

Study of Ephesians

Introduction: Read Acts 19, 20:1, 16-38.

- The events mentioned in the Book of Acts took place while Paul was on his 'third missionary journey'. He remained in Ephesus for some three years (longer than in any other one place), evangelizing the city and the surrounding region. Upon his departure, he had Timothy to assume the pastorate, and Timothy remained there for about a year and a half. Note: At that particular time in history Jerusalem and Antioch of Syria were the major capitals for Christianity, while Ephesus was recognized as the capital of heathen worship in that part of the world.

- Ephesus was known as the 'queen city' of Asia Minor, having a population of some 340,000. Too, the city was noted for the Great Temple of Diana (Artemis); its open-air theater, seating 25,000; a magnificent stadium; and, the shrine of Serapis (an Egyptian divinity). It's been said that Ephesus was famous for its (1) Oriental religion, (2) Greek philosophy, (3) Roman government; and, (4) worldwide commerce. Note: Diana was known as the 'Fertility Goddess': the great nursing mother of gods, men, animals, and plants - therefore, many-breasted.

- The 'Feasts of Diana' were commercialized, creating a large industry among the silversmiths of making shrines and idols to their goddess.

- Paul says (**Acts 20:31**), 'By the space of three years I ceased not to warn everyone night and day with tears'. As a result of his straight-forwardness in preaching and teaching, there was a tremendous spiritual awakening. Many brought their books of magic and curious arts to the city square to be burned before all. Amen! (When Christ is received into the heart, the things of the world must go. No man can serve God and mammon.) Notice **Acts 19:19**. When they totaled up the price of all the books, etc., which had been placed willingly in the bonfire, they found the price to be fifty thousand pieces of silver. Tremendous! Think about it: A day's wage for a common laborer was one penny. A piece of silver was equal to sixty-four pennies (a laborer's wage for two and one-half months). Since that was the case, the price (monetary value) of that which was burned (fifty thousand pieces of silver) was astronomical. A wonderful lesson: No one gives up that of the world for the cause of Christ, but that He receives many-fold blessings in return.

- It's believed that Paul was imprisoned three times: (1) at Caesarea for about two years (**Acts 25,26**); (2) once in Rome for about three years, A.D.61-64; and, (3) again in Rome about A.D.66,67. Too, it's likely that he wrote the Prison Epistles during his first Roman imprisonment, with his letter to the Ephesians the first in order to be written.

- Note: It's been said, 'If a person becomes discouraged or depressed, he should read (and study) Paul's letter to the Ephesians. Not even a slight trace of downheartedness or discouragement can be found therein'. Said another way: It is impossible to live continually within the pages of Ephesians and become depressed.

Chapter 1

1:1,2. 'An apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God'. Note: Paul; was not a preacher and follower of Christ because it was the choice of his parents, nor had he chosen the ministry as a profession. He was called (chosen) of God. It was God's will for his life.

Questions: What had been Paul's plans before his conversion? Why would he cast aside the life for which he had been trained to follow the Lord in sufferings, persecutions, and hardships as a minister of the gospel? Would you be willing to obey the Lord if He called you to forsake the life you now enjoy to follow Him into a life that promised difficulties and sufferings?

- 'to the saints which are at Ephesus'. Notice some definitions given by man concerning saints: (1) one officially recognized, especially through canonizations as preeminent for holiness; (2) one of the spirits of the departed in heaven; (3) angels; (4) a member of any of various Christian bodies; (5) a person of great virtue or benevolence; (6) a founder or patron, as of a movement. How sad! If such was the case, Paul's letter was written in vain. Evidently, his definition of a saint was altogether different than that just noted.

Questions: What is a saint? When does a person become a saint? Answers: A person becomes a saint at the moment his sins are forgiven (when born again and adopted into the family of God). The question now is: Are you a saint?

- 'to the faithful'. To me, 'faithfulness' is a word much like 'holiness'. A person's definition of each will be a factor in determining how he will live. Note: The 'saint' (born-again believer) who fails to continue on with the Lord, and, thus, becomes unfaithful, will soon find himself losing out altogether. Salvation (having sins forgiven; becoming a Christian) is wonderful, but it is also 'conditional'. Jesus said, 'If ye love me, keep my commandments' (**Jn.14:15**). Again, in **Jn.8:31**, Jesus said to those who had believed on him, 'If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed'. Too, read **Col.1:23**: 'If ye continue in the faith, etc.'

Questions: Can a professing Christian be unfaithful, and at the same time be convinced he is ready for heaven? (Surely) It's like someone believing they are ready for the 'rapture', yet, unsaved (still living in sin).

- 'in Christ Jesus'. It's been said that there is no higher position in all the world than 'to be in Christ'. According to **II Cor.5:17** and **I Thes.4**, it's those who have become new creatures 'in Christ' (at salvation) and those 'continuing in Christ' that are going to be caught out at the 'rapture'. Amen! Whatever else you might do in life, get 'in Christ'; then, stay there.

V.3. Here we have (1) the One doing the blessing (the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ); (2) the 'blessed' - 'us' (saints); and, (3) the 'blessing' (all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ).

- God blesses for His Son's sake. Everything He does for the Christian is done primarily for the sake of His Son, Jesus Christ (He who voluntarily laid down His life for the sins of the world).

Chapter 1 (cont.)

- The Father has opened His arms to receive and His hands to bless - all those who accept His Son as Savior. Too, He has taken (adopted) us into His family, and shares with us the Son's blessings of inheritance. Note: Since Jesus is the only begotten of the Father, the inheritance rightfully belongs to him. Yet, we're told in **Rom.8:17**, that those saved are also 'heirs: heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ'. Amen!

- The writer of the chorus said it well: 'I am blessed, I am blessed, Every day that I live I am blessed. When I wake up in the morning, til I lay my head at rest, I am blessed, I am blessed'.

- 'hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ'. Question: Are these blessings ours now, or, is it that they will be ours when we arrive in heaven, after having received our glorified bodies? Without doubt, the answer is 'now'. As saints of God, we have come out of the realm of 'natural man' (**I Cor.2:14 - c.f. Fig.#2, p.9**) and into the sphere of the spiritual (**I Cor.2:15 - c.f. Fig.#4, p.9**). We now have a spiritual nature, having been born of God. Yet, we are living in a non-spiritual world. Therefore, in order to survive as spiritual beings we must have: (1) Spiritual food (Word of God) in order to survive; (2) Spiritual garments (clothed in His righteousness); (3) Spiritual companions, with whom to fellowship (church family); (4) Spiritual strength to endure persecution and affliction (through prayer); and, (5) Spiritual weapons, with which to do battle and defeat the enemy of our souls (**II Cor.10:4; Eph.6:11-18**).

