Paul urges his readers, "Forgive _____ just as God forgave _____."
19. Christians are to show _____ to each other.
20. When Christians show love to each other they are following the example of _____.
- (Check your answers on page 126)

(Read Ephesians 5:3-7)

³There should not be even a hint of sexual sin among you. Don't do anything unclean. And do not always want more and more. Things like that are not what God's holy people should do.

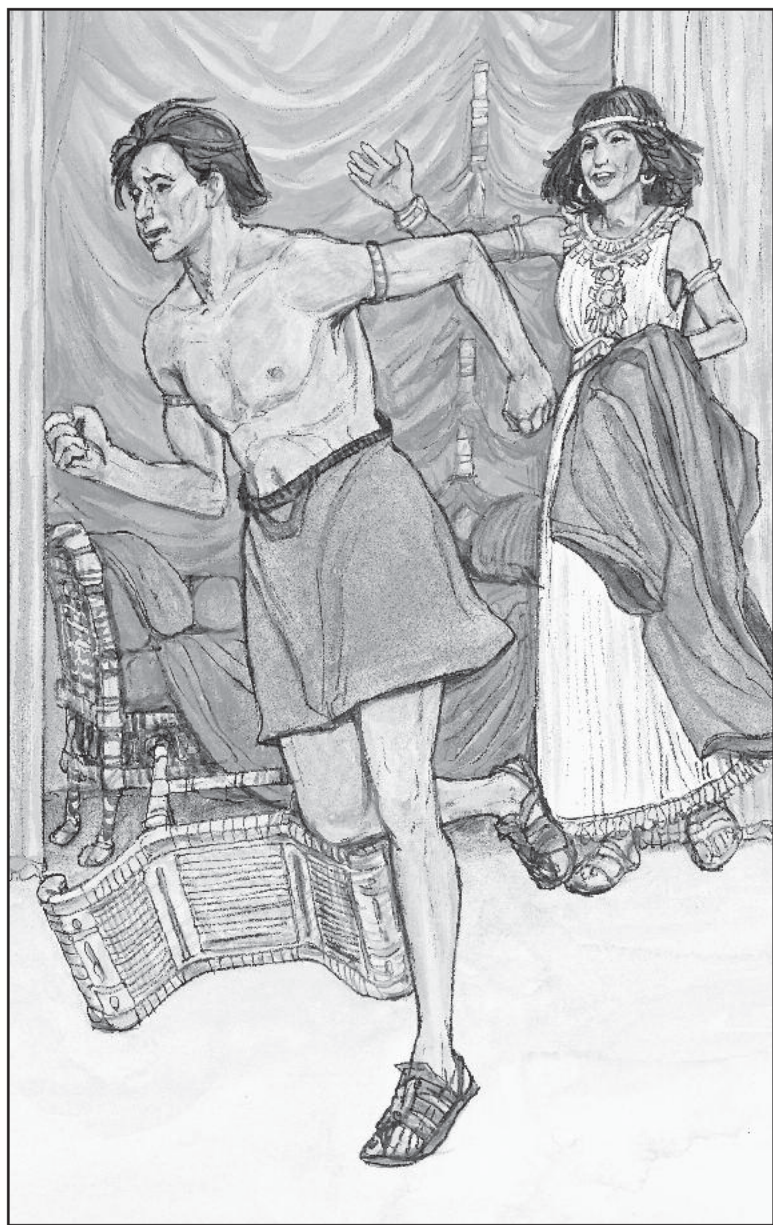
There must not be any unclean speech or foolish talk or dirty jokes. All of them are out of place. Instead, you should give thanks.

⁵Here is what you can be sure of. Those who give themselves over to sexual sins are lost. So are people whose lives are not pure. The same is true of those who always want more and more. People who do those things might as well worship statues of gods. No one who does them will receive a share in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

⁶Don't let anyone fool you with words that don't mean anything. Because of things like that, God is angry with those who don't obey. ⁷So don't go along with people like that.

Avoid sexual sins. When God created Adam and Eve, he created Adam as a man and Eve as a woman. Sexuality is a gift from God, making marriage possible. Marriage is God's arrangement for providing precious companionship between a man and a woman. It is also God's way of filling the world with people through the gift of children. Changing God's gift of sex into a form of entertainment outside of marriage is a sin. Unfortunately it is a common sin.

Paul sternly warns the Ephesians, "There should not be even a hint of sexual sin among you.... Things like that are not what God's holy people should do."



Joseph obeys God and runs from sin.

But not only are God's people not to *do* sexual sins, they are also not to cheapen God's gift of sex by telling filthy jokes. "There must not be any unclean speech or foolish talk or dirty jokes. All of them are out of place. Instead, you should give thanks." Note how Paul returns once more to the important task of controlling one's tongue.

So dangerous is the temptation to fall into sexual sins that Paul repeats four times the terrible end that awaits people whose life is controlled by sexual sins:

- Those who give themselves over to sexual sins are lost.
- So are people whose lives are not pure.
- The same is true of those who always want more and more.
- No one who does them will receive a share in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

Paul devotes a little more space to warning against sexual sins than he does in speaking of other sins. That is not because sexual sins are worse than other sins. It is simply that they are so common and so tempting. All sins, including sexual sins, can be forgiven. After all, Paul's Ephesian readers were once trapped in such sins. But they have repented and, with the help of the Holy Spirit, they want to avoid living in their former life style. But, as Paul strongly warns, unrepentant sinners who insist on continuing in their sinful ways will not receive a share in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

Things to Remember:

21. _____ is a gift from God, making marriage possible.
22. Marriage is God's arrangement for providing precious _____ between a man and a woman.
23. Marriage is also God's way of filling the world with people through the gift of _____.

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24. We are not to cheapen God's gift of sex by making it the subject of _____.

25. Those who give themselves over to sexual sins are _____.

26. Christ earned _____ for all sins, including sexual sins.

(Check your answers on page 126)

(Read Ephesians 5:8-14)

⁸At one time you were in the dark. But now you are in the light because of what the Lord has done. Live like children of the light. ⁹The light produces what is completely good, right and true. ¹⁰Find out what pleases the Lord.

¹¹Have nothing to do with the acts of darkness. They don't produce anything good. Show what they are really like. ¹²It is shameful even to talk about what people who don't obey do in secret.

¹³But everything the light shines on can be seen. ¹ Light makes everything clear. That is why it is said,

“Wake up, sleeper.

