

# Ephesians

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Author: Paul the Apostle · Written: c. AD 60-62 · Category: Pauline Epistles

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## Introduction

Ephesians stands as Paul's most sublime and soaring theological vision, unveiling the **eternal purpose of God** to unite all things in Christ and create a new humanity—the church. Written from Roman imprisonment, the letter transcends the immediate concerns of local church problems to present the cosmic scope of redemption. From before the foundation of the world to the consummation of all things, Ephesians sweeps across eternity to reveal God's grand design: **in Christ, through the church, displaying His manifold wisdom to the heavenly realms.**

The letter opens with a magnificent benediction cataloging the spiritual blessings believers possess in Christ—chosen before creation, adopted as sons, redeemed through His blood, sealed with the Spirit, destined for an inheritance. These are not future hopes but present realities in the heavenly places. Paul's prayer follows, asking that believers would comprehend the immeasurable greatness of God's power—the same power that raised Christ from the dead and seated Him at the Father's right hand, far above all rule and authority. This exalted Christ is given as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

The theological heart of Ephesians is the **mystery of the church**—Jew and Gentile united as one new man in Christ. The dividing wall of hostility has been demolished through the cross. Those once far off have been brought near by Christ's blood. Together, Jewish and Gentile believers form one household of God, one holy temple, one dwelling place for God by the Spirit. This was God's eternal purpose, hidden for ages but now revealed. Through the church, the principalities and powers in the heavenly places come to know God's manifold wisdom. The church is not plan B after Israel's failure but the pinnacle of God's redemptive purpose.

After three chapters establishing believers' exalted position **in Christ** and **in the heavenlies**, Paul transitions to the ethical implications with his signature 'therefore.' The indicative demands the imperative—we must **walk worthy** of our calling. Unity must be maintained through humility and patience. Spiritual gifts exist to equip the body until all reach maturity measured by the fullness of Christ. The new life in Christ requires putting off the old self corrupted by deceitful desires and putting on the new self created in God's likeness. Every relationship—marriage, family, workplace—is transformed by the gospel. The letter concludes with the **armor of God**, reminding believers that we are in a cosmic battle requiring divine resources. Ephesians lifts our eyes from earthly struggles to heavenly realities, from temporal concerns to eternal purposes, from individual salvation to cosmic redemption.

## Book Outline

- **Introduction and Praise** (1:1-2) — Paul's greeting to the saints at Ephesus, grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
- **Spiritual Blessings in Christ** (1:3-14) — The great benediction—blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ. Chosen before the foundation of the world, adopted as sons, redeemed through His blood, given an inheritance, sealed with the Spirit. All according to God's will and to the praise of His glorious grace.
- **Paul's First Prayer** (1:15-23) — Thanksgiving for the Ephesians' faith and love. Prayer for the Spirit of wisdom and revelation to know God better, to comprehend the hope of His calling, the riches of His inheritance, and the immeasurable greatness of His power—the same power that raised and exalted Christ far above all, making Him head over all things to the church, His body.
- **Dead Made Alive—Salvation by Grace** (2:1-10) — Humanity's condition—dead in trespasses and sins, following Satan, under God's wrath. But God, rich in mercy and great in love, made us alive together with Christ, raised us up, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places. Saved by grace through faith, not by works—it is God's gift. We are His workmanship created for good works He prepared beforehand.
- **One New Man—Unity of Jew and Gentile** (2:11-22) — Gentiles were once alienated, without hope and without God. But now in Christ, brought near by His blood, the dividing wall has been broken down. Christ made peace, creating one new man from two, reconciling both to God in one body through the cross. Together we are fellow citizens, members of God's household, built into a holy temple, a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.
- **The Mystery Revealed—Paul's Ministry** (3:1-13) — The mystery hidden for ages is now revealed—Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel. Paul was made a minister to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ and to bring to light God's eternal purpose. Through the church, God's manifold wisdom is made known to rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.
- **Paul's Second Prayer and Doxology** (3:14-21) — Prayer that believers would be strengthened by the Spirit in the inner being, that Christ would dwell in their hearts through faith, that they would comprehend the breadth and length and height and depth of Christ's love that surpasses knowledge, and be filled with all the fullness of God. Doxology to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all we ask or think—glory in the church through all generations forever.