- 'all spiritual blessings' include: '(1) all that the Father can bestow; (2) all that the Son can provide; and, (3) all that the Spirit can apply' (Pulpit Comm.).

- Note: The Christian life (1) begins with a spiritual birth; (2) progresses with spiritual growth; and (3) is consummated at Christ's coming with spiritual perfection.

- 'in heavenly places'. Inasmuch as Paul says that God 'hath blessed', he is not speaking here of the blessings that will be our in our future home (heaven). This phrase speaks of the 'here and now'. We are 'one' with Him, now. Note: To be in 'heavenly places' means to live on a spiritual plane while here in the body, and, to be continually in a heavenly state of mind and heart - even in the midst of trials, sorrow, and heartaches. Remember: When writing this letter, Paul was a prisoner in a Roman jail - yet, he felt of himself as being in 'heavenly places' with Christ. The adjective expresses 'quality of spiritual life' rather than 'place' (location).

- 'in Christ': (1) I am somebody (royalty; a child of the King); (2) I have everything (**Ps.23:1; Rom.8:32**); and, (3) I can do all things (**Phil.4:13**).

- Note: When unsaved, we were in Adam. Now, as Christians, we are 'in Christ'.

(1) Denotes 'position': Where he is, we are. (We in Him, and He in us.)

(2) Defines 'privileges': What he is, we are. (Sons of God)

(3) Describes 'possessions': What he has, we share. (Joint-heirs)

(4) Determines our 'practice': What he does, we do. (That which pleases the Father.)

V.4. 'he hath chosen us'. Salvation, in a sense, depends totally upon God. We did not influence His decision to save us; he did it according to his plan. The mystery of salvation originated in his timeless mind long before we existed.

Chapter 1 (cont.)

- Note: There are six questions answered in this verse: who, what, whom, where, when, and why.

(1) Who did the choosing: 'He', God the Father.

(2) What he has done: 'Hath chosen'. (Selected for himself a people to be his own peculiar possession. Note: God is love, and love cannot exist alone. It must be shared.

(3) Whom chosen: 'Us' (you and me).

(4) Where: 'in him'. Those chosen are those saved; in Christ.

(5) When: Before the foundation stones of the earth were put into place; before creation began; before there was a world or men to inhabit it.

(6) Why: 'That we should be holy and without blame before him in love'.

- Think about it: In eternity past, a merciful and loving God had us (all who would accept his Son in salvation) in mind. He was planning ways to bless us beyond anything we can imagine. And at the same time, he was outlining that which would be required of believers in order that they might enjoy the blessings.

(1) To be holy. Note: 'Holy living' is not something that had its beginning with John and Charles Wesley (holiness preachers of an earlier generation). Nor did it have its beginning with the preaching of Paul and the apostles. Too, by reading the Old Testament, we learn that it was not instituted by Moses or Abraham or Noah or Enoch. God ordained that His children should 'be holy' even before He created the heaven and the earth.

(2) Without blame before him in love. 'That we might be holy and blameless in his sight, living in the spirit of love'.

- Note: 'Holiness is the positive side of a Christlike life: separated from all evil. Blamelessness in character is the negative side of the Christlike life: not sinless, but stainless, without blemish and without defect' (K.J. Bible Comm.).

V.5. 'Having predestined us'. Because God is 'omniscient' (all-knowing), He knew the end before the beginning. He knew that I would one day repent and be saved, and, that I would become a part of the body of Christ (the church). Yet, His foreknowledge had nothing to do with my 'free will'. I was not forced to believe for salvation, but I willingly accepted Christ as my personal Savior. And any person who makes it to heaven will be there because he accepted Christ in salvation of his own free will.

- Note: Paul is not teaching 'predestination' (that some are predestined to be saved and some to be lost, even before they are born). It is not the predestination of people, but 'what they are predestined to' if they love and serve the Lord. All who accept God's plan of redemption are called and chosen to become holy. And only those who meet His conditions will be so blessed.

Always remember: This is the meaning of 'election', or 'predestination', wherever found in Scripture. It's the 'plan of God for the righteous' that is predestined, not the individual.

- 'Adoption'. At the moment of salvation, we became heirs of God and joint-heirs with the Lord

Chapter 1 (cont.)

Jesus Christ, and became a part of the family of God. Note: John said, 'Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God' (I Jn.3:1).

Amen! The truth that God is our heavenly Father and we are His children is one of the greatest revelations in the New Testament.

- God has predestined (pre-determined) that all who accept Christ as Savior be 'adopted' into His family - because it pleases Him to do so. But remember, the choice of being saved is left up to the individual.

Vs.6,7. 'Divine grace' is more than just another attribute of God, it is an attribute filled with wonderful and glorious riches - and deserves our praise. Note: The thought (idea) of the richness and fulness and abundance of God's grace is noted throughout this Epistle. It's through Him and His marvelous grace that we have redemption and have been 'accepted in the beloved'. Amen! 'Thank God' for His amazing grace!

Vs.8-10. 'the mystery of his will'. Before Christ came and died for the sins of mankind, the extent of God's grace was a 'mystery' (more than man could understand). Yet, God was not intentionally keeping his plan a secret, but only that it could not be fully understood by the world until Christ arose from the dead. Therefore, God's purpose for sending His Son to the cross was to unite Jews and Gentiles into one body, with Christ as the head. Many, even today, do not understand God's plan; but at the proper time (when the time is ripe) all things will be united and consummated in Christ.

Vs.11,12. 'we have obtained an inheritance'. In **Gen.12**, God promised to Abram that his 'seed' would be given the land of Canaan as an 'inheritance'. Abram entered Canaan when he was 75 years of age (**Gen.12:4-7**; in **1921BC**), and some 430 years later, on the very day God had promised (**Exo.12:40,41**; **Gal.3:17**; in **1491BC**), Moses led the Children of Israel out of Egyptian bondage. Forty years later Joshua led that great host of Israelites (the seed of Abraham) into the land of Canaan, their inheritance, just as had been promised.

