

Empowerment from Ephesians



A letter from the apostle Paul to the saints at Ephesus

Verse-by-verse commentary by Rick Campione
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Introduction



Location of Ephesus



Authorship of Ephesians



Who wrote Ephesians, and who was it to?

Scripture tells us that it was **written by Paul** an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, **to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus:**

When was this book written?

Most scholars agree that Ephesians (along with Colossians, Galatians, and Philippians) was written during Paul's imprisonment at Rome (Acts 28:16, 30). This likely took place sometime between AD 59 and 63 and lasted for two years. This period of time, is approximately 25 years of spiritual growth and 12 years or so of missionary experience for the apostle of the Gentiles..

What is this book about?

Main themes include: The position of the Body of Christ, The possessions of the Body of Christ and The personal walk of The Body of Christ

Content of Ephesians



What is this book about?

Main themes include: The position of the Body of Christ, The possessions of the Body of Christ and The personal walk of The Body of Christ

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Faith

Love

Hope

All scripture is given by inspiration of God...

PROFITABLE FOR



DOCTRINE

Precepts; what is taught, instruction (current economy of grace that we live in)

ROMANS



EPHESIANS

1 THESSALONIANS

2 THESSALONIANS

PROFITABLE FOR

REPROOF

Usually with the suggestion of shame to the person convicted, chasten, call to account

1 CORINTHIANS

PHILIPPIANS

PHILEMON

2 CORINTHIANS

1 TIMOTHY

2 TIMOTHY

PROFITABLE FOR

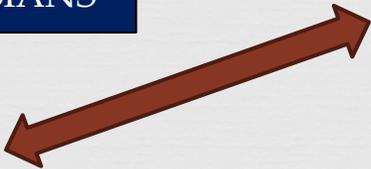
CORRECTION

Restoration to an upright state, improvement of life or character

GALATIANS

COLOSSIANS

TITUS



...That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

2 Timothy 3:16

For INSTRUCTION in righteousness

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. -2 Timothy 2:15

Chapter 1



Our Blessing In Christ -1:1-14

- 1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints, which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus:
- 2 Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: {places: or, things}
- 4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:
- 5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,
- 6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.
- 7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;
- 8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;
- 9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:
- 10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: {heaven: Gr. the heavens}
- 11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:
- 12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. {trusted: or, hoped}
- 13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,
- 14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

Our Blessing In Christ -1:1-14

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

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: [places: or, things]

4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

Verses 1 through 4 – (Grace and Peace)

In all of the apostle's letters, he reminds his brothers and sisters that they have **grace** shed upon them and **peace** from both God Our Father (note the "our"), and from the Lord Jesus Christ. **(verse 2)**

The Father has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ **(verse 3)** and in proportion to and seeing to this fact He has chosen us in Him **BEFORE** the foundation of the world....before Genesis friends, this was His plan!

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ [be] with you all. Amen. Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: - Romans 16:24-26

...that we should be holy and without blame, before Him in love **(verse 4)**. And having predestinated us to the adoption of children **by** Jesus Christ to Himself according to the good pleasure of His will....to the praise and glory of His grace He has made us accepted in the beloved!

Our Blessing In Christ -1:1-14

5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

Verses 5 through 7 – (Predetermined and Adopted)

And having predestinated us to the adoption of children **by** Jesus Christ to Himself according to the good pleasure of His will....to the praise and glory of His grace He has made us accepted in the beloved! **(verses 5 and 6)**

God “decided beforehand” or predestinated us to Himself by the work of Jesus Christ. In eternity past, the Godhead constructed this perfect plan which included an opportunity for all men to be children of God by simply taking Him at His word. As stated in 2 Corinthians 5, God The Father reconciled “the world” unto Himself not imputing or charging their sins against them and as special ambassadors has given to us the word of reconciliation. What was predestinated was that all men would be reconciled to God through His Son, whether or not men receive the gift decree of righteousness offered by God is choice to accept or reject.

We are predestinated unto “the adoption of children by Jesus Christ Himself” according to the good pleasure of *His* will.

Our Blessing In Christ -1:1-14

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Verses 5 through 7 – (Predetermined and Adopted)

28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. – Romans 8:28-30

Adoption (*huiiothesia*) - **the nature and condition of the true disciples in Christ, who by receiving the Spirit of God into their souls become sons of God**

Our Blessing In Christ -1:1-14

Romans 8:1-14

- 1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.
- 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.
- 3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:
- 4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.
- 5 For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.
- 6 For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.
- 7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.
- 8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.
- 9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.
- 10 And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.
- 11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.
- 12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.
- 13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.
- 14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

Our Blessing In Christ -1:1-14

Romans 8:15-28

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

16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

19 For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.

20 For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope,

21 Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.

23 And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

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

Our Blessing In Christ -1:1-14

- 5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,
6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.
7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;*

Verses 5 through 7 – (Predetermined and Adopted)

Let's look at the word "adoption" ...when adopted, you don't have to do anything but embrace it, believe it...as this is one of the many spiritual blessings in heavenly places we have ...

With Romans being our "Faith" doctrine Paul covers the work that God The Holy Spirit plays placing us in Jesus Christ. This can be best illustrated in the eighth chapter:

- No condemnation because *we walk in the Spirit - verse 1*
- Freedom from the law of sin and death because of *life in the Spirit - verse 2*
- Righteousness of the law because *we walk in the Spirit - verse 4*
- *We mind* (agree, cherish, harmonious) *the things of the Spirit - verses 5,6*
- *We are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit and therefore pleasing to God - verses 8,9*
- *We have the Spirit of life because of righteousness - verse 10*
- *We have the increase of life (quickening) because of the Spirit - verse 11*
- *If we are led by the Spirit of God (and we are, as Paul told us in verse 9) then we are the adopted sons of God - verses 14, 15*
- *The Spirit of God bears witness with our rational human spirit that we are the children of God - verse 16*

Our Blessing In Christ -1:1-14

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Verses 5 through 7 – (Predetermined and Adopted)

- As adopted children of God we are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ as noted in verse 17 of Romans 8
 - ✓ As joint-heirs “suffering for Christ”, not from self affliction, caused by bad decisions, we have an opportunity to rejoice in our patience of hope due to persecutions we endure for the cause of Jesus Christ.
 - ✓ If so be that we suffer with [him], that we may be also glorified together.
 - ✓ So as sons and daughters of God, suffering is a privilege and a badge of honor...how many prayer meetings are structured that way???
- The NLT states it this way,what we suffer today is nothing compared to the glory God has for us later. In fact, all creation is waiting eagerly for that future day when God will reveal who his children are anticipating the day when it will join God's children in glorious freedom from death and decay.
- For we know that all creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time
- As His adopted children we have the “first fruits” of the Spirit when compared to other saints of other ages. - *verse 23*

But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. - Galatians 4:4,5

Our Blessing In Christ -1:1-14

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Verses 5 through 7 (Redemption and Forgiveness)

This plan, this “mystery” was hid in God...and it was His secret to be revealed at just the right time and was the basis for Paul’s ministry. Believers who accept the righteousness of Jesus Christ as their entrance into heaven are “highly favored” now with our position being in Christ! **(verse 6)**

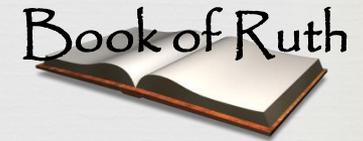
In whom we have **redemption** through His blood, the forgiveness of sins **(verse 7)** according to the riches of His grace. Strong’s defines “redemption” as a “releasing effected by payment of a ransom”, deliverance or liberation procured by the payment of a ransom.

“Redemption” is used 20 times in the bible and 11 times in the NT. The Greek - *apolytrōsis* (*ah-poh-lu-tro-sis*) is used 7 of the 11 times in Paul’s letters and interestingly the most in his epistle to the saints at Ephesus (3 times)!



Our Blessing In Christ -1:1-14

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Verses 5 through 7 (Redemption and Forgiveness)

When talking about redemption, the book of Ruth is a wonderful story that comes to mind! It provides another resource for us to study when investigating the blessings that we have in Christ concerning the topic of redemption.

The primary purpose of the Book of Ruth is the presentation of an important phase in the doctrine of redemption. Redemption is possible only through a Kinsman-Redeemer. God could not redeem apart from a Mediator. Since only God could redeem, it was necessary for Him to become that person. Boaz furnishes the only figure for the Kinsman-Redeemer aspect of redemption which is so essential for any proper theory of the Atonement. This little Book of Ruth comes down to our level and tells the commonplace story of a couple who love each other. They were ordinary folk, average folk, and their love story is a mirror in which we can see the divine love of a Savior for you and me. As we proceed into the Book of Ruth, we see this wonderful love story unfold before us. – J. Vernon McGee

Our Blessing In Christ -1:1-14

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Verses 5 through 7 (Redemption and Forgiveness)

The Old Testament contains man's shortcomings, depravity, and baseness. It also holds Israel's failure as a nation against the greatness of God. But what it also provides its readers are models of how God uses basic principles within its 36 books, such as redemption in the Book of Ruth, to help us understand His love for us!

"Redeem" is used 56 times in 40 verses in the bible including 2 times in the NT.

There are 3 different terms used in Hebrew to describe the idea of "redemption".

The first term used for redemption has a legal meaning. In this case the verb "padah" (Hebrew 6299) is used when an animal substitutes for (or redeems) a person or another animal. The noun derived from the root word means "the ransom" or "the price paid". When a living being or animal, needs to be redeemed, the substitution **must** be made, or price paid; otherwise, the creature involved is killed (Exodus 13:13; 34:20).

- ✓ To ransom
- ✓ To be ransomed
- ✓ To allow one to ransomed
- ✓ To deliver



Our Blessing In Christ -1:1-14

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Verses 5 through 7 (Redemption and Forgiveness)

The second term involved is the Hebrew (1350) root “ga’al”, which is used to discuss family rules and obligations, the laws over family property rights and duties.

For example, if a piece of property were lost by a family member, **the next of kin had both the right and the obligation to redeem this property.** This right of redemption protected the family inheritance. The noun derived from this root is equivalent to the English root “redemption,” and the person who buys back the property is the “go’el”, **or redeemer.**

An Israelite who was forced to sell himself into slavery to pay his debts could be redeemed by a near relative or even by himself (Leviticus 25:47-49). Land might also be redeemed in the same way (25:25-28; Jeremiah 32:6-9).

The right to be redeemed came to people in special circumstances, as well. The obligation of a man to marry his brother’s widow is well known. In the book of Ruth, the right of redemption is extended to a distant relative. In this story, Boaz redeemed not only the property but Ruth as well, and she became his wife (Ruth 3:13; 4:1-6).

Our Blessing In Christ -1:1-14

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Verses 5 through 7 (Redemption and Forgiveness)

The third term used in Hebrew is the root verb “kaphar”, which means “to cover.” From this root come the terms meaning to cover sin, atone, or expiate. The noun derived, “kopher”, means **the price paid to cover sin.** This term is used to **mean the payment made for any life that should be forfeited.** A good illustration is the price paid by the owner of an ox that had gored a person to death. Under the law, the owner’s life was forfeited, but he could redeem himself by paying a set amount of money (Exodus 21:28-32).