- **Walk Worthy—Unity in the Body** (4:1-16) — Walk worthy of your calling with all humility, gentleness, patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain unity. Seven unities: one body, Spirit, hope, Lord, faith, baptism, God and Father. Christ gave gifts—apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds, teachers—to equip the saints for ministry, to build up the body until all reach mature manhood measured by the fullness of Christ. Speaking truth in love, we grow up into Him who is the head.
- **Put Off the Old Self, Put On the New** (4:17-32) — No longer walk as Gentiles walk—in futility of mind, darkened in understanding, alienated from God. You have learned Christ differently. Put off the old self corrupted by deceitful desires; be renewed in the spirit of your mind; put on the new self created after the likeness of God in righteousness and holiness. Speak truth, be angry without sinning, do honest work, speak only what builds up, grieve not the Spirit, put away bitterness and wrath, be kind and forgiving as God in Christ forgave you.
- **Walk in Love and Light** (5:1-21) — Be imitators of God as beloved children. Walk in love as Christ loved us and gave Himself for us. Sexual immorality, impurity, and covetousness must not be named among you, nor foolish talk, but thanksgiving. No immoral person has an inheritance in the kingdom. Walk as children of light—the fruit of light is goodness, righteousness, and truth. Discern what is pleasing to the Lord. Expose the works of darkness. Be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns, giving thanks always, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.
- **Household Relationships Transformed** (5:22-6:9) — Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord, for the husband is head of the wife as Christ is head of the church. Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her, presenting her glorious without spot or wrinkle. Children, obey your parents in the Lord. Fathers, do not provoke children but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. Bondservants, obey earthly masters with fear and trembling, as you would Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. Masters, treat bondservants the same way, knowing you both have the same Master in heaven.
- **Spiritual Warfare—The Armor of God** (6:10-20) — Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the whole armor of God to stand against the schemes of the devil. We wrestle not against flesh and blood but against cosmic powers of evil in the heavenly places. Stand therefore with the belt of truth, breastplate of righteousness, shoes of the gospel of peace, shield of faith, helmet of salvation, and sword of the Spirit, the Word of God. Pray at all times in the Spirit for all the saints and for boldness to proclaim the mystery of the gospel.

- **Conclusion and Benediction** (6:21-24) — Tychicus will inform you of my circumstances, that you may know how I am doing. Peace to the brothers, love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with love incorruptible.

## Key Themes

- **God's Eternal Purpose and Mystery Revealed:** Before the foundation of the world, God purposed to unite all things in Christ and create the church as His masterpiece. This mystery, hidden for ages, is now revealed—Jew and Gentile are fellow heirs, members of the same body, sharers in the promise. The church displays God's manifold wisdom to cosmic powers and will be presented to Christ as His glorious bride.
- **All Spiritual Blessings in the Heavenly Places in Christ:** Believers are blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms in Christ. We are chosen, adopted, redeemed, forgiven, given an inheritance, sealed with the Spirit, seated with Christ in the heavenlies. These are present realities, not merely future hopes. Our position is secure because it is 'in Christ,' united to the one who is far above all rule and authority.
- **Salvation by Grace Through Faith:** The definitive statement of salvation by grace: we are saved by grace through faith, not by works, so that no one can boast. Salvation is God's gift from start to finish. Yet we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works that God prepared beforehand. Grace does not nullify works but reorients them—they flow from salvation rather than earning it.
- **Unity of Jew and Gentile in Christ—One New Man:** Christ has broken down the dividing wall of hostility between Jew and Gentile, abolishing the law of commandments in His flesh. He has made both groups into one new man, reconciling them to God in one body through the cross. This unity is not mere tolerance but organic—one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all.
- **The Church as Christ's Body and Bride:** The church is Christ's body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. He is the head, from whom the whole body grows. The church is also His bride, whom He loves, nourishes, and will present to Himself in splendor without spot or wrinkle. Christ's relationship to the church is the pattern for marriage—self-giving love that sanctifies and cherishes.
- **Walk Worthy of Your Calling:** Believers are called to live worthy of their heavenly calling, maintaining unity, speaking truth, avoiding sin, walking in love as Christ loved us. The old self must be put off and the new self put on. Conduct should reflect identity—we are light in the Lord, so we walk as children of light. Every area of life—relationships, work, speech—is transformed by the gospel.
- **Spiritual Warfare in the Heavenly Realms:** Our struggle is not against flesh and blood but against cosmic powers of evil in the heavenly places. Victory requires God's full armor—truth, righteousness, gospel of peace, faith, salvation, the Spirit's