- As Christians, we are the 'inheritance' of the Lord. Paul said (**I Cor.3:21,23**), 'Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are your's . . . And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's'. Note: God accepts us with joy because of what Christ did for us.

- Before the coming of Christ, Jews and Gentiles had no dealings one with the other. Too, the Jews were sure that the Gentiles were not included in God's plan of redemption. Yet, the Bible declares that Christ offered his salvation equally to all. In **Matt.16:24** Jesus said, 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me'. Note: Only Christ can break down the walls of prejudice, reconcile all believers (Jew and Gentile) to God, and, unify all Christians into one body. Amen! What a Savior!

V.13,14. 'after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, etc.'.

- Notice the sequence:

(1) You heard the word of truth (a 'must' in order to be saved). 'Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God' (**Rom.10:17**).

Chapter 1 (cont.)

(2) You believed. 'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, the whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life' (**Jn.3:16**).

(3) Ye were sealed. The Spirit of God changed your life; and now, you are marked as one of His.

- Note: The 'sealing' is not the 'Baptism of the Holy Ghost', as was experienced in **Acts 2** and elsewhere, but is the receiving of His Spirit at salvation (**Rom.9:9,11**). The Ephesians were sealed at the same time they believed, not at some time later. The sealing was not something apart from salvation, nor something in addition to salvation, and not something subsequent to salvation. All who believe in Christ are sealed - then and there.

- The Holy Spirit, Himself, is the 'seal'.

- 'earnest of our inheritance'. 'Earnest' is a legal term denoting a deposit, a first installment, a partial down payment, a pledge guaranteeing a complete transaction and payment of the total obligation. Note: The presence of the Spirit in a believer's life is God's pledge that the Christian who continues to follow the Lord will one day have complete redemption, and will enjoy the promised inheritance.

- We who are saved have been redeemed, but there is a redemption that is future. It will be complete when we have received our resurrected and glorified bodies. It's then that we can stand before God without spot or blemish.

- The 'purchased possession' is 'us' (Christians).

- Those 'in Christ' are: blessed, chosen, predestined, adopted, accepted, redeemed, forgiven, enlightened, given inheritance, sealed, and assured. Amen! Thank God for salvation!

- Too, notice the Holy Trinity at work in our salvation"

(1) Work of the Father: Election (vs.3-6).

(2) Work of the Son: Redemption (vs.7-12).

(3) Work of Holy Spirit: Protection (vs.13,14).

Vs.15-21. Paul's prayer for knowledge and power.

- In the first 14 verses, Paul wrote of the believer's 'position in grace'. Now he prays that they might fully know and understand the real joy and meaning of having their sins forgiven, and, of their being a part of God's family.

- Three things Paul wanted every Christian to know:

(1) 'what the hope of his calling actually is'. Not only that we know and enjoy the blessings and benefits that are ours in this life, but that we understand 'what God's calling us into salvation' has secured and reserved for us in eternity.

(2) 'the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints'. Question: Is Paul speaking of God's inheritance in the saints, or, the saint's inheritance in God. (I believe it to be the former, from that which has already been written.)

- That believers may know 'how precious we are to God'. We (the church) are His purchased and prized possession. Note: Our treasure is in God, and His treasure is in us, His redeemed. Undoubtedly, many of our day think only of 'what they can get from God' rather than 'what they can be for God'.

Chapter 1 (cont.)

(3) 'the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward'. Note: The 'calling' (**v.18**) refers to the 'past'. The 'inheritance' (**v.18**) points to the 'future'. And the 'power' (limitless resources available to believers) concerns the 'present'.

- God's power, which raised Jesus from the dead and lifted him by ascension back to glory, is made available to every believer at the time of salvation. And it remains available as long as the person continues to walk in the light of God's Word. Therefore, Paul didn't pray that God's power would be given to believers, but that they would be aware of the power they already possessed in Christ. 'How tremendous is the power available to us who believe in God' (Philips).

Vs.20-23. It is the 'power' that:

- (1) Raised Christ from the dead;
- (2) Seated Christ at God's right hand (which speaks of honor, privilege, and power) in the heavenlies;
- (3) Gave Him supremacy and authority over all the universe;
- (4) Gave Him a name above every name;
- (5) Put all things under His feet (under his power and dominion (**Ps.8:6**); and,
- (6) Gave Him 'headship' of the church, which is his body. Amen!

- Christ is revealed as the 'invisible head' of the church, now seated in the glory world; while the church is the 'visible body of Christ' here on earth.

Chapter 2

- In chapter one we learned how God purposed (pre-planned) from before the foundation of the earth to call out a people for Himself. Too, He foreordained (pre-determined) that those who accepted His invitation for salvation would be forgiven, adopted into His family, become joint-heirs with Christ, and, be holy and without blame.

- Here in chapter two, He is actually creating this divine society, the 'Christian Church'.

- In **1:20-23**, Paul describes the 'power of God' in raising Jesus from the dead, and, in giving him 'dominion over all'.

- In **2:1-10**, he says this same power is at work in raising unbelievers from the 'death of sin' (saving; **c.f. Fig.#3. p.9**) and lifting them to 'heavenly places in Christ Jesus'.

- In this chapter we see: two persons; two peoples; two positions; and two periods.

Two Persons:

Prince of the power of the air (Satan). (**v.2**)

Christ Jesus, God's Son.

Two Peoples:

'Ye' - Gentiles; the Uncircumcision. (**vs.2,11**)

'We' - Jews, called Circumcision. (**v.11**)

Two Positions:

In sin. (**v.1**)

In Christ. (**v.10**)

- Note: There is no privileged class in the community of unbelievers. All are sinners. Too, there is no privileged class in Christ. God has no favorites. All come the same way. All must be saved by the blood of Jesus ('the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world' (**Jn.1:29**)).

Two Periods:

'In time past'. At that time. (**v.2**)

'But now'. (**v.13**)

V.1. 'And you. . . who were dead'. Paul is speaking to Gentiles who had accepted Christ as Savior. Note: When Adam, our forefather, sinned in the Garden, the spiritual cord that bound his human spirit to that of God was severed. And this resulted in something far more deadly than disease or degradation (as some teach). It (disobedience, sin) separated man from God. Too, it did not bring about spiritual disease, but 'spiritual death'.

