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Salvation In Ephesians. (2013)

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But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

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Salvation in Ephesians.

INTRODUCTION: since the primary focus of this study is upon Scriptures (in most chapters in Ephesians) that relate to salvation and are relevant to eternal life there are far too many different topics and titles to make a topics list, but I have faith that most who travel through each chapter will by the time they arrive at the end not only be enriched in their knowledge of salvation, but also enriched in God's love and God's grace in Christ.

Ephesians 1.

God has Blessed Us with Every Spiritual Blessing in the Heavenly Places.

Ephesians 1:3 ----- ³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,

Heavenly: means elevated or lifted up, in this context it carries the idea of something being far beyond any good thing the world can give. The following are two different aspects to the heavenly and spiritual blessings those in Christ are blessed with.

1. The heavenly and spiritual blessings refer to: -

- Forgiveness of sins and favour with God.
- God's grace and mercy and our fellowship with God and with Christ.
- God's free gift of righteousness imputed to us because of our FAITH in Christ.
- Our freedom from the bondage of the law and self-effort to earn righteousness.
- The promise of eternal life and everlasting glory with Christ and God the Father.

Paul is telling every faithful brother and sister in Christ that by their faith and their relationship of love toward Christ and God's grace these glorious spiritual blessings are theirs, they are God's gift to every faithful brother and sister in Christ. This is the wonder, glory and splendour of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and why it is called the Good News. Whoever is in Christ has these blessings, not because of their ability to perform religious duties, customs or traditions or because of any form of self-effort or grand Bible knowledge, but because of their faithful relationship to Lord Jesus Christ.

2. The heavenly and spiritual blessings can also refer to: -

The state of the mind and the well-being of every faithful brother and sister in Christ since the word heavenly means elevated or lifted up the expression, in heavenly places carry the idea that the mind is lifted up into high places of joy, happiness, contentment, mental calm, inner peace and love by the Gospel of Christ.

It is similar to when the world has an amazing day or great win and shout to their friends in exuberant excitement, "Wow! I'm in heavenly places" it is a spiritual way of saying that the mind is in an elevated place of excitement, joy and well-being.

They are called heavenly blessings because they are the exact opposite to being fearful and being constantly filled with worry, stress, anxiety and never being content or satisfied, but instead always left wanting more. This type of mindset is referred to as being earthly since it is in direct contrast to a heavenly mindset.

The reason the faithful in Christ are blessed with such a peaceful and contented mind is because the central focus in their life and supreme desire of their heart is the Lord Jesus Christ, in contrast to craving after the things of this world to find happiness.

In Christ we have Redemption and Forgiveness of our Trespasses.

Ephesians 1:7-10 ----- ⁷In him we have Redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace ⁸which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight ⁹making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ ¹⁰as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

The King James Bible says: -

- That he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in him.”

According to the riches of his grace, means, according to the eternal plan of God's grace lavished on those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The things that are in heaven: refer to God, the Lord Jesus Christ and the angels.

The things that are on earth: are the faithful in Christ and those that are sleeping in Christ, those whose name are written in the Lambs Book of Life and those who are counted worthy at the Great White Throne judgment.

Paul is saying in the fullness of time all will be brought together in and by Christ. At the fullness of time the things in heaven are going to descend and dwell with those on earth that belong to the family of the Lord Jesus Christ. John in the Book of Revelation had a vision in which he saw the Holy city, New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God and heard a loud voice from the throne of God saying: -

- Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away (Rev. 21:2-4).

The wonder, splendour and glory of the Gospel: Paul states, “God lavished (hath abounded toward us in KJV) His grace upon us, in all wisdom and insight” (v8) the word lavish and abound carry the idea of something superabounding in excess and excelling in quantity, quality and abundance it carries the thought of overflowing and being far more than enough needed to achieve the task and the words, God in wisdom and insight (v8) refers to God's insight into the heart and mind of mankind and the obvious fact that God is fully aware that it is impossible for any human to attain to the perfect standard of God's holiness and the perfect standard of holiness the law demands.

Therefore God from the foundations of the world and in His eternal wisdom predestined a plan to save mankind to eternal life that would not be dependent on self-effort, but on faith and His abundant grace. This is the reason God could guarantee his promise to Abraham because it is not subject to us attaining to the, Holy Standard of God but on our faith in Christ and God's lavished and abundant grace.

The mystery of God's will: the word mystery in the following verse, making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose which he set forth in Christ (v9) refers to the following two things: -

1. To God uniting together Jews and Gentiles, the noble and the lowly, the rich and the poor, those in great authority and those who lack it together in Christ (i.e., whoever is in Christ by faith are made one in Christ).

2. To God exalting the Lord Jesus Christ above all governments, authorities and powers so that he is the head not only of all nations on earth, but also over all the powers of heaven.

God's plan for the fullness of time: the words, as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth (v10) refer to the end of this age (as we know it) when the Lord returns as, King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:11-16) to rule and reign from God's Holy City Jerusalem (on Mount Zion God's Holy Mountain) to establish God's Kingdom on earth during his glorious millennial reign. In the first resurrection (Rev. 20:4-6) the dead in Christ and the faithful, who are alive, will be gathered together to rule and reign as kings and priests with the Lord over those nations who are left outside the Holy City of God. Christ the King united with his people will not only bring peace to the Middle East, but establish God's Kingdom of steadfast love, faithfulness, righteousness, joy and peace throughout the world and the glory of God will cover the earth.

Jesus will do justice to the poor and oppressed, he will be a faithful and compassionate King forever. He will not allow anyone to strike terror in the earth or use lies and deception to enlarge their own wealth and power. The land will abundantly produce and even the deserts will flourish. The animals will not feed on each other and even the lamb will be able to lie down with the wolf and everyone will eat of their own hands because all that they plant will produce. All nations the LORD has made will come and worship before the Lord Jesus Christ. They will glorify God's Name, proclaiming the LORD is great and does wondrous things and that He alone is God.

The book of Revelation states: -

- Jesus Christ, the faithful witness who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father is coming in glory and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him and all kindreds of the earth (Revelation 1:5-7).

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that: -

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he redeemed a people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation and made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Revelation 5:9-10).

At the end of this glorious Kingdom age God descends to earth on a Great White Throne the sea, death and hades (the grave) give up the dead. They stand before God and are judged according to what is written in certain heavenly books according to what they have done. Death and those counted unworthy are cast into the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal destruction (i.e., total extinction) (also called the, Second Death) (Rev. 20:11-15). Christ hands the Kingdom over to his heavenly Father and God is ALL in ALL and ETERNITY begins in all its fullness and majestic royal glory.

For further information see titles: -

- Kingdom of God (ON WEBSITE MENU).
- The Second Resurrection or Great White Throne Judgment.

In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

Sealed with the Promised Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 1:13-14 --- ¹³In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit ¹⁴who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

The words, when you heard the word of truth, do not refer to every doctrine and teaching of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, but to the Gospel of salvation that

unites a sinner to Christ. No-one has to be a walking Bible encyclopaedia to be saved to eternal life, but they must understand the message of the cross and the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is because being saved to eternal life is not about acquiring an abundance of intellectual head knowledge, but about being in a devoted faithful and loving relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Scriptures have three primary purposes: -

1. To bring us into union and fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. To teach us how to, love our neighbour as ourselves and live to honour God and the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.
3. To teach us the eternal plans and purposes of God and thereby strengthen our faith in the Lord.

Certainly it is a tremendous excitement and glorious adventure travelling through the Bible discovering new treasures and pearls of knowledge that we have not known before, but it should always be remembered that not every Scripture or teaching is important or necessary to know for us to be in a devoted faithful union with the Lord Jesus Christ and saved to eternal life and everlasting glory.