sword. We must stand firm in God's strength, praying at all times in the Spirit. The battle is real but the outcome is certain—Christ is already enthroned far above all powers.

- **The Fullness and Power of Christ:** Christ is central to Ephesians—raised from the dead, seated at God's right hand, exalted far above every name that is named. All things are under His feet. He ascended that He might fill all things. Believers know the immeasurable greatness of His power, the breadth and length and height and depth of His love that surpasses knowledge, and are filled with all the fullness of God.

## Key Verses

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

— Ephesians 1:3-4 (The opening benediction establishes that believers possess every spiritual blessing in Christ—not some, not most, but all. The foundation is God's eternal choice before creation to make us holy and blameless in love. This is the security and dignity of the Christian position—chosen by God, blessed in Christ, destined for holiness.)

But God, being rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved).

— Ephesians 2:4-5 (The two most beautiful words in Ephesians—'But God.' We were dead in trespasses and sins, following the prince of the power of the air, under God's wrath. But God, rich in mercy and great in love, made us alive together with Christ. The parenthetical 'by grace ye are saved' emphasizes that salvation is entirely God's work, motivated by His mercy and love.)

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

— Ephesians 2:8-10 (The clearest statement of salvation by grace through faith in all Scripture. Every aspect is God's gift—the grace, the salvation, the faith itself—'not of yourselves.' Works are excluded as the basis but included as the purpose—we are God's workmanship created for the good works He prepared. Salvation is by grace alone, but never alone—it produces the fruit of works.)

But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us.

— Ephesians 2:13-14 (The gospel's power to unite what was divided. Gentiles who were far off—alienated from Israel, strangers to the covenants, without hope and without God—have been brought near by Christ's blood. The dividing wall that separated Jew and Gentile has been demolished. Christ Himself is our peace, creating one new humanity from two hostile groups.)

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

— Ephesians 3:20-21 (The doxology concluding the doctrinal section. God is able to do not just what we ask, not just abundantly above what we ask, but exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think. This infinite capacity is according to the power already working in believers. Glory



belongs to God in the church—the very purpose for which the church exists—through all generations forever.)

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

— Ephesians 4:4-6 (The sevenfold basis of Christian unity—one body, Spirit, hope, Lord, faith, baptism, God. Unity is not created by human effort but acknowledged and maintained. It is rooted in the Triune God: one Spirit who indwells, one Lord to whom we belong, one Father over all. This theological unity demands practical expressions of love and peace.)

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

— Ephesians 5:25-27 (Christ's love for the church is the pattern and power for marital love. He gave Himself sacrificially, sanctifies progressively through the Word, and will present the church gloriously at the consummation. This reveals both the nature of Christian marriage and the purpose of redemption—Christ will have a bride worthy of Himself, holy and blameless, reflecting His glory.)

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

— Ephesians 6:12 (The nature of the Christian conflict. Our struggle is not merely horizontal (against people) but vertical (against cosmic evil powers). This explains why human solutions fail—education, politics, social reform alone cannot defeat spiritual forces. Only God's armor suffices. The battle is in the heavenly places where Christ is already victorious, and we fight from His triumph, not toward it.)

## Historical Context

Paul wrote Ephesians from Roman imprisonment around AD 60-62, during the same period as Colossians, Philippians, and Philemon—the so-called 'Prison Epistles.' He was likely under house arrest as described in Acts 28, able to receive visitors and write letters but awaiting trial before Caesar. Tychicus carried the letter to Asia Minor, probably delivering Colossians at the same time (Ephesians 6:21-22 parallels Colossians 4:7-8).