- In **Jn.14:6**, Jesus said, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me'. Therefore, since Jesus is the 'life' (the source of all life), those yet unsaved are without life - 'spiritually dead' (**c.f. Fig.#2, p.9**).

The Heart of Man

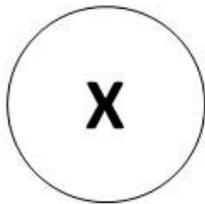


Fig. One

“X” represents the ‘Sin Nature’, with which we were born.
(Ps. 51:5, Rom 5:12)

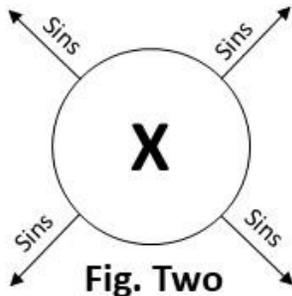


Fig. Two

Natural Man (1 Cor 2:6) - unsaved
‘Sin Nature’ has begun to bear fruit (sins).
Now a sinner (Rom 3:23)

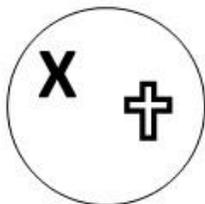


Fig. Three

“✝” represents the Holy Spirit (Spirit of Christ). Sins forgiven, saved, a ‘Babe in Christ’, yet carnal (1 Cor 3:1)
A warfare within (Rom 6:7)

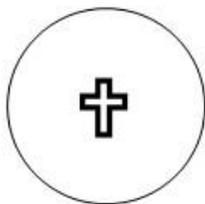


Fig. Four

Spiritual Man Sanctified. Perfect in Christ.
(1 Cor 2:6, 15; Jn 11:17; 1 Thes 4:3)

Chapter 2 (cont.)

- Note: The 'X' in the circles of p.9 represents that which was passed down to all mankind from Adam. It is called the 'sin nature', 'inward man', 'uncircumcised heart', 'self will', 'Adam nature', etc.

- 'dead in trespasses and sins'. These are the 'fruit of the sin nature', or, 'outward manifestations of the inward man' (c.f. Fig.#2, p.9). Such a person is unable to help himself. And unless God intervenes, he is hopelessly lost forever.

- 'hath he quickened' - given new life; made alive (c.f. Fig.#3, p.9). Paul tells us in I Cor.15:45, 'The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam (speaking of Christ) was a quickening spirit'. Note: Salvation (new life) is in Christ, and only in Him.

V.2. 'Wherein in time past ye walked'. Think about it: the 'dead' walking; a picture of unbelieving Gentiles as well as all those unsaved.

- 'according to the course of this world'. Before accepting Christ as Savior they conformed to the low standard of the world's morality, following after humanity's values and standards rather than those of Christ.

- 'prince of the power of the air' (Satan; the 'god of this world' - II Cor.4:4). Note: The term mentioned here seems to denote that evil spirits, those who have some power of influencing man by tempting, have their abode in the atmospheric heavens. Some even believe that 'storms' and 'disturbances of the atmosphere' are caused by Satan and his cohorts. But I can find no scripture for such teaching.

- 'the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience'. Even though 'Jesus saw Satan fall from heaven as lightening (Lu.10:18)', Satan is not destroyed. He continues his work in the hearts and lives of those who are blinded to the truth of God's Word.

- Note: When Christ arose from the dead He was victorious over Satan and all his power. He said to John (Rev.1:18), 'I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore. Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death'. Therefore, Christ is ruler of all the world, including the atmospheric heavens. The only power Satan now has is that which the Lord allows him to exercise. One day, that too will be taken away.

V.3. 'We'. Before accepting Christ as Savior, these Jews were in the same spiritual depraved position and category as were the pagan Gentiles. They were all in the same condemnation, spending their lives in the lusts of their flesh as if there was nothing greater than to please the carnal nature.

- Notice: In vs.2 & 3 there is not a single 'ray of light' nor a 'gleam of hope'. And unless God intervenes and takes the initiative, the sinner will forever remain in his sins.

Vs.4,5. 'But God, who is rich in mercy'. This is the 'turning point of destiny' for the unsaved. God is making a move toward him, shining a light on his path - to help.

- Notice: Three wonderful words are mentioned in these two verses that describe the 'remedy' God has provided for sinners - Mercy, Love, and Grace.

Chapter 2 (cont.)

- First, let me mention the remedy. After Adam and Eve sinned in disobeying God's word (**Gen.3:6**), they sewed fig leaves together in hopes the leaves would cover their newly discovered nakedness. But the leaves proved insufficient. Therefore, God killed an animal, shedding blood, in order to provide skins as a covering (propitiation). Note: This is a wonderful type of Christ; Who died in our stead, pouring out his life's blood as a covering for the sins of mankind. And, remember, Jesus' blood is the only covering sufficient for the task.

- The song-writer said it well:

'What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

What can make me whole again? Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

O precious is the flow That makes me white as now,

No other fount I know, Nothing but the blood of Jesus'. Amen! Thank God for Jesus!

- Will now come back to the three beautiful words mentioned in **vs.4 & 5**.

(1) **Mercy**. Because of our sins, God has a perfect right to administer judgment. Instead, He has chosen to extend mercy (unmerited favor; not giving us what we deserve). Note: God 'is rich in mercy'. He has an abundant supply; enough for all who will come to Him with a repentant heart.

- The Psalmist said, 'The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy' (**Ps.103:8**). Again, in **Ps.136**, we find the words 'for his mercy endureth for ever' in the closing line of all twenty-six verses of the chapter. Thank God for his mercy!

(2) **Love**. In **I Jn.4:8b**, we read that 'God is love'.

- In **Jn.3:16**, we read of God's love in giving his Son for the sins of the world, 'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life'.

- In **Rom.5:8**, we find God's love in action (demonstrated): 'But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us'.

- And in **I Cor.13:13**, we are reminded by the Apostle Paul that God's love is eternal, 'And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity (love).

- Note: We sing of our love for the Lord; and that's wonderful! But such love, on our part, is only possible - 'because he first loved us' (**I Jn.4:19**).