The Gospel of Salvation: begins with the universal law of sin and death which states, that the wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23). This means that whoever sins is already judged and condemned to death and since not one of us is without sin we all stand guilty, but there is a higher law which states that all who trust in Christ have been granted the free gift of God which is, eternal life in the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 6:23), because, the law of the Spirit of life has set them free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death (Rom. 8:2). This means that the law of sin and death has no power over those who believe in Christ and faithfully follow him they like Christ will be raised to eternal life and everlasting glory.

The, focus of the Gospel is salvation from death to eternal life by faith and grace it, is about believing in the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and recognising that one falls short of God's Glory and absolute Holiness. It is about repentance, baptism and abiding in the faith. Throughout the entire history of mankind there has only been one man who has ever been able to attain to God's perfect standard. The Gospel is about recognising this reality, repenting before God and accepting His foreordained plan of salvation. The Gospel is about trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ for one's righteousness, looking forward to his return and being raised to eternal glory.

The majestic Good News of the Gospel states that whoever comes to God through repentance and faith in His Son the Lord Jesus Christ is not only approved of and accepted by God the Father but all their sins are forgiven, not because they are deserving of it, by any self-effort or religious good works, but because through faith in Christ righteousness is imputed from God to them as a pure and free gift. But this is not the end of the Good News since God's promise also states that the faithful in Christ will be resurrected to eternal life and everlasting glory. Can there be any better news than this? This is the reason it is called, the Good News.

In him you were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit: the word sealed literally means to stamp something genuine with a signet or private mark to keep it secret, private and secure for the purpose of preserving and protecting it from misappropriation. The phrase, sealed with the promised Holy Spirit does not refer to speaking in tongues as some teach, but to God's gift of righteousness that comes by grace and by faith which God imputes to the faithful who believe the Gospel and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for their righteousness that leads to eternal salvation. It is this free gift of righteousness (also called the Holy Spirit) that is the guarantee that those in Christ will inherit and acquire possession God's glorious and majestic predestined eternal promises.

The promised INHERITANCE can refer to the following two things: -

1. When our natural body is not only raised a spiritual body but also raised in power to eternal glory and puts on immortality (1 Cor. 15:41-54).

2. When Christ returns and all who have been freed from their sins by his blood will reign with him on the earth and be a Kingdom with the Lord and priests to God (Rev. 1:5-10).
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The Immeasurable Greatness of God's Power toward those who Believe.

Ephesians 1:19-21 ---- ¹⁹and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might ²⁰that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places ²¹far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.

God has exalted Christ not only above every government, every king and every world leader but also above every name that is named meaning above all of mankind not only in this temporal world, but the eternal world to come, he is the perfect King everyone can trust to lead and be confident that they are safe and protected for eternal life in submitting to his headship.

God's immeasurable greatness and the power of God's might refers to the most breathtaking and awe-inspiring event that will have ever taken place in the history of mankind. This spectacular event will totally change the world as we know it and manifest God's power in such an awesome manner that every other miracle will be dwarfed this extraordinary, dramatic and thrilling event of course refers to the resurrection.

God's by his creative power raised Christ one man from the dead to eternal glory, but at the resurrection God will raise multitudes who are sleeping in Christ to eternal life and everlasting wonder and glory.

NOTE: some people find it difficult to comprehend God raising the dead, but think of it this way: we have super computers today that have in their memories literally trillions of bits of information and at the touch of a key any one of those bits is resurrected to us on a brightly coloured screen (soon it is most likely they will simply appear in the air), then with another touch of the key it all vanishes into the super memory and is gone, until we resurrect it again.

Knowing that God has given his creation a mortal mind and finite memory to be able to build such amazing computers should make it very easy to understand how God keeps us all in His immortal mind and eternal memory waiting for the right time to touch the supernatural keyboard of heaven and raise us once again to life. Added to this very few Christians have any trouble believing God created the universe that we live in so raising the dead in comparison is not such a difficult task for such an awesome, powerful and majestic God (Heb. 11:3).

Christ is Head over All Things to the Church.

Ephesians 1:22-23 ---- ²²And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church ²³which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

There is in the secular global world today a mindset that the church is a Sunday meeting in a religious building and some confusion between whether it's God's Spirit or Christ Spirit that fills the church and the heart and mind of those who belong to it. The following notes may help bring some clarity to those who have been influenced by religious tradition. Christ is the head of the church and has dominion, rule and authority over all things in the church. The statement: which is his body, the fullness of him who fills ALL in ALL shows us the following two glorious truths: -

1. All those who trust in Christ form the global body of Christ (the church).
2. It is God's Spirit (also called the Holy Spirit) that fills Christ's body (the church) worldwide.

NOTE: God's Spirit and Christ's Spirit are in perfect unity, perfect love and in perfect harmony of mind in will and purpose therefore the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ can be viewed as being identical since those in Christ have fellowship with both the Father and the Son (1 John 1:3). To attempt to dissect down to microscopic detail the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ as a spiritual surgeon with a scalpel is (I think) to do God and the Lord an injustice since there is nothing in prayer we can say to Christ that God does not hear neither is there anything we say to the Father that the Son is not also listening to and there is nothing we can hide in deed or action from either God or the Lord Jesus Christ

This is the reason God's Spirit and Christ's Spirit can be seen as being identical especially in prayer since they are united together in perfect love, perfect mind and perfect purpose and both God and Christ dwell in the heart of every brother and sister in Christ by faith and God's grace.

A torch its light and God and Christ: if we were to attempt to explain the Spirit of God and of Christ in simple material terms (howbeit very limited) the Spirit of God and of Christ could be likened to a golden torch, its light and its batteries. The torch gives brilliant light that dispels darkness and allows all who walk in its light to clearly see, but without batteries the torch has no power since they are the source of its light. Christ could be likened to the torch and God to the batteries since God is the source of all life, but the batteries without the torch or the torch without the batteries cannot give light.

This is another reason we should not try to dissect in microscopic detail God's Spirit from Christ's Spirit or Christ Spirit from God's Spirit, but always allow a certain amount of mystery since they are together united in perfect unity, perfect love and perfect mind will and purpose. Added to this there is nothing the Father wouldn't do for us that Christ wouldn't also gladly do, nor is there anything that Christ would do for us that the Father would not also be pleased to do. But there is another great insight we gain from the words, ALL in ALL. Paul wrote a similar statement in his letter to the Corinthians: -

- God has put all things in subjection under his feet." But when it says, "all things are put in subjection," it is plain that he is accepted who put all things in subjection under him. When all things are subjected to him then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him that God may be 'ALL in ALL' (1 Corinthians 15:27-29).

These verses also clearly show that God has exalted Christ as the head above all things, but they also tell us something more and that is; "When all things are subjected to Christ then he will also be subjected to God so that God will be, ALL in ALL. The phrase, God will be ALL in ALL in this context lifts the mind of the ardent Bible student at lightning speed and transcends it forward in time to the glorious and majestic vision of a godly man on the isle of Patmos who wrote: -

- I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more and I saw the Holy City, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new" (Rev. 21:1-5).

This is the splendour, the glory the wonder and the climax of God's promise to Abraham made many thousands of years ago and the inheritance of all who are children of Abraham by faith and brothers and sisters of Christ. Is there any other religion on earth that proclaims such a glorious eternal hope? (This author has not found one). The Good News of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ in sharp clearness proclaims that the stunning splendour of this glory is not dependent on our abilities and talents or our lack of them since God in His wisdom has made salvation to eternal life and everlasting glory available to all, not by our own self-effort, but through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and God's grace. Can there be any better news than this? I think not" thus the reason the Gospel of Christ is called the Good News.

The church, which is Christ's body, the fullness of Him who fills All in All (Eph. 1:23-22) should never be limited to the established religious institutions, denominations or church buildings though they may form a part of the global body of Christ they are not the only part. There are many individual Christians in all countries of the world who meet in coffee bars, social outings and mostly their own homes to give thanks to Christ and share their discoveries of God's word and their spiritual experiences with Him. Many of these people are helping others and simply manifesting the reality of their faith to the people that come into their lives.