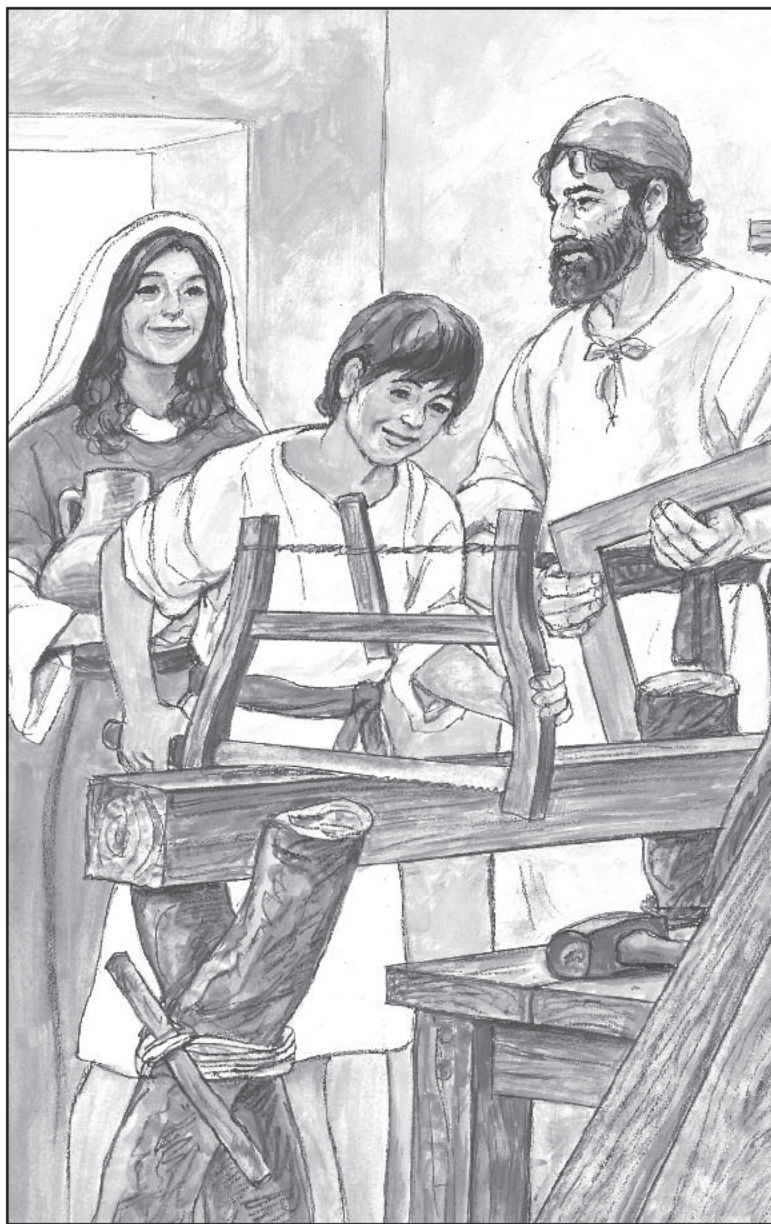
Rise from the dead.

Then Christ will shine on you.”

Live like children of the light. The contrast between light and darkness often serves to picture the difference between good and bad. Paul does that here. He reminds his readers, “At one time you were in the dark.” That was the case in their former life when they were doing all the bad things Paul is warning against.

That was in their past. “But now you are in the light because of what the Lord has done.” Note that the Ephesians did not bring about a holy change in their life through some personal decision they made, or through some power that they had. No, the change happened “because of what the Lord has done.”

It was all God's doing. First God sent his Son Jesus to earth to live the perfect life that the Ephesians were not living.



Jesus obeys his parents.

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And then he died on the cross in their place to pay for the bad things they were doing.

But more than that, it also was God's special gift to send Paul to them to preach the good news of free forgiveness through faith in Christ. Then the Spirit led the Ephesians to accept that message. As forgiven sinners they were now living in the light. Believers, living in the light, are willing and eager to do what is "good, right, and true." Such things please God.

Have nothing to do with the acts of darkness. Light produces what is good, right, and true. Acts powered by the darkness of sin "don't produce anything good." So the believer will not take part in them or talk about them, except for one thing. A believer will make it clear that enjoying the darkness of sin is living in a nightmare.

If you turn on a lamp in a dark room, its light chases the darkness away. Everything in the room becomes visible. So too, a believer who leads a Christian life in the world is a beam of light, exposing bad behavior as a sin to avoid. For both the careless believer who is "sleeping" and the unbeliever who is "dead" in sin, the Christian living in the light of the gospel is a wake-up call, a call to repent. God wants to save and change those "sleepers," as Paul illustrates with the quotation,

Wake up, sleeper.

Rise from the dead.

Then Christ will shine on you."

Things to Remember:

27. The contrast between light and darkness often serves to picture the difference between _____ and _____.
28. The Ephesians were living in the light because of what _____ had done.

29. Believers are willing and eager to do what is
“_____, _____, and _____.”

30. A believer who leads a Christian life in the world is a
_____.

31. A believer’s beam of light exposes _____
_____ as sin.

(Check your answers on page 126)

(Read Ephesians 5:15-20)

¹⁵So be very careful how you live. Do not live like people who aren’t wise. Live like people who are wise. ¹⁶Make the most of every opportunity. The days are evil. ¹⁷So don’t be foolish. Instead, understand what the Lord wants.

¹⁸Don’t fill yourself up with wine. Getting drunk will lead to wild living. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit.

¹⁹Speak to each other with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord. ²⁰Always give thanks to God the Father for everything. Give thanks to him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Summary: Be very careful how you live. Paul closes this section with the general encouragement: “Live like people who are wise.” “Understand[ing] what the Lord wants” and doing it that is wisdom. For the Ephesians, not to do so would be foolish. That would be returning to the darkness from which the gospel had just rescued them.

Paul admits, “The days are evil,” but there are still ways for them to “make the most of” their time on earth. Those opportunities include both growing in their own faith and showing their faith to others.

Misuse of alcohol was a common vice in ancient times, as it remains today. For the Ephesian Christians to drink too much alcohol would have been a major disadvantage for the church. How then could they reveal Christ to people who did not yet know the saving message of the gospel? So Paul warns against drunkenness. In place of the power of wine, he

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encourages them to be led by God's power. "Don't fill yourself up with wine (alcoholic spirits).... Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit."

Being filled with the Spirit will make them ready not only to reach out to outsiders, but also to strengthen their fellow believers. Paul urges, "Speak to each other with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord." We know very little about the liturgical practices of the early Christian church, but Paul here seems to be thinking of their public worship services. Note that Paul returns again to an emphasis on proper use of the tongue.

In closing this section, Paul also returns to another common theme when he urges Christian thankfulness. "Always give thanks to God the Father for everything. Give thanks to him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Things to Remember:

32. Understanding what the Lord wants and doing it is _____.

33. Although the days are evil, one of the ways the Ephesians can use their time on earth is growing in their own _____.

34. Another good way for the Ephesians to use time is by showing their faith to _____.

35. Being filled with the Spirit will allow the Ephesians to strengthen their _____ when they gather in their public worship services.

(Check your answers on page 126)

Things to remember-Answers

1. Lord; 2. covenant regulations; 3. guidance, terribly wrong; 4. Sexual; 5. more; 6. old way of life; 7. thinking; 8. Faith in Christ; 9. new life; 10. created; 11. all people, fellow believers; 12. wrong, properly, correct the situation; 13. work for them; 14. words; 15. Christian values; 16. sad; 17. what, how; 18. each other, you; 19. love; 20. Christ; 21. Sexuality; 22. companionship; 23. children; 24. filthy jokes; 25. lost; 26. forgiveness; 27. good, bad; 28. the Lord; 29. good, right, true; 30. beam of light; 31. bad behavior; 32. wisdom; 33. faith; 34. others; 35. fellow believers.

TEST - Chosen by Grace:
A study of the Epistle to the Ephesians

Section 7-Part 2

Please review "Things to remember."

1. Paul is speaking for the _____ when he warns the Ephesians against immorality.
2. Jews had the advantage of being under God's _____.
3. Gentiles had no such _____. Hence their thinking was _____.
4. _____ sins were very common among the Gentiles.
5. Instead of giving satisfaction, indulging in sin merely leads to a longing for _____.
6. Proper anger is not _____, but it must be handled _____. The intent must always be to _____.
7. An honorable alternative to stealing things is to _____.
8. An important part of every believer's life is his use of _____.
9. Speaking to others is one way of sharing our _____.