(3) **Grace** (God's unmerited favor; Him giving to us that which we do not deserve; another of the wonderful characteristics of our God).

- In **Acts 4:33**, Luke mentioned the term 'great grace'; in **II Cor.9:14**, the Apostle Paul speaks of 'exceeding grace'; in **I Pet.4:10**, Peter calls it 'manifold grace'; and in **II Cor.12:9**, the Lord gave a word of assurance to Paul, saying, 'My grace is sufficient for thee'. Amen! Then, centuries later, a man named John Newton penned the words to one of most well-known and best-loved hymns of the church, 'Amazing Grace'. Thank God for mercy, love, and grace!

Chapter 2 (cont.)

V.6,7. Results of God's mercy, love, and grace:

(1) By Christ, we are 'quickened' (made alive; raised from spiritual death, from the deadness of sin).

(2) With Christ, we are now seated in the heavenlies. Note: 'As God placed Jesus at his right hand in heaven, so he has placed his people with him in heavenly places' (Pulpit Comm.). Amen! Oftentimes, seemingly, this is the experience at salvation, and rightfully so. Too, I'm sure it was the experience of Peter, James, and John, while with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration (**Matt.17**). The experience was wonderful they desired to stay up on the mountain. But my prayer is (since God as ordained it so), that we, as members of God's family, would have a burning desire to enjoy such a wonderful fellowship on a consistent basis.

(3) In Christ, we have a glorious future. In 'the ages to come' (for all eternity) God will be sharing with us the exceeding riches of His grace.

V.8. 'For by grace are ye saved' (c.f. **Fig#3, p.9**). Note: These are some of the greatest and most beautiful words in all of Scripture.

- Salvation is totally and entirely of God and through God. There is not one thing that man can 'do', or 'be', or 'say', or 'give' - that can add to God's redemption. It is all of 'grace (God's unmerited favor).

- 'through faith' - which comes from hearing the Word of God (**Rom.10:17**). Note: In order to be saved, a man must first 'hear' the Word (Gospel), and then 'receive' Christ as Savior through 'faith' in that Word (believe God means what He says). Since no one can be saved without hearing the Word, Jesus gave the 'Great Commission' that we, as believers, 'Go everywhere and tell everyone the good news' (**Mk.16:15-18**).

- On the part of God, salvation is by grace; on the part of man, it is through faith. 'Faith' believes the good news of a free salvation through Christ, and accepts Him as Savior.

- 'it is the gift of God'. (God's greatest gift and man's greatest need.) It's free, without money and without price; that which could never have been ours but for the goodness and mercy and generosity of God. All that is asked of man is that he 'receive it by faith' - with a thankful heart.

Vs.9,10. 'Not of works, lest any man should boast'.

- Salvation cannot be earned (not of works), but is 'unto good works'. As Christians, we do not toil to gain entrance into heaven, but labor together in His vineyard to help others find their way there. Note: Many of our day are substituting: Education for regeneration, Religion for repentance, and, Works for grace - all to no avail.

- We are God's handiwork, 'created in Christ Jesus'. Before we could do anything aright, or of any true benefit, we had to be fashioned anew by God. And, according to the Apostle Paul, that's exactly what God did when we repented of our sins: 'Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new' (**II Cor.5:17**). Too, James tells us that 'good works' are not only the aim of our salvation, but the evidence of our faith (**Jas.2:17,18**).

- Through regeneration, God prepares man for good works. It has been his plan from eternity past that those saved would become workers in his service.

Chapter 2 (cont.)

Vs.11-22. Contrast between the Past and the Present.

V.11. 'Wherefore remember'. They were not to lose sight of the fact that they were born Gentiles. Too, they are to remember what they were by nature, and what they had become by grace. Note: This admonition is beneficial for us, as well. It's good to remember from whence He has brought us. David said, 'He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings' (**Ps.40:2**).

- They were Gentiles in respect of the flesh - not bearing in their bodies the mark of Israel's God (circumcision), therefore, not marked out for His blessings.

V.12. The 'sad state' of Gentiles before accepting Christ as Savior (c.f. Fig#2, p.9).

- Without Christ. Having no knowledge of Christ, no interest in him, and no life or blessing from him.

- 'aliens from the commonwealth of Israel' - shut out of (excluded from) God's chosen community.

- 'strangers from the covenants of promise' - the promise of Christ, of which circumcision was the seal. Note: God had made a promise to Abraham, saying, 'I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed'

(Gen.12:3).

- 'having no hope' - nothing to look forward to (no reasonable expectation of improvement in your religious condition).

- 'without God' - no God to whom you could turn.

V.13. 'But now in Christ Jesus'. The picture changes, entirely. Notice the contrast of being 'without Christ' (**v.12**) and now, in this verse, 'in Christ Jesus'. Amen!

- Although at one time 'far off' (outside the pale), have now been 'made nigh by the blood of Christ'; have been brought into fellowship with God. Note: The 'blood of Jesus' breaks down all barriers: national, racial, social, or whatever.

Vs.14,15. Jew and Gentiles 'one body' in Christ.

- 'For he is our peace, who hath made both one'. It's good to note that Christ is not only our 'Peacemaker', but our 'Peace'. Here, with Gentiles having accepted Christ as Savior, both they and the believing Jews have become 'one body'.

Sin's two-fold work:

(1) Its primary work is to 'separate man from God'. Note: This is what happened to Adam and Eve when they disobeyed God's command in the Garden. Upon realizing that they were naked, they tried to cover themselves with fig leaves and hide from God. Therefore, the first work of salvation is to bring the sinner out of hiding into fellowship with God.

(2) Sin's secondary work is to 'separate man from man'. In Matt.22:37-39, Jesus said, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself'.

Chapter 2 (cont.)

- Note: The first four commandments (**Exo.20**) have to do with man's relationship with God. The final six commandments speak of man's relationship with man.

- In his human nature, Christ put an end to the cause of enmity between Jews and Gentiles, which was the Law with all its ordinances, commands, and decrees. His desired plan was to unite the two sections of humanity in Himself so as to form one 'new man' (the Church) - and, thus, make peace.

- Too, since the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus has made it possible for all (whosoever) to be saved, some teach that the 'Law' has been abolished completely. Yet, Jesus himself said (**Matt.5:17**), 'Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill'. Again, in (**Matt.7:12**) Jesus said, 'Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets'. Jesus did not come to destroy, or annul, the law, but to bring them to perfection.