Ephesus was the capital of the Roman province of Asia and the fourth largest city in the empire. It was a center of commerce, culture, and pagan religion—home to the magnificent temple of Artemis (Diana), one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. The city was steeped in occult practices and magic arts. Paul spent three years there on his third missionary journey (Acts 19:1-20:1), longer than anywhere else. His ministry was marked by extraordinary miracles, public burning of occult books, and a riot provoked by silversmiths whose idol-making business was threatened by conversions to Christianity.

The letter's original audience is debated. The words 'at Ephesus' in 1:1 are missing from the earliest and best manuscripts. The letter lacks personal greetings unusual for a church where Paul spent three years. Some scholars suggest it was a circular letter intended for multiple churches in Asia Minor, with copies sent to different cities. Alternatively, it may have been addressed to Ephesus but written in such a universal style that it lacks local references.

The church at Ephesus was predominantly Gentile but included Jewish believers. Tension between these groups is not as pronounced as in Galatians or Romans, suggesting the church had matured in understanding their unity in Christ. By the time of writing, the church had apparently grown strong in faith and love (1:15), though Paul still prays for deeper spiritual insight and experience.

## Literary Style

Ephesians is noted for its **elevated, liturgical style** and majestic theological content. The opening blessing (1:3-14) is one continuous sentence in Greek—202 words in a cascade of praise cataloging spiritual blessings. This extended sentence structure, rare in Greek literature, reflects Paul's overwhelming emotion as he contemplates redemption's riches. The prayer sections (1:15-23; 3:14-21) are magnificent expressions of spiritual desire and doxology.

The letter exhibits careful **structure and balance**. Chapters 1-3 establish doctrine, chapters 4-6 apply it to practice. The first half emphasizes the indicative (what God has done and who we are in Christ); the second half emphasizes the imperative (how we should live in response). The transition at 4:1—'I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy'—explicitly connects ethics to theology. The 'walk' vocabulary appears repeatedly in chapters 4-5, structuring the ethical section.

**'In Christ' and 'in the heavenlies'** are Ephesians' characteristic phrases. The letter uses 'in Christ,' 'in Him,' or similar expressions over 30 times, emphasizing that every blessing and calling derives from union with Christ. 'In the heavenly places' (or 'heavenlies') appears five times (1:3, 20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12), always in Ephesians. This is not heaven itself but the spiritual realm where Christ is enthroned, where believers are seated with Him, where powers and principalities observe God's wisdom through the church, and where spiritual warfare occurs.

The **Christ-hymn** of 4:8-10, quoting Psalm 68:18, interprets Christ's ascension as the basis for giving gifts to the church. This parallels the Philippians 2:6-11 and Colossians 1:15-20 hymns, suggesting these poetic passages may reflect early Christian worship.

**Mystery** is a key term, appearing six times (1:9; 3:3, 4, 9; 5:32; 6:19). The mystery is not something incomprehensible but something hidden that has now been revealed—specifically, that Gentiles are fellow heirs with Jews in one body through the gospel. This theme links to the 'one new man' concept central to Ephesians' ecclesiology.

The **household codes** (5:22-6:9) addressing wives-husbands, children-parents, and slaves-masters parallel Colossians 3:18-4:1 but are more developed, especially regarding marriage. Paul grounds these instructions in profound theology—marriage reflects Christ's relationship to the church (5:32).

The **armor of God** passage (6:10-20) uses vivid military imagery familiar to Paul's Roman guards. Each piece of armor—belt, breastplate, shoes, shield, helmet, sword—represents a spiritual reality necessary for standing firm against evil. This memorable metaphor has shaped Christian understanding of spiritual warfare.

## Theological Significance

Ephesians presents the most comprehensive **ecclesiology** in the New Testament. The church is not merely a voluntary association or human organization but the very **body of Christ** (1:23; 4:12), His **bride** (5:25-32), a **holy temple** (2:21), and the **household of God** (2:19). It is the sphere where God's fullness dwells (1:23), the instrument through which God displays His wisdom to cosmic powers (3:10), and the community that will span all generations glorifying God forever (3:21).

