
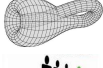





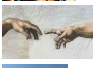










## 16 Studies on Ephesians



1	Eph 1:1-2	intro	3	
2	Eph 1:1-14	"in Christ"	7	
3	Eph 1:3-14	all things together under Christ	11	
4	Eph 1:15-23	power	13	
5	Eph ch 2	finding yourself	16	
6	Eph 2:1-10	old way, new way	20	
7	Eph 2:11-22	one in Christ	24	
8	Eph ch 3	mystery	28	
9	Eph 4:1-6	church	32	
10	Eph 4:7-16	growth	35	
11	Eph 4:17-24	thinking	39	
12	Eph 4:25-5:2	relationships	42	
13	Eph 5:3-21	walking	46	
14	Eph 5:18-6:9	cultural context	50	
15	Eph 6:1-9	parents, children, masters & slaves	55	
16	Eph 6:10-24	spiritual warfare	58	

Paul's letter to the Ephesians differs considerably from his other letters. There are none of the usual personal greetings, although Paul had spent some years in Ephesus and had many friends there (see on Acts 19). Nor does Ephesians deal with particular problems or news. Even the words 'at Ephesus' (1:1) are missing from some of the early manuscripts. So it seems likely that Ephesians began as a circular letter written to a group of churches in what is now western Turkey, of which Ephesus itself was the most important. John's 'seven churches' (Revelation 1:11, see map) were in this general area, as was the church at Colossae.

The fact that Paul wrote from prison (probably in Rome in the early 60s) links this letter with Philippians, Colossians and Philemon, the other 'letters from prison'. Of the three, Ephesians is closest in thought to Colossians. Because of its general nature the letter provides few clues to the situation in the churches. But it is clear that the Gentile Christians predominated, and that they tended to look down on their Jewish fellow Christians. Paul had been specially commissioned to work among the Gentiles, but he held no brief for a divided church.

From the Lion Handbook to the Bible Second Revised Edition, p 604.

In preparing these studies I've used the following sources:

The Message of Ephesians by John R. W. Stott  
Paul for Everyone the Prison Letters Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon by Tom Wright  
Ephesians by Francis Foulkes (Tyndale Commentary)

New Bible Dictionary 3<sup>rd</sup> edition  
New Illustrated Bible Dictionary  
Lion Handbook to the Bible Second Revised Edition  
Living with the Underworld by Peter Bolt  
Union with Christ by Rory Shiner  
Knowing God by J. I. Packer  
The Evangelical Universalist 2<sup>nd</sup> edition by Gregory MacDonald  
Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament by John H. Walton  
The New Testament a translation by David Bentley Hart

Matthias Media Bible Study booklets: Walk this Way by Bryson Smith  
He is Our Peace by David Jackman

Other Bible Study booklets: In the company of Christ 6 studies on Eph 1:1-2:10 by David Thurston, Central Sydney Presbyterian Church 2007.  
Knowing, Ephesians Study 9 studies on Ephesians by Travis Mundy, Narrabeen Baptist 2016  
Ephesians 12 studies by Fighting Words Ministries Inc. 2002  
We are: the letter to the Ephesians Bray Park Community Church 2016  
The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Ephesians The Church, The fullness of Christ 6 studies by Military Christian Fellowship of Australia  
Changed from the Inside Out (Eph 4) 4 studies by Springwood Baptist Church, 2019  
Pictures of Us Ephesians 4 studies on Ephesians by Brett Middleton, St Luke's Anglican Church, Miranda 2018  
Connecting to God and his People through Ephesians 8 studies on Ephesians chs 1-4 by Stephen Hale, St Hilary's, Melbourne  
The New "Us" 6 studies on Ephesians chs 5-6 by Natalie Rosner, St Hilary's, Melbourne  
Philippians a series of 8 Bible Studies by Roger Green 1997

Bible Briefs on Ephesians from The Briefing magazine # 273, 349 by Tony Payne and Simon Roberts respectively.

Ed O'Connor (January 2020)

## Study 1, Eph 1:1-2, intro

### Getting started

1. (a) In common usage today what is a “saint”?



(b) In your church are Christians more often referred to as sinners or saints? Why?

(c) How do you feel about being called - a sinner?

- a saint?

### Bible

2. Read Eph 1:1-2.

Verse 1 **Christ**: Paul uses the word "Christ" in Ephesians tons of times - it's his favourite way of describing Jesus. But "Christ" is not Jesus' last name or some random title. Christ is derived from the Hebrew word "Messiah". In the Old Testament, we are told that God Himself was going to come and restore the world and our hearts back to where He intended them to be. Only God could do this - Israel failed. The patriarchs failed. The kings failed. It would take God Himself. This idea, that the only one anointed/chosen/worthy to do this was God, was called "the Messiah". So when Paul uses the term "Christ" (a translation of the Hebrew "Messiah") what he is saying is that He alone, and no one else, can restore this world and our heart back to rights. That without him, we are and can do nothing (John 15:5).

From Knowing Ephesians Study 9 studies on Ephesians by Travis Mundy, Narrabeen Baptist 2016.

Why does Paul refer to the Ephesians as “saints”?

The Greek word translated “**saint**” has the same root as the word for “holy” – i.e., a saint is someone who is made holy, which means being set apart from unrighteousness and sin, and to God and his character and purpose. This is actually a description of every christian person, so if we are “in Christ”, we are saints, according to the New Testament definition. The only reason we may feel uncomfortable is that we have become used to a different scale of meaning for the word, where it describes only the very best and most worthy - and we know we are not classed among those! But, in fact, God has made us worthy (no-one is worthy of themselves), so we are saints.

From Philippians a series of 8 Bible Studies by Roger Green 1997.

In all Paul's letters (except Galatians) he addresses Christians as **saints** or with similarly positive terms but never as sinners. In Galatians Paul is annoyed at the churches because they are “so quickly deserting the one who called you to live in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel” (Gal 1:6). So he has no words of praise for them but still he doesn't address them as sinners. With the exception of 2 references in James, the New Testament never addresses Christians as sinners but as saints or with similarly positive terms like God's holy people, God's people, God's elect, brothers loved by God and God's servants.

3. Read Eph 1:1-14.

(a) From these first 14 verses - what is the tone of the letter?



(b) From these first 14 verses - how do you feel about yourself?

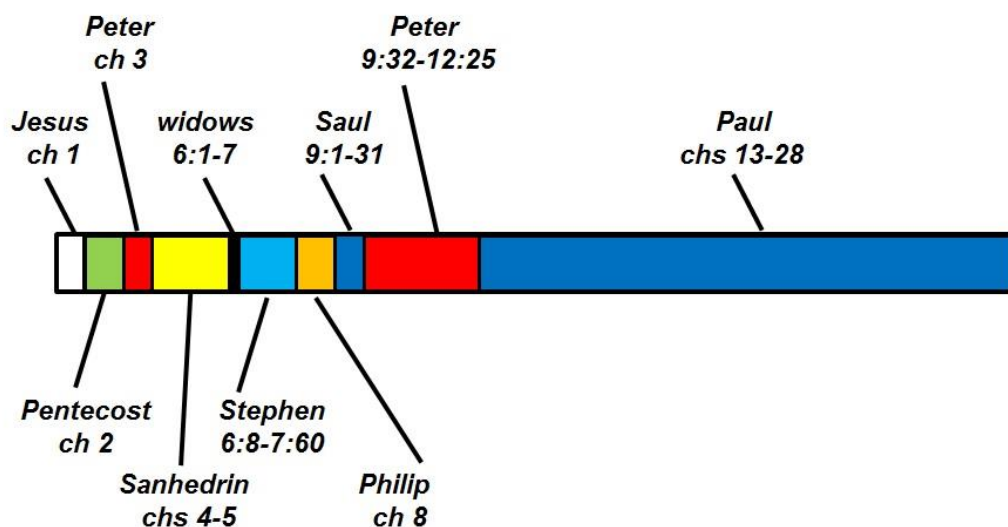


(c) What is God's "big picture"?

4. Read Acts 19:8-41, 20:13-38.

The "we" in 20:13 refers to the group of men mentioned in 20:4.

Context: The Holy Spirit has come (ch 2). The apostles have been speaking about Jesus and were persecuted for doing so (chs 3-8). One of their persecutors, Saul, met the risen Jesus and had his life turned around. Saul joined the disciples and began preaching about Jesus and the church continued to grow (ch 9). Peter (chs 9-12) is called to the home of Cornelius, a Gentile, and all the Gentiles there received the Holy Spirit. Peter had to explain this in Jerusalem and Gentiles were accepted into the church. Paul and Barnabas began their first missionary journey (chs 13-14). Wherever they went people became disciples but some Jews opposed and persecuted them. Some people said you couldn't be saved unless you were circumcised. This dispute was settled at the Jerusalem Council (15:1-16:5). Paul continued his travels but this time with Silas and Timothy. They went to Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth, where they met Aquila and Priscilla, and then on to Ephesus.



(a) How long did Paul spend in Ephesus?

(b) What evidence is there that Paul made close relationships during this time?



(c) Summarize how Paul describes his ministry in Ephesus.

(d) How does Paul's ministry in Ephesus and his letter connect with the cult of Artemis?

Ephesus was the most important city in Asia Minor. It was on the trade routes of land and sea which not only made it rich but also influential. The temple to Diana was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Coins from Ephesus bore the inscription '**Temple Warden**' – the temple dominated Ephesus in the same way that Ephesus dominated the region.

Pagan worship was little better than magic and magic was a big part of what went on in Ephesus. It was a place where you could, for a price, purchase magical power and influence for health, protection and influence. The temple was also a bank for the region. Life in Ephesus was dominated by Diana.

In the company of Christ 6 studies on Eph 1:1-2:10 by David Thurston, Central Sydney Presbyterian Church 2007.

5. Read again Eph 1:1-2.

(a) Whose apostle is Paul?

(b) By whose authority is Paul an apostle?

(c) What is an apostle?

'Apostle' literally means 'one sent out' and implies a special commission and message.

(d) Read the following and note down what else the New Testament says about the role of apostle.

1 Cor 4:9

1 Cor 12:28

2 Cor 12:12

1 Thes 2:6

1 Tim 2:7

(e) What is the difference between a local church pastor/minister and an apostle?

(f) What is the gospel?

(g) How does verse 2 sum up the gospel?

Paul opens as he does most of his letters with a blessing: "**Grace and peace** to you..." We often read over these lines and think they are just nice sounding sentiments to put in a letter opening. But those words, "grace" and "peace" are more than just pleasant words. They are central to much of Paul's theology. Both of those words are standard greetings in Greek (grace) and Jewish (peace) culture. But because of Jesus, these

words have new meaning. Grace (the word "charis" in Greek) is the idea that despite our sinful rebellion, God has given us Himself in Jesus. Peace (the Hebrew word "shalom") means more than just absence of conflict — it means the total and complete well-being of our entire self because of what Jesus has done. So what Paul is really conveying is the whole of the gospel message in two little words: Because of Jesus we have been shown unlimited grace and have the confidence of God's Spirit providing us His everlasting peace in Christ.

From Knowing Ephesians Study 9 studies on Ephesians by Travis Mundy, Narrabeen Baptist 2016.

"Grace" is the free gift of God's love, extended to us, though totally undeserved on our part. It is God's grace which stands at the heart of the gospel (see Ephesians 2:8-9), and without it we would all remain condemned. "Peace" speaks of the reconciliation which we have with God in Christ - and the implication of that peace, found in the gospel, is that we then strive for peace (reconciliation) with others (see Col. 1:20, 2 Cor 5:18-21, Eph 2:14-18).

From Philippians a series of 8 Bible Studies by Roger Green 1997.

### To finish

6. (a) *Should* you be addressed as a saint rather than a sinner? Why/why not?

(b) If you are referred to as a saint rather than a sinner - how does that effect your status?