God is not limited to any one pattern or organisation; He is far too creative for that. Jesus church is global and is manifested in a vast variety of ways across the face of the earth. In many third world countries church is held outside under a tree (for shade) with its members sitting on the dusty ground often with dogs, chooks and other animals roaming around. It is also important to be aware that the word church does not embrace everyone simply because they confess to be Christians. When the Bible uses the term church it primarily refers to those who belong to Christ and those who do the will of his Father.

The will of God in this context is to obey Jesus command, "Love your neighbour as yourself (Matt. 22:37-40) (Mark 12:28-31). In the New Testament this is called the, royal law (James 2:8) and means do-good to others. Those who deliberately harm or use people, (especially those who belong to Christ) for their own selfish gain and greed, sexually, financially, verbally, emotionally and spiritually are referred to by Christ himself as workers of iniquity (Matt. 7:21-23).

The Bible teaches that some will be cast out of God's Kingdom which means not everyone who confesses to know Christ is part of his church there are those in his present Kingdom who he calls wicked servants.

They use his name and his Gospel for their own selfish gain and line their own greedy pockets with the wealth and riches of this world by making merchandise of those who do belong to Christ. The good news is that Jesus knows those who are his and those who are not and will not only reject anyone who uses his message of grace, mercy, compassion and love for their own selfish gain, but when he returns will deny them entry into his eternal Kingdom. (Matt 8:12) (Matthew 22:13) (Matthew 25:30). Jesus said: -

- I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, but you do not believe because you are not part of my flock. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me (John 10:14) (John 10:26-27).

Building God's church is not about financing opulent mega million dollar buildings, but rather it is about people gathering together to share their faith in any place they are able, nevertheless a building maybe required for practical purposes (i.e., the size of the congregation, protection from weather etc.), but if it is built from cleverly distorting Scriptures to manipulate money from faithful believers and by making them feel guilty if they don't give and borrowing such vast amounts of money that not only the oversight of that church, but also the congregation are put under financial oppression it is not in the will of God. Building God's house (temple) is about becoming more Christ like, and living in the will of God.

New Testament Christianity is fluid and not restricted to a particular building or even a special day. The Christianity Christ taught is so exciting and real, it cannot be contained. It has no limitations and overflows into every moment of a Christian's life. The New Testament church is global, moving and manifested in the lives of all those who are faithful and who belong to the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Global Family of God:

Since the Bible was written in an entirely different culture to ours and the body of Christ is a Global family filled with people from different nations, countries, cultures, backgrounds, knowledge, levels of education (especially religious), hurts and troubled pasts there is always going to be certain amount of Scripture we will all understand differently. Paul in the book of Romans tells us to avoid those who cause divisions contrary to the doctrine that he taught the brothers and sisters in Rome, but in the context of his letter the doctrines he has in mind are: -

1. Doctrines that are contrary to the teaching that salvation is by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ contrasted to works of the law, self-effort and keeping religious customs and traditions etc.
2. Doctrines that are contrary to the truth that Jews and Gentiles who accept Christ become one nation in Christ, contrasted to them being two separate nations.
3. Doctrines that, are contrary to godly behaviour and lead people away from the Lord Jesus Christ.

These are the three major topics Paul has focused on in his letter to the brothers and sisters in Rome and the doctrines he has in his mind when he says be careful of those who cause divisions and create obstacles.

Naturally within the global family of Christ there are many varied understandings of many Scripture, but not all teachings are important to know to be saved to eternal life nor does one have to have perfect understanding of every teaching of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, to know Christ and be in union with him, but they must understand the message of the cross and the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life.

But no-one has to be a walking Bible encyclopaedia to be in the family of Christ and saved to eternal life, but should any teacher proclaim a message of works and self-effort to be saved or teach that Jews and Gentiles are two separate groups/nations in Christ, or teach doctrines that lead people away from godly behaviour and from Christ Paul says they should be avoided (Rom. 16:17-19).

The body is the reflection of Christ on earth and therefore should be walking in the same Spirit of love, kindness, compassion and grace etc. that Christ walked in while on earth.

Ephesians 2.

Ephesians 2:4-7 ----- ⁴But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us ⁵even when we were dead in our trespasses made us alive together with Christ— by grace you have been saved— ⁶and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

Immeasurable: (exceeding in KJV) in this context carries the idea of something that abundantly and exceeding surpasses and excels far beyond and above what is considered normal.

Dead in Trespasses and Sins.

A person who is dead in trespasses and sins is in a state of conformity to this world and as such has no desire for the spiritual pleasures of God, when we look upon a corpse, it gives an awful feeling, we see the life has gone and left nothing but the ruins of that person. Paul viewed those who are, dead in trespasses and sins (v5) as being spiritually dead for the following two reasons: -

1. Because they are without Christ through who God's eternal love and the fountain of His rich mercy and undeserved grace flows.
2. Because whoever is without God's grace is not an heir of eternal life, but remains destined to death.

Just as we feel that awfulness upon seeing a corpse, it is most certain that Paul felt this same 'awfulness' toward those without Christ and that this 'awfulness' (which is really deep compassion and concern) was the motivating power that drove him with outstanding zeal to proclaim the saving power of the Good News of the Gospel even at the risk of his own life.

Heavenly Places in this context carries the following two ideas: -

1. It refers to the fact that those in Christ are delivered from the condemnation of the law and the sentence of death into the glorious eternal Kingdom of God. It refers to their sins being forgiven, the favour and fellowship they have with God and with Christ, the grace that God has lavished upon them because of their devotion and love for His Son and to God's majestic and guaranteed promise of eternal life and everlasting glory. The following words of Paul, God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus (v7) mean that the faithful in Christ have by faith and God's grace been raised up with Christ and are seated with him in spiritual places far beyond any riches this earthly and material world has. Paul is able to speak of this majestic event in the past tense or as though it has already taken place because it is a reality by faith in the mind of all who belong to the Lord Jesus Christ. Added to this it is based on God's promise and He cannot lie therefore it is guaranteed.
2. The word, heavenly from Strong's Concordance carries the idea of elevation and can refer to a heavenly state of the mind. This means that the words, seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus (v6) can also carry the idea of the mind being lifted up into high places of joy, peace and love by the Gospel of Christ since the faithful in Christ are aware of all the majestic glorious and eternal blessings they have in Christ and that knowledge elevates the mind into a glorious state of joy, peace, contentment and wonder. It is similar to when a secular person has a fabulous day or a great win and shouts in exuberant excitement and joy, "Wow I'm in heavenly places." It's a spiritual way of saying that the mind is in an elevated state of joy and of well-being.

God's immeasurable greatness: the words, "That in the coming ages God might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus" (v7) refer to the following two things: -

- 1 The resurrection, God by His awesome creative power gloriously raised Christ one man from the dead, but at the resurrection of the faithful God by His awe-inspiring and breath-taking power will literally raise multitudes who are sleeping in Christ from the dead to eternal life and everlasting glory and all this in the twinkling of an eye. This will be an absolutely stunning event which will by far surpass the power of any thunderstorm, lightning strike or tornado that this world has ever seen. It goes without saying all who see this glory will stand in awesome and breath-taking wonder as they witness the immeasurable riches of God's grace and kindness toward those who have loved and been faithful to His Son.
- 2 It refers to the wonder and glory of the following majestic vision of a godly man on the isle of Patmos who wrote: -
 - I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband and a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore (Rev. 21:2-4).
 - I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. The city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb (Rev. 21:22-23).
 - No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him they will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads and night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever (Rev. 22:3-4).

Is there any other religion on the face of our planet that proclaims such a majestic and glorious eternal hope? This author has not found one.