In a similar fashion, The Hebrew (language) uses different words for different situations, but the same essential meaning of redemption was involved in all situations. **The concept of redeeming or freeing was of primary concern.**

Our Blessing In Christ -1:1-14

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Verses 5 through 7 (Redemption and Forgiveness)

GOD AS REDEEMER

In the Old Testament **God** is spoken of as “redeeming **his** people” as a whole, rather than individuals. The beginning of this concept of “national redemption” is seen in God’s freeing the people from slavery in Egypt. Though they were in bondage, God **ransomed** them (Exodus 6:6; Deuteronomy 15:15).

This idea of redemption required the payment of a set price or the substitution of one life for another. However, when **God in the Old Testament** is spoken of as “redeeming,” he redeems **through his might and power**, not by paying a price.

- I am the LORD, and I will free you from your slavery in Egypt. I will redeem you **with mighty power** and great acts of judgment (Exodus 6:6, NLT; compare Deuteronomy 15:15).
- The same thought is carried forward in other times of need and rescue, such as the time of exile. God is the national Deliverer (for example, Isaiah 29:22; 35:10; 43:1; 44:22; Jeremiah 31:11).
- In and throughout Psalms 1-41 the LORD God is “**The Redeemer**”

Our Blessing In Christ -1:1-14

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Verses 5 through 7 (Redemption and Forgiveness)

GOD AS REDEEMER (continued)

Again there is no suggestion that God paid a price to free his people. **God redeems by his own power.**

- “For this is what the LORD says: ‘When I sold you into exile, I received no payment. Now I can redeem you without paying for you’ “ (Isaiah 52:3).
- When Cyrus let the people free, it was again without payment of a price (45:13).

In the Christian community, especially in the early centuries of the church, there arose the idea that a ransom price was needed to pay for sins. In fact, it was often taught that the sinner was, in effect, held captive by Satan or Christ’s death was the ransom price paid by God **to Satan** to free sinful people! Scripture does not say this. The death of Christ is an atonement for sin, but this does not mean that his death was a price paid to Satan. God is not pictured anywhere in Scripture as making some sort of deal with Satan. **The redeeming work of salvation through the Cross of Christ is not as a commercial transaction but instead a righteous requirement from a Just and Holy God to pay for the sins of man and thus “reconciling” the world unto Himself in the process!**

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Verses 5 through 7 (Redemption and Forgiveness)

REDEMPTION AND THE MESSIAH

In the Old Testament, redemption is closely linked with the “hope” of a coming Messiah. From the time of the Exodus on, God is revealed as “Deliverer”. The hope of redemption is very strong during the time when Israel is captive in Babylon. The prophets constantly speak of God as Redeemer or Deliverer. This hope was to be fulfilled ultimately through God’s anointed one, or Messiah, who would be of the line of David (Isaiah 9:1-6; 11:1-9; Jeremiah 23:5-6).

The messianic hope grew stronger during the periods when Israel was exiled and persecuted. In fact, during the long centuries of persecution, this hope of a messiah was stronger than ever. This period, generally called the intertestamental period, lasted about four centuries and extended from the last of the prophets Malachi until the time of John the Baptist and Jesus. Christians believe that Jesus is the Messiah spoken of in the Old Testament. John the Baptist described Jesus of Nazareth as the fulfillment of God’s redemptive kingdom (Matthew 3:12) and hence, the Messiah of Israel. Jesus, the Son of Man, came to give himself as a ransom for many (20:28; Mark 10:45).

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REDEMPTION AND THE MESSIAH

The apostle Paul conveys a distinctive message concerning redemption, the completed work of Christ and its good news message for the world! Christ is the sin offering to the Father (**Romans 3:25**). He redeemed us by giving up his life (**Acts 20:28**) for a purchased people (**1 Corinthians 7:22-24; 2 Corinthians 5:14-17**). These are all words or expressions used to present the idea of redemption or atonement. Jesus Christ fulfilled the redemption promised in the Scriptures and by his sacrifice provided for the redemption of sin.

Let's look at the several verses that magnify the concept of redemption:

22 For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant. 23 Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men. 24 Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God. 1 Corinthians 7:22-24

Our Blessing In Christ -1:1-14

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Verses 5 through 7 (Redemption and Forgiveness)

22 And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: 23 Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. 24 But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. 25 And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. 26 Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. 27 For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. 28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. – Acts 20:22-28

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Verses 5 through 7 (Redemption and Forgiveness)

20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. 21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: 23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; 26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. – Romans 3:25

Our Blessing In Christ -1:1-14

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7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

Verses 5 through 7 (Redemption and Forgiveness)

14 For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:

15 And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

16 Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.

17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

18 And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. - 2 Corinthians 5:14-21

Our Blessing In Christ -1:1-14

5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

Verses 5 through 7 (Redemption and Forgiveness)

1 1 For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, 1 2 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; 1 3 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; 1 4 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. 1 5 These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.

~ Titus 2:1 1-14

Our Blessing In Christ -1:1-14

*5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,
6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.
7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;*

Verses 5 through 7 (Redemption and Forgiveness)

1 Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; 2 But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. 3 Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: 4 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, 5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. - Galatians 4:1-5

Our Blessing In Christ -1:1-14

Verses 5 through 7 (Redemption and Forgiveness)

During my personal bible study, I had wrestled with scriptures that were *seemingly* contradicting. **I knew it was not God's word that was contradicting**; it was something that I did not understand. But during my attempt to find sound explanations by pastors, teachers and other main-line ministries there was still a void in my mind when I came across troubling scriptures as the Holy Spirit tugged at my reason.

Through practical study and exposure to Paul's distinctive message as he received it from **Jesus Christ**, scripture had become illuminating to me. The passages that troubled me, now made **more** sense and I experienced the peace that God had intended for any person who would simply embrace God's grace for today!

Our Blessing In Christ -1:1-14

Verses 5 through 7 (Redemption and Forgiveness)

As concerning “forgiveness” the gospel of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery, Our Risen Savior appeared to Paul in a Glorified state while communicating a unique and special message to be delivered going forward.

And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting. - 1 Timothy 1:12-16

Specifically, one of the many blessings of the cross addressed the dispensational meaning of “forgiveness” in the age of grace. **In other words, is there a difference in how God forgives believers today under this dispensing of grace when compared to how He forgave the Children of Israel?**

Our Blessing In Christ -1:1-14

Verses 5 through 7 (Redemption and Forgiveness)

If we are honest with ourselves, our ability to understand God's forgiveness today under grace is in direct correlation with the proportion of how much of the flesh we are willing to "mortify" in our minds on this matter...

Down deep, we do not want God to forgive "that" sin that exceeds some arbitrary threshold where I determine the consequence and collateral damage to be beyond the cross of Christ. In our minds, we still want the control to be able to say "that person is hopeless" or because of what I see, proclaim them "un-savable"!

It's why I believe "forgiveness" is a choke point in many assemblies / faith systems and one of several components why Paul's unique message of grace is often rejected...

Our Blessing In Christ -1:1-14

Verses 5 through 7 (Redemption and Forgiveness)

As we learn about God's **complete forgiveness through the merits of Christ**, not only will our understanding of His grace increase, but we'll begin to realize the seriousness of The Adversary's attack upon it. The Adversary, Satan, will attempt to limit God's complete forgiveness through erroneous, yet even worse, counterfeit doctrine. Something that "looks" counterfeit may appear as if it were "an original". But after closer examination...experts can almost always point out the differences. Through the power of The Holy Spirit, we have been ordained to be "subject matter experts". Through the practice and (*rightly divided*) study of God's Word, we can effectively understand how Satan's plan of evil wants to undermine and corrupt man's ability to comprehend the magnitude of what God has for believers on this topic.

Our Blessing In Christ -1:1-14

Verses 5 through 7 (Redemption and Forgiveness)

The word **forgiveness** here “aphesis” is found seven times in the bible with more than half of those times (four) associated with Paul’s ministry. It is a pardon of sins (letting them go as if they had never been committed) remission of penalty. As we study what the *risen* Lord Jesus Christ had to say about forgiveness in this dispensing of grace, we’ll come to the realization of our blessing in Christ concerning this fact and how it differed from OT days...

The word **forgive** is found fifty-six (56) times in forty-eight (48) verses in the bible. Although it is used in just three instances of Paul’s letters, on no occasion is it ever used as a doctrinal theme pertaining to what Christ accomplished or is it ever implied as something we must still do to be reconciled to God in some way.

Our Blessing In Christ -1:1-14

Verses 5 through 7 (Redemption and Forgiveness)

The word **forgiven** is found forty-two times (42) in thirty-eight verses (38) in God's word:

- 15/38 verses (39.4%) used in Leviticus (10), Numbers (4) and Deuteronomy (1). Of the 15, 12 verses are prefaced with someone or some office having to do something in order to atone for the sin OR for forgiveness to be granted.
- 2/ 38 verses (5.2%) listed in Psalms speak directly about God's forgiveness to *His people Israel* and in Psalm 32:1 resides David's declaration of "the blessed man" - *Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.*
- A single instance of *forgiven* in Isaiah 33:24 refers to the all encompassing forgiveness *that will occur during Millennial Reign of Jesus Christ*
- 14 of 38 (36.8%) verses contained in Matthew (4), Mark (4) and Luke (6), Jesus Himself tells followers that they will be forgiven or that He has the power to declare them forgiven. In many instances there is a condition that must occur in order to be forgiven. (If you do, then I will model....)
- 3 of 38 (7.9%) verses these three verses in Acts (1), James (1), 1 John (1) again speak to conditional forgiveness

Our Blessing In Christ -1:1-14

Verses 5 through 7 (Redemption and Forgiveness)

With some baseline established on the topic of forgiveness, let's examine the scriptural differences in both the Old Testament and New Testament.

Forgiveness under the law

14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: 15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. - Matthew 6:14, 15

28 But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. 29 And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. 30 And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. 31 So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. 32 Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: 33 Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee? 34 And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. 35 So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses. - Matthew 18:21-35

25 And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. 26 But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses. - Mark 6:25,26

Our Blessing In Christ -1:1-14

Verses 5 through 7 (Redemption and Forgiveness)

Forgiveness under grace

Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: 39 And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. - Acts 13:38-39.

14 And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. 15 And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. 16 But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; 17 Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, 18 To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me. - Acts 26:12-18

Our Blessing In Christ -1:1-14

Verses 5 through 7 (Redemption and Forgiveness)

Forgiveness under grace

In whom we have redemption through his blood, [even] the forgiveness of sins: - Colossians 1:14

In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; - Ephesians 1:7

And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; - Colossians 2:13,14

If we are honest with ourselves, our ability to understand God's forgiveness today under grace is in direct correlation with the proportion of how much of the flesh we are willing to "mortify" in our minds on this matter...