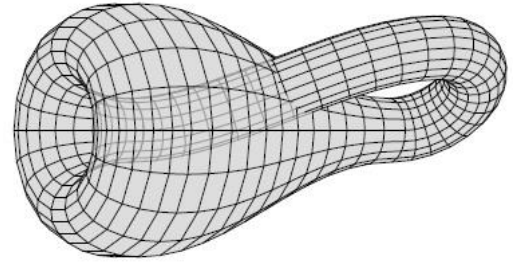
- how does that effect your self-esteem?

(c) What difference does it make to your life if you have raised self-esteem?

## Study 2, Eph 1:1-14, "in Christ"

### Getting started

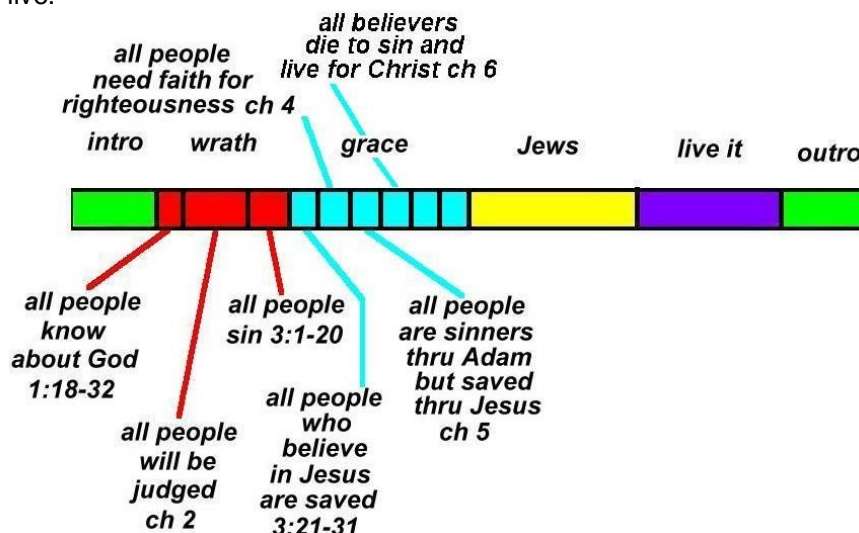
1. What do you understand by the term "in Christ"?



### Bible

2. Read Eph 1:1-14.
  - (a) What does it mean to be "blessed" (v 3)?
  - (b) If we have "every spiritual blessing" (v 3) what do you say to people who say "yes you are Christian but there are extra, special, second blessings for you"?
  - (c) How many times is "in Christ" or "in him" (where "him" refers to Christ) mentioned in these verses?
  - (d) What does Paul say about being "in Christ"?
  - (e) What do we find out about ourselves if we are "in Christ"?
3. Read Rom 6:3-10.
 

Context: Romans can be divided into 5 sections: an intro and outro, God's wrath, God's grace, how Jews fit into the scheme of things, and a section on applications of the gospel. Paul explains how all people know about God but we sin and deserve God's judgement (chs 1-3). All people need to believe in Jesus and are saved by his life, death and resurrection (3:21-5:21). In chapter 6 Paul begins to explain how God's grace takes effect in how we live.



What does Rom 6:3-11 tell us about being “in Christ”?

4. Sum up what it means to be “in Christ”?

Imagine yourself at the airport, about to board a plane. The plane is on its way to sunny Melbourne, and Melbourne is where you want to be. What relationship do you need to have with the plane at this point?

Would it help to be under the plane, to submit yourself to the plane’s eminent authority in the whole flying-to-Melbourne thing? Or would it help to be inspired by the plane? To watch it fly off and whisper “One day, I hope to do that too”. What about following the plane? You know the plane is going to Melbourne, and so it stands to reason that if you take note of the direction it goes and pursue it then you too will end up there.

Of course, the key relationship you need with the plane is not to be under it, behind it, or inspired by it. You need to be in it. Why? Because, by being in the plane, what happens to the plane will also happen to you. The question “Did you get to Melbourne?” will be part of a larger question: “Did the plane get to Melbourne?” If the answer to the second question is yes, and if you were in the plane, then what happened to the plane will also have happened to you.

I think, at heart, the biblical idea of being in Christ is something like that. According to the New Testament, to be in Christ is to say that, by union with him, whatever is true of him is now true of us. He died, we died. He is raised, we are (and will be) raised. He is vindicated, we are vindicated. He is loved, we are loved. And so on, all because we are in him....

Now, if your mental image of your relationship to God through Christ is that of a lover relationship, a friendship, or of following God, then the language of ‘closer’ or ‘far away’ makes sense. But not if you are united to Christ.

Grasping the nature of our union with Christ challenges our very language of ‘getting close to God’. We say, “I want to get closer to God”. And union with Christ says: “Really? How close to God do you want to get? How do you intend to pull that off? To which part of the universe do you plan to move to secure this ‘closer to God’ status?”

If you know yourself to be in Christ, then surely you are now, presently, in all your brokenness, as close to God as it is possible for any person to be - because you are in Christ. And, if you are in Christ, united to Christ, then the answer to the question “How close am I to God?” is subsumed by the larger question “How close is Christ to God?” If

Jesus Christ is as close to God as the only Son of the Father, the beloved of God, the object of the affections of the heart of the Father, and if you are in Christ, then the language of getting closer to God needs re-thinking.

From Union with Christ by Rory Shiner pp13-15.

Another way of expressing what it means to be “in Christ” is by using the term “identity”. Your identity, if you are a believer, is who you are in Christ. Your identity in Christ is a son and heir of God, blessed with every spiritual blessing and we live, not according to the flesh (our old identity) but according to the Spirit (our new identity).

5. What does it mean to be (a) holy (v 4)?

(b) blameless (v 4)?

(c) predestined (v 5, 11)?

(d) adopted as God’s sons (v 5)?

(e) redeemed through Jesus’ blood (v 7, 14)?



(f) hopeful in Christ (v 12)?

(g) saved (v 13)?

(b) marked with the Holy Spirit (v 13)?

It was common for letters to be sealed with a hot wax seal with the insignia of the writer on it. The seal was a sign of ownership.

From Connecting to God and his People through Ephesians 8 studies by Stephen Hale.

In this passage we find the first example of “**we**” and “**you**” (v 13) language. In Ephesians “**we**” generally refers to Jewish Christians (before his conversion Paul was a Jew see Gal 1:13-17, 2 Cor 11:22) and “**you**” generally refers to Gentile Christians (Eph 2:11-12). As we will see in chapter 2, these two very different groups both share in all the blessings of Christ.

From the Bible Brief on Ephesians from The Briefing magazine # 349 by Simon Roberts.

holy = set apart

blameless = not blamed for sin, pronounced innocent of sin

In verses 4 and 11 the text says that God “chose” us and in verses 5 and 11 it says we were “**predestined**”. These verses are several of many that point to the theme of “election” (otherwise known as “predestination”). The basic understanding of this theme is that humans have no choice in the matter - that God Himself is the one who chooses who comes into the saving knowledge of Him. This certainly seems to be true in these verses and the context of the whole of Ephesians - it’s all about God and what He does.

Yet a balance is found in the rest of the letter - yes, God is the one who chooses and elects, but you and I have a part to play. You and I freely choose to sin, to turn away from God, and we can choose to live and respond in obedience to Jesus (through the help of the Spirit) or not. Further, when God elects, He chooses a people (notice Paul’s use of “us” and “we” rather than “I” and “me”).

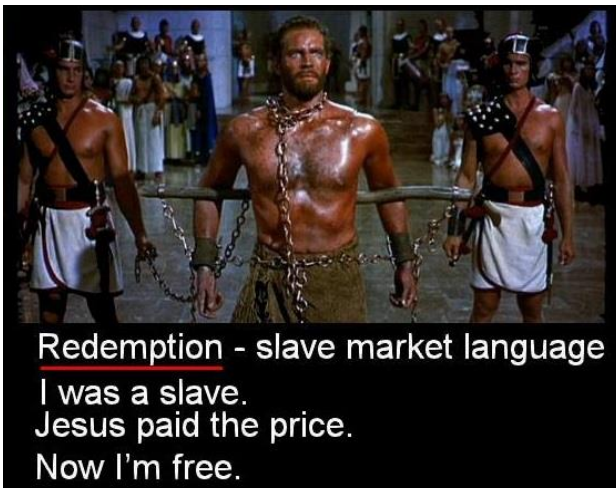
From Knowing Ephesians Study 9 studies on Ephesians by Travis Mundy, Narrabeen Baptist 2016.

Verse 5 mentions we were predestined for “**adoption** to sonship” through Jesus Christ. This term was a legal term in the Roman world for taking a person who was not part of your family and making them, in name and with all rights and privileges, a true son or daughter. The most famous example of this was Julius Caesar adopting his great-nephew Octavius as his son and heir, making him the true child of the emperor.

From Knowing Ephesians Study 9 studies on Ephesians by Travis Mundy, Narrabeen Baptist 2016.

**Adoption** is a *family* idea, conceived in terms of *love*, and viewing God as *father*. In adoption, God takes us into His family and fellowship, and establishes us as His children and heirs. Closeness, affection and generosity are at the heart of the relationship. To be right with God the judge is a great thing, but to be loved and cared for by God the father is a greater.

From Knowing God by J. I. Packer p 231.



We often define the word "**hope**" today as "to wish for, to expect - but without certainty of the fulfillment; to desire very much, but with no real assurance of getting your desire." In other words, hoping for something is the same thing as really wanting something to come true, even though it may not.

But this is not how the Bible understands hope. Hope in Scripture means "a strong and confident expectation". Hope usually refers to this confidence being in something that is both in the future and invisible. So a biblical definition of hope would be confidence in what God has for you and what He is going to do. In other words, it's not blind wishing, but certainty, even though it's not yet present.

From Knowing Ephesians Study 9 studies on Ephesians by Travis Mundy, Narrabeen Baptist 2016.

Jesus' mission was to **save** the world from sin and the wrath of God (Matt 1:21, John 12:47, Rom 5:9). During his earthly ministry salvation was brought to us by His presence and the power of faith (Luke 19:9-10). Now our salvation is based on His death and resurrection (Mark 10:25).

From New Illustrated Bible Dictionary p 1116.

Jesus is now present to the believer only in and through the Spirit . . . and that **the mark of the Spirit** is both the recognition of Jesus' present status . . . and the reproduction of the character of his sonship and resurrection life in the believer (Rom 8:11, 14-16, 23, 1 Cor 15:45-49, 2 Cor 3:18, Gal 4:6f, 1 John 3:2).

From New Bible Dictionary 3<sup>rd</sup> edition p 1129.

6. (a) What does a Christian inherit (v 14)?

(b) How do we obtain this inheritance?

(c) How do we know it's ours?

(d) Can we lose our inheritance?

(e) Verse 11: NIV "In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will"

ESV "In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will"

Verse 11 speaks about an inheritance "we have obtained" (ESV) in Christ. Verse 14 says that the Holy Spirit "is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession".

How can this inheritance be both something we have now and something that we will acquire on the last day?

## To finish

6. (Curly question) How would you answer the question, "How is your relationship going with God?"

### Study 3, Eph 1:3-14, all things together under Christ

#### Getting started

1. (a) Have you ever been chosen to be on a team? Think of a specific team.

(b) How did it feel to be chosen to be on that team?



(c) Have you ever missed out on being selected for a team or course at uni or TAFE? Be specific.

(d) How did it feel when you missed out?



(e) How do you relate to people - who are chosen?

- who miss out?

#### Bible

2. Read Eph 1:3-14.

(a) What do you think is the "mystery" (v 9)?

Verse 9: 'mystery' — this word will pop up again in Ephesians; it refers to the 'secret' that has now been revealed through Christ; namely, that in Christ, even the Gentiles have now been gathered in as members of God's household. This was God's ancient purpose, but it has now been fully and clearly made known.

From the Bible Brief on Ephesians from The Briefing magazine # 273 by Tony Payne.