The **mystery of the church**—Jew and Gentile united as one new man—is central to God's eternal purpose (3:1-13). This was not plan B after Israel's failure but God's intention from before creation, hidden in past ages but now revealed. The cross demolished the dividing wall between Jew and Gentile (2:14), abolishing the law of commandments that separated them. Together they form one body with equal access to the Father through one Spirit (2:18). This radical unity transcends the most fundamental ethnic and religious division of the ancient world.

Ephesians' **Christology** is exalted. Christ is seated far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, above every name that is named (1:21). All things are under His feet (1:22). He ascended that He might fill all things (4:10). The church's unity is grounded in the supremacy of the one Lord (4:5). The love of Christ surpasses knowledge (3:19). He is the head from whom the whole body grows (4:15-16). Every blessing, every hope, every calling is 'in Christ.'

The doctrine of **election** appears in Ephesians' opening verses—God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world (1:4). This election is unto holiness and love, not merely salvation. It is according to the purpose of His will (1:5, 11), motivated by grace and love, resulting in the praise of His glorious grace (1:6). God's eternal purpose eliminates human boasting and grounds assurance—salvation originated in eternity past and extends to eternity future.

**Salvation by grace through faith** receives its clearest articulation: 'For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast' (2:8-9). Every element—grace, salvation, faith—is God's gift. The 'not of yourselves' excludes any human contribution. Works are excluded as the basis but included as the purpose—we are created in Christ Jesus for good works God prepared beforehand (2:10). Salvation is monergistic (God's work alone) in origin but transformative in outcome.

The letter develops **spiritual warfare** theology. Believers are seated with Christ in the heavenly places (2:6), positioned in the realm where cosmic powers dwell. Our struggle is against these principalities and powers, the rulers of this present darkness, spiritual

forces of evil in the heavenly places (6:12). Yet Christ is already far above all these powers (1:21). The battle is real but the outcome is certain—we stand firm in the victory Christ has won, wearing the armor God provides.

**Unity** is both theological reality and ethical mandate. There is one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father (4:4-6). This unity already exists; believers must maintain it through humility, gentleness, patience, and love (4:2-3). Disunity denies the gospel that creates one new man from formerly hostile groups. Gifts are given to build up the body until all reach unity of faith and knowledge of the Son of God (4:12-13).

The relationship between **indicative and imperative** structures the letter. Chapters 1-3 establish who believers are—blessed with every spiritual blessing, made alive together with Christ, seated in the heavenly places, members of God's household, recipients of the mystery. Chapters 4-6 command how believers should walk—worthy of their calling, in unity, putting off the old self, in love and light, in transformed relationships, in spiritual armor. Ethics flow from identity; imperatives rest on indicatives. We live out what God has made us to be in Christ.

## Christ in Ephesians

Christ is **absolutely central** to Ephesians, mentioned more than 90 times. Every spiritual blessing is 'in Christ' (1:3). God chose us 'in Him' before the foundation of the world (1:4). We have redemption 'through His blood' (1:7). God purposed to unite all things in heaven and earth 'in Him' (1:10). We were sealed with the Spirit 'in Him' (1:13). The revelation of God's power was displayed 'in Christ' when He raised Him from the dead (1:20).

Christ is **exalted far above all** rule, authority, power, and dominion—above every name that is named not only in this age but in the age to come (1:21). All things are put under His feet, and He is head over all things to the church (1:22). He fills all in all (1:23). God made us alive together 'with Christ,' raised us up 'with Him,' and seated us with Him in the heavenly places 'in Christ Jesus' (2:5-6). This demonstrates the immeasurable riches of His grace 'in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus' (2:7).

Christ is **our peace** who made both groups—Jew and Gentile—one (2:14). He broke down the dividing wall of hostility 'in His flesh' by abolishing the law of commandments (2:14-15). He created in Himself one new man from two, making peace, and reconciled both to God 'in one body through the cross' (2:15-16). Through Him, both have access in one Spirit to the Father (2:18). He is the cornerstone in whom the whole structure is joined together (2:20-21).