The Gift of God is Righteousness and comes as a Free Gift

Ephesians 2:8-9 ----- ⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Grace: means unmerited and undeserved favour.

The gift of God: relates to the following two things: -

- 1 The Lord Jesus Christ himself.
- 2 To the splendour, wonder, and awesome glory of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ which states, "Sinners are saved by grace." We cannot earn it, nor can we do anything to deserve it everyone who is saved to eternal life is saved by faith and God's grace alone. It does not matter how great we are at adhering to ceremonial rites, holy days or at keeping religious customs or traditions nothing we do can add to our salvation or make us worthy of it. Every eternal spiritual blessing we have is because of God's grace and our faith in His Son.

God in His eternal wisdom has designed salvation this way for the following three reasons: -

- 1 So that no-one can boast that they are saved by their own self effort, works, talents, gifts or abilities,
 - 2 So salvation is not dependent on birthright (i.e., being born a descendant of Abraham, a Jew or a citizen of Israel) or whether someone is of noble decent or lowly, rich or poor, a leader of a great church or the church cleaner it makes no difference since not one of these has any power to make us worthy for salvation.
 - 3 So that every man and woman is on an equal playing field in regards to eternal life all have the same chance since salvation for all is based on faith and not our abilities or lack of them.
-

The Commonwealth of Israel.

Ephesians 2:12 ----- ¹²remember you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the Commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

Prior to Christ's ministry on earth anyone born of any other nation than Israel was separated from Christ, from God and from God's promises and therefore separated from the Commonwealth of Israel.

It is interesting to notice that these verses imply that those born of Israel even prior to the arrival of Christ were united with Christ. Some may wonder how this can be since Christ had not yet appeared. The answer is simple, the faithful fathers were united with Christ in the same manner as we are (i.e., by faith).

They believed in the coming of the promised seed of the woman spoken of in (Genesis 3:15), the prophet and deliver Moses said would come like him, the promised seed of Abraham, the promised seed of David, the Messiah, the Christ and the Holy one to come that the prophets and the Scriptures proclaim. By this faith the Lord Jesus Christ was with the faithful Jews of the Old Testament in the same manner as he is with us today.

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

Those who were far off refer to the Gentiles since they were separated from God while those who were near obviously refer to the Jews who had God, the covenants and the promises.

Ephesians 2:14-17 ---- ¹⁴For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility ¹⁵by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two so making peace ¹⁶and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. ¹⁷And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near.

Those who were near: refers to the Jews because they were the chosen nation of God and not only had the temple, the prophets and the Scriptures, but also had been with God for around four-thousand years.

Those who were far off: refers to the Gentiles since they were separated from God.

Because the Jews were given God's commandments, His statutes, the temple, the prophets and the promises they viewed themselves as the holy race with God and the Gentiles as the unclean race without God. Paul is now clearly showing that God through Jesus death and resurrection has now abolished every religious Jewish law, custom and tradition that separated the Jews from the Gentiles and is now uniting both Jews and Gentiles together in Christ to create in him, one new man. In other verses this new man is also called, a new creation, a new nation, the church and the Kingdom of God.

NOTE: some religions teach that the Jews have higher value to God, because they are the LORD'S chosen nation, but Paul in these verses is shining a brilliant floodlight on the fact that this is no longer true. God's love for brothers and sisters in Christ is equal regardless of whether they are Jews or Gentiles. Added to this a Gentile in Christ will now inherit the eternal promises God made to Israel whereas a Jew who denies Christ will not.

This is because the true Israel is not those who are biologically descendants of Abraham, but those who are children of Abraham by faith in his promised seed the Lord Jesus Christ. For further information concerning the promised seed of Abraham, see the title: "God's promise to Abraham in Promises (ON WEBSITE MENU).

Through Christ we have Access in One Spirit to the Father.

Ephesians 2:18-20 ---- ¹⁸For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone (chief corner stone in the KJV).

Saints: in this context refer to the Jews because up until now Israel has been God's special people. The LORD has always dealt with Israel differently to any other nation, He declared His word, statutes and His rules to Israel (the LORD has not done this with any other nation). They are children of Abraham the father of faith and because they are his offspring they were entrusted with the oracles of God and to them belongs the adoption, the glory and the covenants.

God says he gave birth to Israel and carried them from the womb even to their old age (Isaiah 46:3-4) and loved them when they were a child, and out of Egypt He called Israel His Son (Hosea 11:1). They were given the law, the worship and the promises, to them belong the patriarchs and from their race, came the Christ who is Lord over all that God created (Rom. 3:2) (Rom. 9:4-5, 7). Added to this; the LORD called Israel His treasured possession and the apple of the LORD'S eye, his allotted heritage and a people holy to Him.

(Exod. 19:5) (Deut. 7:6) (Deut. 14:2) (Deut. 26:18) (Deut. 32:9).

The one Spirit (v18) the Jews and Gentiles have to access the Father through refers to the Spirit of Christ and the words, through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father again clearly shows that the only way for a Jew or a Gentile to enter into communion with God the Father is through faith in the Lord Jesus

Christ. The glorious, magnificent and celebrated words, you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints (Jews) and members of the household of God (v19) changed the Jewish and Gentile religious world forever. They mean that Gentiles are now considered by God equal to Jews because of their faith in His Son the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Household and Temple of God.

The comparison of the household of God with a building was most likely taken from the temple since it was a structure of great beauty, expense, and sacredness. It would be natural to compare the household of God with it since the temple was the sacred place where God dwelt on the earth and the household of God is the place where he delights to abide now. To a converted Jewish mind such as Paul's the comparison of the household of God to the temple and the residence of God would have been clearly obvious.

Added to this the image of a building was especially appropriate to both the Jews and the Christians at Ephesus since the temple at Jerusalem was the stronghold of Judaism as the temple of Diana of the Ephesians was of paganism. Nevertheless whether Paul had these temples in mind or not is not important since the principle of the cornerstone applies to any structure.

The Cornerstone: the word of God that the apostles and prophets proclaimed is the foundation of which the household of God on. But the cornerstone is the most important stone in the entire building because the whole building rests mainly on the cornerstones if they are small and unstable then the entire building is insecure therefore the master architect would make sure that great care was taken to place a large stone firmly at each corner.

Isaiah when referring to Jesus wrote: -

- Thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I am the one who has laid as a foundation in Zion, a stone a tested stone a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation, 'whoever believes will not be in haste' (Isaiah 28:16).

The Lord Jesus is called the precious cornerstone of a sure foundation because the whole building rests on him he holds a place as important as the cornerstone of any natural building since if not for Christ neither the prophets nor the apostles alone could sustain the structure for a moment. There is another beautiful symbolism in Christ being referred to as the cornerstone which presents Christ as also being the stone of union. This is because the stone at the corner became a part of both walls joining them together which means Christ the cornerstone has joined the Jews and Gentiles together in the one building.

The Structure being Joined Together, Grows into a Holy Temple in the Lord.

Ephesians 2:21-22 ---- ²¹in whom the whole structure being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.
²²In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

The whole structure: embraces the Lord Jesus Christ, the apostles and prophets the Jews and the Gentiles. The words being joined together (v21) refers to Jews and Gentiles being united as one body in Christ, it embraces whoever will come to the Lord Jesus Christ, regardless of birth or background (good or bad) whether rich or poor, whether king or lowly it makes no difference, Peter in his letter wrote: -

- As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:4-5).

Added to this the Lord Jesus Christ himself says: -

- All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out (John 6:37).

And Peter said: -

- As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:4-5).

As the stones in a Solomon's temple were all properly and carefully placed so as to form the complete structure to be a sacred house for God to dwell and be worshipped there. Likewise all believing Jews and Gentiles are being prepared by the prophets and apostles teachings and by the influence of Christ and the Holy Spirit to become a majestic and glorious sacred temple in which God dwells for all eternity.