(b) What is God's big plan (see also Col 1:19-20)?

Verse 10: 'all things in the heavens and on earth' — this refers not just to the totality of the world (including the Gentiles) but to the 'heavenlies', the powers and forces of the heavenly or spiritual realm. We will come across this word 'heavenlies' (it is plural in v. 10) a few more times in Ephesians.

From the Bible Brief on Ephesians from The Briefing magazine # 273 by Tony Payne.

(c) How do we fit into that plan?

(d) What happens to those who are chosen/predestined (v 4, 5, 11)?

(e) What are you chosen to do?

(f) What do you think happens to those who are *not* chosen (the answer is not in this passage but answer from what you have been told or read)?

(g) If God is going to

“bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ” (v 10)

= “reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven” (Col 1:20)

what do you think will happen to people who have gone to hell (see Rom 5:18)?

Anastasia is an evangelical Christian. She believes in the inspiration and authority of the Bible. She believes in all those crucial Christian doctrines such as Trinity, creation, sin, atonement, the return of Christ, salvation through Christ alone, by grace alone, through faith alone. In fact, on most things you'd be hard pressed to tell her apart from any other evangelical. Contrary to what we may suspect, she even believes in the eschatological wrath of God — in hell. She differs most obviously in two unusual beliefs. First, she believes that one's eternal destiny is not fixed at death and, consequently, that those in hell can repent and throw themselves upon the mercy of God in Christ and thus be saved. Second, she also believes that in the end everyone will do this. Now, not all Christian universalists would agree with Anastasia's views here, but it is her kind of universalism that I primarily have in mind when I speak of **universalism**.

From The Evangelical Universalist 2<sup>nd</sup> edition by Gregory MacDonald p 6.

3. If you have time you may like to look up some verses that are for and against universalism.

against

2 Thes 1:9-10

Is 66:24 = Mark 9:48

Matt - sheep & goats 25:31-46

- 10 virgins Matt 25:1-13

- talents Matt 25:14-30

Luke 16 – rich man & Lazarus

Rev 14:11, 20:11-15

John 5:24

Eph 5:5-6

for

Rom 5:18

Is 66:22-23

John 1:29, 3:16-17, 12:32

Col 1:20

Eph 1:10

Phil 2:9-11

1 Tim 2:4

1 Cor 5:1-5

2 Pet 3:9

Ps 72:11

1 Cor 15

### To finish

4. (a) Besides going to heaven what are the advantages of being a Christian?

(b) (i) What makes you think you have what it takes to last the distance as a Christian?

(ii) What encouragement does Eph 1:3-14 give?

## Study 4, Eph 1:15-23, power

### Getting started

1. (a) Who is the most powerful person you have ever met?

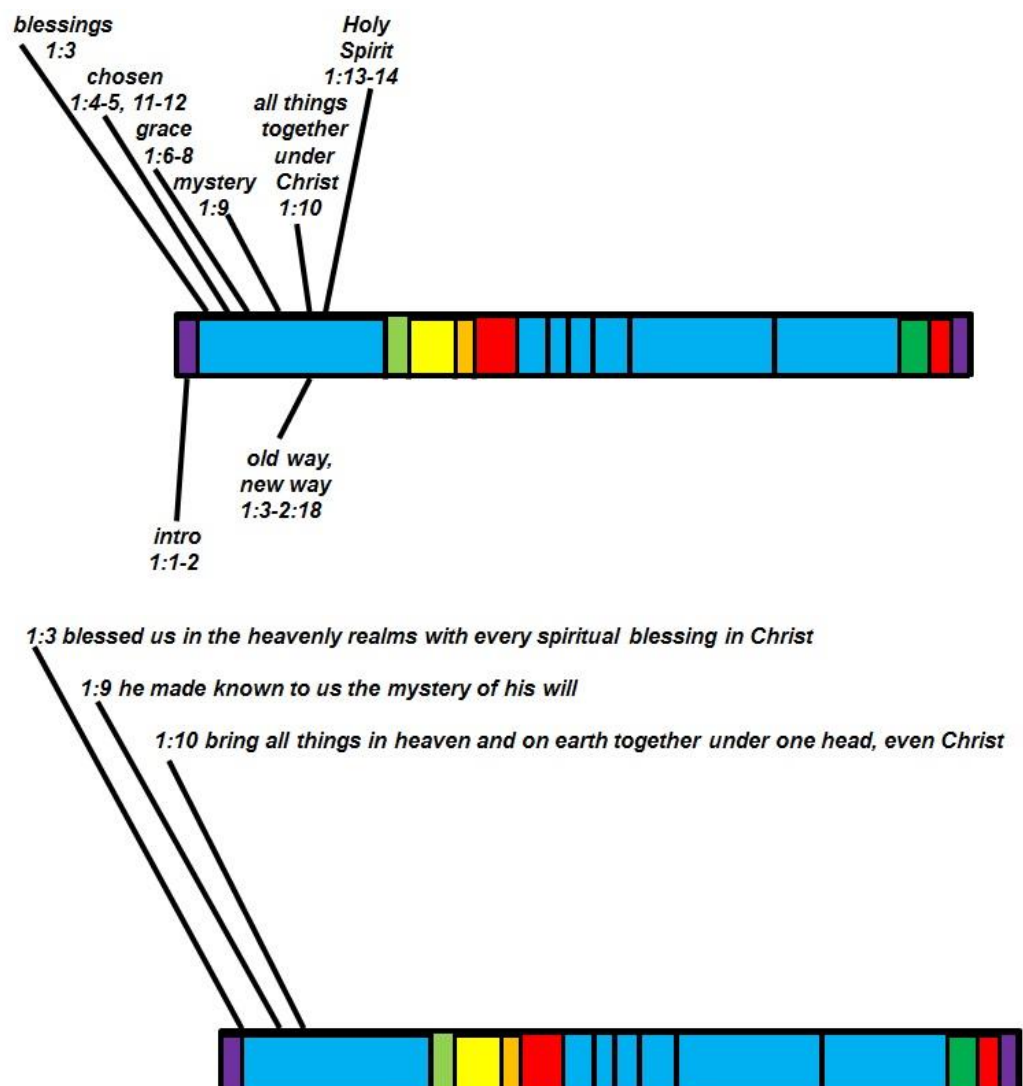


- (b) Briefly describe the circumstances of your meeting.

- (c) How did he/she wield his/her power?

### The story so far . . .

Paul begins this letter with praise for God for the grace he has shown to his people i.e. God has given them every spiritual blessing, chosen/predestined them, made them holy and blameless, adopted them as sons, redeemed them, forgiven them, given them hope in Christ, saved them, marked them with the Holy Spirit and God promises to bring all things together under the headship of Jesus.



**Bible**

2. Read Eph 1:15-23.

(a) (i) What is it that prompts Paul's prayer for the Ephesians (v.15)?

(ii) Why are these two things so praiseworthy?

(b) What does "For this reason" (from the beginning of v 15) refer to?

(c) How would you assess your "faith in the Lord Jesus" (v 15)?



(d) (i) How would you assess your "love for all the saints" (v 15), be honest?

(ii) How can you love them better/more?

(e) (i) What do you pray for?

(ii) What does Paul pray for in vv 16-19?

(iii) Notice that Paul not only prays for the Ephesians, but he tells them that he is doing so!  
How does this help?

(iv) Can you learn anything else from what Paul prays for?

What do we pray for each other? Sometimes it can boil down to little more than 'happy thoughts' or a general attitude toward the other person that they will be 'all right'. It's no wonder we find intercession, praying

for others, at times tedious and uninspiring. Paul's prayers in contrast were beefy and sharp with the focus of God's Christ-filled purposes in the lives of others.

From In the company of Christ 6 studies on Eph 1:1-2:10 by David Thurston, Central Sydney Presbyterian Church 2007.

(f) In Eph 1:3 Paul says that God has blessed them with every spiritual blessing but in Eph 1:17 Paul says that he keeps asking that God will give them the Spirit of wisdom and revelation. If they have every spiritual blessing why do they need the Spirit of wisdom and revelation?

3. (a) What power is Paul writing about (v 19)?

(b) How much power is Paul writing about?

(c) What power do we have today?



(d) Does the church look powerful today?

(e) What good things could the church do with its power (use your imagination)?

(f) What are the dangers of power?

"All power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely".

This quote from the English historian, Lord Acton, was from a letter in 1887 which actually said "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Great men are almost always bad men."

4. (a) Paul gives an exalted picture of the rule of Christ and the power of God (vv 19-23).  
Why does Paul want his readers to know this?

(b) Does it look like everything is under Jesus' feet (v 22)? Why/why not?

(c) Who fills everything in every way (v 23)?

(d) What do you think it means that the church is “the fullness of him who fills everything in every way” (v 23) (see also 3:19, 4:10, 13, 5:18)?

(e) Is Eph 1:10 the same as Eph 1:22? Why/why not?

### **To finish**

5. (a) How well do you “know” the things mentioned in this passage?

(b) How can you know them more?

(c) How will knowing them more change your daily life?



## Study 5, Eph ch 2, finding yourself

### Getting started

Have you heard the term “finding yourself”? I first heard the term in the 70s when singers and musicians used the term. I was a fan of Cat Stevens and he wrote a lot of songs about finding yourself e.g. “Miles from Nowhere”, “On the Road to Find Out” and “Father and Son” (below and <https://youtu.be/X8W5U2tIFQI> ).

(Father) It's not time to make a change,  
Just relax, take it easy.  
You're still young, that's your fault,  
There's so much you have to know.  
Find a girl, settle down,  
If you want you can marry.  
Look at me, I am old, but I'm happy.

I was once like you are now, and I know that it's not easy,  
To be calm when you've found something going on.  
But take your time, think a lot,  
Why, think of everything you've got.  
For you will still be here tomorrow, but your dreams may not.

(Son) How can I try to explain, when I do he turns away again.  
It's always been the same, same old story.  
From the moment I could talk I was ordered to listen.  
Now there's a way and I know that I have to go away.  
I know I have to go.

(Father) It's not time to make a change,  
Just sit down, take it slowly.  
You're still young, that's your fault,  
There's so much you have to go through.  
Find a girl, settle down,  
If you want you can marry.  
Look at me, I am old, but I'm happy.  
(Son – away, away, away, I know I have to make this decision alone – no.)

(Son) All the times that I cried, keeping all the things I knew inside,  
It's hard, but it's harder to ignore it.  
If they were right, I'd agree, but it's them they know not me.  
Now there's a way and I know that I have to go away.  
I know I have to go.  
(Father – stay, stay, stay, why must you go and make this decision alone?)



1. (a) What does it mean to find yourself?



- (b) What did you find?

### The story so far . . .

Paul begins this letter with praise for God for the grace he has shown to his people i.e. God has given them every spiritual blessing, chosen/predestined them, made them holy and blameless, adopted them as sons, redeemed them, forgiven them, given them hope in Christ, saved them, marked them with the Holy Spirit and God promises to bring all things together under the headship of Jesus. Paul then prays for the Ephesians – for the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, for enlightenment to know hope, inheritance and power through Jesus.

### Bible

2. Read Eph ch 2.

We looked at what it means to be “in Christ” in Study 2 but Ephesians tells us even more of what it means to be in Christ and it has a lot to do with “finding yourself”.

In Eph ch 2 “in Christ” is also expressed as “in him” or “with him” or “with Christ” or “through him” but each time it means the same thing. “In Christ” or its equivalent is mentioned 9 times in Eph ch 2 and 11 times in Eph ch 1.

3. Read Eph 2:1-5.  
What does it mean to be “made alive in Christ” (v5, see also Rom 6:3-11)?
4. Read Eph 2:6-7.  
What does it mean when it says we were “raised up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus”?  
(i) Is this literal? Why/why not?

(ii) What does it mean?

5. Read Eph 2:7 again.  
What does this tell us about being “in Christ”?
6. Read Eph 2:10.  
(a) What does this tell us about being “in Christ” (see also 2 Cor 5:17)?