- Note: God did not convert Jews into Gentiles, nor Gentiles into Jews - nor did He raise the Gentiles to the earthly position of the Jews, or lower the Jews to the earthly position of the Gentiles. But, in Christ, both Jews and Gentiles were raised to a heavenly position in Him.

V.16. This was the Lord's purpose; that he might reconcile the two entities into a single body to God through the cross. Paul said, in **Col.1:20**, 'And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself'. Again, in **Col.3:11**, he says, 'Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond or free: but Christ is all in all'. Amen!

Vs.17,18. He came with the 'good news' of peace, both to those afar off (Gentiles), and to them that were nigh (Jews). It is through him that both, united in the one Spirit, are now able to approach the Father.

- 'Access' means that we who have faith in Christ have the freedom and right to approach our heavenly Father with confidence that we will be accepted, loved, and welcomed - made possible through Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit.

- In writing to Timothy, Paul said, 'For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus' (I Tim.2:5). Amen! That excludes Mary (Catholicism), or Allah (Islam), or some saint - only Jesus.

V.19. So then, since you have become 'one' in Christ and have been reconciled to God, you are no longer sojourners (foreigners), but are now 'fellow-citizens with the saints' (members of the family of God).

Vs.20-22. The church can only be a 'true church' if it is founded on the Christ-inspired infallible revelation to the first apostles. All believers and churches are dependent on the words, message, and faith of these apostles - as recorded in Acts and in their inspired writings.

Chapter 2 (cont.)

- **The Apostles' Creed**. I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ His only Son, our Lord; which was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into hell (that is, the place of the departed righteous); the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven; and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead; He ascended into heaven; and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic (universal) church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and life everlasting. Amen.

- The 'stone' rejected by the Jewish builders (**Jn.1:11**) is become the 'chief corner stone' (**Acts 4:11**).

- In union with him (Jew and Gentile in Christ), the whole building is properly and harmoniously fitted together - all made possible through the Holy Spirit.

Chapter 3

Vs.1-9. The Church, A Special Revelation to Paul

Vs.1,2. Paul had been a prisoner for some two years in Caesarea, and, now, another two years a prisoner in Rome, yet, he did not consider himself to be a prisoner of any government or person. He maintained the firm belief that God was in control of all that happened to him. Therefore, he was sure that he was in jail in the will of God. **Ps.37:23** says, 'The steps of a good man are ordered (prearranged; ordained step by step) by the Lord'.

- Question: Have there been times when it seemed as if Satan has had the upper hand; that God was no longer in control of the situation? If so, take heart; in such times we have God's promise 'that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose' (**Rom.8:28**).

- In essence, Paul says, I am a prisoner in Rome because of my preaching concerning you (Ephesians), for preaching that Gentiles are an equal part of the body of Christ with the Jews, the 'one new man' of **2:15**.

- 'dispensation' (a stewardship, or management). Paul didn't choose the stewardship of his ministry or Apostleship. It was God who commissioned him, giving grace, in order that he might preach (be a channel of blessing) as the Apostle to the Gentiles.

Vs.3-7. The 'mystery' was not something mysterious, but God's secret until He was ready to reveal it. Too, this mystery, as herein explained, was not the gospel itself, but that the gospel was meant for Gentiles as well as the Jews; that the Jews and Gentiles would be 'one in Christ' (the Church). Such a mystery was not only unknown but unknowable apart from divine revelation.

- God's plan, the Church, was hidden from previous generations, but was revealed at the proper time by the Holy Spirit. Note: Paul was given a 'truth' that was hidden from even the greatest of prophets.

(1) Abraham, a Friend of God and Father of the Hebrew nation which brought the Messiah into the world - 'did not know'.

(2) Moses, the 'Great Emancipator' and Leader of the Israelie nation, known as the meekest man of his day - 'did not know'.

(3) David, Israel's great King, and a man after God's own heart - 'did not know'.

(4) Daniel, a Statesman, Prophet, Prayer-warrior, and one to whom the events of the end-time were revealed - 'did not know'.

(5) John the Baptist, the Fore-runner of Christ the Messiah, a Preacher of repentance, and, a man of whom Jesus said, 'Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist' (**Matt.11:11**) - 'did not know'.

Chapter 3 (cont.)

- Important to note: It was not a mystery to the Old Testament Prophets that Gentiles would be saved (**Isa.49:6**); yet, it was never revealed to them that Gentile and Jewish believers would become equal in the body of Christ.

- Too, when testifying before King Agrippa, Paul says that he had been sent by God to minister to the Gentiles - 'that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified by believing in me' (**Acts 26:18**).

Vs.8,9. Paul considers himself to be less than the least of all saints, yet, he was humbled that God had extended 'grace' in such a way that he was privileged to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ to the Gentiles.

- His sense of unworthiness is progressive: (1) In **I Cor.15:9**, he said, 'I am the least of the apostles; (2) Here in **v.8**, he says, I 'am less than least of all saints'; and, (3) in **I Tim.1:15**, he speaks of himself as being 'chief of sinners'. Note: Some have suggested that Paul's assessment of himself was nothing more than 'false humility'. But nothing could be farther from the truth. It was simple honesty.

- In reality, Paul was saying that without God's grace and help he would be unable to do the work God called him to do. Note: And that's true for all who labor together with God in His vineyard. Without His grace and anointing we can accomplish nothing of lasting spiritual benefit. Jesus said (**Jn.15:5**), 'without me ye can do nothing'. So true.

- Paul was given 'grace' to preach to the Gentiles 'the unsearchable riches of Christ'. Note: Usually, precious things are rare. And since that is true, their rarity increases their value (price). But here, that which is 'most precious' is infinitely abundant. Too, it's been said that these 'riches in Christ' include all of God's truths, all of His blessings, and all that He is and has. We are serving a wonderful Lord! Whose riches are boundless, endless, exhaustless, fathomless, incalculable, and untraceable. Amen! What a Savior!

- 'If Christ were not too big for our mental comprehension, He would be too little for our spiritual need' (K.J. Bible Comm.)

- The 'mystery' of God's eternal plan and purpose had been hidden from the beginning, but in order that all might see God had Paul turn on the light (gospel).