10. Not only _____ a Christian says but also _____ he says it is important.
11. Paul urges his readers, “Forgive _____ just as God forgave _____.”
12. _____ is a gift from God, making marriage possible.
13. Marriage is God’s arrangement for providing precious _____ between a man and a woman.
14. Marriage is also God’s way of populating the world through the gift of _____.
15. We are not to cheapen God’s gift of sex by making it the subject of _____.
16. Christ earned _____ for all sins, including sexual sins.
17. The contrast between light and darkness often serves to illustrate the difference between _____ and _____.
18. A believer who leads a Christian life in the world is a _____.
19. A believer’s beam of light exposes _____ as sin.

(Check your answers on page 163)



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SECTION 8:
Accept responsibilities

Ephesians 5:21-6:9

Chosen by Grace:
A study of the Epistle to the Ephesians

SECTION EIGHT:

Accept responsibilities (Ephesians 5:21-6:9)

(Read Ephesians 5:21-24)

²¹Follow the lead of one another because of your respect for Christ.

²²Wives, follow the lead of your husbands as you follow the Lord. ²³The husband is the head of the wife, just as Christ is the head of the church. The church is Christ's body. He is its Savior. ² The church follows the lead of Christ. In the same way, wives should follow the lead of their husbands in everything.

In this section the apostle is directing his readers' attention to the responsibilities they have as members of society. These responsibilities do not apply only to Christians. Everyone in society is under some "leader" whose "lead" they need to follow. To remind people of their responsibilities Paul divides society into three pairs: husbands and wives; parents and children; employers and employees.

Wives: God created a woman (Eve) and gave her to Adam as his wife. In this way God set up marriage as the union of a man and a woman. Eve was to be Adam's helper. She was to "follow the lead of [her] husband."

But this was not just God's plan for marriage in the Garden of Eden. Paul shows that this still is God's plan when he tells the Ephesians, "The husband is the head of the wife, just as Christ is the head of the church." The loving roles that join husband and wife are meant to reflect the perfect love that joins Christ and the church. Christ saved the church. It is his body. He is the head. It is unthinkable that he would treat his church harshly. So the church gladly and willingly "follows the lead of Christ." Paul instructs his readers, "In



Creation and marriage.

the same way, wives should follow the lead of their husbands in everything.”

Following the lead of her husband does not make a wife inferior or less important, nor does it give her husband the right to be a dictator. Rather, setting up roles and duties for both husband and wife is the Creator God’s way of forming a strong and successful team to protect the precious gift of marriage.

Things to Remember:

1. Marriage is the union of a _____ and a _____.
2. Marriage is a gift from _____.
3. According to God’s arrangement, a wife is to follow the lead of _____.

(Check your answers on page 141)

(Read Ephesians 5:25-33)

²⁵Husbands, love your wives. Love them just as Christ loved the church. He gave himself up for her. ²⁶He did it to make her holy. He made her clean by washing her with water and the word. ²⁷He did it to bring her to himself as a brightly shining church. He wants a church that has no stain or wrinkle or any other flaw. He wants a church that is holy and without blame.

²⁸In the same way, husbands should love their wives. They should love them as they love their own bodies. Any man who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹After all, people have never hated their own bodies. Instead, they feed and care for their bodies. And that is what Christ does for the church. ³⁰We are parts of his body.

³¹Scripture says, “That’s why a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife. The two will become one.” (*Genesis 2:24*) ³²That is a deep mystery. But I’m talking about Christ and the church.

³³A husband also must love his wife. He must love her just as he loves himself. And a wife must respect her husband.

Husbands: Note that in speaking of the responsibility of wives Paul wrote three verses. To make sure that there is no

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misunderstanding, the apostle now more than doubles that, using eight verses to outline the responsibility of husbands.

A wife's role is to follow the lead of her husband. Her husband's role, in turn, is to provide leadership but he is to do so in a loving manner! Paul sets the bar high. He tells husbands, "Love your wives... just as Christ loved the church." And to impress on husbands just how high the bar is, Paul makes a list of the things Christ has done for his church:

- He gave himself up for her.
- He did it to make her holy.
- He made her clean by washing her with water and the word.
- He did it to bring her to himself as a brightly shining church.

It is clear that no sinful husband will be able to fully reach the goal Christ set with his loving treatment of his church. That goal does, however, give husbands both an example to follow and the best of reasons for trying to imitate Christ's love.

A Christian husband's loving treatment of his wife is a fruit of faith. But Paul adds yet another encouragement. One could call it self-interest. "In the same way, husbands should love their wives. They should love them as they love their own bodies. Any man who loves his wife loves himself. After all, people have never hated their own bodies. Instead, they feed and care for their bodies."

Quoting Genesis 2:24, Paul reminds the Ephesians that when a man and a woman marry, they actually "become one." They are joined together as one body. A husband's wife is really his "other half." Neglecting or mistreating her would be as foolish as hurting his own body.

Paul closes his God-given advice about the responsibilities of husband and wife with a summary statement. "A husband also must love his wife. He must love



Our first parents, Adam and Eve.

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her just as he loves himself. And a wife must respect her husband.”

Things to Remember:

4. A husband’s role in marriage is to provide _____ for his wife to follow.
5. A husband is to _____ his wife as Christ loves his _____.
6. When a man and a woman marry, they actually become _____.
7. If a husband mistreats his wife, he is really hurting _____.

(Check your answers on page 141)

(Read Ephesians 6:1-3)

6 Children, obey your parents as believers in the Lord. Obey them because it’s the right thing to do. ²Scripture says, “Honor your father and mother.” That is the first commandment that has a promise. ³“Then things will go well with you. You will live a long time on the earth.” (Deuteronomy 5:16)

From a discussion of the loving roles God has set up for husbands and wives Paul naturally moves on to a discussion of the loving roles of parents and their children.

Children: The apostle says children are to obey their parents. The reason for doing this is simply “because it’s the right thing to do.” The reason it’s the right thing to do is because God says so. After all, he is the one who gives children life. He is the one who has put them into the care of parents. As “believers in the Lord,” children will want to obey their God-given caretakers.

But children are not merely to obey their parents, perhaps with complaining and anger. More is asked of Christian children. They are to “honor” their parents. This is required

by the Fourth Commandment. Paul quotes it from the Old Testament book of Deuteronomy.

God is serious about wanting children to honor the parents he has given them. He makes that very clear by the fact that he attaches a promise to this commandment. He says, “Then things will go well with you. You will live a long time on the earth.”

Note that God gave the Ten Commandments to the children of Israel as they were on their way from slavery in Egypt to freedom in the Promised Land of Palestine. The promise God attached to the Fourth Commandment made it certain that they would get there and occupy the land for a long time. It does not promise that every obedient child will live to be a hundred years old. It does, however, remain true that things will go well in homes where children obey and honor their parents. The opposite is also true. Things surely will not go well in homes where children disobey and disrespect their parents.

Things to Remember:

8. _____ are a special gift God gives to children.
9. Children are to _____ their parents.
10. Children are not only to obey their parents but also to _____ them.
11. God promises that where children obey and honor their parents, things will _____ with them.

(Check your answers on page 141)

(Read Ephesians 6:4)

Fathers, don't make your children angry. Instead, train them and teach them the ways of the Lord as you raise them.