(b) Verse 10 says we are created in Christ Jesus to do good works.  
Give some examples of “good works”.

7. Read Eph 2:11-18. These verses are about what we once were but, in this study, I’d like to focus on what we are now and what we can be. From these verses what do we now have, if we are “in Christ”?

8. Read Eph 2:19-22.  
What do we have “in him”?

### To finish

To summarise, what we have looked at in Eph 2 tells us that to be “in Christ” we

- are included in Jesus’ death
- are included in Jesus’ resurrection
- are involved in an unseen spiritual reality
- are a new creation
- have access to the Father
- are joined together in a building where God lives in his Spirit.

9. (a) Do you think that being “in Christ” has anything to do with finding yourself?

(b) Does being “in Christ” wipe out any of the old stuff you found when you found yourself?

(c) What are the practical implications of finding yourself in Christ?

## Study 6, Eph 2:1-10, old way, new way

### Getting started

1. Imagine the following scenario: You know Rick fairly well. He's university educated, middle class, married, paying off his mortgage and secure in his job and lifestyle.

(a) How do you think he would feel/think if you told him he needed to be saved?



(b) What do Christians mean when they say: "I am saved"?

(c) As simply as possible answer Question 1 (b) again without using any Christian jargon.

(d) What would you say if Rick said that he didn't believe in sin?

### The story so far . . .

Ch 1 - Paul begins this letter with praise for God for the grace he has shown to his people i.e. God has given them every spiritual blessing, chosen/predestined them, made them holy and blameless, adopted them as sons, redeemed them, forgiven them, given them hope in Christ, saved them, marked them with the Holy Spirit and God promises to bring all things together under the headship of Jesus. Paul then prays for the Ephesians – for the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, for enlightenment to know hope, inheritance and power through Jesus.

### Bible

2. Read Eph 2:1-3.
  - (a) What is the problem (v 1)?

(b) (i) What are the influences on the Ephesians' old way of life (vv 2–3)?

(ii) What effect did these influences have?

3. **Eph 2:3 "flesh" or "sinful nature".**

NIV (old) All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our **sinful nature** and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.

NIV (new) All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our **flesh** and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath.

ESV among whom we all once lived in the passions of our **flesh**, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

KJV 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.

RSV Among these we all once lived in the passions of our **flesh**, following the desires of body and mind, and so we were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

NASB Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our **flesh**, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

We need understand what is meant by the words “sinful nature” in the old New International Version (NIV) or “flesh” in a lot of other versions. The Greek word in the text, “sarx”, means “flesh” but the editors of the NIV decided to interpret the word as “sinful nature”, perhaps following the many commentators who used “sarx” to mean “sinful nature”.

In old versions of the Bible, the King James Version (KJV) used the word “flesh”, the Revised Version (RV) used the word “flesh”, the Revised Standard Version (RSV) used the word “flesh”, then came the NIV and it used the words “sinful nature”. Next came the English Standard Version (ESV) which was supposed to replace the NIV but it didn’t. The ESV went back to using the word “flesh”. The New American Standard Bible (NASB) also used the word “flesh”, The latest NIV has gone back to using the word “flesh”.

Why is this such a big deal? Because it radically changes the meaning of the passage. If you don’t have the latest NIV you may be used to using the words “sinful nature” instead of “flesh”. The old NIV used “sinful nature” consistently in passages in Rom 7:4-8:17, 1 Cor 5:1-5, Gal 5:13-26, Eph 2:1-10, Col 2:9-15 and 2 Pet ch 2. Many commentators thought of “sarx” as “sinful nature” i.e. a Christian has two natures inside him/her – a sinful nature and a good or Spirit filled nature. These two natures are at war with each other all the time like a split personality or good verses evil scenario. Using this way of thinking the Christian struggles constantly with these two natures inside him/her.

Instead of looking at “sarx” that way some more recent commentators understand “sarx” as the old, pre-Christian way that the person *used to have* as a way of life. In Rom 7:4-8:17, Gal 5:13-26, Eph 2:1-10 and Col 2:9-15 that old way of life is contrasted with the new way that a Christian now follows. A Christian is wholly converted, wholly Spirit filled. There is no sinful nature co-existing with the new Spirit filled nature. The struggle that a Christian encounters is because he/she has free will and he/she has to make choices. A Christian can choose to do things according to Christ’s way or he/she can choose to do things the old, pre-Christian way = the way of the flesh (“sarx”).

The 2 ways of living are compared and contrasted in Eph 2:1-10. Under the 2 headings below write the things that are associated with each way of living.

**new way**

**old way (flesh)**



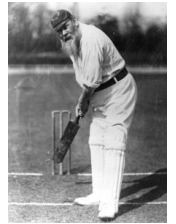
4. Read again Eph 2:4-10.
  - (a) How would you describe your self-esteem?

(b) From this passage what does God think of you?  
(Verse 10 literally translates as “You are God's masterpiece”.)

(c) Does what God thinks of you change your self-estimation?

If so, in what way? If not, why not?

5. (a) What is God's grace (v 5)?



(b) How could you give grace to people?

Patricia was a mother of a well-off English family living in Fiji in the 1950s. They had servants which was customary in that context. Patricia discovered that one servant had been stealing. Her first reaction was to sack her but Patricia had recently become a Christian and she wanted to think through what believing in God's grace meant to her life. She prayed about it and reasoned that her servant had stolen because she was poor and needed the money to feed her family. Patricia decided that God would not want her to sack her servant but to give her a raise which was what she did. The servant was astounded and became a devoted household maid. Patricia's act of grace was an overflow of the grace she had received from God and it was life changing for her servant. Later Patricia led her to faith in Jesus Christ.

From a eulogy by Tony Golsby-Smith at his mother's funeral.

Grace is getting what we don't deserve. We deserve death and God's judgement but, because of Jesus' life, death and resurrection we get what we don't deserve - life, the Holy Spirit, fellowship with God, church, gifts . . . think of all the other things God gives us. But it doesn't stop there. Like Patricia, we can give grace as it overflows from the grace we have received from God. We can do grace/give grace, and it may be life changing for the people who receive it.

6. (a) If the Ephesians were once dead (vv 1, 5) in what sense were they dead?

(b) What has happened now (v 6)?

7. (a) When will Jesus “show the incomparable riches of his grace” (v 7)?

(b) What will that look like?

8. (a) In verses 8-10 what does Paul say about “works”?

(b) How good do you have to be, to be saved?

Of course it feels like something we do, that's why we need to understand that we were once dead. A person who is dead and is brought back to life takes a breath—they suck in air and blood cells are oxygenated. We are made alive in Christ—so we breath spiritually—believe God's gospel.

From In the company of Christ 6 studies on Eph 1:1-2:10 by David Thurston,  
Central Sydney Presbyterian Church 2007.

(c) Does that mean you don't have to go to church? Or bible study? Why/why not?

(d) Why can't we boast about our faith?

(e) We can't do anything to help our salvation. Why is it so hard to handle that idea?

(f) What is the difference between “faith”, “trust” and ordinary “believe”?

### To finish

9. Could it be that being chosen (Eph 1:4, 5, 11) is about being chosen to do good works (Eph 2:10) “which God prepared in advance for us to do” rather than being chosen for salvation in an elitist sense?

Give reasons for your answer.



10. How should we treat a Christian brother or sister who claims to be a Christian but does not show any good works and is too busy to ever volunteer?

## Study 7, Eph 2:11-22, one in Christ

### Getting started

1. I studied Horticulture at Hawkesbury Agricultural College – 2 years full time. One of the popular teaching methods was to divide the class into groups of about 7 people each and give different assignments to each group. The goal, at the end of a period of time, was for each group to present their findings to the whole class. In one group we had a bossy person, a person who was willing to take notes, two people who weren't keen on doing anything, one person of very low intelligence and one very introverted person.

(a) How would you fit in if you were the 7<sup>th</sup> person in this group?

(b) How would you fit in if your church was like this?



### The story so far . . .

Ch 1 - Paul begins this letter with praise for God for the grace he has shown to his people i.e. God has given them every spiritual blessing, chosen/predestined them, made them holy and blameless, adopted them as sons, redeemed them, forgiven them, given them hope in Christ, saved them, marked them with the Holy Spirit and God promises to bring all things together under the headship of Jesus. Paul then prays for the Ephesians – for the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, for enlightenment to know hope, inheritance and power through Jesus.

### Bible

2. Read Eph 2:11-22.

**Gentiles** (v 11): Paul speaks of a group called the "**Gentiles**" - which is a catch-all word to mean "anyone not Jewish".

**Circumcision** (v 11): The cutting off of the foreskin. Male circumcision was a major mark of identity for Jews, following its initial commandment to Abraham (Genesis 17), reinforced by Joshua (Joshua 5:2-9). Other peoples, e.g. the Egyptians, also circumcised male children. A line of thought from Deuteronomy (e.g. 30:6), through Jeremiah (e.g. 31:33), to the Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament (e.g. Romans 2:29) speaks of 'circumcision of the heart' as God's real desire, by which one may become inwardly what the male Jew is outwardly, that is, marked out as part of God's people.

From Paul for Everyone the Prison Letters Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon by Tom Wright p 212.

**Israel** (v 12): the Old Testament people of God; the theocratic nation state of Israel

**Covenant** (v 12): a binding agreement between two or more parties; in the Bible they are originated by God and an act of His grace

**Cornerstone** (v 20): the stone that gives a building completeness, solidarity, and unity

**Temple** (v 21): a shrine; the dwelling place of God

(a) What was the problem Paul was referring to?



(b) How does “Therefore” at the beginning of verse 11 connect this passage with the previous one?

(c) (i) How does Paul describe what they were, and what they are now?

**what they were**

**what they are now**

(ii) How did this change happen?

In the first century there was a major issue with the growing movement known as Christianity. Jesus and his disciples were all Jews from Judea (modern day Israel). They knew and practiced the Old Testament laws and customs. Both Jesus' message and the message of the first generation of followers were intimately connected with the story and promises of Israel.

As the good news about Jesus exploded, people from other cultures and nationalities started believing in and following after Jesus - people who had no previous knowledge of Israel and its history and customs. Because of this a major dilemma faced the growing church: what do we do with these people? Do they need to know and follow the Jewish laws in order to have access to Jesus and therefore be a part of our group (known as the church)? Do they need to get circumcised, follow the kosher food regulations, or even give up their culture and nationality in order to follow Jesus and be welcomed into the church?

The bigger question this raised, aside from the obvious theological issues, is this: what kind of community are we? How are we to relate to one another - people of diverse and conflicting backgrounds and stories? Are we supposed to be exclusive - that only people who are exactly like us can join us? How do we display the love of God to this world by how we treat one another?

From Knowing Ephesians Study 9 studies on Ephesians by Travis Mundy, Narrabeen Baptist 2016.

(d) Verse 15 says that the law has been abolished.

(i) What does this mean?

(ii) How did this happen?

(iii) What does this mean for us?

(e) (i) What does Paul mean by the creation of “one new man out of the two” (v 15)?



(ii) Why did Jesus need to reconcile both of them to God (v 16)? Weren't the Jews already right with God?

(iii) Is ethnic division still an issue for the church today? Why/why not?

3. (a) What are some possible causes of "hostility" in the church?



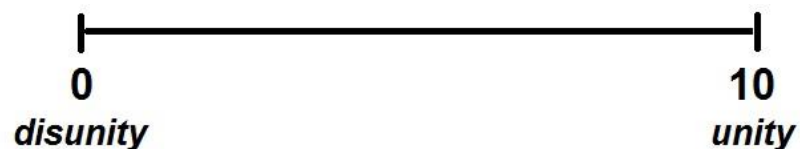
(b) How can the cross cure such "hostility" among the people of God (v 16b)?

(c) How is unity more than just the absence of conflict (see also Eph 4:16, 32)?

(d) Why is unity in the church such a big deal to God?