When this majestic building is completed there will be nothing so:-

- Worthy of reverence since God dwells in it.
- Ancient since the patriarchs and prophets laboured in building it.
- Solid since love cements it together.
- Closely united and indivisible since Christ is the corner stone.
- Exalted since it reaches as high as heaven and to God himself.
- Full of wisdom since its specifications are the word of God.
- Full of light since the Holy Spirit dispels every dark corner.
- Spacious since it is spread over the whole earth.
- Invincible or indestructible since it is being built by God, by Christ, by the Holy Spirit and by the influence of God's eternal word.
- Divine since it is a living, vibrant, dynamic temple inhabited by the Holy Spirit.
- Universal since all its unique stones though spread throughout the world are compacted together in Christ.

God is the master builder of this majestic and glorious temple, Christ is the corner stone; faithful believers are the proper materials; the prophets and apostles are its foundation and the Gospel and love its pillars. Christ is the door and faith is the entrance into it.

It is a spiritual building and through, faith and grace this living building is growing into an eternal house fit for the Most Holy God to dwell in. It's beauty and radiance will surpass all temples that have ever gone before it since it will be adorned with a vast variety of rich colour made up of Jews and Gentiles of every age, country, sex, and condition: the mightiest of kings, the most renowned lawgivers, the most profound philosophers, the most eminent scholars and all those of whom the world was not worthy have formed this building.

Peter wrote, "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame" (1 Pet 2:6). Every faithful brother and sister in Christ are represented as living stones that God is using to build this spiritual majestic temple of eternal glory which will be manifested in splendour for all to see when: -

- The Lord himself descends from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ are raised then we who are alive are caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. 4:15-18).

The Mystery of Christ was hidden to Previous Generations.

Ephesians 3:3-6 ----- ³how the mystery was made known to me (Paul) by revelation, as I have written briefly. ⁴When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, ⁵which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. ⁶This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the Gospel.

This mystery of Christ was not made known to the Old Testament fathers, this no-doubt is one of the reasons the Jews being God's chosen nation viewed themselves as the holy race with God and Gentiles as the unclean race without God. This mystery that Christ has now revealed to Paul, the apostles and prophets of the New Testament by the spirit of revelation has changed forever the entire religious and spiritual world of both the Jews and the Gentiles.

This is because Gentiles are now fellow heirs with the Jews and partakers of all, the promises God made to Abraham and Israel. This means that whoever is in Christ by faith will inherit all God's eternal promises made to Abraham and his seed because the seed of Abraham is the Lord Jesus Christ and it is in him that all God's majestic promises dwell. For further information concerning the promised seed of Abraham, see the title: "God's promise to Abraham in Promises (ON WEBSITE MENU).

NOTE: some religions teach that the Jews are valued as more precious to God than the Gentiles even though Gentiles are in Christ, but Paul in these verses and many others like them is clearly showing that this theory is simply no longer true. In fact a faithful Gentile brother or sister in Christ will receive all God's eternal promises made to Israel whereas a Jewish person who denies Christ will not. Peter after seeing a vision of a great sheet descending from heaven with all kinds of animals, and birds of the air which were unclean for Jews to eat and hearing a voice from heaven telling him to eat, told his listeners: -

- Though it has been unlawful for a Jew to associate with or to visit anyone of another nation, God has now shown me that I should not call any person common or unclean for, truly I understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him (Acts 10: 9-29, 34).

Added to this Paul in his letter to the Galatians wrote: -

- There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus and if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise (Gal. 3:1-29)

This clearly shows that whether Jew or Gentile it counts for nothing outside of Christ and in Christ all are brothers and sisters in the Lord whether Jew or Gentile all are precious to the heart of God and belong to the Kingdom of Christ.

The Unsearchable Riches of Christ.

Ephesians 3:8-12 ----- ⁸To me (Paul), though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, ⁹and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things, ¹⁰so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. ¹¹This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realised in Christ Jesus our Lord, ¹²in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him.

The rulers and authorities in the heavenly places: the wisdom in the following verse, "The manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places" (v10) refers to the mystery that is now revealed which states that Jews and Gentiles are now united as one in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The words, heavenly places does not refer to angels in heaven, but rather to those who hold high positions of high religious authority and influence on earth. During Paul's era the expression in heavenly places referred to the Jewish rulers who through their command and dominance over the nation of Israel had great authority and power to influence the people in the Jewish faith. It is referred to as, heavenly places because to the faithful Jewish mind being a priest or minister of God was considered the highest calling and privilege in life.

It was because of this and because the authority and influence was spiritual and concerned God's Kingdom that those who held a priestly position of authority were by the Jews spoken of as being in, heavenly places meaning they held an honoured and privileged position in God's authority. Nevertheless though the position is spoken of as being heavenly that does not automatically mean that all who hold that position are serving God, many of the Old Testament priests who were exalted with such glory and honour were not serving God, but rather their own selfish ambition and lust for power. The expression, heavenly places by extension can refer to any brother or sister in Christ who is given the privilege and honour to minister to others in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in Christ:

Paul's in his statement to the Ephesian brothers and sisters, we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in Christ (v12) is telling them that they do not need to follow any religious Jewish rites, customs or traditions nor do they need a Jewish high priest or any religious ruler to have fellowship with God, since their union with the Father is solely dependent on their faith in Christ and not in keeping any Jewish laws of purification or religious customs and traditions.

By extension the same principle applies today to every brother and sister in Christ, no-one who has faith in the Lord needs a priest or any other man to intercede for them since it is not our religious works or our own self-effort that opens the spiritual pathways and heavenly doors for our fellowship with the Father, but our faith in God's Son.

If our fellowship with the Father was dependent on our works and self-effort there in no-way Paul could say, "We have boldness and access with confidence," since who of us ever feels worthy when standing before God's Holy Throne without the covering of our faith in Christ and God's grace. Our boldness comes from knowing that we are clothed in the royal robes of Christ's righteousness and crowned with the abundant grace of God's love, without these eternal, royal and majestic garments we will find ourselves standing spiritually naked before God.

Every Family in Heaven and on Earth.

Ephesians 3:14-15 --- ¹⁴For this reason I (Paul) bow my knees before the Father, ¹⁵from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named.

The words, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named (v15) refers to God, the Lord Jesus Christ, the angels, those who are sleeping in Christ plus everyone whose name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life and those who are judged worthy at the Great White Throne Judgment all these groups will be gathered together in eternity. The whole family in heaven does not mean that there are conscious ghost like spirit families living in heaven waiting to be united with their immortal and eternal body at the resurrection (as some believe). The words, the whole family in heaven in this context refers to all those who are saved from the beginning of creation to the final judgment.

Since the faithful who have died in faith are referred to as sleeping in Christ and their names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life their resurrection to eternal life is certain since it is based on God's promise and He cannot lie (Titus 1:2). It is because of these truths that they can be spoken of as being in heaven (i.e., in God's eternal mind, God's eternal care and God's eternal protection). All the children of God from the Old Testament, the New Testament, the millennial age and those counted worthy at the Great White Throne judgment will be gathered together with their heavenly Father and the Lord Jesus Christ their perfect elder brother in the Holy city, New Jerusalem.

It is interesting to notice: that eternity at the end of the book of Revelation is not pictured as being in heaven but descending down from heaven to earth when God will be ALL in ALL (1 Cor. 15:27-28). John a godly an elderly man in the book of Revelation was given an eternal glorious and majestic vision of which he wrote: -

- I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more and I saw the, Holy City, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away and he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new (Rev. 21:1-5).
- There will be no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb and by its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it (Rev. 21:22-24).