When Paul addresses this section to “fathers,” he is speaking to them as men who are the head of the family. Fathers are to show leadership in raising the children. But that does not in any way rule out the very important role of the mother. Recall that just before this, Paul quoted the Fourth Commandment with its call to honor “father *and* mother.” So we can safely say that Paul is here speaking to both parents.

Paul begins his encouragement to parents with a negative word. He says, “Don’t make your children angry.” Giving children limits and correction is always an uncomfortable matter. Children rarely accept it cheerfully. They may even become angry.

But Paul is not speaking of that kind of anger here. Rather he is warning parents against making harsh or thoughtless demands of their children. Parents need to find out what the facts are when bad behavior happens and then deal with the problem in a way that is fitting and safe.

Instead of making their children feel worthless and making them angry with careless demands, parents are to “train them and teach them the way of the Lord.” Proper training requires the use of both law and gospel. Children are by nature sinful. They have a sinful nature that needs to be corrected with God’s holy law. But thanks to their baptism and basic teaching and training in the gospel message, they also have a new nature. This new nature wants to do what God wants. It accepts and benefits from the loving training that parents bring.

Things to Remember:

12. Training children is the role of both _____ and _____.
13. Parents need to be careful not to make their children _____ with careless demands.
14. Children have a _____ that needs to be corrected by God’s law.

15. Through their baptism Christian children have a _____
_____ that wants to do what God wants.

(Check your answers on page 141)

(Read Ephesians 6:5-8)

⁵Slaves, obey your masters here on earth. Respect them and honor them with a heart that is true. Obey them just as you would obey Christ. ⁶Don't obey them only to please them when they are watching. Do it because you are slaves of Christ. Be sure your heart does what God wants.

⁷Serve your masters with all your heart. Work as if you were not serving people but the Lord. ⁸You know that the Lord will give you a reward. He will give to each of you in keeping with the good you do. It doesn't matter whether you are slaves or free.

Slaves: In giving advice to both rich and poor people in the Ephesian church, Paul spends quite a bit of time dealing with the role of slaves. Only the instruction that Paul gave to husbands is longer. This may be so because there were many slaves in the Ephesian congregation. They may even have outnumbered the members who were not slaves.

Also, slaves were a very large group in the society of the Roman world. They too were a target audience for Paul's missionary efforts. In that connection, it is important to see that Paul's message was about Jesus and the forgiveness of sins. It was designed to get people to heaven. Paul was not a social reformer with his eyes set on changing the laws or making the world a better place in which to live. So he does not treat slavery as something to get rid of by any and all means. Rather, he treats it as a way of life in which Christians can honorably serve.

The key word of this section is "obey." The apostle urges slaves, "Obey your masters here on earth." And then in the same verse he repeats and strengthens that encouragement, "Obey them just as you would obey Christ."

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Not only does he encourage them to obey, but they are to do it with their whole heart and with the desire to help their masters. Three times he repeats and stresses that it is not to be half-hearted service. “Respect [your masters] and honor them with a heart that is true.... Be sure your *heart* does what God wants.... Serve your masters with all your *heart*.”

Paul does not expect them to do this automatically or because they want to do it. He provides a more powerful reason for loving service when he says, “Do it because you are slaves of Christ.... Work as if you were not serving people but the Lord.”

Paul adds a second reason why they should be good slaves. He promises, “You know that the Lord will give you a reward. He will give to each of you in keeping with the good you do.” We need to be very careful here not to misunderstand Paul. He is not saying their good service as slaves will earn them a reward from God. Remember that Paul is writing to *Christian* slaves. The work they do for their masters is a fruit of faith. It is their way of thanking God for all that Christ has done for them. The good works that believers do simply show that their faith is living and active. It is this faith in Christ that will receive the reward of eternal life in heaven.

So, in this way Paul is telling them, “Don’t be too concerned about your race or position in life here on earth. Things will all turn out right on judgment day.” It is that wonderful future that lets him say in the closing verse, “It doesn’t matter whether you are slaves or free.”

Things to Remember:

16. Many members of the Ephesian church were _____.

17. Paul’s message was a _____ message.
He was not a _____ trying to
change things in society.

18. Paul tells slaves to _____ their masters.
19. Paul tells slaves to serve as though they were serving _____.
20. Paul promises believing slaves that on judgment day they will receive the _____ that their faith in Christ gives them.

(Check your answers on page 141)

(Read Ephesians 6:9)

⁹Masters, treat your slaves in the same way. When you warn them, don't be too hard on them. You know that the One who is their Master and yours is in heaven. And he treats everyone the same.

Masters: When Paul says, "masters," he is talking to slave owners who are Christians. He doesn't want to scold them for having slaves. Rather, he is encouraging them to let Christ guide the way they treat their slaves. This will be especially important if their slaves are Christians and fellow members of the Ephesian congregation.

Paul tells masters, "Treat your slaves in the same way." He is thinking of the encouragement he just gave to slaves. Slaves were urged to lead Christian lives as they faithfully serve their masters. In the same way, masters are to let Christ show them how to treat their slaves.

This will keep masters from mistreating their slaves. If they need to correct slaves, masters are to do it gently, without being too hard on them. To reinforce that point Paul uses a play on words. He gives the word "master" a double meaning. First it refers to them then to God. This is what he means, "Be careful what you do. Even though you are the *master* over your slaves, don't forget that in heaven you too have a *Master* and he treats everyone the same."

Every Christian has a sinful nature, an old Adam that needs to be warned and corrected by God's holy law. Paul is

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giving such a warning against the sin of mistreating slaves in this short paragraph to the Ephesian slave owners.

Will this change them? No. The real change and improvement in their conduct doesn't come from the law. Rather, it comes from a heart that has heard the gospel and appreciates what God, the Master in heaven, has done in sending his Son as Savior. When that heavenly Master controls the slaves' earthly master, there will be no mistreatment of slaves.

It should be clear that much of what Paul says to slaves and slave masters applies also to the way that employers and employees treat each other in the modern workplace.

Things to Remember:

21. Paul is here talking to Ephesian slave owners who are _____.
22. Paul warns slave owners not to _____ their slaves.
23. He gives strong encouragement to slave owners not to mistreat their slaves because the owners too have a _____ in heaven.
24. Much of what Paul urges for slaves and slave owners applies also in the _____.

(Check your answers on page 141)

Things to remember-Answers

1. man, woman; 2. God; 3. her husband; 4. leadership; 5. love, Church;
6. one; 7. his own body; 8. Parents; 9. obey; 10. honor; 11. go well;
12. father, mother; 13. angry; 14. sinful nature; 15. new nature; 16. slaves;
17. spiritual, social reformer; 18. obey; 19. Christ; 20. reward;
21. Christian; 22. mistreat; 23. Master; 24. modern workplace.

TEST - Chosen by Grace:
A study of the Epistle to the Ephesians

Section 8

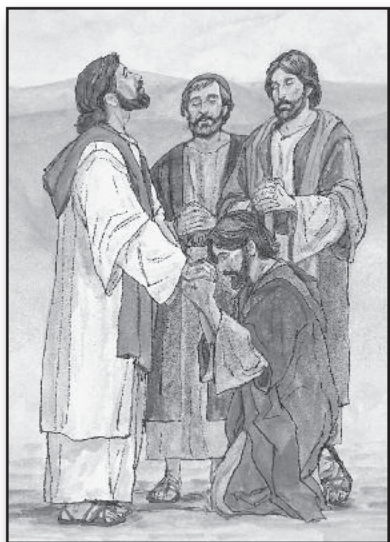
Please review "Things to remember."