(e) Why is disunity so damaging?

(f) Where is your church on a scale of 10 between disunity (0) and unity (10)?



Give reasons for your answer.

(g) How can you fix disunity?

4. (a) How are you to relate to people of diverse and conflicting backgrounds and stories?

(b) How will this work out for you with people you don't naturally gravitate towards?

5. Paul describes God's people (the church) as a household, a building and a temple (vv 19-22).  
 (a) What other metaphors does the New Testament use to describe the church?
- (b) Who makes up this household (vv 19, 22)?
- (c) What is the foundation of this building?
- (d) Who is the cornerstone?
- (e) What is this building becoming (vv 21-22)?
- (f) What are you becoming?
6. (a) Why does Paul use the image of a household to describe God's people?
- (b) Why does Paul use the image of a building to describe God's people?
- (c) Why does Paul use the image of a temple to describe God's people?

Worship took place at **temples**, but temples were not designed primarily to provide a place of worship. They were designed to be residences for deities and, as such, places for the performance of cultic rituals. . . .

From the standpoint of deity, the temple is his/her estate and residence. The earthly temple was a symbol, an echo, a shadow of the heavenly residence. As such it served as a link, a bond, or even a portal to the heavenly residence. . . .

From Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament by John H. Walton p 113.

### To finish

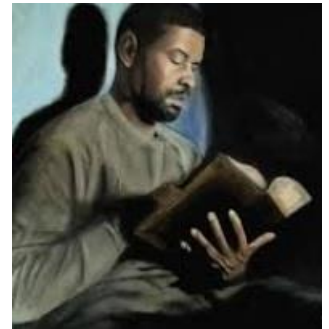
6. If we are the temple (VV 21-22) – why do we build churches that look like temples?



## Study 8, Eph 3, mystery

### Getting started

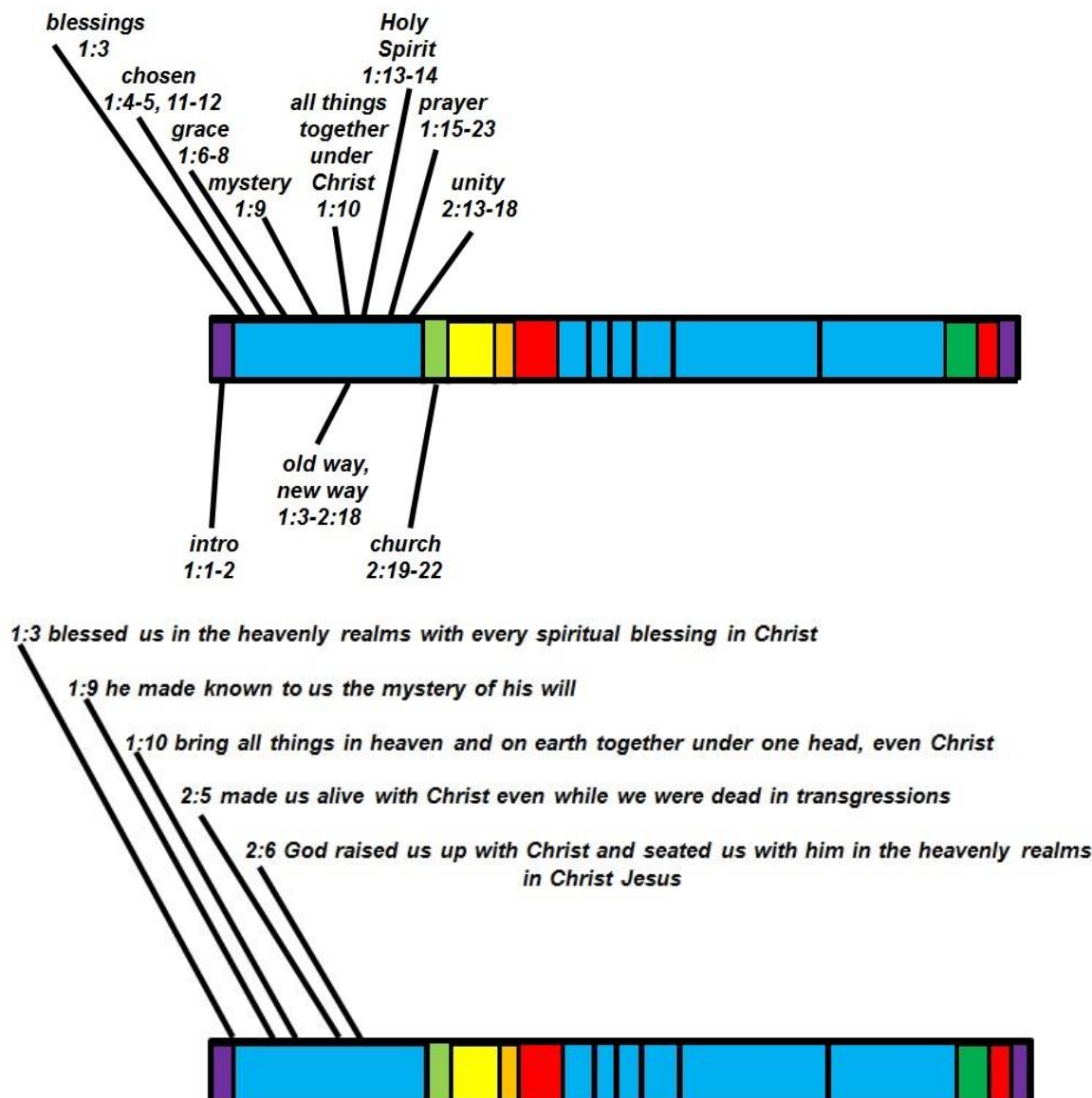
1. If someone were to ask you to read a certain section in the Bible and then explain it, what would you need to know about that section of the Bible in order to understand and explain it properly?



### The story so far . . .

Ch 1 - Paul begins this letter with praise for God for the grace he has shown to his people i.e. God has given them every spiritual blessing, chosen/predestined them, made them holy and blameless, adopted them as sons, redeemed them, forgiven them, given them hope in Christ, saved them, marked them with the Holy Spirit and God promises to bring all things together under the headship of Jesus. Paul then prays for the Ephesians – for the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, for enlightenment to know hope, inheritance and power through Jesus.

In ch 2 Paul describes what the Ephesians once were and what they are now thanks to Jesus. Paul addresses the Jew/Gentile problem and how that too has been solved by Jesus in uniting them with each other and with God. Together they are a building where God lives by his Spirit and with Jesus as the cornerstone.



## Bible

2. To properly understand Eph 3 we need to understand the **structure** of the passage as well as other things like the genre or literary type, the cultural setting, the meaning of the words and the context. As you read Eph 3 look out for pointers to the structure of the passage.  
Read Eph 3.  
What did you notice about the structure of the passage?
  
3. Paul breaks off after v1 and writes about something else.  
Where does Paul get back to the idea he began in v1?
  
4. Paul gives us the reason for his actions before he actually does it.  
(a) What does he do?  
  
(b) What is his reason for doing it?
  
5. (a) How does Paul describe himself in verses 1 and 8?  
(b) Why does he describe himself in that way? (Notice the irony by checking Acts 8:1-3.)
  
6. Before we look at what Paul prays for, we will look at the side-track (vv 2-13) for which Paul breaks his line of thought. (a) What is the mystery in vv 2-6?



- (b) Why does Paul call it a mystery?
  
- (c) How has this mystery been made known?
  
7. Read vv 7-13 again.  
(a) What do we learn about Paul in these verses?

(b) What are the implications that the riches of Christ are “unsearchable” (v 8)?

(c) What are the guarantees, in the present, of the certain future fulfilment of God’s purposes (vv 10-12)?

(d) What is the intent on revealing this mystery (v 10)?

(e) What have the rulers and authorities in heavenly realms got to do with it?

(f) Is this the purpose of church (vv 10-11)?

If so, how do we do this in real life? If not, what is the purpose of church?

(f) Tim Keller says: “The only person who dares wake up a king at 3:00 AM for a glass of water is a child. We have that kind of access.”

What does it mean to approach God with freedom and confidence (v 12)?

8. Verse 14 begins the bit about what Paul is going to do “for this reason” which is to pray for them. Read vv 14-19 again.

(a) What does Paul pray for?

Prayer for their hearts/inner being to be strengthened (vv 16-17a). This relates to one's passions/emotions/desires to be found in Christ's Spirit and power.

Prayer for love to be the binding reality in their community (vv 17b-18a). This relates to our actions and outward display of Jesus love to be evident in all our relationships.

Prayer that we may have knowledge of Jesus' love for us so that we may be filled with God's fullness (vv 18b-19). This relates to our mind/thoughts/plans - the focus of our life.

From Knowing Ephesians Study 9 studies on Ephesians by Travis Mundy, Narrabeen Baptist 2016.

(b) What sort of power does Paul pray for (see Eph 3:16, 18, 20, 6:10)?

Are they 2 different types of power or is v18 elaborating on the power mentioned in v16?



(c) What is this power for?

(d) Why do these things need power?

(e) Reflect on whether you limit the power of God

9. (a) Why would the Ephesians need to grasp the love of Christ?

(b) Why would we need to grasp the love of Christ?

10. To understand the idea of the fullness of God (v19) we need to start the sentence (according to the NIV) in v 17 with “And I pray that you . . .”.  
What does it mean to be filled with the fullness of God? Is it possible?

11. (a) What does “to him be glory” mean?



(b) How do we glorify God?

### To finish

12. What are encouragement do we get from verses 20-21?



## Study 9, Eph 4:1-6, Church

### Getting started

1. Briefly describe your church journey.



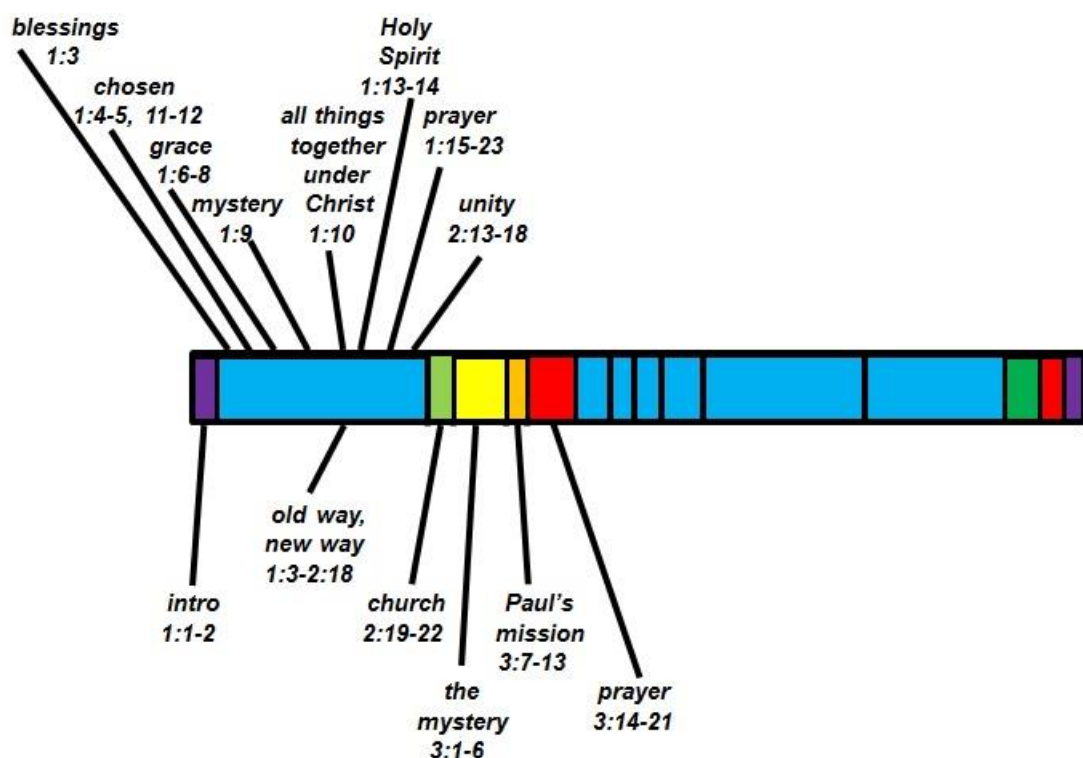
2. What makes a church good?