Vs.10-12. God is making of the Jews and Gentiles 'one new body' to demonstrate to the 'principalities and powers in heavenly places' the manifold wisdom of God in the eternal purpose. Note: There are two opinions as to whom these 'principalities and powers in heavenly places' might be: (1) unfallen angels (**I Pet.1:12**), or, (2) the ruling powers of darkness (hostile forces opposed to God), as mentioned in **6:12** and **Dan.10:13,20,21**.

- God's 'eternal purpose' is being made known through believers in Christ Jesus proclaiming the glorious gospel of salvation.

- 'The Church thus becomes the university for angels, and each saint a professor. Only in the church can the angels, both good and evil, come to an adequate comprehension of the grace of God' (**Wuest**).

Chapter 3 (cont.)

Vs.13-21. Prayer for inner fulness and knowledge.

- In **Ch.1**, Paul's prayer was for 'revelation' - 'that ye may know' the riches of His grace. Here, it's a prayer for 'realization' - 'that ye might be', by appropriating and enjoying the riches, rooted and grounded in the Word.

-	<u>First Prayer (1:15-23)</u>	<u>Second Prayer (3:13-21)</u>
	Revelation	Realization
	Enlightenment	Enablement
	Light	Life
	Know what you are	Be what you are
	Know the power of God	Experience the fulness of God
	Power working for us	Power working in us
	Ye in Christ	Christ in you

- Question is asked: How could Paul's suffering be the Ephesians' glory? (If he had refrained from preaching the gospel, he would not have been imprisoned. But if that had been the case, they would not have heard the 'good news' of salvation and been converted.)

V.14. 'I bow my knees'. Note: When Jews prayed, they normally stood upright with hands raised, but Paul's posture here tells us that this is no ordinary prayer.

- It's been said, 'The position of the body when praying reflects the condition of the soul'. Still others say, that kneeling in prayer denotes 'deliberate prayer', approaching God with reverence and holy fear. Note: People bow in humiliation, in supplication, and, more often than not, in times of urgency.

V.15. 'The whole family'. The apostle recognizes all saints, whether in heaven or on earth, as forming one family. And the whole family receives its name from God (the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ).

- Note: Some use this verse to teach the false doctrine of the 'Fatherhood of God' (that all, whether saved or unsaved, are God's children).

- The Fatherhood of God over all created intelligences is in the sense of Creator, as Paul mentioned when ministering to those of Athens (**Acts 17:28,29**). In that context, was Paul saying that 'we are the offspring of God', inasmuch as God is the Creator of all. It has nothing to do with salvation, where only the born-again (saved) are God's children.

V.16. 'According to the riches of his glory'. God is not promising something He is unable to perform. He estimated His resources before He promised such wealth to His children. Too, it's been said that 'His budget has always been in balance'. Amen! We're serving an awesome God!
- He counted the entire cost long ages before he laid the first foundation stone; and he knew he was fully able to complete the task.

Chapter 3 (cont.)

Vs.17,18. Paul is not praying that Christ may come into their hearts, but, by faith, that he may continue to dwell (abide) in their hearts. Note: Every believer is indwelt by Christ at the moment of being saved.

- 'by faith'. Too many have a tendency to depend upon 'feelings'. Then, when the good feelings are no longer there, Satan deceives them into believing that they have lost out, that some unknown sin has caused their faltering. But, we must remember, our steadfastness does not come about by feelings, but by faith.

- 'being rooted and grounded in love'. 'May your roots go down deep into the soil of God's marvelous love' (Taylor).

- Paul uses four dimensions to describe the vastness and completeness of God's immeasurable love. Three illustrations: (1) 'The 'breadth' extends to all people; its 'length' extends to all time; its 'depth' extends to the lowest condition of human need; and its 'height' extends to the highest heavens'. Amen! Truly, Christ is 'able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him' (**Heb.7:25**). (2) The 'width' of God's love reminds us that his arms reach around the globe. While on the cross, Jesus' hands were stretched out for the whole world. Its 'length' reminds us that his love extends from eternity past to eternity future. Its 'depth' reminds us that his love ministers to all the needs of the human heart. And its 'height' reaches to the very throne of God. And, (3) The 'breadth' - boundless. 'For God so loved the world' (**Jn.3:16**). The 'length' - endless. 'He gave His only begotten Son'. His love reached from the portals of glory to a stable in Bethlehem, and finally, to the cross. (3) The 'depth' - fathomless. 'Whosoever believeth in him should not perish'. And, (4) the 'height' - measureless. 'Everlasting life'. God's love reaches to the depths of sin and places the sinner in heavenly places with Christ Jesus.

V.19. 'That ye might be filled with all the fulness of God'. We can never contain all of God. He is greater than all the containers. Yet, we can be filled to capacity with God: first, by being saved from sin (**1 Jn.1:9**); afterwards, sanctified wholly (**1 Thes.4:3; 5:23**); then, filled to overflowing with His Spirit.

Vs.20,21. God is able. Not only will God do for us more than we ask and desire in prayer, but more than we can possibly perceive (think). Whatever the need, God is able to supply it, in Christ. It makes no difference how great or how small.

- He is able to make the vilest sinner clean; to deliver in the hour of peril; to heal all our diseases; to deliver us from temptation; to meet all our needs; to keep us from falling; and to do all, above all, abundantly above all, and even exceedingly abundantly above all we might ask or think. Amen! What a mighty God we serve!

- 'May our God be given glory - because of His wonderful master plan of redemption and salvation through Christ Jesus' (Taylor).

- Notice: In his prayer for 'inner strength' (**vs.14-21**), Paul addresses all three members of the Godhead (Holy Trinity): the Father, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Spirit.

Chapter 4

- In the first three chapters we learned of the 'wealth' that is ours in Christ. Now, in the final three chapters, we learn how Christians are to 'walk', so that others might see Christ in us.
- While preaching the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see our good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven' (**Matt.5:16**)

V.1. 'Therefore'. This marks the transition from 'Doctrine to duty', from 'Principle to practice', and, from 'Position to behavior'. Note: It's important that we understand - the Christian 'walk' is more than adhering to church dogma, it's living in a manner that brings glory and honor to our Master, the Lord Jesus Christ.