The unsearchable riches of Christ are proclaimed to the Gentiles (3:8). God's eternal purpose is accomplished 'in Christ Jesus our Lord' (3:11). We speak truth 'in Christ' (4:21). God in Christ forgave us (4:32). Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her (5:2, 25). He sanctifies and cleanses her that He might present the church to Himself glorious, without spot or wrinkle (5:26-27).

Christ **gave gifts** when He ascended on high (4:8). He descended into the lower regions and ascended far above all the heavens that He might fill all things (4:9-10). The gifts He gave—apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds, teachers—are for equipping the saints until all attain to mature manhood measured by the stature of the fullness of Christ (4:11-13). The body grows as each part works properly, building itself up in love (4:16).

Believers are to be imitators of God and **walk in love as Christ loved** us and gave Himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God (5:1-2). Husbands are to love their wives **as Christ loved the church** and gave Himself for her (5:25). This great mystery refers to Christ and the church (5:32). Children are to obey parents 'in the Lord' (6:1). Slaves are to serve 'as to Christ' (6:5), doing the will of God from the heart, serving the Lord Christ (6:6-7).

Believers are strong **in the Lord** and in the strength of His might (6:10). We stand firm not in our own power but in the victory Christ has won. The grace of God is 'with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with love incorruptible' (6:24). From election before the foundation of the world to the putting on of God's armor, from the breaking down of dividing walls to the glorious presentation of His bride, Christ is the beginning, middle, and end of God's eternal purpose.

## Relationship to the New Testament

Ephesians has the closest relationship to **Colossians** among Paul's letters. Both were written during the same imprisonment, carried by Tychicus, and address similar themes with similar language. Colossians confronts false teaching with Christ's supremacy; Ephesians builds on that foundation to develop ecclesiology. The Christ-hymns (Colossians 1:15-20; Ephesians 1:20-23), household codes (Colossians 3:18-4:1; Ephesians 5:22-6:9), and even closing verses (Colossians 4:7-8; Ephesians 6:21-22) parallel each other. Yet Ephesians is more universal and less polemical—less about countering error and more about unveiling mystery.

**Romans** shares Ephesians' emphasis on salvation by grace through faith (Romans 3:21-26; Ephesians 2:8-10), the inclusion of Gentiles in God's people (Romans 9-11; Ephesians 2:11-22), and the body metaphor for the church (Romans 12:4-8; Ephesians 4:11-16). But Romans is more focused on justification and individual salvation; Ephesians emphasizes the corporate reality of the church and cosmic reconciliation. Romans addresses Jewish-Gentile tensions with heated urgency; Ephesians presents their unity as an accomplished mystery.

The **Corinthian correspondence** discusses spiritual gifts and the body (1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 4:7-16), sexual immorality (1 Corinthians 5-6; Ephesians 5:3-5), and marriage as reflecting Christ and the church (1 Corinthians 7; Ephesians 5:22-33). First Corinthians addresses specific church disorders; Ephesians presents the ideal pattern of body life. The resurrection chapter (1 Corinthians 15) connects to Ephesians' emphasis on God's power displayed in raising Christ (Ephesians 1:19-20).

**Galatians** defends Gentile inclusion against Judaizers; Ephesians celebrates it as the revelation of God's eternal mystery. Both present one people of God, but Galatians argues for it polemically while Ephesians expounds it majestically. Both emphasize walking by the Spirit (Galatians 5:16-26; Ephesians 5:18-21) and bearing one another's burdens in love (Galatians 6:2; Ephesians 4:2).

The **Pastoral Epistles** (1-2 Timothy, Titus) share vocabulary and concerns with Ephesians—church structure, elder qualifications, sound doctrine, household relationships. Ephesians provides the theological vision (the church as God's household, pillar of truth); the Pastorals provide practical implementation (selecting elders, organizing worship, addressing false teaching).

**Philippians 2:6-11**—the Christ-hymn describing Jesus' descent and exaltation—parallels Ephesians 4:8-10 where Christ descended and ascended. Both letters emphasize humility (Philippians 2:3; Ephesians 4:2) and joy (Philippians throughout;



Ephesians 5:18-20). Philippians focuses on individual Christlikeness; Ephesians on corporate unity in Christ's body.