1. Marriage is the union of a _____ and a _____.
2. Marriage is a gift from _____.
3. According to God's arrangement, a wife is to follow the lead of _____. _____.
4. A husband's role in marriage is to provide _____ for his wife to follow.
5. A husband is to _____ his wife as Christ loves his _____.
6. When a man and a woman marry, they actually become _____.
7. If a husband mistreats his wife, he is really hurting _____.
8. _____ are a special gift God gives to children.
9. Children are to _____ their parents.
10. Training children is the role of both _____ and _____.

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11. Parents need to be careful not to make their children _____ with unreasonable demands.
12. Children have a _____ that needs to be corrected by God's law.
13. Through their baptism Christian children have a _____ that wants to do what God wants.
14. Paul tells slaves to _____ their masters.
15. Paul tells slaves to serve as though they were serving _____.
16. Paul warns slave owners not to _____ their slaves.
17. A strong encouragement to slave owners not to mistreat their slaves is the fact that the owners too have a _____ in heaven.

(Check your answers on page 163)



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SECTION 9:

Courage to fight against evil, using God's armor

Ephesians 6:10-17

Chosen by Grace:
A study of the Epistle to the Ephesians

SECTION NINE:

Courage to fight against evil, using God's armor (Ephesians 6:10-17)

(Read Ephesians 6:10-12)

¹⁰Finally, let the Lord make you strong. Depend on his mighty power.

¹¹Put on all of God's armor. Then you can stand firm against the devil's evil plans. ¹²Our fight is not against human beings. It is against the rulers, the authorities and the powers of this dark world. It is against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly world.

As a closing word of encouragement, Paul tells his readers, "Let the Lord make you strong." The life of a Christian will always be filled with struggles. That is because of the temptations that regularly come our way.

Fighting temptation is not something we are naturally good at. We need help—God's help. That is why Paul says, "Depend on his [God's] mighty power..... Then you can stand firm against the devil's evil plans."

We often think that our problems and struggles in this world are caused by bad people. Paul points out that wicked people are really only workers and tools in the service of Satan. They're part of his attack plan against Christians. The apostle states that very plainly. "Our fight is not against human beings. It is against the rulers, the authorities and the powers of this dark world. It is against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly world."

We are battling against *spiritual* forces that are trying to do us harm. That should not surprise us. Scripture tells us of a group of angels who fell away and rebelled against God. They are now under the leadership of Satan. Scripture tells

LUTHER'S MORNING PRAYER

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, your dear Son, that you have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that you would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please you. For into your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

LUTHER'S EVENING PRAYER

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, your dear Son, that you have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that you would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into your hands, I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

us he prowls around like a hungry lion, looking for somebody to chew up and swallow.

To be sure, there are evil spiritual forces trying to harm us. But there are also good spiritual forces, fighting on our side. Remember Paul's words in the opening chapter of this letter. There he wrote, "Give praise to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He has blessed us with every *spiritual* blessing. Those blessings come *from the heavenly world*"(1:3). There is help for us. All we need to do is use it.

Things to Remember:

1. We need God's help to resist _____.
2. In the beginning there was a group of _____ who fell away and rebelled against God.
3. These evil angels are now serving _____.
4. There are bad spiritual forces trying to _____ us.
5. There are also good spiritual forces who want to _____ us.

(Check your answers on page 156)

(Read Ephesians 6:13-17)

¹³So put on all of God's armor. Evil days will come. But you will be able to stand up to anything. And after you have done everything you can, you will still be standing.

¹ So stand firm. Put the belt of truth around your waist. Put the armor of godliness on your chest. ¹⁵Wear on your feet what will prepare you to tell the good news of peace. ¹⁶Also, pick up the shield of faith. With it you can put out all of the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷Put on the helmet of salvation. And take the sword of the Holy Spirit. The sword is God's word.

Paul has spoken of the wide-ranging warfare caused by "the powers of this dark world" and "the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly world." He now turns his attention to the

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battle between those forces of evil and the individual Christian.

The apostle warns his readers that evil days will come. These are days when they will be under attack by unbelievers and fighting against sharp temptations of many kinds. To be able to stand up against the forces of evil they will need a good defense system. To provide the needed protection, Paul urges them, “Put on all the armor of God.”

The military equipment Paul lists was the normal outfit of a soldier in the Roman army. He mentions five pieces of protective armor and one weapon for attack.

- Put the belt of truth around your waist.
- Put the armor of godliness on your chest.
- Wear on your feet what will prepare you to tell the good news of peace.
- Pick up the shield of faith.
- Put on the helmet of salvation.
- Take the sword of the Holy Spirit.

The Roman soldier’s “belt” would have been the section of armor that he strapped around his waist to protect his midsection and thighs. The chest protector would have covered his upper body. A sturdy pair of boots was needed for his feet. Shields came in two kinds. There was the full-length body shield and the smaller round shield for blocking spear thrusts and stopping flying arrows. A metal helmet protected his head.

Each piece of armor had a special purpose in its military setting. Paul, however, attaches spiritual meaning to the various pieces of armor. He speaks of a “belt of truth,” a “shield of faith,” and a “helmet of salvation.” These do not seem to be very different or separate from each other. All of them picture what Christ has won for us and what is ours by faith. They are our protection and what we should flee to when we come under attack. With them, Paul promises, “you will be able to stand up to anything.”

A Christian, however, doesn't have to just hunker down and ride out the storm. He has one very powerful weapon of attack. And he doesn't need any more. He has the "sword of the Holy Spirit, which is God's Word." The writer of the letter to the Hebrews uses a similar picture. He writes, "The word of God is living and active. It is sharper than any sword that has two edges. It cuts deep enough to separate soul from spirit. It can separate joints from bones. It judges the thoughts and purposes of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12).

Armed with this powerful Word, the Christian is able not only to defend himself but even to go on attack. Using God's Word, the Christian can drive away "the powers of this dark world" and "the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly world." He needs only to trust the Word and remember to keep coming to his Lord in prayer, as Paul will be urging in the next paragraph.

Things to Remember:

6. Paul warns the Ephesians that _____
_____ will come into their lives.
7. For Christians to survive spiritual battles they need a good _____ system.
8. Paul compares the Christian's defense system to the _____ of a Roman soldier.
9. Paul lists _____ pieces of protective armor but only one weapon for _____.
10. A Christian's weapon for attack is the "sword of the Holy Spirit," which is _____.

(Check your answers on page 156)

(Read Ephesians 6:18-20)

¹⁸At all times, pray by the power of the Spirit. Pray all kinds of prayers. Be watchful, so that you can pray. Always keep on praying for all of God's people.

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¹⁹Pray also for me. Pray that when I open my mouth, the right words will be given to me. Then I can be bold as I tell the mystery of the good news.