The glory, splendour and wonder of eternity: the book of Revelation states; those sleeping in Christ will be resurrected and those who are alive when the Lord returns will be gathered together with them and reign with Christ for a thousand years, but the rest of the dead do not come to life until Christ's glorious millennial Kingdom age has ended. This is the first resurrection (Rev. 20:5) whoever shares in the first resurrection is blessed and the second death has no power over them (Rev. 20:6). Those who attain to the first resurrection will reign with the Lord as a Kingdom with Christ and as priests to god on earth (Rev. 5:9-10) during his millennial Kingdom reign as King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:11-16).

When Christ's millennial reign comes to an end there will be a battle between the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Men then God Himself descends to earth on a Great White Throne and the sea, hades and death give up the dead who were in them. The great and small stand before the throne of God and the Book of Life is opened whoever name is not found in the Book of Life is immediately cast into the Lake of Fire (a symbol of eternal death (i.e., total extinction) this is called the second death (Rev. 20:4-15). Those whose names are written in the Book of Life and are judged unworthy according to what is written in the other heavenly books and according to what they had done are also cast into the lake of fire.

After this judgment eternity begins. The Holy city, New Jerusalem descends to earth from heaven and God dwells with those remaining on earth. They will be His people and God Himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more neither will there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, because the former things have passed away and God who is seated on the Throne makes all things new.

There is no temple in the city because its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb so the city has no need of the sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is Christ so there will be no night there. By its light the nations walk, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and the honour of the nations into the Holy city, New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:2-27).

This is the splendour, the glory the wonder and the climax of God's promise to Abraham made many thousands of years ago and the inheritance of all who are children of Abraham by faith and brothers and sisters of Christ. Is there any other religion on earth that proclaims such a glorious eternal hope? (This author has not found one).

The Good News of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ in sharp clearness proclaims that the stunning splendour of this eternal glory is not dependent on our abilities and talents or our lack of them since God in His wisdom has made salvation to eternal life and everlasting glory available to all, not by our own self-effort, but through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and God's grace can there be any better news than this, "I think not" thus the reason the Gospel of Christ is called the Good News.

NOTE: since it is certain that this is a very difficult concept for a mind that has been indoctrinated into the traditional idea that we all go to heaven and not that heaven comes down to us it should be mentioned that having an exact understanding of eternity is not important to being saved to eternal life.

The Lord will not reject or cast out those who have been faithful to him simply because they did not understand where they will be in eternity. It is interesting to notice after Christ's resurrection most New Testament writers simply state; those in Christ will be resurrected to eternal glory and everlasting life since the criteria to be saved is not dependent on understanding eternity but upon believing we are saved by faith in Christ and by God's grace and by believing we will be resurrected to eternal life.

It is interesting to notice: the New Testament (excluding the book of Revelation) has no Scriptures that contain teachings that people go to Heaven immediately upon death or even after death.

For further information see the title: -

- Heaven, in Death (ON WEBSITE MENU).
- The Second Resurrection or Great White Throne Judgment.

In Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

- Sleeping in Christ (at the end of this document).
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You May Know the Love of Christ that Surpasses Knowledge.

Ephesians 3:16-21 ---- ¹⁶that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love ¹⁸may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth ¹⁹and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. ²⁰Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us ²¹to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Here Paul is praying (v14-15) that those in Christ would be strengthened according to the riches of God's glory. The riches of God's glory in this context refer to the richness of: -

- God's character and God's holiness.
- God's grace and God's mercy.
- God's justice and God's love.

God may strengthen your inner being so Christ may dwell in your heart: Paul prays that every brother and sister in Christ would be strengthened through his Spirit in their inner being. His desire for every brother and sister in Christ is that God the Father would strengthen their inner being so that Christ would dwell in their hearts by faith in contrast to trusting in strict adherence to ceremonial rites and holy days and keeping religious customs and traditions. When Paul uses the word, riches it denotes abundance.

Paul's greatest desire was that those in Christ would comprehend that God's rich grace is not only inexhaustible and ample for all their needs for salvation but can never be exhausted. This is no-doubt why he is on bended knees (v14) earnestly and passionately praying such a beautiful prayer. On behalf of all who have been redeemed by the blood of Christ Paul is praying that the Father by His Spirit would powerfully strengthen those in Christ's family with the courage and strength to: -

- Stop trusting in religious practices to earn righteousness that leads to salvation.
- Forsake all their ceremonial rites and religious laws, customs and traditions and any remaining attachment they may still have to their pagan faiths.
- Endure the persecution and conflict that may result from these actions.

Paul is praying this prayer so that they would not only know that Christ dwells in their heart through faith, but also be filled with his love that surpasses knowledge (v17-19). Paul knowing the love of Christ as deeply as he did was fully aware that without total surrender to Christ and depending solely on him alone for eternal salvation the rich abundance and fullness of God's love is hindered and limited from flooding the heart to overflowing this is the reason for the earnestness of his prayer.

Christ may dwell in your heart: Paul prays, that Christ may dwell in their hearts through faith (v17) this means: -

- The character of Christ is in the heart.
- The fruit of the Spirit is in the heart.
- The things that Christ loves, is in the heart.
- God's best interest is in the heart.
- The desire to please and obey God is in the heart.

Christ in you: Jesus says, "Greater love has no one than this, that someone lays down his life for his friends," (John 15:13). When a person's spiritual eyes are opened to perceiving their fallen condition before God and understand what it cost God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ to save them their heart is filled with overwhelming love for the Lord, it is in this sense that Christ dwells in the human heart. The following is a true story and a good example of how a person dwells in the heart of another. An eight-year old disabled girl, whose best friend was her mother was doing her first live school stage show. The mother loved her daughter but could not be at the opening show as she was in hospital with terminal cancer.

A television reporter asked the young girl if she would be sad and miss her mother at the opening of the show. The small girl with tears in her eyes said, "Yes I will miss her, but she will be in my heart where she belongs." Love for a person creates the reality and presence of that person in the human heart. This presence is in direct proportion to the love (i.e., the greater the love the greater the presence).

That you are rooted and grounded in Christ's love: Paul prays, "That they would be rooted and grounded in love (v17). The words that you being rooted means, that they would be firmly established. The words, being rooted carry the idea that they would be as a tree whose roots strike deep and extend far and wide through the soil and as the roots of a tree penetrate deep into the earth so they would be rooted deep in love.

This is the soil in which we are all to grow it is God's infinite love that Paul prays will strike the roots of the inner most being of every brother and sister in Christ and that from this love they would find all the spiritual nourishment needed for their full growth, until they have the mind in them that was in Jesus and are filled with all the fullness of God.

The outward man is strengthened by earthly food, while the inward man is strengthened by the knowledge of Christ, the knowledge of God and by spiritual and heavenly influences (i.e., love, peace and righteousness). These are the divine food of the inward man (i.e., of Jesus Christ). The enormity of Christ's love that surpasses knowledge is comprehended when the inner man is fed and nourished by divine food as the body is by natural food (v18-19).

The breadth, length, depth, and height of God's love: Paul prays, that every brother and sister in Christ would comprehend the breadth, length, height and depth (v18).

The breadth: implies God's omniscient presence that encompasses the globe and Christ's world-wide love, embracing all mankind in all ages, places, and nations.

The length: implies the grace and love of God and the eternal purpose of Christ mission being extended through all ages and flowing from everlasting to everlasting.

The depth: carries the idea of God's goodness and love in Christ reaching down to the lowest fallen of the sons of Adam, extending to the deepest depravity of the human heart and searching for those who have sunk into the depths of sin and misery and raising them up to glory from the lowest state of life.

The height: not only refers to the mind being raised up to a state of heavenly happiness, mental peace and filled with a spectacular and breathtaking hope, but also to the following majestic words of Jesus as recorded in the book of Revelation, "The one who overcomes, I will grant to sit with me on my Throne, as I also overcame and sat down with my Father on his Throne (Rev 3:21). This is a glorious picture of a father's love for his son and a son's love for his father.