Our Blessing In Christ -1:1-14

Verses 5 through 7 (Redemption and Forgiveness)

Forgiven under grace - (the remaining 3 verses)

What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath [whereof] to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, [Saying], Blessed [are] they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. - Romans 4:1-7



And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. - Ephesians 4:32

And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; - Colossians 2:13

Our Blessing In Christ -1:1-14

9 For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; 10 That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; 11 Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; 12 Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: 13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: 14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: 15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: 16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: 17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. 19 For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; 20 And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. ~

Colossians 1:9-20

Our Blessing In Christ -1:1-14

8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;

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

As stated, forgiveness is what can be referred to as a “choke point” when you compare what the Christian media thinks it is with what the risen Christ told Paul today under the riches of His grace.....

Verse 8

And as we know about the character of God....when He does something, he does it right! When He was in the healing business...we knew it because those who were crippled could walk, those who were deaf could hear. St. John said that if possible, the world could not contain the books of all the things that He did. When he was feeding people, they were full and there were abundant leftovers.....and when He provided redemption, He saves to the uttermost that come unto God by Him!

(Verse 8) Tells us that God hath abounded towards us all wisdom and prudence. There is no excuse for us to not be fully aware of what God has for us in this age of grace! Why? Because the bible says he has “abounded” toward us....

Abounded: *perisseuō* (*perre-sue-oh*)

-exceeding a fixed number of measure

-to abundantly excel

-to overflow

Wisdom: *sophia*

-broad and full of intelligence

-varied knowledge of human and divine

-skill, discretion in dealing with men

Our Blessing In Christ -1:1-14



*8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;
9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:*

Educated: The University of Holy Spirit (verse 9) “having made known”

1) to make known

1a) to become known, be recognized

2) to know, to gain knowledge of, have thorough knowledge of

2a) in earlier Greek it means "to gain a knowledge of" or "have thorough knowledge of"

3) *musterion* or the mystery of His will

-hidden thing, secret, mystery

1a) generally mysteries, religious secrets, confided only to the initiated and not to ordinary mortals

1b) a hidden or secret thing, not obvious to the understanding

1c) a hidden purpose or counsel

1c1) secret will

1c1a) of men

1c1b) of God: the secret counsels which govern God in dealing with the righteous, which are hidden from ungodly and wicked men but plain to the godly

Our Blessing In Christ -1:1-14

8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;

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

Entrusted: That we might know His eternal purpose in the heavens and in the earth, when He gathers all things together. (verses 10 through 13)

God has entrusted to us His “roadmap” for this age so that we would understand all things in Christ. It is no longer a mystery! This presents no conflict since we are in Christ and this is part of our inheritance as believers of “the faith”. Christ has entrusted to us knowledge (complete and perfect) of what he intends to do. It is there for us to find out if we want to study! We are to study in order to show ourselves approved unto God, a workman, that does not need to be ashamed by correctly partitioning or dividing God’s counsel from our Lord’s previous instructions to mankind! God has pre-determined (before Genesis 1:1) to do this according to His counsel.

Sealed: with the Holy Spirit as proof positive (verse 14)

God’s pledge or promise to us, is not a covenant of something to come, it is God Himself, The Holy Spirit in us. This verse indicates that we are marked as "His possession" according to God's word. This "sealing" is eternal for since we did nothing to earn it, we could certainly do nothing to remove it! The only thing we can do to assure salvation is to simply take God at His word concerning the accomplishments of His Son Jesus Christ on our sinful behalf!

Our Blessing In Christ -1:1-14

Looking back, in summary we have:



- Grace & peace from God The Father AND The Lord Jesus Christ (verse 2)
- All spiritual blessings in heavenly places (verse 3)
- Adoption as His children (verse 5)
- Acceptation in the beloved (verse 6)
 - High favor with God
 - Honor with blessings from God
- Redemption through His blood (verse 7)
 - Releasing effected by a payment of ransom
 - Deliverance
 - Liberation procured by the payment of a ransom
- Abounding, exceeding wisdom and prudence (verse 8)
- The ability to understand the “mystery of His will” (verse 9); we are “educated” by the Holy Spirit.

Our Knowledge In Christ -1:15-23

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

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

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

18 the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

19 and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,

20 which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,

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

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

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

Our Knowledge In Christ -1:15-23

*15 Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints,
16 cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;
17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:
18 the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,*

OUR KNOWLEDGE:

Paul emphasizes his “faith - “love” - “hope” concepts here in these wonderful nine verses and in particular verses 15 through 18. Our responsibilities as “Ambassadors” of Christ is to demonstrate faith, love and hope in Christ. But that can only occur once we understand our unchanging position in Christ through comprehension of all that was accomplished at Calvary on our behalf. Friends, our salvation is much, much more than being saved from eternal separation from God in the future...., it is a real and living faith to help us today!

In **verses 15 & 16**, Paul was thankful for the opportunity to fellowship and to teach these dear Ephesians, especially after he heard of their faith and their demonstrated “output” which was “love” unto all the saints.

He ceased not to give thanks to God for them, instead of “fruit inspecting” them. His prayer was that "The Father of Glory" would give us the spirit of wisdom and revelation (apokalupsis - disclosure of truth) **in the full and complete knowledge of Him!**

Our Knowledge In Christ -1:15-23

*15 Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints,
16 cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;
17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:
18 the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,*

OUR KNOWLEDGE (continued):

Note: Why would Paul ask The Father of glory to give us the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him? Shouldn't we already have that? I believe that God answered Paul's prayer and that we **do** indeed possess the capability of understanding the full complete knowledge of Him. However, God the Holy Spirit will only deploy knowledge and wisdom when we have put aside our pride and show ourselves approved to receive His counsel versus man's counsel in regards to the mystery. **God in all of His dispensings to mankind will never violate his free will. In addition, as "workman" we should continue in the faith learning and studying God's word allowing the Holy Spirit to teach us through bible studies and personal reading.**

In **verse 18**, Paul specifically requests that our eyes (literally the eyes of our mind) would be open, by being enlightened (illuminated, made clear,) by the Holy Spirit that we may know, perceive, notice, discover what is the hope (an expectation) of the calling of Christ AND the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints...

Our Knowledge In Christ -1:15-23

*19 and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,
20 which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,
21 far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:
22 and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,
23 which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.*

HIS GREATNESS:

The apostle continues His thoughts in **verse 19** by convincing readers of the greatness of His power to us-ward who believe....according to the working (continual) of His (The Father) mighty power which he wrought in Christ!

Jesus Christ demonstrated His greatness:

1. By His mighty power
2. By His position; currently seated at the right hand of God The Father in heaven (specifically the 3rd heaven, the highest domain)
3. By His authority; Christ is far above all principality, might, and dominion and every name that is named in this world and in the world that is to come
4. By His headship; Jesus is "The Head" of all things including the church of this dispensation called "The Body"

Our Knowledge In Christ -1:15-23

Far above: above a thing or place; of rank or power.

Principality: origin, beginnings (implies prior to the creation of angels both demonic and angelic...)

Power: total power, judicially, by choice, by authority, by rule

Might: Dunamis - inherent power, moral power, the power to influence, strength in numbers.

Dominion: government, lordship

In summary, Paul prayed:

1. That our eyes would be enlightened.
2. That we may know the hope of His calling.
3. That we may know what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints are.
4. That we may know His exceeding power to us who believe according to the might of His power

What kind of power???? EXCEEDING POWER - HUPERBALLO POWER: - to transcend, surpass, exceed, excel! This power was operative (wrought) in Christ...and it is ours as we are seated in Jesus Christ at the right hand of God The Father in "the" heavenly places.

Our Knowledge In Christ -1:15-23

HIS GREATNESS (continued):

In the last remaining verses of chapter 1, Paul is describing the greatness, power and energy of God through Christ Jesus.....an by the way, we now possess this!

That power is “far above” all principality, power, might and dominion AND above every name that is named in this world, but also in that which is to come.

Friends, Paul is clear here in who he wants us to understand we identify with. We can leverage the unlimited power of God through the accomplishments of Calvary



Chapter 2



Our Standing In Christ -2:1-10

- 1 *And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;*
- 2 *Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:*
- 3 *Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.*
- 4 *But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,*
- 5 *Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)*
- 6 *And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:*
- 7 *That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.*
- 8 *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:*
- 9 *Not of works, lest any man should boast.*
- 10 *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

Our Standing In Christ -2:1-10

In verse 1, the authors of the KJV have "hath he quickened" in italicized. This means that it was added by the translators to assist with the rendering of the meaning. This translation differs from verse 5. **The above "hath he quickened" emphasizes simply "our being" which scripture says, "that we were dead in trespasses and sins".**

Death as described here suggests we were like corpses and we were incapable of doing anything right or inactive as respects to doing right when compared with God's righteousness! However, this does **not** imply that we are unable to exercise our God given free will. This verse speaks to the doctrine of reconciliation as God The Father placed all of mankind's sins, past, present and future, on His Son Jesus Christ. God did this while we were still sinners...at enmity with Him my friends. He "reconciled" us to Himself through Christ's finished work at Calvary.

Verse 2 shows us:

-The "time past" of verse 2 would seem to imply only to us. But the phrase "the course" is the GR. for "eon" to imply the state of the human race also. This only confirms what Paul said in Romans 1 in regards to the utter depravity of the human race. The "spirit" in verse 2 refers to: a spirit higher than man but lower than God, i.e. an angel does not imply possession, but strong influence Satan gladly uses our inherent sin nature to our destruction.

Verse 3 tells us that the word "conversation" means to live, to turn upside down or overturn. We by nature were the children of wrath:

Our Standing In Christ -2:1-10



Verses 4 and 5

-In these verses, we have been "quickenened together with Christ" which comes from the Greek (suzoopoieo - to make one alive)! This differs from verse 1 (reconciliation) in which it states we were quickened from death. But now, believers have been *quickenened unto life* (justification) **because they have trusted in God's righteousness...**The God-Man Jesus Christ.

-But God who is wealthy (in mercy) and abounding in material resources (including Christian virtues and eternal possessions) loved us! God loved us even in our separated sinful state. This love does not preclude His justice for He will always love the sinner and demonstrate that love by an action (unconditional or agape love), even before mankind could respond to His offer! Let's review some companion verses from the book of Romans:

Romans 5:6-10

6 For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.

8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

Our Standing In Christ -2:1-10

Verse 6

-Raised up together

(sunegueiō - to raise together, to cause to raise together; to raise up together from mortal death to a new and blessed life dedicated to God with Christ)

-Seated together in heavenly places in Christ

(sugkathizō) - to cause to sit down together; to sit down together) REST!

-In Christ and the word "in" denote a relation of rest!

Verse 7

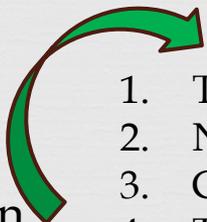
So that in the ages to come He might show us the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards, us through Christ Jesus.