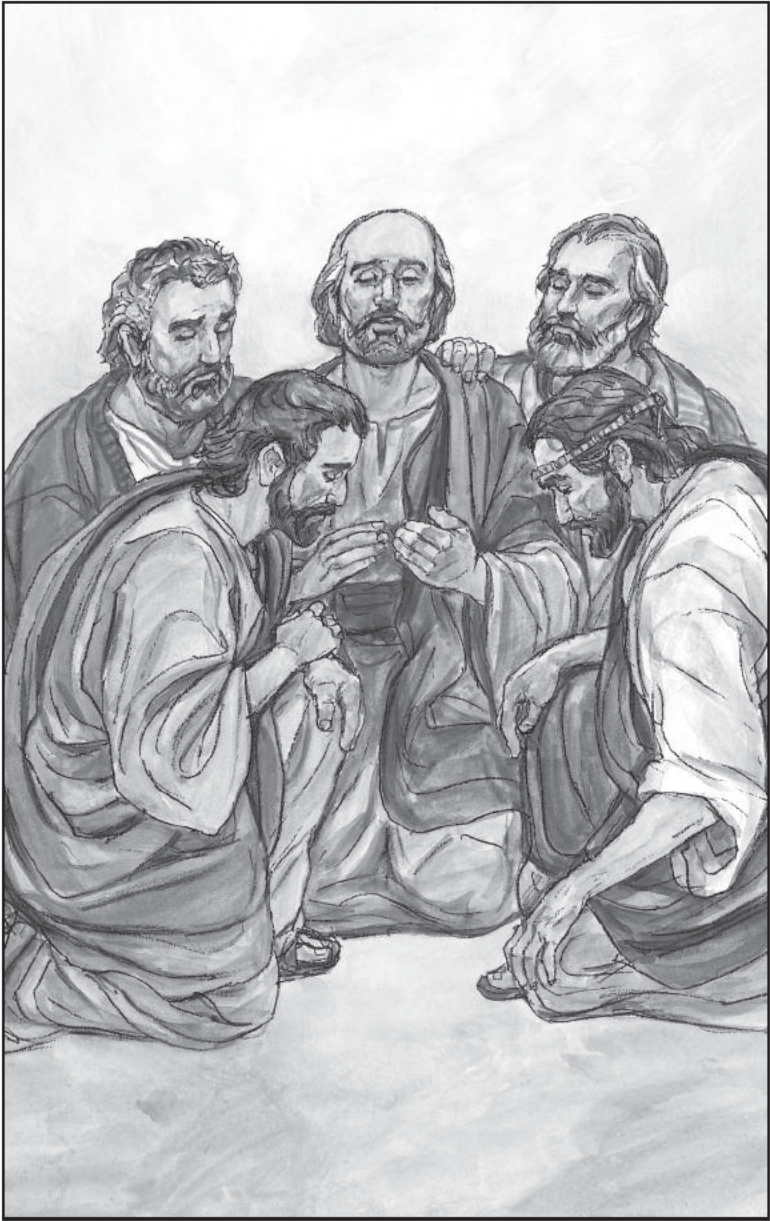
²⁰Because of the good news, I am being held by chains as the Lord's messenger. So pray that I will be bold as I preach the good news. That's what I should do.

There are many wrong ideas as to what prayer is and what it does. Paul gives important instruction on both points.

He begins by telling them, "Pray by the power of the Spirit." By himself, a sinner is not worthy to come into the presence of a holy God. He has no right to ask for anything. So, proper prayer must come from a heart filled with faith in Christ and his work as our Savior. Such faith, of course, is something that only the Holy Spirit can create. Spirit-worked faith takes God at his word. It trusts his promises and joyfully approaches God as a dear heavenly Father. The apostle is here repeating what he said earlier in this letter, "Through Christ we [Jews and Gentiles] both come to the Father by the power of one Holy Spirit" (2:18).

What may a Christian pray for? People generally feel it is fitting to come to God for important things and in times of emergency. But other than that, they don't want to bother him. They think: Surely, he can't be interested in the little things that trouble me. I should be able to take care of those by myself. Note, however, that Paul plainly says, "*At all times*, pray by the power of the Spirit. Pray *all kinds* of prayers." Few instructions are given more often or more strongly in Scripture than the invitation and the encouragement to pray.

What does prayer do for us? When we pray for spiritual things, such as forgiveness of sins, the gift of a good conscience, the conversion of unbelievers, or unity in the church, we know it is God's gracious will to give us those things. In praying about every day, physical needs, however, we will always add the words, "if it is your will." Such prayers are answered in God's good time and in his way.



Paul prays with the Ephesian elders.

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Paul doesn't ask only that his readers pray all kinds of prayers at all times. He also urges them to pray for all kinds of people. Most important, pray for the benefit of fellow believers. He says, "Always keep on praying for all of God's people."

But then he adds a special request for one of God's people. "Pray also for me." Remember that Paul is writing this letter while under house arrest in Rome. He is on trial for preaching the gospel. He reminds the Ephesians of this fact with the brief remark, "Because of the good news, I am being held by chains as the Lord's messenger."

When Paul speaks in his defense at his trial, he will have the chance to share the good news about Christ. He will be "the Lord's messenger." As such, he is not asking for prayers merely for his personal safety. Rather, they are to pray for the success of the gospel. That is why he says, "Pray that when I open my mouth, the right words will be given to me. Then I can be bold as I tell the mystery of the good news."

Things to Remember:

11. Proper prayer requires _____ in the heart.
12. Only a _____ can pray a proper prayer.
13. Paul urges us to pray at _____.
14. Paul urges us to pray _____ of prayers.
15. Paul urges us to pray especially for God's _____.
16. We know that God wants to grant us _____ blessings.
17. When we pray for physical blessings we will add the words: "_____."
18. Paul asks the Ephesians to pray also for _____.
19. Paul asks the Ephesians to pray for the success of the _____.

(Check your answers on page 156)

Final greetings (Ephesians 6:21-24)

(Read Ephesians 6:21,22)

²¹Tychicus is a dear brother. He is faithful in serving the Lord. He will tell you everything about me. Then you will know how I am and what I am doing. ²²That's why I am sending him to you. I want you to know how we are. And I want him to cheer you up.

At the time when Paul lived, there was no mail delivery system such as the postal service we take for granted today. If someone wanted to send a letter to a person living in a distant city, he had to find someone traveling to that city. This person would then agree to carry the letter and hand-deliver it. It is very likely that Tychicus was the carrier personally delivering Paul's letter to the congregation in Ephesus.

But Tychicus was also to perform another important service. Paul knew the Ephesians were concerned about his health and safety. After all, he was in Rome on trial for his life. How were things going? What were the chances of being found innocent by the Roman court? To give them an answer to some of their questions, Paul chose to send Tychicus, "a dear brother" and a "faithful servant of the Lord." Paul promises, "He will tell you everything about me. Then you will know how I am and what I am doing. That's why I am sending him to you. I want you to know how we are."

Paul hints that Tychicus' report on things in Rome will be a positive one when he says, "I want him to cheer you up."

Things to Remember:

20. _____ was one of Paul's co-workers in the city of _____.
21. Tychicus was very likely the _____ of Paul's letter to the Ephesians.
22. Tychicus was also to report on _____ condition.

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23. Paul hints that Tychicus' report will be a _____ one.

(Check your answers on page 156)

(Read Ephesians 6:23,24)

²³May God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give peace to the brothers and sisters. May they also give them love and faith.

² May grace be given to everyone who loves our Lord Jesus Christ with a love that will never die.

In this letter Paul has urged the Ephesians a number of times to use their God-given privilege of prayer. He follows his own advice by closing this letter with a two-fold prayer. The first request he makes is that “the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” give Paul’s beloved Ephesians the gifts of peace and love with faith.

Then, in keeping with his previous encouragement to pray “all kinds of prayers... for all of God’s people” (6:18), he broadens his request. He prays, “May grace be given to *everyone* who loves our Lord Jesus Christ.”

With this closing request, Paul returns one final time to the grand message that is central to this letter. He is praying for the holy Christian Church. That church is made up of all the believers whom the Holy Spirit has brought to faith in Christ. It includes the believers who have lived in the past. It includes us who are living now, as well as those yet to be born.