Ephesians illuminates **Hebrews'** emphasis on Christ's superiority to angels (Hebrews 1; Ephesians 1:20-21), the new covenant superseding the old (Hebrews 8-10; Ephesians 2:14-15), and believers' access to God (Hebrews 10:19-22; Ephesians 2:18; 3:12). Both describe the church as God's household (Hebrews 3:6; Ephesians 2:19).

The **General Epistles** echo Ephesians' themes. First Peter's living stones built into a spiritual house (1 Peter 2:5) parallels Ephesians' temple imagery (2:21-22). James' emphasis on faith producing works (James 2:14-26) aligns with Ephesians 2:10—created for good works. First John's walk in light versus darkness (1 John 1:5-7) parallels Ephesians 5:8-14.

**Revelation's** cosmic conflict between God's kingdom and Satan's forces (Revelation 12-13) reflects Ephesians' spiritual warfare (6:12). The bride of the Lamb adorned for her husband (Revelation 19:7-8; 21:2) fulfills Ephesians' vision of Christ presenting the church glorious without spot or wrinkle (5:27). The new Jerusalem where God dwells with His people (Revelation 21:3) consummates Ephesians' temple imagery—the church as God's dwelling place (2:22).

## Practical Application

Ephesians grounds all Christian living in **identity in Christ**. Before commanding how to walk, Paul establishes who we are—chosen, adopted, redeemed, forgiven, sealed, seated with Christ in the heavenly places. We act not to become something but because of what God has made us. The indicative always precedes the imperative. When we forget our position in Christ, we lack both motivation and power for godly living. When we remember—when we 'sit' in the heavenlies with Christ—we can 'walk' worthy on earth.

The letter teaches that **unity is not optional** but essential to the gospel. Christ died to create one new man from two hostile groups. To perpetuate division—whether ethnic, economic, or any other—contradicts the cross. Unity does not mean uniformity; the body has diverse members with different gifts (4:11-16). But it does require humility, gentleness, patience, and bearing with one another in love (4:2). We must be eager to maintain the unity the Spirit has created. Churches that major in secondary issues while ignoring gospel unity fail to understand Ephesians.

**Every believer has a ministry** in the body. Christ gave gifts not to a special class but to equip all the saints for ministry (4:11-12). The body grows as each part does its work (4:16). No member is insignificant; no one can say 'I have no ministry.' The question is not whether you serve but whether you are using your gifts to build up the body. Maturity is measured by how much we look like Christ (4:13)—individually and corporately.

Ephesians revolutionizes **marriage and family relationships**. Marriage is not merely a social contract or means of happiness but a living parable of Christ and the church (5:32). Husbands love sacrificially as Christ loved—giving themselves up, sanctifying, nourishing. Wives submit voluntarily as the church submits to Christ. Neither command makes sense apart from the gospel. Children obey parents 'in the Lord' (6:1); fathers do not exasperate but train children in the Lord's discipline (6:4). Even master-slave relationships are transformed—both recognize they have the same Master in heaven (6:9). Every relationship provides opportunity to display the gospel.

The **put off/put on** dynamic (4:22-24) structures sanctification. The old self must be put off like filthy clothes—corrupted by deceitful desires. The new self must be put on—created in God's likeness in righteousness and holiness. This is both definitive (done at conversion) and progressive (ongoing). Specific sins are named—lying, sinful anger, stealing, corrupting speech, bitterness—and replaced with virtues—truth, honest work, edifying words, kindness, forgiveness. Transformation is concrete, not abstract.

Believers must **be filled with the Spirit** (5:18). This is not a one-time experience but a continuous command—keep being filled. The evidence is not ecstatic phenomena but addressing one another in psalms and hymns, singing and making melody to the Lord, giving thanks always, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ (5:19-21). Spirit-filled living is corporate worship, constant gratitude, and mutual submission. This contrasts with drunkenness (5:18)—both involve being controlled, but one destroys while the other transforms.

**Spiritual warfare is real** and requires God's resources. Our struggle is against cosmic powers of evil, not merely human opponents (6:12). This explains why cultural reform, political activism, or education alone cannot bring ultimate victory—we face spiritual forces requiring spiritual weapons. Yet we do not fight for victory but from victory—Christ is already enthroned far above all powers (1:21). We put on God's armor and stand firm in the triumph Christ has won. Prayer 'at all times in the Spirit' (6:18) is essential—the battle is won on our knees.