As in any family the father sits in his own chair while the son sits alongside him in his chair, so it is in these eternal words of Jesus. God the Almighty and heavenly Father sitting on his throne while the beloved Son sits alongside of him on his throne; but as any child loves to be nearer to their father and the father loves to hold their son, so likewise in these royal and stunning words of Jesus, Christ the Son is pictured as climbing from his throne to be nearer to his Father and his Father with open arms and a loving heart is seen making room for the Son to sit alongside him on his throne.

This is how Christ says he will receive those who come to him. Can there be any more astoundingly awe-inspiring words of wonder. Christ himself tells us that every faithful brother and sister will be seated on his throne as he sat on the Father's throne. This is the majestic height of the love of Christ and the glorious height to which that love raises those who depend on the Lord and faithfully follow him.

Love that surpasses knowledge: Paul prays that those who belong to the family of Christ would know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge (v19). The word, surpasses (passeth in KJV) in this context carries the idea of the love of Christ surpassing and excelling abundantly far above and beyond intellectual knowledge. Paul's prayerful words, "That you many know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge shows that Paul's heart was not only full to overflowing with Christ's love and that he had a deep sense of it, but also that he had a zealous passionate desire that every brother and sister in Christ would also fully understand and experience its beauty.

Paul had such an apprehension of Christ's love for him that he knew it had no limit and was unlike anything which had ever been revealed. It is from this deep love that was dwelling in his inner most being that he desired that every faithful brother and sister in Christ would attain to a full view of it. It was love which led the Son of God to be a man of sorrows, to be brutally persecuted and cruelly put to death in the most shameful manner – an innocent man on a cross as a criminal; and nailed there not for himself, but for others. Who could understand that?

Where else has there been anything like that? What is there with which such love can be compared? And how could it be fully understood yet Paul knew something of it can be known and felt it in his inner most being. Paul desired that as far as possible every faithful brother and sister would not only understand, but also experience this great love which the Lord Jesus Christ had manifested for a dying world.

Being filled with all the fullness of God: Paul prays that those in the family of the Lord would be filled with all the fullness of God" (v19), the words, that you would know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God (v19) does not only refer to the love which Christ showed for the Gentiles in calling them into his Kingdom, but also the love which is shown for the lost world in giving himself to die. This love is often referred to in the New Testament and is declared to surpass all other expressions of love which have ever been demonstrated. To know this; to feel this; to have a lively sense of it, is one of

the highest privileges of the Christian faith. Nothing will so much excite gratitude in our hearts; nothing will prompt us so much to a life of self-denial; nothing will make us so kind or compassionate toward others and so dead to the world as being filled with the fullness of God's love in Christ. The expression of Paul's prayer, that you might be filled with all the fullness of God (v19) is so rich and glorious, who can comprehend all that it implies? That they would be, full of God that is, God would dwell in them. This is the richest, best gift of God to man. It more clearly teaches us our true dignity than all the profound discoveries which people can make in their discoveries of science and evolution; for no matter what they discover none can fill with the fullness of God.

It is only by the love of Christ that we can know the love of God: the love of God toward us induced Him to give Christ for our redemption; Christ's love toward us induced him to give his life's blood for our salvation. The gift of Christ to us is the measure of God's love. The death of Christ for us is the measure of Christ's love. Jesus himself said, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). This shines a glorious spotlight on the eternal truth that it has pleased God that the fullness of His grace should dwell in Christ.

Where Christ's Spirit dwells, there he dwells, if the Gospel of Christ is written in our hearts, and the love of Christ is shed abroad there then Christ dwells there and we can be assured that the love of God in Christ is upon us and dwelling within us in Christ. This surpasses all the capacity of man's intellect, to comprehend it fully in his mind. The fullness of God is the fullness which God imparts through the dwelling of Christ in the heart, Christ, in whom the Father was pleased that all the fullness should dwell (Col 1:19) and in whom dwells all the fullness of the God (Col. 2:9). When this love touches the heart of those in Christ all the pleasures of the world that would compete for their happiness seem to be but a thousand trifles blowing in the wind.

According to the Power working in Us.

Ephesians 3:20-21 --- ²⁰Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, ²¹Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

The church was to be the instrument by which the glory of God would be shown; and it was by the church that his praise would be celebrated. The words, "Throughout all ages, world without end," express a richness and amplification of language here which shows that Paul's heart was full of the subject, and that it was difficult to find words to express his perceptions. It means, in the strongest sense, forever. It is the language of a heart full of the love of God, and desiring that he might be praised without ceasing forever and ever. It is Paul's heartfelt desire that all these blessings should be enjoyed by every faithful brother and sister in Christ and that Christ should inhabit their hearts by love that they would be filled with all the fullness of God.

Ephesians 4.

One Body, one Spirit, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father

Ephesians 4:4-6 ----- ⁴There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— ⁵One Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶One God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all

Paul here is saying that every faithful brother and sister in Christ have the same standing before God regardless of birthright, (i.e., being a descendant of Abraham or born of any other nation) and regardless of whether one is noble or lowly, rich or poor, a church leader of thousands or the church cleaner, all in Christ have the same privileges in the Kingdom of God and in Christ's family since there is only: -

- **One body:** referring to the faithful global body of Christ (v4).
- **One Spirit:** referring to God's Spirit the source of all life flowing through Christ and onward through those who have faith in him (v4).
- **One hope:** referring to the glorious return of the Lord Jesus Christ and the resurrection to eternal life and everlasting glory (v4).
- **One Lord:** referring to the Lord Jesus Christ (v5).
- **One faith:** referring the, Good News of the Gospel of Christ (v5).
- **One baptism:** referring to water baptism (v5).
- **One God and Father:** referring to the, all powerful Almighty creator the God of all life and of Abraham Isaac and Jacob (v6).

Grace was given to us According to the Measure of Christ's Gift.

Ephesians 4:7 ----- ⁷But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift.

Measure: carries the idea of a limited portion or limited degree of a thing.

Gift: refers to a compensation, reward or gift, especially a sacrificial offering.

Grace: literally means kindness, courteousness, politeness, it carries the idea of generosity. In the Bible it often refers to the divine influence upon the heart, and its outward reflection in the life manifested in gratitude, joy, generosity and charity.

Paul's statement: grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift (v7) refers to Christ's death and resurrection. Jesus said, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). Jesus is the gift of grace who all in God's Kingdom has received by faith. Without grace we are separated from Christ and without Christ we are not only separated from God, but remain held captive to the bondage and judgment of the law which without mercy declares us guilty, condemned and sentence to death (Rom. 6:23). The following words of Paul show the enormous importance of trusting in God's grace in Christ. Paul in his letters wrote: -

- I do not nullify the *GRACE* of God, for if justification were through the law (or any form of religious self-effort), then Christ died for no purpose (Gal. 2:21).

This means, when a brother or sister in Christ begin to justify themselves through the law and self-effort they nullify the grace of God and by their actions declare that Christ's death was of no value.

Equally as horrific as this Paul states: -

- When we forsake *GRACE* we separate ourselves from Christ because it was only by *GRACE* that God made us alive in Christ (Gal. 5:4) (Eph. 2:5).

Paul to highlight even more the majestic glory of grace wrote with absolute boldness that: -

- It is only by *GRACE* that any brother or sister has been saved (Eph. 2:8).

Paul in these verses is shining a brilliant floodlight on the truth that every brother and sister in Christ is saved, solely by faith and by grace and it is not their own doing, but the gift of God. This means that without grace no-one can be united to Christ and whoever is without Christ is separated from God and without God no-one can be saved to eternal life. This means in regards to eternal salvation, Christ, God, grace and faith, are all on an equal par with each other since no-one can be saved to eternal life without any one of them.