### The story so far . . .

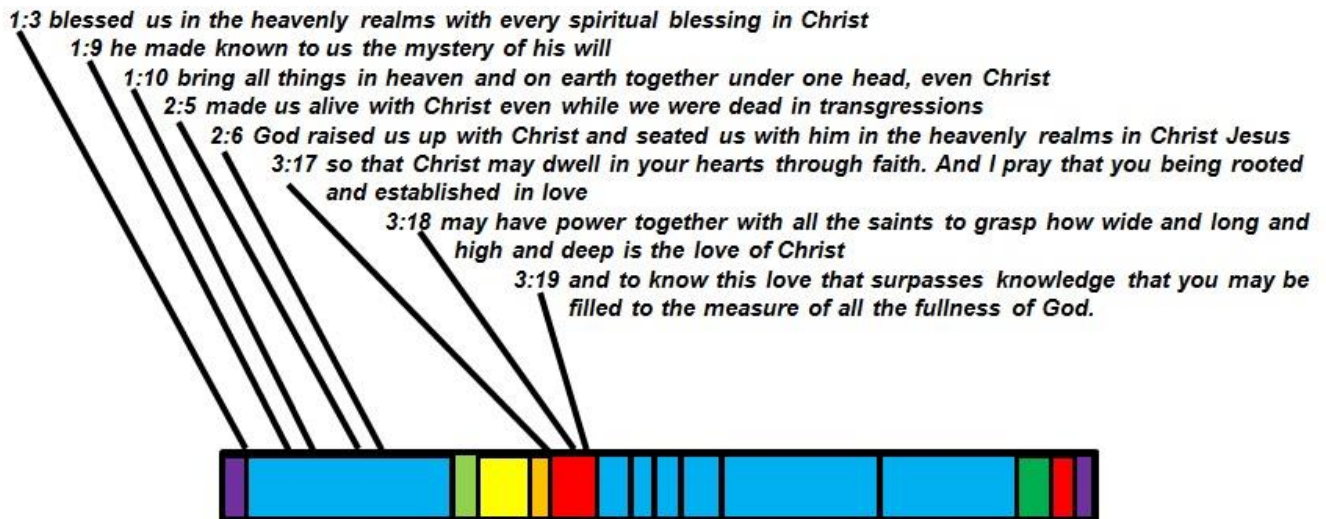
Ch 1 - Paul begins this letter with praise for God for the grace he has shown to his people i.e. God has given them every spiritual blessing, chosen/predestined them, made them holy and blameless, adopted them as sons, redeemed them, forgiven them, given them hope in Christ, saved them, marked them with the Holy Spirit and God promises to bring all things together under the headship of Jesus. Paul then prays for the Ephesians – for the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, for enlightenment to know hope, inheritance and power through Jesus.

In ch 2 Paul describes what the Ephesians once were and what they are now thanks to Jesus. Paul addresses the Jew/Gentile problem and how that too has been solved by Jesus in uniting them with each other and with God. Together they are a building where God lives by his Spirit and with Jesus as the cornerstone.

In ch 3 Paul explains his part in God's plan to convert Gentiles to faith in Christ. He prays for their strength and understanding of God's power and love, and concludes by giving glory to God.







## Bible

3. (a) What do Christians mean when they say they have a “calling” or have been “called”?



- (b) Is this only for ministers or missionaries? Why/why not?

- (c) What “calling” have you received, if any?

4. Read Eph 4:1-6.  
(a) What “calling” did the Ephesians receive?

Verse 1: In the English translations, we may find the words “lead a life” in place of the word for “walk” (peripateo). Paul’s metaphorical use of the term “walk” (translated in NIV as “live a life”) reveals his deep Jewish heritage. Often Jewish writers speak of a faithful life as walking with God. The image creates a picture of action, effort, and purpose. Paul uses the verb elsewhere (5:2, 8, 15) as he envisions the believers’ faithful, fruitful lives in Christ. He also uses the word once (2:2) to reference the habits and lifestyle the Ephesians previously engaged in prior to their calling. Paul strongly urges the Thessalonians to walk worthy of their calling in God’s Kingdom (1 Thes 2:11–12; see also Phil 1:27; Col 1:10). In describing this life, Paul does not offer here a list of dos and don’ts, but sets before them holy attitudes that should govern all actions.

From *Changed from the Inside Out (Eph 4)* 4 Bible studies by Springwood Baptist Church, 2019, quoting from *Ephesians* by L. H. Cohick p 102.

- (b) Think back over Ephesians chs 1-3. Why would humility, gentleness and forbearance be an appropriate way for people with that ‘calling’ to live?

- (c) (i) Do verses 2 & 3 mean we let people walk all over us? Why/why not?

(ii) Is Paul mean we are to act like this just with our Christian brothers and sisters or with non-Christians as well? Give reasons for your answer.

- (d) (i) We have already looked at church unity in Study 7 and in Eph 2:13-18 and Paul addresses the issue again here. What is meant by “keep the unity of the Spirit” (v 3)?

(ii) In your church how would you keep the unity of the Spirit?



(iii) Is it wrong for Christians to disagree? Why/why not?

(iv) Do disagreements disrupt unity? Why/why not?

(e) How might the characteristics mentioned in verse 2 achieve the result hoped for in verses 3-4?

(f) Verses 3-6 emphasize the ‘oneness’ of Christianity, and why unity in the congregation is so much to be prized. Explain each of the ‘ones’ in your own words.

one body

one Spirit

one hope

one Lord

one faith

one baptism

one God and Father

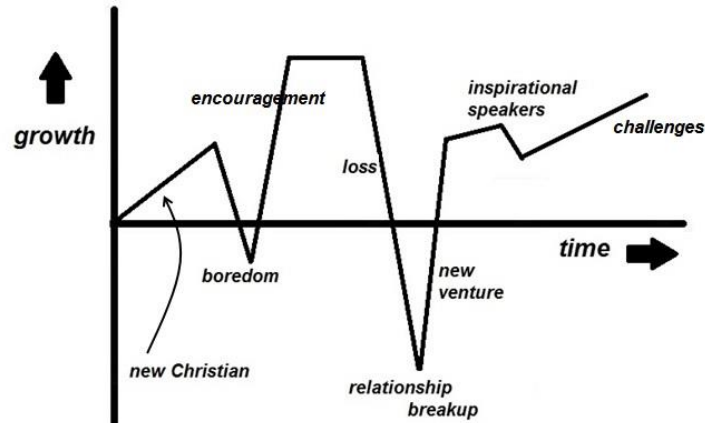
### To finish

4. If Paul were to write you a personal letter, begging you to lead a life worthy of your calling, which of the characteristics of verses 2 and 3 do you think he would highlight?

## Study 10, Eph 4:7-16, Growth

### Getting started

- Do you ever look back and think about how things have gone in your life? What events loomed large and how did they affect you? Think about these things in terms of how comforting, encouraging and challenging these events were for your faith/growth in Jesus. We could represent this pictorially by making a graph like the one below:



(a) What would your “growth graph” look like?

(b) What events gave you the most comfort, encouragement and challenge?

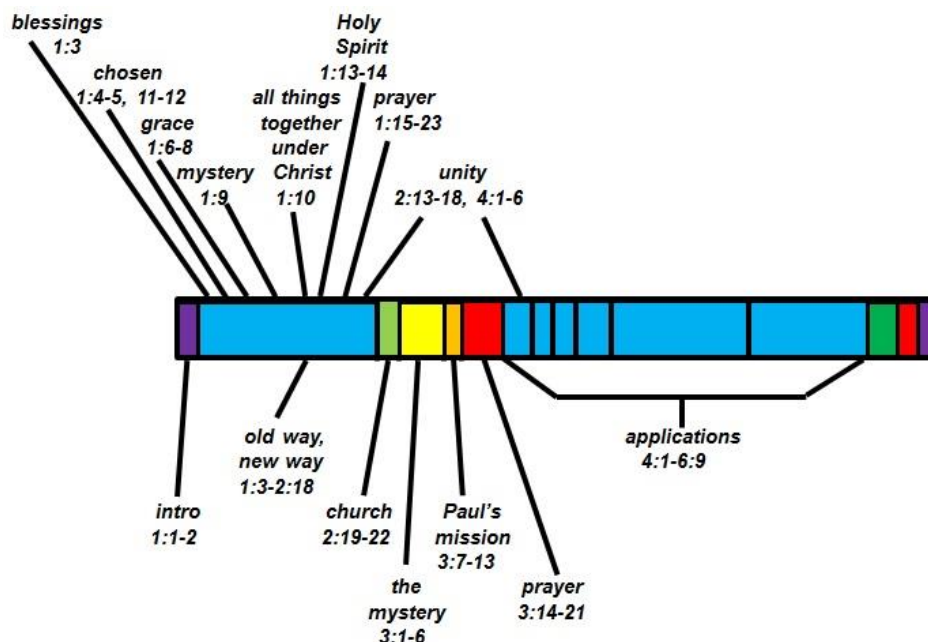
### The story so far . . .

Ch 1 - Paul begins this letter with praise for God for the grace he has shown to his people i.e. God has given them every spiritual blessing, chosen/predestined them, made them holy and blameless, adopted them as sons, redeemed them, forgiven them, given them hope in Christ, saved them, marked them with the Holy Spirit and God promises to bring all things together under the headship of Jesus. Paul then prays for the Ephesians – for the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, for enlightenment to know hope, inheritance and power through Jesus.

In ch 2 Paul describes what the Ephesians once were and what they are now thanks to Jesus. Paul addresses the Jew/Gentile problem and how that too has been solved by Jesus in uniting them with each other and with God. Together they are a building where God lives by his Spirit and with Jesus as the cornerstone.

In ch 3 Paul explains his part in God's plan to convert Gentiles to faith in Christ. He prays for their strength and understanding of God's power and love, and concludes by giving glory to God.

In ch 4 Paul writes about the sort of people he wants them to be.



**Bible**

2. Read Eph 4:7-13.  
 (a) How does the “but” at the beginning of verse 7 connect with Eph 4:1-6?

(b) What roles did Jesus give some people?

(c) What were they to do?

(d) What were all Christians (i.e. the “saints” Eph 1:1) to do?

(e) How has this worked out in your church?

(f) What are our goals according to these verses?



(g) Compare this to when you started your church journey (question 1). Since then how have you been equipped, built up or changed?

3. Read Ps 68.  
 (a) What is it about?

(a) How does verse 18 relate to the rest of the psalm?

(c) What important change does Paul make to the Psalm as he reinterprets it in the light of Jesus' death and resurrection?

4. Read Eph 4:14-16.  
 (a) What pictures does Paul use to describe a maturing church?

- (b) (i) Using these pictures or some other picture (see your answer to Question 5 (a) in Study 7), what model best describes your church?

(ii) Why did you pick that picture/model?

5. What do verses 13–16 teach us about the characteristics of spiritual maturity and immaturity?

6. (a) What roles do truth (v15) and love (vv 15-16) have in building maturity?

(b) Why is it important to speak with both love and truth?

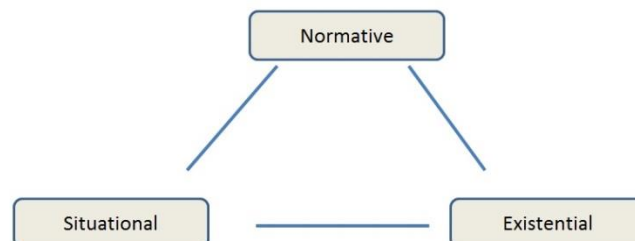
(c) Are you more prone to speaking truth without love, or love without truth?