Huperballo

- 1) to surpass in throwing, to throw over or beyond any thing
- 2) to transcend, surpass, exceed, excel
- 3) excelling, exceeding

One of the very first truths of my salvation that I took hold of was the realization that I could do nothing to earn my salvation as described in verses 8 and 9:

For by grace you have been saved (past tense);

- 
1. Through faith
 2. Not of yourselves
 3. Grace is a gift from God
 4. This gift of grace (**God's righteousness**) is not worked for or earned...it's accepted by faith in what Christ has done for us.
 5. The reason it is a gift is so that we don't boast: to glory, to glory because of a thing, to glory in a thing independent from God

Our Standing In Christ -2:1-10

Friends, I have found that it is so easy for us to read God's word and simply breeze through some awesome foundational truths. I don't want you to make the same mistake I did with these few verses! I want to point out that verses 6 and 7 tell us **that we have been raised up together with Christ**. Not only are we raised up but we are also "seated in heavenly places in Christ". Paul goes to great lengths to make sure that readers understand the accomplishments of Christ. Grace teaches us that we cannot begin to think about changing our conduct unless we have renewed minds first. We believe that Christ made us "right" with God...it is here that we have all of the righteousness we will ever need, all up front through Jesus Christ and His completed work that satisfied the holy requirements of God the Father. In Paul's letters, the pattern will be the same, doctrine then application.....justification (or righteous-ification) There is no other way!

Grace teaches us that we cannot begin to think about changing our conduct unless we have renewed minds first.

Our Standing In Christ -2:1-10

Verse 10

We are the workmanship of The Father (ktizo)! Literally, this means that we are manufactured in Christ Jesus for the purpose of good works (indicating service) that was before ordained that we should walk in them! If we do not understand our completeness in Christ Jesus, our motivation to serve Him will be skewed to say the least.



Our motivation will then be from "duty" and not out of thankful love. This is partly the reason why many Christians lose their zeal, their purpose and their drive for life. Law wears you down, grace empowers you!

Grace teaches us that we cannot begin to think about changing our conduct unless we have renewed minds first.

Our Oneness In Christ -2:11-22

*11 Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;
12 that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:
13 but now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.
14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;
15 having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;
16 and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: 17 and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.
18 For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.
19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;
20 and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;
21 in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:
22 in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.*

Our Oneness In Christ -2:11-22

A.) Our oneness “to those far off (Gentiles, unrighteous)” verses 11-14

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

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

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

-Paul reminds us of God’s dealings with mankind in prior centuries. (verse 11)

-At that time, Gentiles (us!) were *without* Christ, with no hope and we were *aliens* “from the commonwealth” of Israel. (verse 12)

aliens

-to be shut out from one’s fellowship and intimacy

-to alienate, to estrange commonwealth of Israel

politeia

1) the administration of civil affairs

2) a state or commonwealth

3) citizenship, the rights of a citizen, strangers without knowledge of, without a share in

-**But now** in Christ, those of us that were in times past far off (a great way off), are made near (of place and position...to make a proselyte of) by the blood of Christ!

Our Oneness In Christ -2:11-22

B.) Our oneness "to them that were near (Jews, self- unrighteous)" verses 14-17

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

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

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

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

-For He (**Christ**) is our peace (verses 14-16) having made both Jew **and** Gentile **one** with Christ. One of the many things that amazes me about God's special dispensing of **grace is that both Jew and Gentile are one in Him**. With the nation of Israel on hold until a future time, God no longer recognizes national distinction. All men: race, color or creed can be saved if they just simply take God the Father at His word concerning Jesus Christ, His atoning cross-work and His righteousness to enter heaven!

-Christ made inactive, inoperable the "law of commandments" by His flesh. These "law of commandments" were contained in "ordinances" or dogma

1) doctrine, decree, ordinance

1a) of public decrees

1b) of the Roman Senate

1c) of rulers

2) the rules and requirements of the law of Moses; carrying a suggestion of severity and of threatened judgment

3) of certain decrees of the apostles relative to right living

Our Oneness In Christ -2:11-22

B.) Our oneness "to them that were near (Jews, self- unrighteous)" verses 14-17

*14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;
15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;*

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

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

-Christ destroyed these same ordinances (Colossians 2:13-15) that our religious and "fundamental" bible teachers attempt to revive every day:

13 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; 14 blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; 15 and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

God The Father "reconciled" us to Himself through Jesus Christ, that is a done deal, a fact that established our righteousness. In turn, man in order to enter heaven, **MUST** believe that when Christ declared us right with God....we have God's righteousness....it doesn't get any better than that.

Having slain

apokteino ap-ok-ti' -no

from 575 and kteino (to slay); v

AV-kill 55, slay 14, put to death 6; 75

1) to kill in any way whatever

1a) to destroy, to allow to perish

2) metaph. to extinguish, abolish

2a) to inflict mortal death

2b) to deprive of spiritual life and procure eternal misery in hell

Our Oneness In Christ -2:11-22

B.) Our oneness “to them that were near (Jews, self- unrighteous)” verses 14-17

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

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

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

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

Verse 17 is the summary and “10,000 foot view” objective showing that Christ did the work (reconciliation) and gave us His most current instructions through the apostle Paul (to accept His righteousness). This news is to be communicated to others as opportunity arises. We are to meet people where they are as we work, play or interact with people today.

Paul instructs us concerning the things that pertain to understanding Christian salvation and the differences between:

- The kingdom of God, (the earth), Israel and prophecy
- Salvation through Christ (the heavens), The Body of Christ and the mystery
- Leaders across most denominations attempt to uncover yesterday’s news (the law) and re-broadcast it as grace!

Paul’s instructions from Christ encourage us to:

- Seek those things that are above the heavens (Col. 3:1,2)
- Forget those things, which were behind (the earth), while reaching forth those which are before (Phil. 3:13)
- Press toward the high mark for the prize of the high calling of God (Phil 3:14)

Our Oneness In Christ -2:11-22

C.) Our oneness unto salvation (verses 18,19)

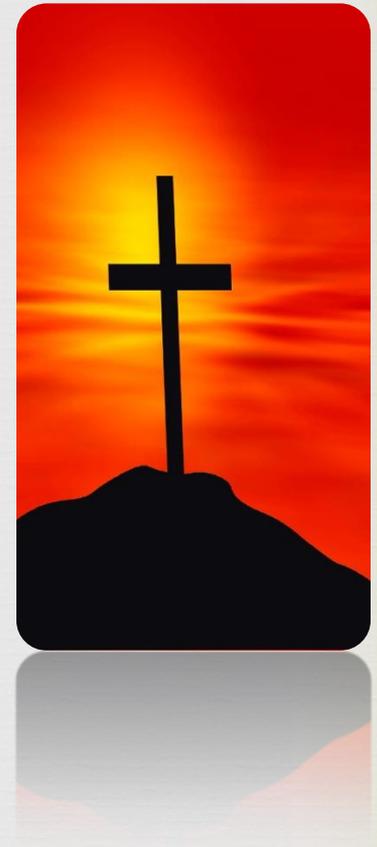
18 For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

-For through (denoting the channel of an act) **Him**, (Christ) we (Jew and Gentile) have access by one Spirit unto The Father!

-With these things being so and while drawing to the conclusion of this fact, not only are we no longer strangers and foreigners but we (those near off and far off) **now** have the same citizenship as consecrated unto God a most holy thing.

- 1) **We are no longer: strangers**
-without knowledge of, without a share in, foreigners
-living in a place without the right of citizenship,
- 2) **We have citizenship belonging to the household of God.**
-Paul does not say here, we have the same commission, or the same instructions as previous saints, we have the same citizenship as unto the family of God
- 3) **We have commonality in the household of God**
-Belonging to one's household because of a blood relationship.....Christ's!!
- 4) **We are same in citizenship with the saints throughout the economies of God, yet distinct in the instruction that we receive:**
-Unto salvation – how we are saved according to God's revealed (or latest news) Word
-Unto service – how we are to serve others according to God's revealed (or latest news) Word



Our Oneness In Christ -2:11-22

D.) Our oneness unto service (verses 19-22)

19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

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

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

22 In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

It would appear that **verse 20** could bring controversy to those defending the position of grace since apostles and prophets are mentioned and identified as "the 12" in the Greek. However, since context defines the meaning of a word and "apostle" means simply delegate, one that is sent etc... (from above), the verse clearly is talking about apostles and prophets of the dispensing of grace.

Apostolos 652 apostoloj apostolos ap-os' -tol-os

AV-apostle 78, messenger 2, he that is sent 1; 81

1) a delegate, messenger, one sent forth with orders

1a) specifically applied to the twelve apostles of Christ

1b) **in a broader sense applied to other eminent Christian teachers**

1b1) of Barnabas

1b2) of Timothy and Silvanus

-In whom, Christ, (all the building) "which is joined closely together as members of one body" (unity) would grow as a holy temple of God.

-**Verse 22** states our position and who we are through Christ. Again, Paul encourages us to act as we are, not act so that we can attain (Law vs. Grace)

Our Oneness In Christ -2:11-22

D.) Our oneness unto service (verses 19-22)

It is in **verses 21 and 22** where the Body of Christ fails miserably. The fact is today across the world, the Body of Christ is not growing the way it should. Of course the number of churches are growing as well as the number of people in them! Besides, that is the way man measures success. But that is not the growth I am talking about. Here, I am referring to growth in the sense of the maturity of the believer:

1 Corinthians 3:1-3 1 And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. 2 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. 3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

What happens when you don't grow?

Satan can cause division according to **2 Timothy 2**, so that the body doesn't fit together TO ENSURE IT DOESN'T GROW. That's the adversary's objective friends and he has been very successful at it. Several years back, a well known, popular bible scholar confronted me on bringing the message of grace into the assembly I pastored at. He said: "Rick, don't let the Devil into the church with that type of (grace) doctrine." I said: Jim-Bob, not only is the Devil already in the church, but he's in an arm chair with a cigar, newspaper and slippers"

Our Oneness In Christ -2:11-22

D.) Our oneness unto service (verses 19-22)

I think that one of the most disturbing things going on today concerning our “work of faith” is the fact that we haven’t matured as believers and we are “adults” trapped in infant bodies. While babies are so cute and charming, there is nothing as frightening as an adult head on a baby body....I think of those satirical movies like the Three Stooges or Ernest (right) where those characters portrayed babies! When considering what is going on today concerning what we should be telling people about God....specifically about Jesus Christ and His accomplishments, we fall short in communicating the blessings of the cross. I think this was what was also bothering Paul at Corinth (*ref. 1Cor 3:1-3*).



Our Oneness In Christ -2:11-22

D.) Our oneness unto service (verses 19-22)

2 Timothy 2:16-26

16 But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness.

17 And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus;

18 Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.

19 Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

20 But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour.

21 If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.

22 Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

23 But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes.

24 And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient,

25 In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;

26 And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

Chapter 3



The Revelation of the Mystery - 3:1-3

- 1 *For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,*
- 2 *If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:*
- 3 *How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words,*

Friends, I can't tell you about the number of times I have read these verses and glossed over them without really understanding what Paul was trying to say. I pray that you read these verses and consider what the apostle is trying to say. Understanding that Paul's ministry and doctrine **was separate from the 12 apostles** magnifies the message of grace (which we must remember was received directly from Jesus Christ)!