The letter teaches that **the church exists for God's glory**, not merely human benefit. God's purpose is that through the church, His manifold wisdom would be made known to cosmic powers (3:10) and glory would come to Him through all generations forever (3:21). We gather not primarily to meet our needs but to worship Him. We serve not to earn rewards but to reflect His glory. When the church becomes consumer-focused, it forgets its reason for existence.

Paul's prayers (1:15-23; 3:14-21) model **what to pray** for believers. Not health, wealth, or comfort, but spiritual insight—knowing God better, comprehending our hope and inheritance, experiencing His power. Not ease but strength in the inner being. Not happiness but that Christ would dwell in our hearts by faith, that we would comprehend His love that surpasses knowledge, that we would be filled with all God's fullness. These are the prayers that align with God's purposes, the requests He delights to answer.

Ultimately, Ephesians calls us to **think cosmically**—to lift our eyes from petty concerns to God's eternal purposes. Before the foundation of the world, He chose us. Through Christ's cross, He created one new humanity. In the heavenly places, He seated us with Christ. Through the church, He displays His wisdom to cosmic powers. In the coming ages, He will show the immeasurable riches of His grace. We are part of a drama that spans from eternity past to eternity future, that encompasses heaven and earth, that involves angels and demons, that culminates in Christ summing up all things in Himself. We are blessed with every spiritual blessing. We are His workmanship created for good works. We are members of Christ's body and His beloved bride. Walk worthy of this calling.

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# Chapter 1

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## Greeting

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.

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## Spiritual Blessings in 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:

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.

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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:

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.

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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.

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### **Paul's Prayer for the Ephesians**

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,

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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.

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## Chapter 2

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### Made Alive in Christ

- 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.
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### One in Christ

- 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.
- 

### **Christ Our Cornerstone**

- 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.
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## Chapter 3

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### The Mystery of the Gospel Revealed

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

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### Prayer for Spiritual Strength

- 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.
- 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.
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# Chapter 4

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## Unity in the Body of Christ

- 1 I 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 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
  - 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.
- 

## Spiritual Gifts for the Church

- 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 captive, and gave gifts unto men.
- 9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower 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.)
- 11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;
- 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:
- 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:
- 14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;
- 15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

- 16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.
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### **The New Life in Christ**

- 17 This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,
- 18 Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:
- 19 Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.
- 20 But ye have not so learned Christ;
- 21 If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus:
- 22 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;
- 23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;
- 24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.
- 25 Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.
- 26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:
- 27 Neither give place to the devil.
- 28 Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.
- 29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.
- 30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.
- 31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:
- 32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.
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# Chapter 5

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## Walking in Love and Light

- 1 Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;
- 2 And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.
- 3 But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints;
- 4 Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks.
- 5 For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.
- 6 Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.
- 7 Be not ye therefore partakers with them.
- 8 For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:
- 9 (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;)
- 10 Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.
- 11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.
- 12 For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.
- 13 But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light.
- 14 Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

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## Filled with the Spirit

- 15 See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,
- 16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.
- 17 Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.
- 18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;
- 19 Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;

- 20 Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;
- 21 Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.
- 

### **Wives and Husbands**

- 22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.
- 23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.
- 24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.
- 25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;
- 26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,
- 27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.
- 28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.
- 29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:
- 30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.
- 31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.
- 32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.
- 33 Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.
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# Chapter 6

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## Children and Parents

- 1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.
  - 2 Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;)
  - 3 That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.
  - 4 And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.
- 

## Slaves and Masters

- 5 Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ;
  - 6 Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;
  - 7 With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men:
  - 8 Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.
  - 9 And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.
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## The Armor of God

- 10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.
- 11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.
- 12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.
- 13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.
- 14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;
- 15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;
- 16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

- 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:
- 18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;
- 19 And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel,
- 20 For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.
- 

### **Final Greetings**

- 21 But that ye also may know my affairs, and how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things:
- 22 Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs, and that he might comfort your hearts.
- 23 Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 24 Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.

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