(d) What are some ways you can speak with more love, or with more truth?

(e) According to verse 16, what will be the result of unity in the church?

7. (a) How do you grow/mature (look at the whole of Eph ch 4)?

(b) Here is a model for Christian growth:



**The normative perspective** means we look to an ideal standard or norm. This is what we use to determine right and wrong. The norm is transcendentally true and doesn't change. In this perspective we try to understand God's will and the Bible. Paul describes it as "growing in the knowledge of God" Col 1:10.

**The situational perspective** means we look at our circumstances or situation. We respond to the changing contexts that we find ourselves in. If you respond to different situations in different times then it involves change. The normative perspective never changes.

**The existential perspective** means we look at our own existence; our emotional, personal and individual feelings; our “gut instinct”; what is authentic to our inner selves.

Recognising that both the Spirit and other Christians enable our growth, how might we personally cultivate this in each perspective?

Normative

Situational

Existential

### To finish

8. It is one thing to not be “tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching” (Eph 4:14) and another thing to never allow any changes to what you have always believed. Both extremes are unwise. The church has changed its doctrines over the years.

(a) Can you remember any teachings of the church that have changed? Be specific.

(b) Are there any currently contentious teachings now that could be adopted in the future? Be specific.

(c) How do you decide which teachings to accept and which teachings to reject?



9. When it comes to religion, why is it *not* acceptable to say that there is only one way?

1. (a) From this list, what do you most often think about?

(b) What other things, other than those on the list, do you think a lot about?

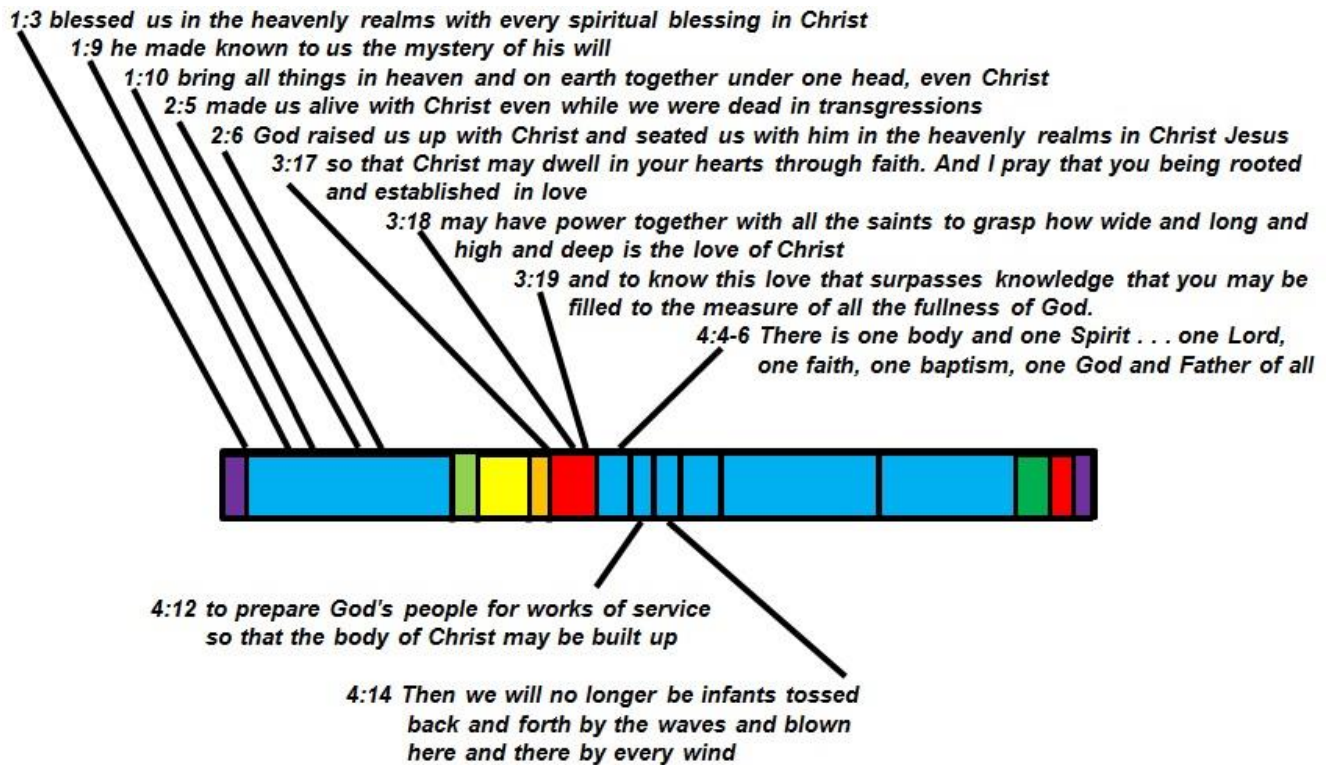
Ch 1 - Paul begins this letter with praise for God for the grace he has shown to his people i.e. God has given them every spiritual blessing, chosen/predestined them, made them holy and blameless, adopted them as sons, redeemed them, forgiven them, given them hope in Christ, saved them, marked them with the Holy Spirit and God promises to bring all things together under the headship of Jesus. Paul then prays for the Ephesians – for the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, for enlightenment to know hope, inheritance and power through Jesus.

In ch 3 Paul explains his part in God's plan to convert Gentiles to faith in Christ. He prays for their strength and understanding of God's power and love, and concludes by giving glory to God.

Diagram illustrating the structure of a book, divided into segments (represented by colored blocks) and associated themes or chapters:

- Intro:** 1:1-2
- Old way, new way:** 1:3-2:18
- Church:** 2:19-22
- The mystery:** 3:1-6
- Paul's mission:** 3:7-13
- Prayer:** 3:14-21
- Applications:** 4:1-6:9
- Other themes/chapters:**
  - blessings 1:3
  - chosen 1:4-5, 11-12
  - grace 1:6-8
  - mystery 1:9
  - all things together under Christ 1:10
  - Holy Spirit 1:13-14
  - prayer 1:15-23
  - unity 2:13-18, 4:1-6
  - gifts 4:7-12
  - maturity 4:13-16





## Bible

2. Read Eph 4:17-5:2.
  - (a) List the topics Paul suggests his readers think about.
  - (b) Verse 17 begins "So I tell you this". What is Paul's line of thought that leads him to this next section?
3. Looking ahead briefly, read Eph 4:17-5:21.
  - (a) Write down the broad ideas that Paul associates with the old self and the new self (4:24).

old self	new self

  - (b) What has the old/new self have to do with identity?
4. Re-read Eph 4:17-19.
 

What is the underlying reason for this way of life?
5. Re-read Eph 4:20-24.
 

The 'old nature' and the 'new nature' are literally the 'old man' and the 'new man' (in the original Greek). This goes back to chapter 2, in which Paul teaches that God has created a 'new man' in Christ Jesus by joining Jew and Gentile together as one, holy people of God. You should now live as a 'new man', he says, and not as you once were, as Gentiles.

From the Bible Brief on Ephesians from The Briefing magazine # 273 by Tony Payne.



(a) What is the underlying reason for this way of life?

(b) What 3 basic actions should this drive us to?

(c) What is an example of a bad attitude?



(d) How do you change your attitude?

### To finish

6. What do these 2 passages (Eph 4:17-19 and 4:20-24) tell us about the place of the mind in your life?

## Study 12, Eph 4:25-5:2, Relationships

### Getting started

1. Think of people you consider to be close friends. What is it that makes you consider them to be close friends rather than just acquaintances (pick your top 5 and also the least important aspect)?

Good sense of humour	Same political persuasion
Time spent together	Similar tastes in music, films, food etc.
Shared experiences	Fun to be with
Adventurous	Sympathetic
Unpredictability	Prayerful
Encouraging	Helpful
Same religion	Considerate
Can talk on a "deep and meaningful" level	Passionate
Physically attractive	Understanding

2. What is it about God that makes you consider Him to be in a relationship with you?
3. What is it about your relationship with God that is different to that of a close friendship with a human being?



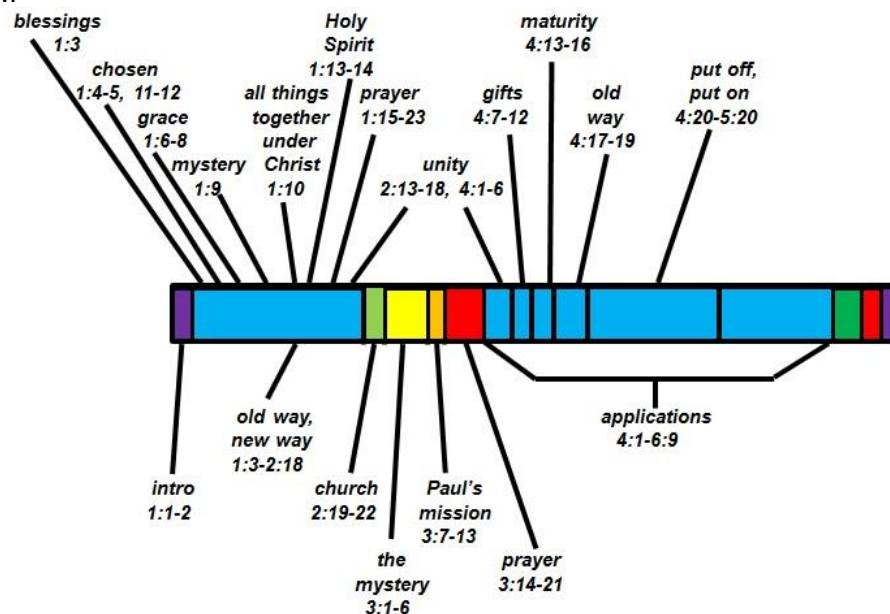
### The story so far . . .

Ch 1 - Paul begins this letter with praise for God for the grace he has shown to his people i.e. God has given them every spiritual blessing, chosen/predestined them, made them holy and blameless, adopted them as sons, redeemed them, forgiven them, given them hope in Christ, saved them, marked them with the Holy Spirit and God promises to bring all things together under the headship of Jesus. Paul then prays for the Ephesians – for the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, for enlightenment to know hope, inheritance and power through Jesus.

In ch 2 Paul describes what the Ephesians once were and what they are now thanks to Jesus. Paul addresses the Jew/Gentile problem and how that too has been solved by Jesus in uniting them with each other and with God. Together they are a building where God lives by his Spirit and with Jesus as the cornerstone.

In ch 3 Paul explains his part in God's plan to convert Gentiles to faith in Christ. He prays for their strength and understanding of God's power and love, and concludes by giving glory to God.

In ch 4 Paul writes about the sort of people he wants them to be – their qualities of character, their unity, their roles as a church, and their growth and maturity. He describes again who they once were (see ch 2) and who they are now.



## Bible

4. Read Eph 4:25-5:2.  
(a) How does Paul try to convince his readers to do things his way?

(b) The focus is on relationships with each other. Why do you think this is the focus?

5. (a) Verse 25 begins with “therefore”. What is the connection between what comes before “therefore” and what comes after?

Verse 25: This seems to be a reference back to Zechariah 8:18, which is a prophecy about how God will restore his people, and how the nations will come in and be part of it. In that day, God’s people will speak the truth to each other.

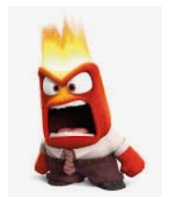
From the Bible Brief on Ephesians from The Briefing magazine # 273 by Tony Payne.

(b) Why speak truthfully?

(c) Does the requirement for truth and honesty, mean that we need to have full disclosure to each other about what is going on in our lives?

(d) In what ways could we not be truthful to one another?

6. (a) How can anger lead to sin (v 26)?



(b) At first glance v 26 and v 31 seem to be saying opposite things: to be angry (and not sin), and to get rid of all anger. What do you think the passage is saying?