WHO is telling us? - Paul, an apostle...and now a prisoner of Jesus Christ!

WHAT is he telling us?- With an almost sarcastic spin, Paul is asking if we have heard of the dispensing of God's grace which was given to him FOR US, for our learning and edification. Paul goes on to tell his readers that by "revelation" He (Christ) made know unto him "the mystery" wherby Paul wrote about before. Here in Ephesians, the apostle hits this hard!

If ye have heard.....



- ak-oo: to give audience, to hearken
- to attend to, to consider what has been said
- to understand, to perceive the sense of what was said
- to perceive by ear what is announced in one's presence
- to get by hearing learn

The Revelation of the Mystery - 3:1-3

- 1 *For this cause / Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,*
- 2 *If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:*
- 3 *How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words,*

The apostle is provoking believers to think about, consider or give understanding to **God's** special dispensing or administration of grace. The word "dispensation" may confuse many believers while others are angered because what they *thought* was true about what they believed is *wrong*. You'd be surprised at how we can cling to something; right or wrong simply because of the time it has been part of our core. However, **the bible is God's inspired word** and this word is in there for a reason! The Greek meaning and its definitions are below:

oikonomia (where we get the English word for economy):
dispensation, stewardship-the management of a household,
oversight, administration, of other's property.
-the office of a manager or overseer

The Revelation of the Mystery - 3:1-3

*1 For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,
2 If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:
3 How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words,*

How was it revealed to you? What has **not** changed over the last 2,000 years is the fact that Paul's credibility is still challenged in regards to the distinct message he received from Jesus Christ! Most teachers and leaders believe that Paul received an "extension" of an existing gospel (good news) from the 12. Others believe that Paul **is** the 12th apostle. But friends, take note at what is being said! What Paul heard was directly from the risen, glorified Christ! He received it by **revelation** starting on the road to Damascus and ending just before his death.

Look at what the apostle tells us in Philippians 1:9-10

And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; 10 That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ.

Paul clearly wants us to literally examine, prove, scrutinize (*do-kē-mä'-zō*) The things that are excellent "**the things that differ**". The things that differ are what God had taught *before* concerning His dealings with mankind in prior "house rules "or dispensings.

The Revelation of the Mystery - 3:1-3

How was it revealed to you?

-By **revelation**, He (Our Lord Jesus Christ) made known unto me "the mystery" as before I wrote in a few words.

-By revelation or *apokalupsis*

-to lighten, be revealed

-laying bare, making naked

-a disclosure of truth, instruction

-concerning things before unknown

-used by events by which things or states or persons hitherto withdrawn from view are made visible to all

-manifestation, appearance

-By disclosing truth concerning things unknown before, **Jesus made known unto me the mystery or *musterion*.**



Musterion:

- a secret thing not obvious to understanding
- a hidden counsel
- the secret counsels which govern God in dealing with the righteous, which are hidden from ungodly and wicked men, but plain to the godly.
 - in OT times, a dream, vision or image.

The Knowledge of the Mystery - 3:4-7

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

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

6 That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:

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

-Literally, Paul is saying when you distinguish between, recognize or know accurately about **my knowledge** in the mystery, it will flow together with what you already know!

-In other ages, **my knowledge in the mystery was not made known unto man (verse 5)** as it is NOW revealed by His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.

-It is NOW revealed to His holy apostles and prophets (me, Barnabas, Silas, Luke). It is NOW revealed by the Spirit for us to learn:

-That the Gentiles who were strangers and aliens from the things of God should be made (**verse 6**):

- Fellow heirs: joint participants; **and** of the same body AS CHRIST AND OF THE JEW
- partakers of His promise **in Christ** by His good news whereof I was made a minister according the gift of the grace of God, given unto me by the effectual working of His power
- WHEREOF I WAS MADE A MINISTER
- GIVEN UNTO ME

The Knowledge of the Mystery - 3:4-7

- 4 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)*
5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;
6 That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:
7 Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.

One day a person came into my office and noticed my screen saver which read: *“If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery;”* Which was straight from Ephesians 3:2,3

They then asked me what the mystery was and I quickly realized I had a dilemma on my hands because I knew in a work setting I didn't have enough time to explain. Honestly, I was not prepared to give a brief enough answer without losing the meaning and message of these verses. I simply said it pertained to my faith and they began to discuss what they wanted from a project we were working on.

After this, I developed an acronym that I call “PURE GOD” to make sure that if this happened again I could quickly and succinctly explain “the mystery” with its core components still in tact.

The Knowledge of the Mystery - 3:4-7

P - Preaching of the Cross (1 Corinthians 1:18) - The preaching of the cross committed to Paul and the benefits of what occurred on our behalf at and after Calvary was not preached before! No other old testament saint preached what Paul preached, nor did they have the insight that he received from the risen Christ.

U - Union of Christ and one Body (Ephesians 5:30,31) - This blessed benefit really ties to the doctrine of justification (being made right with God through Jesus Christ). Unified or at one (*at-one-ment a.k.a. atonement*) with Christ comes as a result of believing that at the moment we took God The Father at His word concerning Christ's imputation of His rightness **to us** we become part of His body. The bible tells us in Ephesians 5 that we are now of His flesh and bones....

R - Rapture of the Body of Christ (1 Thessalonian 4:16-18) - Although many push back on the word "rapture" because it is not in the bible, this blessed "exit event" and the fact that we may be called out of this world prior to God's judgment on the earth at any time is a core component of the mystery.

E - Equality of Jew and Gentile (Ephesians 2:8-18) - With Israel's program put on hold, there is no longer any national distinction in how God is dealing with His favored nation. Under the dispensing of grace, Jew or Gentile can be saved and are on equal footing with the "middle wall of partition" being broken down.

G - God's Gentile Program - (All of 13 of Paul's letter's from Romans to Philemon)

O

D

The Ministry of the Mystery - 3:7-12

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

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

The Minister

Did you ever hear the saying?: “As much as things change, things stay the same”. I find this to be true today, because most people will REJECT the ministry of the apostle Paul and his distinctive teachings. In many parts of his letters he spends a lot of time in his ministry defending what he received from the risen, gloried Lord Jesus Christ! We see starting in **verse 7** Paul was made a minister (one who executes the commands of another) by the “*energia*” or working efficiency used by one with supernatural powers. Here Paul testifies of the person, operation and work of God The Holy Spirit.

- Paul qualifies himself as being “less than the least of all saints” I find this very interesting when today, church leaders seem to qualify themselves as the “cream of the crop” thus making the bar of God to sinners unattainable.....an affront to God!
- Paul states that he was made a minister according to the gift of grace. This is in perfect harmony with Galatians 1:1-12 where Paul elaborates on how he received his ministry through the revelation (*apokalypsis: laying bare, disclosure of truth*) of Jesus Christ.
- Paul preached the “unsearchable” riches of Christ. *Anexichniastos*
 - AV-past finding out 1, unsearchable
 - 1) **that cannot be searched out, that cannot be comprehended**

The Ministry of the Mystery - 3:7-12

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

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

Many leaders, teachers and scholars contend that what Paul received was preached before. Some argue that the 12 apostles, Peter or other Old Testament saints spoke of "the mystery" in times past. **This teaching or belief is in error!** Jesus Christ Himself revealed to Paul what was unsearchable. In other words, no one could find it because it was hid in God through Christ Jesus!

Romans 16:25-27

*25 Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, **which was kept secret since the world began,** 26 But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: 27 To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen.*

Colossians 1:25-29

*25 Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; 26 **Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:** 27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: 28 Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: 29 Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.*

The Ministry of the Mystery - 3:7-12

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

The Mission

As stated in **verse 9**, Paul's mission, which was given to us, was to **make all men see** what is the **fellowship** of the mystery. Let's examine a few Greek words to help us get a better understanding of what Paul is telling his readers:

photizo *fo-tid'-zo* **make men see**

AV-give light, bring to light, lighten, enlighten, light, illuminate, make to see

- 1) to give light, to shine
- 2) to enlighten, light up, illumine
- 3) to bring to light, render evident
 - 3a) to cause something to exist and thus come to light and become clear to all
- 4) to enlighten, spiritually, imbue with saving knowledge
 - 4a) to instruct, to inform, teach
 - 4b) to give understanding to

If Paul's mission was to make all men see, deductive reasoning tells us that mankind is in darkness. Look at what Christ told Paul at his conversion in Acts 26:13-18....

The Ministry of the Mystery - 3:7-12

13 At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me. 14 And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. 15 And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. 16 But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; 17 Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, 18 To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.
- Acts 26:13-18

In these passages, the Risen, Glorified Lord Jesus Christ tells Saul (now Paul) that He appeared to him to make him a minister and a witness to the things he had already seen and will see from God. Christ continues to tell Saul that He is sending him to the Gentiles...notice in verse 18: "To open their eyes and to turn them from DARKNESS to light and from the power of Satan unto God that they may receive forgiveness of sins (reconciliation) and inheritance among them (righteousness) which are sanctified by faith that is in me."

Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God - 1 Corinthians 4:5

As ambassadors for Christ, we need to enlighten men about what Christ has done for us; to instruct; to give understanding to them. My fear is that Christians are too judgmental and have isolated themselves from the world by barricading themselves into buildings, programs and theatrics that have little to do with reaching the lost and sharing the word of reconciliation to them (2 Corinthians 5).

The Ministry of the Mystery - 3:7-12

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

The Mission

koinonia *koy-nohn-ee'-ah* is the fellowship

AV-fellowship 12, communion 4, communication 1, distribution 1, contribution 1, to communicate 1; 20

1) fellowship, association, community, communion, joint participation, intercourse

1a) the share which one has in anything, participation

1b) intercourse, fellowship, intimacy

1b1) the right hand as a sign and pledge of fellowship (in fulfilling the apostolic office)

1c) a gift jointly contributed, a collection, a contribution, as exhibiting an embodiment & proof of fellowship

The fellowship of the mystery and terms such as communion, intimacy, association are meant to be used in understanding mankind's union with Christ. It seems as though mankind does a great job at using these terms **apart** of God and the true fellowship that Paul wanted people to have was through the Body of Christ by understanding all that God The Father has done for us through God The Son Jesus Christ. Our Christian walk must first start with an objective understanding of what occurred at Calvary, how....what...and why.



Where was sin judged?.....**At the cross**

What was the verdict?.....**Guilty**

What was the penalty?.....**Death**

Who paid for it?.....**Jesus Christ**

How much of it?.....**All of it!**

How much did He leave for you?.....**None of it!**

The Ministry of the Mystery - 3:7-12

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

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

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

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

The Mission

The mystery...the plan God committed to Paul was planned by God since the beginning of the world, before Genesis 1:1; but was not revealed until the risen, glorified Christ told Paul about it! God in His divine foreknowledge knew of man's propensity to sin and in His grace, mercy judgment and love allowed man to exercise his free-will when responding to God's dispensed instructions over the last 6,000 years.