- 'the prisoner of the Lord'. Paul had mentioned his imprisonment in **3:1**. Because of his obedience in fulfilling his call to the ministry, he had paid a considerable price, personally. (Yet, he had no complaints.) Now, he reminds the believers at Ephesus that the faithful 'Christian walk' can be costly.
- 'I beseech you (implore, request vigorously) that ye walk worthy'. Be everything the Lord would have you be. Note: If we profess to be Christians, we should act Christ-like. They were not to be ashamed of their religion (what Christ had done in their hearts), but rejoice in it (live it to the fullest). Remember: Others measure Christ and Christianity by the way we live.

- Paul gives a Six-fold Exhortation (vs.1-3):

- (1) Walk worthy of your calling.
- (2) Walk in all lowliness, or humility (**Matt.5:3**).
- (3) Walk in meekness.
- (4) Walk with longsuffering.
- (5) Forbear one another in love. Be patient.
- (6) Endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Vs.2,3. 'Walk in unity'. In order for this to be a reality, we are to be humble, gentle, patient, understanding, peaceful. etc. In essence, we are called upon to bear the 'fruit of the Spirit', as outlined in **Gal.5:8,9**.

- Due to the many natural differences among believers (race, culture, up-bringing, disposition, etc.), there is always a potential for friction. Therefore, 'unity' doesn't come automatically. We must work at it.
- 'Forebearing one another in love'. To love Christians in spite of their faults. Note: It's been said that to forbear is to 'put up with', or, even 'endure' one another - yet, 'in love' (exhibit the love of God that is in our hearts).
- At times, a Christian might 'get under your skin', 'rub you wrong', or 'irritate you'. That's a reason why we need 'Agape love' flooding our souls at all times.
- The spiritual health of a church is dependent upon the unity of its members. And it's the Holy Spirit that leads in this endeavor. But, as believers, we must be willing to be led.
- 'Endeavouring to keep'. We are 'to make every effort'. And those efforts must be focused on God rather than on ourselves. Spiritual unity cannot be obtained 'by the flesh'.

Chapter 4 (cont.)

Vs.4-6. A Sevenfold Unity.

- In **Jn.17** - Jesus prayed for 'unity' (oneness) among believers. Here, Paul outlines that which is involved in that oneness.

(1) One Body. The Church is an organic whole, of which believers are the members, and Christ the Head. We have been called out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation. And through the blood of Jesus, we are united to Him as living members of His body.

(2) One Spirit - the Holy Spirit. There are many 'spirits' in the world, but we are admonished by John in his first epistle (**I Jn.4:1**), to 'try the spirits whether they are of God'.

(3) One hope - the same glorious reality for both Jews and Gentiles. Our 'hope' is in Christ; and our 'goal' is to be 'like Him' so that we might one day be 'with Him'.

(4) One Lord - the Lord Jesus Christ. There are many false Christs - but only one Lord and Savior. He is the 'sacrificial Lamb' who gave Himself that we might be saved. It's been said, 'If He is not Lord of all, He is not Lord at all'.

- The question is raised: Is it possible for Jesus to be a person's "Savior", and yet not be his Lord? (I believe the answer is 'yes'. That He becomes the Lord of our lives when we surrender our all to Him, including our 'wills'; when we can pray 'Not my will but thine be done'. Amen! Thank God for the experience of 'sanctification'). Read **Heb.13:12,13**. Note: The all-important question now: Is He Lord of your life?

(5) One faith - not a 'creed' or a 'body of doctrine' revealed in the New Testament, but a commitment to Christ (one way of salvation - **Rom.10:9,10**). Anything less than 'salvation through the blood of Jesus' will lead to eternal damnation.

(6) One baptism. There are four schools of thought. (1) 'Water baptism' in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Note: Scriptural baptism is the outward expression of an inward experience: a public confession of Christ. (2) A particular 'method' of baptizing in water, i.e. sprinkling, submerge (put under water). etc. (3) The Pentecostal fulness in receiving the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. (4) It is the expression of the 'one faith' in the 'one Lord' which resulted in the baptism of the 'one Spirit' into the 'one body' - the 'one baptism' that saves the soul, the 'baptism into Christ' (**Rom.6:3**). (I agree.)

(7) One God and Father of all. For all; not a separate God for each nation or religion. Note: Some claim that since God is the Creator of all, He is the Father of all. But that's far from the truth. Jesus said to the unbelieving Jews (**Jn.9:44**), 'Ye are of your father, the devil'. Here, in this chapter of Ephesians, Paul is writing to Christians (the Church), encouraging them in the Lord.

Vs.7-11. The Ministry Gifts of Christ to the Church.

- Paul now moves from the subject of 'unity' of believers' to the 'uniqueness' of believers.

V.7. 'Grace' is not given in equal measures. Christ, as the great Bestower, measures out His gifts, and each receives according to his measure. Note: 'Grace' does not refer merely to supernatural gifts, but to the ordinary gifts of men, as well.

- God has placed each member of the 'body' (Church) in the particular place He wishes that person to occupy. Then He bestows upon that person the gift needed to accomplish his work effectively.

Chapter 4 (cont.)

- Because God is a God of grace, He gives freely; and is not based on who we are or on anything we have done. His 'grace' is unmerited, unearned, and undeserved. But the wonderful part is: it is sufficient for our every need (**II Cor.12:9**).

V.8. 'When he ascended up on high'. When he returned to 'glory' from the Mt. of Olives some forty days after his resurrection. Note: The speaker is God (the Author of Scripture), and the quotation is from **Ps. 68**, which is a 'psalm of triumph', where the placing of the ark on Mt. Zion is celebrated as if it had been a great victory.

- 'He led captivity captive'. These captives, taken to heaven with Christ after his resurrection, are most probably the Old Testament saints that were in sheol (hades)(**Matt.27:51-53**).

- 'and gave gifts unto men'. Note: 'As in a literal triumph, the leaders of the enemy's army are led captive, so the powers were led captive by Christ' (**M. Henry**). As a conqueror at a triumph gets gifts to distribute, so Christ, on his resurrection and ascension, got the Holy Ghost to bestow on his Church.

V.9. Some believe the 'lower parts of the earth', here, speaks of the 'earth itself'. Other believe it is the 'grave'. Still others, that it has sheol in mind. (I agree.) Note: Before the resurrection of Jesus