This is the reason the author in the book of Hebrews spends so many chapters brilliantly and skilfully explaining to the Hebrews that they must stop their sin of trusting in religious works, the Levitical Law and their priesthood to be counted righteous before God and start trusting in the grace of God that is in Christ and in his righteousness to be saved to eternal life. By extension this means that Christians must stop trusting in attending a church building every week, strictly adhering to ceremonial rites and holy days and keeping religious customs and traditions to be saved. Though the practise of some of these maybe good in themselves they become grossly sinful when believers trust in them for their salvation since not one of them has any power to save to eternal life.

Do Not Grieve the Holy Spirit of God.

Ephesians 4:30-32 -- ³⁰And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamour and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. ³²Be kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

Paul's statement, do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God means do not do anything that would offend God or bring dishonour to the name of Jesus or to God. In this context it refers to the Ephesian brothers and sister's bitterness, anger, disorder, slander and malice that they are showing toward each other. It is in this manner that they are grieving the Holy Spirit, rather than being kind, tender hearted and forgiving which are all the things the Holy Spirit, God and Christ delight in.

Sealed for the day of redemption: in this context sealed means to stamp with a signet or private mark for privacy, security and preservation, it carries the idea of keeping secret, protecting from misappropriation and a sign of genuineness. The words, sealed for the day of redemption, (v30) refers to the righteousness that brothers and sisters have in Christ. The faithful in Christ are referred to as being sealed because the righteousness that God imputes to them is not based on their own self-effort nor is it dependant on strictly adhering to ceremonial rites, holy days or keeping religious customs and traditions that we might practise, but rather it is founded on our faith in Christ and on God's grace.

The Bible tells us that God has designed salvation this way so that he could promise it to Abraham the father of faith, since if righteousness that leads to eternal life was based on our own self-effort God could not promise it nor could he guarantee it since not one of us can stand before the Father and boast that we are without sin. John in his letter states: -

- If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us, but if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us (1 John 1:8-10).

Added to this if it was possible for us to attain to the perfect demands of the law and to the perfection of God's Holiness Christ died for no purpose.

Ephesians 5.

Walk in Love, as Christ Loved us and Gave Himself up for Us

Ephesians 5:1-2 ----- ¹Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. ²And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Every brother and sister in Christ is called to be imitators of God in the sense He is perfect love which means we are to walk in love as Christ loved us and showed compassion to all he came in contact with (with the exception of the prideful and hypocritical religious leaders). These words of Paul clearly show that our highest aspiration should be to continually increase in love not only toward those in the Kingdom of God, but also toward those outside of it and in this way we will always

be a fragrant aroma to God. The purpose Christ gave himself up for the church was so that a repentant sinner could be purified from all unrighteousness and cleansed from all guilt by the washing of water in baptism through the inward work of God's grace on the heart so that he might sanctify them in this world and shower on all the faithful in the church righteousness by faith and deliver them from the guilt and condemnation of the law and the reigning power of sin by the influences of the Holy Spirit on the heart of which water baptism is an outward sign.

The church and the faithful in this present mortal world though being counted by God as being, without spot or wrinkle because of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ will not literally be without spot or wrinkle till they come to eternal glory.

Christ might present the Church to Himself without Spot or Wrinkle.

Ephesians 5:27 ----- ²⁷so that he might present the church to himself in splendour, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

This does not mean that we can attain to such a state of perfection and a life free of sin this side of Christ's return in glory. Every faithful brother and sister in Christ at this present time stands before God the Father without spot, blemish or wrinkle not because of any ceremonial rites, holy days or religious customs and traditions we might be adhering to or because of our own self-effort to attain to righteousness, but because of our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and God's grace. God has designed the way of salvation to eternal life this way so that He could promise it to Abraham with an oath and a guarantee.

Had the LORD made salvation dependant on us attaining to the perfection of His holy law there is no-way God could have promised it since not one of us can stand before God and boast we are without sin. This is the reason God before the foundation of the world planned and purposed in His eternal mind that salvation to eternal life would be based on the following three things: -

- 1 Faith.
- 2 Grace.
- 3 Love (i.e. love for God's Son).

Now here is the Good News of the Gospel: in the resurrection we will be delivered from the fallen corrupted body we live in. Paul in his letter to the Corinthians wrote the following glorious words: -

- Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven because flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable (corruption inherit incorruption in KJV), but in a twinkling of an eye when the last trumpet sounds the dead will be raised imperishable (incorruptible in KJV) and we shall be changed and this perishable (corruptible in KJV) body will put on the imperishable (incorruption in KJV) and this mortal body will put on immortality (1 Cor. 15:50-54).

Then the righteousness that the faithful now have by faith in Christ will literally shine like a radiant diamond throughout all eternity and the sons and daughters of God will be manifested for all creation to see.

SLEEPING IN CHRIST.

When a person who belongs to Christ dies, the Bible says, that they have no knowledge and know nothing, they are totally unaware of it and are therefore in a perfect state of peace, this state is called sleeping in Christ and because they have no consciousness there, is no time. It is very similar to someone in a deep sleep there is no awareness of time, when the person wakes they have no idea of whether four, seven or twelve hours have passed.

Likewise because there is no time in death the moment a Christian dies is the moment they are in the Kingdom of God and with the LORD, for them it is instant, even though many years may have passed by in our world's time. David died thousands of years ago, but the moment he is resurrected will be like the moment he breathed his last breath, because for him there is no awareness of time, so it is for every Christian from death to Christ is instant.

Death to the Christian is similar to a person in a coma: a person in a coma has no consciousness of time, time does not exist to them, when they wake, they often think only a day or so has gone by, when in actual fact several years may have passed yet they think they are waking up, the same day, or next day after they went to sleep. The person in the coma or in death is totally unaware of any time that they have spent in the coma or being dead. Death to those who belong to Christ is much the same as the person in the coma, the dead or those who are sleeping in Christ have absolutely no consciousness of time so for them, the moment they die, is the moment they are instantly with the Lord, even though many years may have passed during the time they have been dead (i.e., sleeping in Christ).

It is the same principal as a person who goes into hospital for an operation: the patient is given an anaesthetic and put to sleep, surgeons cut them up and take bits out, over the next few hours, yet the patient is totally unaware of it they wake up and have absolutely no idea of the time that has passed, therefore when Paul says: -

- We are of good courage, and we would rather be away (absent in the KJV) from the body and at home with the Lord (2 Cor. 5:8).

It is a true statement, even though he may have spent years sleeping in Christ.

NOTE: a second reason a Christians death is called sleeping in Christ is because their death is only temporary, being asleep in Christ means everyone who dies in Christ is kept in the eternal mind and memory of God.

Jesus said: -

- Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them falls to the ground without the father knowing it and even the hairs of our head are all numbered therefore we should not fear death because we are of more value than many sparrows (Matthew 10:29-31).

The entire person, (i.e., body, spirit, mind and consciousness) remains sleeping in Christ, until the first resurrection (Rev. 20:5) when all who are asleep in the Lord are woken up at the blast of the angels trumpet and raised from the dead to everlasting glory and clothed with an eternal and immortal body.

NOTE: some people find it difficult to comprehend God raising the dead, but think of it this way: we have super computers today that have in their memories literally trillions of bits of information and at the touch of a key any one of those bits is resurrected to us on a brightly coloured screen (soon it is most likely they will simply appear in the air), then with another touch of the key it all vanishes into the super memory and is gone, until we resurrect it again.

Knowing that God has given his creation a mortal mind and finite memory to be able to build such amazing computers should make it very easy to understand how God keeps us all in His immortal mind and eternal memory waiting for the right time to touch the supernatural keyboard of heaven and raise us once again to life. Added to this very few Christians have any trouble believing God created the universe that we live in so raising the dead in comparison is not such a difficult task for such an awesome, powerful and majestic God (Heb. 11:3).

End.