The result:

- God dispenses instructions
- Man in his rebellion rejects God's Word
- God judges man
- God dispenses a new set of instructions



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The Mission

I think one of the most common questions by believers and non believers alike is: “What is my purpose in life”? Today, we have the divine privilege of being able to know what God wants from us and expects from us. With this in mind, let’s dig deeper into verses 10 through 12.

Our duty is to make all men see the fellowship of the mystery which has been hid in God through Christ. **Verse 10** tells us that at the present time, the principalities and powers in “heavenly places” are to be “made known” about the manifold (*polypoikilos* – *great variety*) wisdom of God. Friends, not only is the Body of Christ responsible for telling the world about the ministry and word of reconciliation as stated in 2 Corinthians 5:18,19, but while they are doing just that, God’s hierarchal organization of angels, those in heavenly places, should be being taught in the process. WE are the instructors! We are to learn and to teach the revelation of the mystery. We are to love unconditionally and apply what we have learned through our day-to-day lives so that the heavenly host can understand it both academically and experientially through us! My opinion here is that if we are to judge angels according to 1 Corinthians 6:4,5, it will be how THEY respond to what they have learned from us. As elect angels of God, this will not be a judgment of eternal condemnation as the demonic angels have already received, but a matter of stewardship, faithfulness and reward.

The Ministry of the Mystery - 3:7-12

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

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

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

The Mission

Paul continues in verse 11 that this is God's eternal purpose, which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord; in whom we have boldness (free, fearless, without ambiguity, open and frank – because we know the truth!) and access (to God, i.e. that relationship with God whereby we are acceptable to him and have assurance that he is favorably disposed towards us) with confidence by the faith of Him (Jesus Christ) as noted in verse 12.

“That relationship with God whereby we are acceptable to him and have assurance that he is favorably disposed”

The Understanding of the Mystery - 3:13-21

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

Wherefore? Because of what may be known by “the principalities and powers in heavenly places”, I beg you or call you that you not grow weary of the pressure and stress to come, for your cause, what is for your glory!

I wish that I could tell you that on this plane of our lives....during our numbered years....that when you preach Paul’s gospel as He received it from Christ, it would be much embraced, and warmly regarded. I wish that I could tell you that the churches would look forward to understanding the mystery and the associated blessings of the cross that are contained therein. I wish I could elaborate on the myriad of conversions as people hear about how Christ established HIS righteousness for all to receive as a by-product of what He accomplished at Calvary.

But the reality is the local assemblies have been duped. A very small percentage will be receptive to the riches of God’s grace according to what the Risen, Glorified Lord Jesus Christ revealed to the apostle Paul. A very small number will ascertain all that Christ has accomplished for us this side of the cross in the light of “mystery” and not “prophecy”. It is this burden Paul had desired that WE...those that believe Paul’s gospel...”faint not” at his tribulations on our behalf. Simply, speaking, if we are communicating and holding fast to Paul’s gospel, there will most assuredly be tribulations (GR - *thlipsis*: oppression, affliction, tribulation, distress, straits).

The Understanding of the Mystery - 3:13-21

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

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

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

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

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

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

Paul's "for this cause" starting in **verse 14** is referring to the reason why he bows his knees unto God The Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ. He is praying in this fashion as a template for us to pray for each other concerning the issue of tribulations that will most assuredly follow ministers of the gospel of the grace of God. I can tell you through experience it is a lonely place to be and sustainable only because of the working power of God The Holy Spirit my friends. Knowing that we are part of the whole family in heaven and in earth (**verse 15**) is a testament of our identity in Christ. The Family of God is real and is even more tangible than *any* family we belong to today because it is eternal....think on that!!

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

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

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

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

Paul's prayer for us (**verses 16-19**) is that God would grant US, according to the riches of His glory, "to be strengthened with might by His Holy Spirit in the inner man"; that "inner man" is our conscious and soul, while already now possessed by the Spirit of God, Paul is praying that we would grab hold of faith as we are rooted and grounded in God's love through Christ:

Paul's phrase "that Christ may dwell in your hearts" is not conditional. It is the Greek - *katoikeō* and is used to refer to how God dwelt in the temple ALWAYS being available. Today with the indwelling Holy Spirit, we have something far better...God in us friends and always available! The tense is past while the mood is infinitive caused by the subject -Christ). We are being rooted and grounded (factual yet ongoing, like a growing tree) in love and able to comprehend with ALL THE SAINTS ---back to being part of "The" Family--....comprehend what Paul????

"What is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know that love of Christ, which passes knowledge (that we could even imagine) that we might be filled with all the fullness of God.

The Understanding of the Mystery - 3:13-21

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

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

Under Gods' special dispensing of grace, believers are challenged to comprehend the vastness of Christ's love for us.

Through Jesus Christ and His finished work, God has performed "exceedingly abundantly" above all that we ask or think. Verses 16 through 21 certainly show us that God has done something, great, different and unexpected! The "unexpected" part is the "mystery" which God has now revealed for over two millennium through Paul on our behalf.

Paul closes his thoughts and insights as concerning our position in Christ. He takes three chapters to discuss our completeness in Christ so that in Chapters 4 through 6, we can read about how to apply this doctrine to our conduct and application of this faith to our lives!

Chapter 4



The Captivity of the Believer - 4:1-3

- 1 | *therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,*
- 2 | *With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;*
- 3 | *Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

The apostle Paul begins chapter four with a resounding request. Notice friends how he does this **after** he has established our position in Christ in the first three chapters. By this time, there should be no doubt as concerning where we came from, that God through Christ Jesus has taken sin off the table, God's great love for us, and the riches we have in Christ to prove it! The most difficult aspect of our faith is our ability to **apply** our understanding of God's grace. This is where "the rubber meets the road". **Through the power of the Holy Spirit**, believers should now be able to demonstrate Christ's love as His ambassadors in a cold, confusing world. I don't know about you, but I still have a difficult time doing this....

Who?

Paul, our example and father in the faith, was not only in physical bonds, but he was held "captive" by the Son of God as a prisoner of the Lord (verse 1)

I find it amazing how Paul goes on *begging us* to walk worthy of the vocation that God has called us to:

- Walk - to make use of the opportunities, to conduct or regulate one's self
- Worthy - suitably, in a manner worthy of
- Vocation - a calling, a call or invitation.

The Captivity of the Believer - 4:1-3

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- 2 *With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;*
- 3 *Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

How?

Paul makes it clear with all distinction to **walk worthy** of the calling that we are called.

- With all lowliness – having a humble opinion of one’s self
- With a deep sense of one’s (moral) littleness
- With modesty, humility, lowliness of mind
- With meekness (power under control) – gentleness or mildness

Longsuffering: patience, endurance, constancy, steadfastness, perseverance, slowness in avenging hope

Forbearing: in love – to sustain, bear, to endure

Endeavoring: to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; make haste or give diligence to stay unified in the bond of peace

Paul reminded Timothy how to walk worthy of the Lord in his epistle to him:

- 24 *And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient,*
- 25 *In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;*
- 26 *And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will. 2 Timothy 2:24-26*

The Charity of God - 4:4-6

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

5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

The bible tells us starting in verse 4 that there is **one** body, **one** Spirit; even as we are called in the **one** certainty (hope) of our calling---**one** Lord (Christ Jesus), **one** faith (the “faith” that Paul tells us about. (author note: reference Hebrews 11 to show the other “faiths” i.e. - what God required man to do to demonstrate he was taking God at His word---Rick)

Paul continues: One God and Father of all who is above all and through all, and in you all!

Friends, these set of verses speak specifically of the work of The Godhead in the believer.

The charity....the very love of God is demonstrated here by the work of the Holy Spirit in this dispensing of grace. Here, God the Holy Spirit is the “One Spirit” spoken of in the above verse. I can't tell you about the number of pastor's, teachers and leaders that get these verses wrong. Many will exegete these verses (especially **verse 5**) incorrectly by reading in water baptism. Clearly, the text here **has nothing to do with water** friends. The Greek word for “baptism” is simply (*Gk-baptisma*). But if *water* is the main emphasis here then this belief attempts to eliminate the work of the Holy Spirit and **His** indwelling “baptizing” of us into Jesus Christ!



The Charity of God - 4:4-6

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5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

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Let's investigate and **please** follow me: (Gk-baptisma)

1) immersion, submersion

a) of calamities and afflictions with which one is quite overwhelmed

b) of John's baptism, that purification rite by which men on confessing their sins were bound to spiritual reformation, obtained the pardon of their past sins and became qualified for the benefits of the Messiah's kingdom soon to be set up. This was valid Christian baptism, as this was the only baptism the apostles received and it is not recorded anywhere that they were ever re-baptised after Pentecost.

c) of Christian baptism; a rite of immersion in water as commanded by Christ, by which one after confessing his sins and professing his faith in Christ, having been born again by the Holy Spirit unto a new life, identifies publicly with the fellowship of Christ and the church.



The Charity of God - 4:4-6

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5 *One Lord, one faith, one baptism,*

6 *One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*

The first and foremost primary definition has to do with **immersion and submersion**. Thayer's Lexicon states that this word is *peculiar* to New Testament writings.

- **From the previous slide**, if I apply **a)** to my context...."*of calamities and afflictions with which one is quite overwhelmed*", I am not going to find the answer that fits with the doctrine I know so far.
- If I select **b)** to describe this verse, then the "One Baptism" Paul speaks of here would speak of **John's baptism** "*that purification rite by which men confess their sins prior to entry into the coming Kingdom.*" (ref. John 1:27-31; ...and I knew Him not but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore or that is why I am coming to baptize with water); **Friends, read for yourself and think about this; Is that why people get water baptized today???? I hope not!**
- If I select **c)** this also presents a problem. The One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism also requires a "rite of submersion" which in *this* definition signifies that a believer has been "born again by the Holy Spirit unto a new life and is identified with fellowship of Christ and the church". **Although sounding romantic, it has not a shred of bible proof as taught by the apostle Paul.** **c)** is actually hybrid of **b)** and the belief that water is a **requirement** under this dispensing of God's grace. **Did you also notice that this belief has water superseding the Holy Spirit? If a person is to believe that the "One Baptism" in this verse is tied to water, then logic states we have a water based salvation, of which the same could be said for Romans 6:1-4 where the same Greek word is used for baptism. Interestingly, these verses are more condemning than Ephesians 4:5!**



The Charity of God - 4:4-6

- 4 *There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;*
5 *One Lord, one faith, one baptism,*
6 *One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*

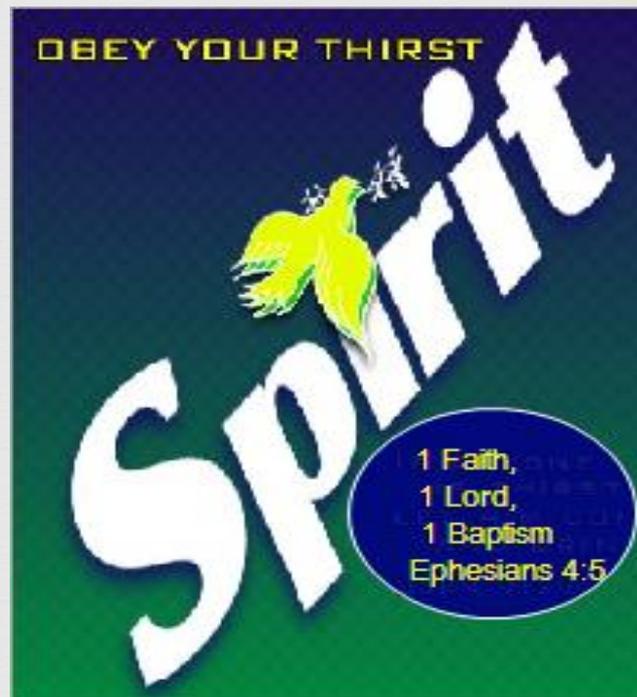
Since we already proved we couldn't connect the dots in a), b) or c) , we'll now look at the word origin and history for "immersion". Taking out all of the water bias in Christianity today you can find the following:

immersion

mid15c., from L.L. *immersionem* (nom. *immersio*), noun of action from *immergere*, from L. in- "into" + *mergere* "plunge, dip" (see [merge](#)).