With the whole Christian Church in mind, Paul prays, “May grace be given to everyone who loves our Lord Jesus Christ.” The grace [gift] he prays for is everything Christ earned for us. It is forgiveness of sin, a good conscience, and the peace with God that we enjoy already here and now.

But there is an even greater gift awaiting believers in Christ. That is the gift of spending eternity with God in

heaven. Thanks to Christ's saving work, that gift is sure and certain.

May a study of the apostle Paul's letter to the Ephesians lead us to an ever greater understanding of and love for the blessings we enjoy already now. But may it also help us always to keep our eyes fixed on the eternal joys that we confidently expect in the future.

Things to remember-Answers

1. temptation; 2. angels; 3. Satan; 4. harm; 5. help; 6. evil days; 7. defense; 8. outfit; 9. five, attack; 10. God's Word; 11. faith; 12. believer; 13. all times; 14. all kinds; 15. people; 16. spiritual; 17. If it is your will; 18. him; 19. gospel; 20. Tychicus, Rome; 21. carrier; 22. Paul's; 23. positive.

TEST - Chosen by Grace:
A study of the Epistle to the Ephesians

Section 9

Please review “Things to remember.”

1. In the beginning there was a group of _____ who fell away and rebelled against God.
2. These evil angels are now the agents of _____.
3. There are bad spiritual forces trying to _____ us.
4. There are also good spiritual forces who want to _____ us.
5. For Christians to survive spiritual battles they need a good _____ system.
6. Paul compares the Christian’s defense system to the _____ of a Roman infantryman.
7. Paul lists _____ pieces of defensive armor but only one _____ weapon.
8. A Christian’s offensive weapon is the “sword of the Holy Spirit,” which is _____.
9. Proper prayer requires _____ in the heart.
10. Only a _____ can pray a proper prayer.
11. Paul urges us to pray at _____.

12. Paul urges us to pray _____ of prayers.
13. We know that God wants to grant us _____ blessings.
14. When we pray for temporal blessings we will add the condition: “_____.”
15. Paul asks the Ephesians to pray also for _____.
16. Paul asks the Ephesians to pray for the success of the _____.
17. Tychicus was very likely the _____ of Paul’s letter to the Ephesians.
18. Tychicus was also to report on _____ condition.

(Check your answers on page 163)

GLOSSARY

Chosen by Grace:

A study of the Epistle to the Ephesians

accomplishments – The act of completing something successfully

alternative – That which may be chosen instead of something else

amazing – Filling someone with surprise or great wonder

assure – To make something certain

bickering – To quarrel, usually over small matters

brag – To speak with too much praise for oneself, to boast

bully – To behave as someone who uses his or her power or strength to hurt or frighten others into doing what he or she wants them to do

Christ – The anointed one; the promised Savior of the world; a special title for Jesus; He is true God and true man in one person.

concept – A general idea about something

contempt – A lack of respect; the act of despising someone or something

contradictory – To disagree or to say something the opposite of what someone says

conversation – Talking with someone

critical – Finding fault with something or someone

dignity – The state of being worthy, noble, and excellent in character, or reserved and formal in manner

diligent – Hard working; industrious; putting care and effort into what one does

exaggerate – To make something seem to be, or describe it, as larger, better, or worse than what it really is

expose – To make visible; to uncover

fester – To become infected, sore

Gentiles – Those people who are not Jews by birth

hostility – A state of being unfriendly or at war

immorality – Not being moral; sinful especially in sexual matters

insult – To treat or speak to someone with scorn or great disrespect; to say or do something that hurts or is meant to hurt the feelings of someone

judgment day – The day when God will judge all people some to go to heaven and some to go to hell

lax – Careless or not strict in discipline or morals; lacking in control

less fortunate – Not having as many good things or happenings as other people

liturgy – The form of a religious worship service especially in a Christian church

nature –

sinful nature – The bad spiritual condition that all people are born with that leads us to actual sins

new nature – The new spiritual life that God gives to believers in Jesus by his Holy Spirit to overcome sin and live for God

optional – The act of being free to choose something or not to choose something

orally – Spoken, not written; to take something by mouth

predict(ed) – To tell in advance what is going to happen based on knowledge and reason

pulpit – A raised platform or enclosure in a church from which the pastor addresses the congregation

resentment – Feeling angry over something that is unfair

Chosen by Grace

rouse – To wake up people from sleep or to stir up people to action, to make people excited

substitute – One takes the place of or acts for another; Jesus took our place in life and in death to earn righteousness and eternal life for us sinners.

synagogue – After the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem and the captivity in Babylon, this is the place where Jews gather to worship, pray, and teach the Scriptures

televangelist – A religious speaker on radio or television who sometimes teaches false doctrine and seeks to gain money

triune – The Bible's teaching that God is one almighty, eternal, always present spirit, who exists in three co-equal persons, the Father, the Son (Jesus), and the Holy Spirit

vice – Great wickedness, immoral conduct, a bad habit

wisdom – Being able to apply or use what you know in everyday life situations; It is knowing what is the right thing to do and doing it.

ANSWERS to Section Tests

Chosen by Grace:

A study of the Epistle to the Ephesians

Section 1 – (pages 7-8)

1. Saul, Paul; 2. dangerous, destroyed; 3. Jerusalem, Damascus;
4. opposing; 5. attack; 6. apostle; 7. sent out, message; 8. good news;
Christ; 9. three; 10. prison, Rome; 11. God, good gifts, sinners; 12. sins,
Christ's death.

Section 2 – (pages 25-26)

1. belong to Christ, believers in Christ; 2. eternity, chose, saved;
3. nothing, gift; 4. Jesus Christ; 5. triune, three, one; 6. God, man, one;
7. mystery; 8. mysterious, hard to understand; 9. explained;
10. Abraham; 11. become a great nation, get special land, Savior born
of his family; 12. Jesus Christ, virgin Mary, Jewish; 13. Jews;
14. Gentiles; 15. faith; 16. Jews; 17. Ephesians, gospel.

Section 3 – (pages 35-36)

1. thanksgiving; 2. heard, faith, love; 3. wisdom, understanding, know
God better; 4. heaven, hope; 5. future; 6. power; 7. all power; 8. raise
Christ from the dead; 9. believers; 10. right hand, power, authority;
11. this, come; 12. Church; 13. head, body.

Section 4-Part 1 – (pages 46-47)

1. physically, sin; 2. sinful; 3. angry; 4. Christ, heavenly kingdom;
5. eternal salvation; 6. saving sinners by grace; 7. anything you do,
brag; 8. creator, obedience; 9. born sinners; 10. unable, unwilling;
11. faith, good things; 12. thankfulness.

Section 4-Part 2 – (pages 65-66)

1. Abraham; 2. Jewish, Egypt; 3. Palestine; 4. covenant; Sinai;
5. circumcised; 6. uncircumcised Gentiles; 7. permanent, Christ came;
8. work, saving; 9. Old Testament rules; 10. one new group;
11. New Testament Christian Church; 12. Father, family; 13. building;
14. prophets, apostles; 15. Christians, Christ, everything together;
16. all believers, past, are living, future.

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Section 5 – (pages 77-78)

1. prison, Rome; 2. synagogues; 3. Gentiles; 4. sent him; 5. mystery; 6. clear; 7. Christ, Christians; 8. gift, Gentiles; 9. promised Savior, faith; 10. New Testament Christian Church, Jews, Gentiles; 11. grace, wisdom.