Merge: verb, merged, merging (used with object)

1. To cause to combine or coalesce; to unite
2. To combine, blend, or unite gradually so as to blur the individuality or the individual identity of. (i.e. - They voted to merge the two branch offices into a single unit
3. To become combined, united, swallowed up, or absorbed; to lose identity by uniting or blending.
4. To combine or unite into a single enterprise or organization



So in retrospect and with further analysis, the sub-bullets "a, b or c" won't get us there friends. It requires a deeper dive in understanding the word "immersion" to get the definition and context of baptism here. It should be clear then that the only baptism Paul referred to, and all that matters, is the baptism of us into Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit! This is a divine operation that occurs the moment that ANYONE believes God The Father concerning what God the Son did on our behalf at Calvary thus establishing God's righteousness for access into heaven.

The Charity of God - 4:4-6

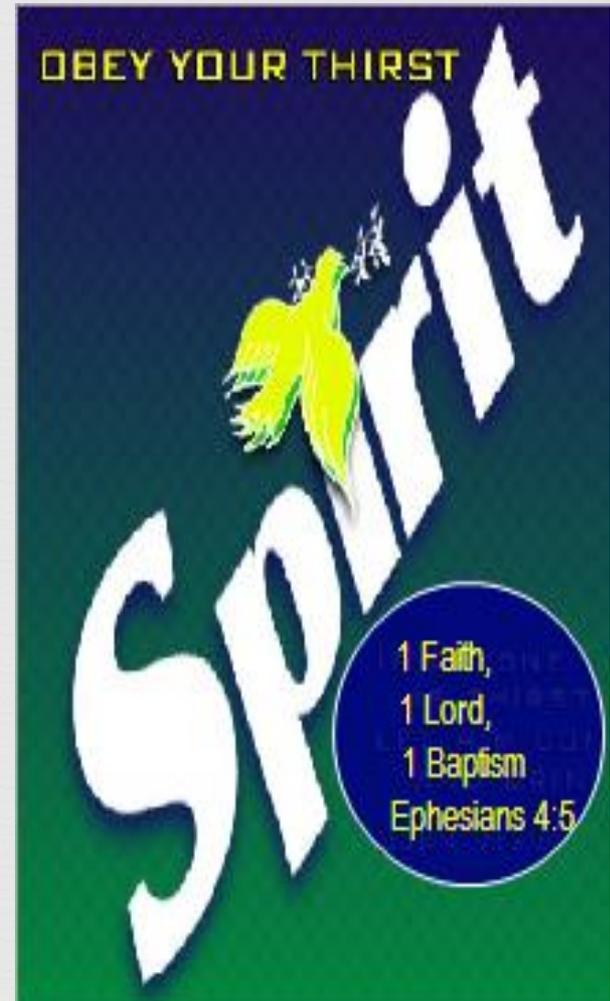
- 4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;
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Not to be confused with 911, bapto.

The clearest example that shows the meaning of baptizo is a text from the Greek poet and physician Nicander, who lived about 200 B.C. It is a recipe for making pickles and is helpful because it uses both words. Nicander says that in order to make a pickle, the vegetable should first be 'dipped' (bapto) into boiling water and then 'baptised' (baptizo) in the vinegar solution. Both verbs concern the immersing of vegetables in a solution. But the first is temporary. **The second, the act of baptising the vegetable, produces a permanent change.** When used in the New Testament, this word more often refers to our union and identification with Christ than to our water baptism.

When you read the word "baptism" or baptized in the letters of the apostle Paul, he is always referring to Holy Spirit baptism which speaks to our union with Jesus Christ. As an old friend once told me; "There is no water in our conversion today as we have been dry-cleaned by the Holy Spirit!"

Water baptism has no place in the dispensing of grace for if we render water to Paul's writings on this topic, we have a works based salvation....



The Captivity God- 4:7-10

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

8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity (a prisoner of war) captive (to capture), and gave gifts unto men.

9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower (inferior as in Hades) parts of the earth?

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

In **verses 7 through 10**, I am sure there are many interesting commentaries which discuss the whereabouts and ministry of Christ while he was separated from God The Father and God The Holy Spirit for three (earth) days prior to His glorious resurrection. However, I would like to take a deeper dive into the love, glory and beauty of God and His plan for us so that we can understand its great value as we chomp on *Ephesians 4:7-10*.

- This following portion of our comprehensive study will attempt to understand what occurred during the time of Our Lord Jesus Christ's death; His disembodiment and separation from God The Father.
- While both doctrinal and historical, the redemptive value of Christ's accomplishment is understood by those that have trusted in him for their salvation. This study will take a more tiered approach....a deeper dive at understanding what scripture has to say about what actually happened during Christ's foreknown exit from planet earth during His burial.



The Captivity God- 4:7-10

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There are assumptions that have to be made as part of this study that of themselves could generate pages of content. Readers may think of some that are not here, but I will list what I think are core to this topic including:



- 1. The deity of Jesus Christ** (*John 8:8-58, Philippians 2:5-11, John 1:1-14, 1 John 5:7, Colossians 1:1-20*)
- 2. The qualifications and perfection of Jesus Christ** as being the only One able to meet the holy requirements of God The Father as concerning the necessary payment for the sins of humanity. (*Hebrews 8:1-6, 9:9-28*)
- 3. The unique priesthood of Jesus** as Melchizedek; a Holy and High Priest not of man, but of God. (*Hebrews 6:13-20, Hebrews 7*)

The Captivity God- 4:7-10

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During the three days where Jesus' physical body was in the tomb, His Spirit was quite busy accomplishing the following objectives prior to His reunion with God The Father:



1. **The Presentation of Christ** - Presenting His blood as “the sacrifice” to God The Father in the position of High Priest. God's blood through Jesus Christ was the perfect and only worthy sacrifice required for such an act. (*Hebrews 9*) Up until this point in history, sins had been atoned for or covered up through the sacrificial system.
2. **The Ascension of Christ** - Leading those who died, having taken God at his word before Jesus Christ's atonement at Calvary, from paradise to the very presence of God (*Hebrews 11:38-40, Luke 16:19-31, Ephesians 4:8-10, Psalm 68, Judges 5:11-12*)
3. **The Proclamation of Christ** - Preaching, literally *proclaiming* to the lost in Hades, about the significance of their unbelief and His victory over death at Calvary. (*1 Peter 3:18-22, Luke 16:19-31, Psalm 63:9, Isaiah 44:23*)

The Captivity God- 4:7-10

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

Is it possible that Paul is trying to explain to us the great power of God, who is the Father of us all, who is above all and in us all (**v6**) (“In” **His** saints of course; those people that have taken Him at His word throughout time)? Paul quotes *Psalms 68:18* in the verses contained in *Ephesians 4:8*

Paul tells us that “every one is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ” in **verse 7**. But how is this apportionment determined? Under this dispensing of grace I believe this allotment is different for all men, but “as much as we want” is there for the taking! In **verse 8**, I believe the apostle of the Gentiles takes us back to *Psalms 68* to reference an important historical fact in order to show his readers the love of God. There, God “**received gifts from his captives**” where Jesus Christ “**gave gifts unto men**” as a result of the liberty He created for us! Since we are in Christ, I believe Paul wants to motivate us to tap into the mind of God by mentioning these Ephesian verses that explore what occurred in and around the death, burial and resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Through the power and teaching of God The Holy Spirit, it is up to us to use the word of God and to piece together what is available to us ----grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ----to find out more about God, His love, His glory, His beautiful plan and desire for our involvement! With that in mind, we have some nice referential scripture to study that will explain what occurred during the three days of Christ’s burial. Let’s begin by exploring *Hebrews 6 through 9*; here we can better understand His qualifications as Our High Priest as well as what Our Lord Jesus Christ accomplished on our behalf.

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The Presentation of Christ

Notes on the sacrificial system and its relevance:

When God brought Israel out of Egypt, he set up as part of the covenant relationship a system of sacrifices that had at its heart the shedding and offering of the blood of unflawed animals "to make atonement for yourselves" (Lev. 17:11). These sacrifices were typical (that is, as types, they pointed forward to something else). Though sins were in fact "left . . . unpunished" (Rom. 3:25) when sacrifices were faithfully offered, what actually blotted them out was not the animals' blood (Heb. 10:11) but the blood of the antitype, the sinless Son of God, Jesus Christ, whose death on the cross atoned for all sins that were remitted before the event as well as sins committed after it (Rom. 3:25-26; 4:3-8; Heb. 9:11-15).

New Testament references to the blood of Christ are regularly sacrificial (e.g., Rom. 3:25; 5:9; Eph. 1:7; Rev. 1:5). As a perfect sacrifice for sin (Rom. 8:3; Eph. 5:2; 1 Pet. 1:18-19), Christ's death was our redemption (i.e., our rescue by ransom: the paying of a price that freed us from the jeopardy of guilt, enslavement to sin, and expectation of wrath; Rom. 3:24; Gal. 4:4-5; Col. 1:14). Christ's death was God's act of reconciling us to himself, overcoming his own hostility to us that our sins provoked (Rom. 5:10; 2 Cor. 5:18-19; Col. 1:20-22). The Cross propitiated God (i.e., quenched his wrath against us by expiating our sins and so removing them from his sight). Key texts here are Romans 3:25; Hebrews 2:17; 1 John 2:2 and 4:10, in each of which the Greek expresses propitiation explicitly. The cross had this propitiatory effect because in his suffering Christ assumed our identity, as it were, and endured the retributive judgment due to us ("the curse of the law," Gal. 3:13) as our substitute, in our place, with the damning record of our transgressions nailed by God to his cross as the tally of crimes for which he was now dying (Col. 2:14; cf. Matt. 27:37; Isa. 53:4-6; Luke 22:37).

Christ's atoning death ratified the inauguration of the new covenant, in which access to God under all circumstances is guaranteed by Christ's one sacrifice that covers all transgressions (Matt. 26:27-28; 1 Cor. 11:25; Heb. 9:15; 10:12-18). Those who through faith in Christ have "received reconciliation" (Rom. 5:11) "in him . . . become the righteousness of God" (2 Cor. 5:21). In other words, they are justified and receive the status of adopted children in God's family (Gal. 4:5). Thereafter they live under the motivating constraint and control of the love of Christ for them as made known and measured by the cross (2 Cor. 5:14).

Excerpted from Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs by J. I. Packer.

The Captivity God- 4:7-10

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17 Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: 18 That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: 19 Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; 20 Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. ~

Hebrews 6:17-20

Friends, in the book of Hebrews we can learn about the perfection of the priesthood of God after the order of Melchizedek. Melchizedek was a character we first learned about in Genesis 14. There, Melchizedek appeared to Abram (Abraham) after Lot and his family were rescued. Melchizedek, blessed Abram and it is only in the book of Hebrews where we begin to grasp who he was and how his "priesthood" was a perfect model of the true "priesthood" of heaven, with Jesus Christ being that true High Priest. **My personal conviction is that Christ was indeed Melchizedek**, the one who appeared to Abram in His Pre-Incarnate state. Also known as a "theophany" an appearance or manifestation of God, Jesus Christ loved us so much that being the very Son of God, it behooved Him...He literally took our debt, became one of us, and called us brothers so that he could be merciful to those that were wretched and in need of help! As "**The Faithful High Priest**", He made reconciliation for God's people Israel; certainly also for the world as Paul the revelator would tell us in detail as part of "the mystery".



Meaning an appearance or manifestation of God, this compound word is derived from the Greek noun for "God" (theos) and the Greek verb "to appear" (phano). A theophany is when God is seen in temporary forms perceptible to the external senses. A theophany is regarded as one of the means by which God's special revelation comes to people; it is a divine revelation in which God's presence is made visible and recognizable to people.

Jesus Christ could very well proclaim (and did) that through His efficacious work He might destroy (to cease, to render inoperative, put an end to, abolish, deprive of force, influence or power) The Devil.

The Captivity God- 4:7-10

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With some background now in place, please read Hebrews 7 for a detailed understanding of Melchizedek as we continue to explore all that Christ accomplished for man, especially during the three days of His glorious death, burial and resurrection.....

1 For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; 2 To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace; 3 Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually. 4 Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils. 5 And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham: 6 But he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises. 7 And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better. 8 And here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth. 9 And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham. 10 For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him. 11 If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? 12 For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. 13 For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. 14 For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood. 15 And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, 16 Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. 17 For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. 18 For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. 19 For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God. 20 And inasmuch as not without an oath he was made priest: 21 (For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec;) 22 By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament. 23 And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: 24 But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. 25 Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. 26 For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; 27 Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. 28 For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore. - Hebrews 7:1-28

The Captivity God- 4:7-10

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8 Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him.

9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

10 For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

11 For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren,

12 Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.

13 And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me.

14 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;

15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

16 For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.

17 Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

18 For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

- Hebrews 2:8-18

Although the passages on the left is from book of **Hebrews**, its principles and precepts speak to all of us concerning the power of God. It is clear that God has put all things under Christ (**verse 8**). In **verse 9**, Christ shows His great power and dominion while **still** being made "a little lower than the angels", by taking the form of a man; crowned with glory and honor. (*Philippians 2:8* also tells us that although His "schema" or outer appearance was variable as man, His "form" as referenced in *verse 6* of the same chapter was God!)

We also know that through the grace of God, Christ "tasted death" for every man (**verse 9**).

In **verse 10** the bible tells us that Christ "stood out", He was fit...the one for all of us...the same God that made us also brought mankind into glory (through His work at Calvary) testifying of **His** completeness and perfection. Those that Christ has set apart and those that He will set apart are His brothers (**verse 11**). This shows of His endearing and loving relationship to man. **Verse 12** tells us that Jesus Christ declared the name of God (The Father) on behalf of the church; He literally brought tidings, reported, and made open this fact and sang praises as a result.

With all that we have shown up until this point Hebrews 2:17,18 give us insight on the activities that I believe occurred during the 3 days of redemption Paul spoke of in the main text of our Ephesians study.

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1 Now in that first covenant between God and Israel, there were regulations for worship and a sacred tent here on earth. 2 There were two rooms in this tent. In the first room were a lampstand, a table, and loaves of holy bread on the table. This was called the Holy Place. 3 Then there was a curtain, and behind the curtain was the second room called the Most Holy Place. 4 In that room were a gold incense altar and a wooden chest called the Ark of the Covenant, which was covered with gold on all sides. Inside the Ark were a gold jar containing some manna, Aaron's staff that sprouted leaves, and the stone tablets of the covenant with the Ten Commandments written on them. 5 The glorious cherubim were above the Ark. Their wings were stretched out over the Ark's cover, the place of atonement. But we cannot explain all of these things now. 6 When these things were all in place, the priests went in and out of the first room regularly as they performed their religious duties. 7 But only the high priest goes into the Most Holy Place, and only once a year, and always with blood, which he offers to God to cover his own sins and the sins the people have committed in ignorance. 8 By these regulations the Holy Spirit revealed that the Most Holy Place was not open to the people as long as the first room and the entire system it represents were still in use. 9 This is an illustration pointing to the present time. For the gifts and sacrifices that the priests offer are not able to cleanse the consciences of the people who bring them. 10 For that old system deals only with food and drink and ritual washing-external regulations that are in effect only until their limitations can be corrected. 11 So Christ has now become the High Priest over all the good things that have come. He has entered that great, perfect sanctuary in heaven, not made by human hands and not part of this created world. 12 Once for all time he took blood into that Most Holy Place, but not the blood of goats and calves. He took his own blood, and with it he secured our salvation forever. 13 Under the old system, the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a young cow could cleanse people's bodies from ritual defilement. 14 Just think how much more the blood of Christ will purify our hearts from deeds that lead to death so that we can worship the living God. For by the power of the eternal Spirit, Christ offered himself to God as a perfect sacrifice for our sins. 15 That is why he is the one who mediates the new covenant between God and people, so that all who are invited can receive the eternal inheritance God has promised them. For Christ died to set them free from the penalty of the sins they had committed under that first covenant. 16 Now when someone dies and leaves a will, no one gets anything until it is proved that the person who wrote the will is dead. 17 The will goes into effect only after the death of the person who wrote it. While the person is still alive, no one can use the will to get any of the things promised to them. 18 That is why blood was required under the first covenant as a proof of death. 19 For after Moses had given the people all of God's laws, he took the blood of calves and goats, along with water, and sprinkled both the book of God's laws and all the people, using branches of hyssop bushes and scarlet wool. 20 Then he said, "This blood confirms the covenant God has made with you." 21 And in the same way, he sprinkled blood on the sacred tent and on everything used for worship. 22 In fact, we can say that according to the law of Moses, nearly everything was purified by sprinkling with blood. Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins. 23 That is why the earthly tent and everything in it-which were copies of things in heaven-had to be purified by the blood of animals. But the real things in heaven had to be purified with far better sacrifices than the blood of animals. 24 For Christ has entered into heaven itself to appear now before God as our Advocate. He did not go into the earthly place of worship, for that was merely a copy of the real Temple in heaven. 25 Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, like the earthly high priest who enters the Most Holy Place year after year to offer the blood of an animal. 26 If that had been necessary, he would have had to die again and again, ever since the world began. But no! He came once for all time, at the end of the age, to remove the power of sin forever by his sacrificial death for us. 27 And just as it is destined that each person dies only once and after that comes judgment, 28 so also Christ died only once as a sacrifice to take away the sins of many people. He will come again but not to deal with our sins again. This time he will bring salvation to all those who are eagerly waiting for him. - Hebrews 9:1-2

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The most significant aspect of Christ's atonement, His payment for the sins of humanity, was the actual payment which we can read about in *Hebrews 9*.

We already know that the sacrificial system that God instructed Moses to create, develop and implement was made after the pattern of the actual, true tabernacle of heaven (*Hebrews 8:5*). But the bible also gives us insight into God's activity concerning the redemption of mankind starting in *Hebrews 9:1-9* where readers can associate the construct of the tabernacle of God with His glory and perfection.

Then the author of the Hebrews moves to the "pattern" aspect of why the earthly tabernacle was created and the insufficiency of it "which stood only in meats and drinks and in diverse washings and carnal ordinances imposed on them until the time of reformation".

6 Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. 7 But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: 8 The Holy Ghost thus signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: 9 Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; 10 Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation - Hebrews 9:6-10

parabolē ←

- a comparing, comparison of one thing with another, likeness, similitude
- an example by which a doctrine or precept is illustrated
- a narrative, fictitious but agreeable to the laws and usages of human life, by which either the duties of men or the things of God, particularly the nature and history of God's kingdom are figuratively portrayed
- a parable: an earthly story with a heavenly meaning



23 It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. - Hebrews 9:23

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11 But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; 12 Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. - Hebrews 9:11-12



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24 For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: 25 Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; 26 For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. 27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: 28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation. –

Hebrews 9:24-28



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The Ascension of Christ

The topic of Hades and its two compartments, one being **Hell** (or The Place of Torments) and the other being **Abraham's Bosom** (a place of rest and peace), usually come up in the [Luke 16:19-31](#) passage otherwise known as the "Rich man and Lazarus". Although not a major doctrinal issue, it is my belief that in the verses contained in [Ephesians 4:7-10](#), the apostle Paul wanted his readers to know more about the power of God, the accomplishments of the cross and the details of what Jesus Christ was doing, including preaching to those saints who had died having taken God at His word through faith.



19 By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; 20 Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. 21 The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ: 22 Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him. - [1 Peter 3:19-22](#)



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What could Christ have told these Old Testament saints *ascending up on high*? So we see that:

- The Father put “all things” under Christ’s feet and left nothing out!
- “All things” includes the work and plan of The Father.
- Jesus Christ was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death.
- Christ was crowned with glory and honor “to taste death” (literally, to experience death on behalf of mankind) for EVERY man.
- As “The Captain of their salvation” Christ was “made perfect” (literally, this completed His work) through suffering. **“Captain” equates with prince, chief, predecessor, pioneer.**
- Christ stood out and was fit for the job while doing it for those He created and set apart.
- Christ was in charge of the plan of God and on behalf of The Church He will sing praises to God The Father; Christ Jesus has put His trust in Him.
- Our Lord Jesus Christ partook in flesh and blood, that through death, He might destroy The Devil that had the power of death (prior to Christ and his completed cross-work).

Jesus Christ could very well proclaim that through His efficacious work He might destroy (to cease, to render inoperative, put an end to, abolish, deprive of force, influence or power) The Devil

To be continued.....

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19 By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; 20 Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. 21 The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ: 22 Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him. - [1 Peter 3:19-22](#)



The

Republic of Grace

18 And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; 19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. 20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. 21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. -2 Corinthians 5:18-21