Section 6 – (pages 88-89)

1. Holy Spirit; 2. Bible, sacraments, create, strengthen; 3. roots; 4. foundation; 5. Christ; 6. Christ's love; 7. forgiveness of sins; 8. good conscience, grace; 9. pray boldly; 10. thanking, life; 11. confident faith.

Section 7-Part 1 – (pages 106-107)

1. two, doctrine, live; 2. Holy Spirit; 3. forgiveness, others; 4. Christ, king; 5. enemies, prison; 6. sin, death, devil; 7. apostle; 8. prophet; 9. evangelists, pastors, teachers; 10. serve; 11. faith; 12. False teachers; 13. speaking the truth; 14. opposed firmly; 15. love.

Section 7-Part 2 – (pages 127-128)

1. Lord; 2. covenant regulations; 3. guidance, terribly wrong; 4. Sexual; 5. more; 6. wrong, properly, correct the situation; 7. work for them; 8. words; 9. Christian values; 10. what, how; 11. each other, you; 12. Sexuality; 13. companionship; 14. children; 15. filthy jokes; 16. forgiveness; 17. good, bad; 18. beam of light; 19. bad behavior.

Section 8 – (pages 142-143)

1. man, woman; 2. God; 3. her husband; 4. leadership; 5. love, Church; 6. one; 7. his own body; 8. Parents; 9. obey; 10. father, mother; 11. angry; 12. sinful nature; 13. new nature; 14. obey; 15. Christ; 16. mistreat; 17. Master.

Section 9 and Final Greeting – (pages 157-158)

1. angels; 2. Satan; 3. harm; 4. help; 5. defense; 6. outfit; 7. five, attack; 8. God's Word; 9. faith; 10. believer; 11. all times; 12. all kinds; 13. spiritual; 14. If it is your will; 15. him; 16. gospel; 17. carrier; 18. Paul's.

FINAL TEST

Chosen by Grace:

A study of the Epistle to the Ephesians

Go back through the book and review any mistakes you made in the section tests. Then complete the final test without looking at the book. When you have finished, give the test to the person who gave you this book or mail the test to the place listed on the back cover of this book.

Words needed to complete each question are listed at the end of the test.

Chosen by Grace

1. Jesus appointed Saul/Paul to be an _____.
2. An apostle is someone who is _____ to share a _____.
3. Paul's message was the _____ about _____.
4. For _____ years Paul preached and taught in the city of Ephesus.
5. Now Paul is writing to the Ephesians from _____ in _____.
6. Grace is the loving attitude in the heart and mind of _____ that makes him eager to give _____ to undeserving _____.
7. The special gift God gave the Ephesians was that from _____ God _____ them to be _____.
8. The Ephesians did _____ to influence God's choice. God's choice was a _____.
9. God's choice of the Ephesians was based on what _____ has done for them.
10. God is a _____ God, _____ persons in _____ God.
11. Jesus Christ is true _____ and true _____ in _____ person.
12. God chose _____ to be the father of the Jewish nation.

13. God gave Abraham three great promises:

- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____

14. At the appointed time the promised Savior,
_____, was born of a Jewish
girl, the _____. Jesus
was _____.

15. It could look as though God chose only
_____ for salvation.

16. The “mystery” Paul speaks of is that God has also
chosen _____ for salvation.

17. God seated Christ at his _____.
That means God gave him _____ and
_____.

18. Christ controls everything for the benefit of his
_____.

19. Christ is the _____; the church is his
_____.

20. Since Adam and Eve’s fall all people are _____
_____.

21. Sinners are _____ and _____ to do
what God wants.

Chosen by Grace

22. Through the message of the gospel the Holy Spirit works _____ in the sinner's heart. Such faith creates the spiritual life that makes it possible for the believer to do _____.
23. A believer does good works to show his _____ for what God's grace has done for him.
24. Paul describes the New Testament Christian Church by comparing it to a _____.
25. The foundation on which this building rests is the Old Testament _____ and the New Testament _____.
26. Individual _____ are the building blocks, but _____ is the most important block. He holds _____.
27. The Christian Church consists of _____ in Christ. That includes those who lived in the _____; those who _____ now, as well as those who will be added in the _____.
28. Throughout the Old Testament, believers in the _____ were saved by that _____.
29. The new development after Christ's coming was the establishment of the _____ where _____ and _____ stand on the same level.
30. God comes into people's lives through the work of the _____.

31. The Holy Spirit uses the message of the _____ and the _____ first to _____ faith in the heart and then to _____ such faith.
32. For a person to have Christian love it is essential that he understand the love _____ had for a sinful world.
33. We give glory to God by _____ him and by leading a _____ that pleases him.
34. Paul's letters often divide into _____ parts. In the first part Paul teaches an important _____. In the second part he instructs people how they are to _____.
35. Christ has created important offices in his church, such as _____, _____, or _____.
36. Workers are called into these offices so that they might prepare God's people to _____.
37. All of God's people have a role to play in helping others to grow in their _____.
38. Paul is speaking for the _____ when he warns the Ephesians against immorality.
39. Paul urges his readers, "Forgive _____ just as God forgave _____."
40. _____ is a gift from God, making marriage possible.

Chosen by Grace

41. Marriage is God's arrangement for providing precious _____ between a man and a woman.
42. Marriage is also God's way of populating the world through the gift of _____.
43. Christ earned _____ for all sins, including sexual sins.
44. Marriage is the union of a _____ and a _____.
45. Marriage is a gift from _____.
46. According to God's arrangement, a wife is to follow the lead of _____.
47. A husband's role in marriage is to provide _____ for his wife to follow.
48. A husband is to _____ his wife as Christ loves his _____.
49. _____ are a special gift God gives to children.
50. Children are to _____ their parents.
51. Training children is the role of both _____ and _____.
52. Children have a _____ that needs to be corrected by God's law.
53. Through their baptism Christian children have a _____ that wants to do what God wants.

54. For Christians to survive spiritual battles they need a good _____ system.
55. Paul compares the Christian's defense system to the _____ of a Roman infantryman.
56. Paul lists _____ pieces of defensive armor but only one _____ weapon.
57. A Christian's offensive weapon is the "sword of the Holy Spirit," which is _____.
58. Proper prayer requires _____ in the heart. Hence only a _____ can pray a proper prayer.
59. We know that God wants to grant us _____ blessings.
60. When we pray for temporal blessings we will add the condition: "_____."

FINAL TEST

Chosen by Grace:

A study of the Epistle to the Ephesians

Answers needed to complete the final test.

Abraham	faith
all believers	faith
apostle	father
apostles	five
are living	forgiveness
attack	future
authority	Gentiles
become a great nation	Gentiles
believer	get special land
Bible	gift
body	God
born sinners	God
building	God
children	God's Word
chose	good gifts
Christ	good news
Christ	good things
Christ	head
Christians	her husband
Church	Holy Spirit
Church	If it is your will
companionship	Jesus Christ
create	Jesus Christ
defense	Jewish
doctrine	Jews
each other	Jews
eternity	leadership
evangelists	life
everything together	live
faith	Lord
faith	love

man	saved
man	Savior born of his family
message	sent out
mother	serve
new nature	Sexuality
New Testament Christian Church	sinful nature
nothing	sinner
obey	spiritual
one	strengthen
one	teachers
outfit	thankfulness
Parents	thanking
past	three
pastors	three
power	triune
prison	two
promised Savior	unable
prophets	unwilling
right hand	virgin Mary
Rome	woman
sacraments	you

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