- (c) Verse 26 is a quote from Psalm 4. Read Psalm 4 (it's quite short).  
(i) What gives rise to the anger in this psalm?

(ii) What is the right way to deal with this sort of anger?

(d) What is the difference between the two sorts of ‘anger’ that are mentioned?

(e) What is the right way to deal with the anger of verse 26?

(f) What is the danger if we don't deal with it rightly?

7. (a) How do you respond when you are treated unjustly?

(b) What practical steps can you take to maintain good relationships when this happens?

**Anger** (4:26) has been a confusing expression for the Christian. It is often seen and denounced as a sinful trait that should be erased from the believer. We attempt to rename it by more spiritual terms such as "righteous indignation" or "spiritual fervour." In reality, we cannot empty ourselves from anger any more than we can empty ourselves of any of the other emotions God has created in us by which we relate to the world.

Anger is not a sin, though it can be used in a sinful way. Paul notes this distinction when he quotes Psalm 4:4: In your anger do not sin (Eph. 4:26a). The prohibition is on the improper use of the emotion, and not the emotion itself. Anger is basically a defence mechanism built into us to protect us in life. Without it, we would be overtaken in no time. The trick to anger is to know when its expression is appropriate or sinful. One way to make the discernment is by distinguishing between its constructive and destructive effects.

A constructive effect of anger is when it corrects a wrong. People who are opposed to certain social issues will find that anger is a motivation to speak out, protest, and actively become involved in the process that will bring change for the better. A spouse or a parent unhappy with a behaviour may endure it until moved with dissatisfaction to protest and demand a change. Anger expressed out of genuine concern and in constructive ways that bring about positive change is appropriate. However, those expressions of anger that result in harm or destruction are not appropriate. If our anger is destructive, then we have sinned. If our correction of a child results in abuse, we have sinned. If a disagreement with our spouse or other person results in physical harm, we have sinned. . . . The Christian is one who recognizes the necessity of anger and exercises it appropriately as the tool it was created to be.

From Changed from the Inside Out (Eph 4) 4 Bible studies by Springwood Baptist Church, 2019,

8. How do we steal time from our 'employer' (v 28)?

9. How can we be more helpful in building others up (v 29)?

The word "unwholesome" in verse 29 is used of spoiled fish or rotten fruit, but it is also used to describe stones that crumble. The metaphorical meaning connotes "foul" or "bad." Although obscene speech may be in mind (see 5:4). Unwholesome means anything that does not build up others. Now the words slander, gossip, ridicule, insult, and mocking become relevant. The issue with Paul is not so much what is said as how it affects those who hear it. Words can be a positive force or a destructive blow. Jesus warns us of the misuse of words against one another. To call a person a fool results in the danger of hell's judgment (see Matthew 5:22). Jesus also warns that every careless word uttered in our lifetime will be brought before us so as to make us accountable (see Matthew 12:36).

From Changed from the Inside Out (Eph 4) 4 Bible studies by Springwood Baptist Church, 2019.

10. (a) What is the "day of redemption" (see Eph 1:11-14)?

(b) What does grieving the Holy Spirit mean (4:30)?

(c) What has grieving the Holy Spirit got to do with identity (old self/new self)?

11. What does being kind and compassionate mean (v 32)? Is it just 'niceness'?

12. I wonder how much we think about what we say before we say it. Most of vv 25-32 is about things we express with words. We can divide vv 25-32 (leaving out v 28) into these topics:

truth v25

anger vv 26 & 31

building others up v29

kindness, compassion and forgiveness v32

(a) Which of these do you think **most** about before saying something? Why?

(b) Which of these do you think **least** about before saying something? Why?

(c) How can we do better with the things we think least about before speaking?

13. Re-read Eph 5:1-2.

(a) What kind of love is this?

(b) How do men love each other?

(c) Is this harder? If so, why? If not, why not?

### To finish

14. (a) From personal experience have you enjoyed relationships with Christians any more than relationships with non-Christians? Why/why not?

(b) How do you deal with a relationship where you don't like the other person?

## Study 13, Eph 5:3-21, Walking

### Getting started

- Some have suggested that evangelical preaching today puts too much emphasis on sin.  
(a) Do you agree or disagree? Why/why not?



- What other area(s) could be given justifiable emphasis?

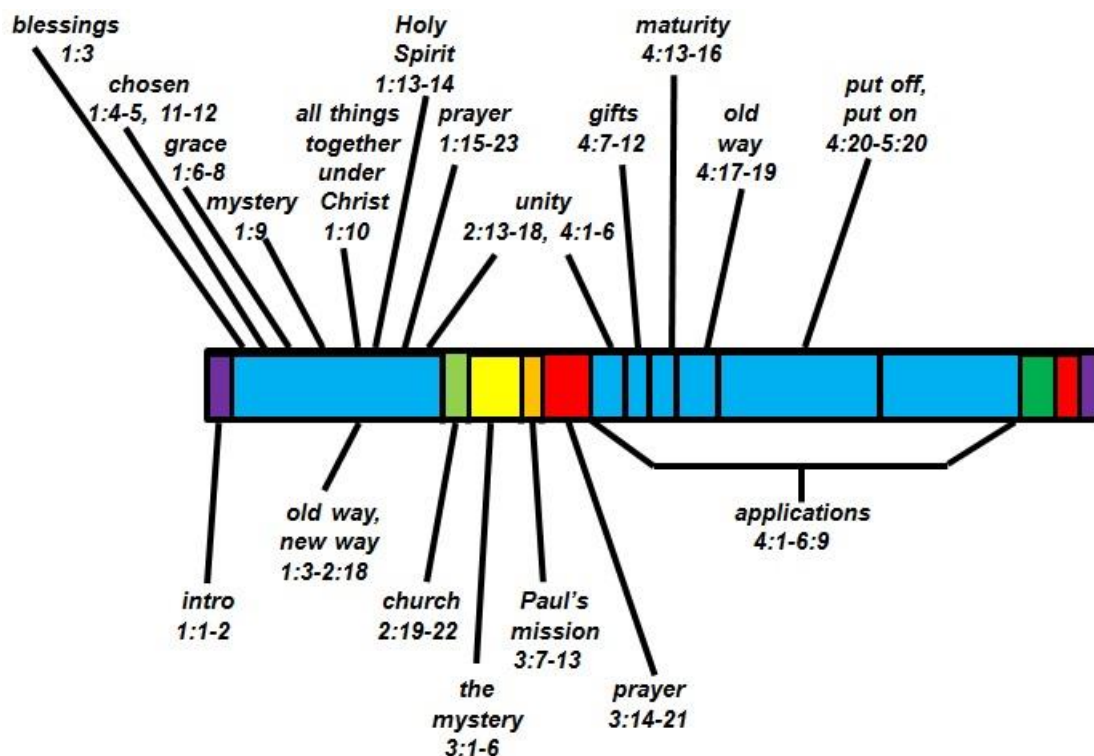
### The story so far . . .

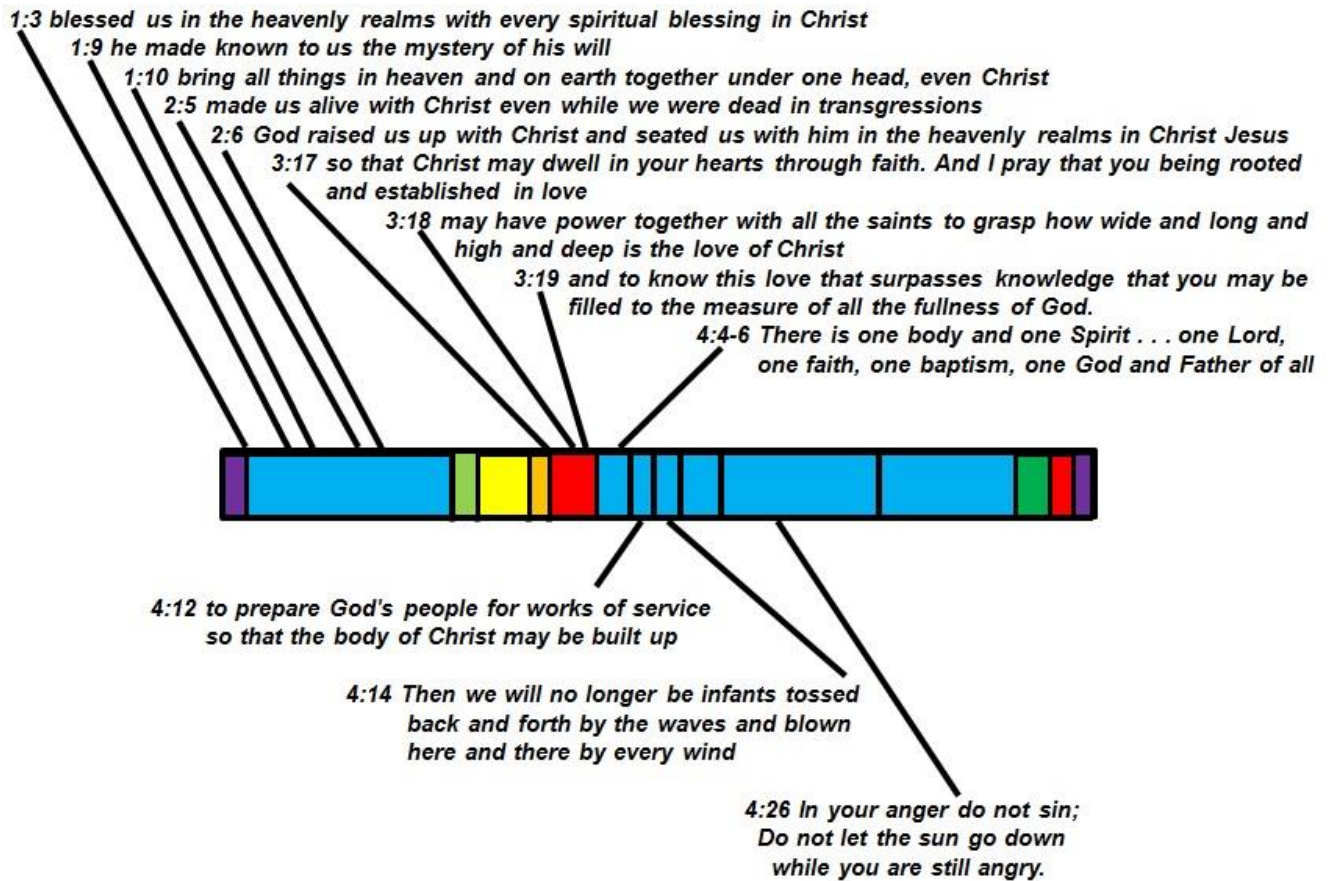
Ch 1 - Paul begins this letter with praise for God for the grace he has shown to his people i.e. God has given them every spiritual blessing, chosen/predestined them, made them holy and blameless, adopted them as sons, redeemed them, forgiven them, given them hope in Christ, saved them, marked them with the Holy Spirit and God promises to bring all things together under the headship of Jesus. Paul then prays for the Ephesians – for the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, for enlightenment to know hope, inheritance and power through Jesus.

In ch 2 Paul describes what the Ephesians once were and what they are now thanks to Jesus. Paul addresses the Jew/Gentile problem and how that too has been solved by Jesus in uniting them with each other and with God. Together they are a building where God lives by his Spirit and with Jesus as the cornerstone.

In ch 3 Paul explains his part in God's plan to convert Gentiles to faith in Christ. He prays for their strength and understanding of God's power and love, and concludes by giving glory to God.

In ch 4 Paul writes about the sort of people he wants them to be – their qualities of character, their unity, their roles as a church, and their growth and maturity. He describes again who they once were (see ch 2) and who they are now. They have a new identity in Christ with characteristics of truth, honesty, control, kindness and love.





## Bible

2. Read Eph 5:3-14.  
 (a) Is Paul describing his readers' past or present? Give a reason for your answer.

(b) How are they to live now (see also Eph 5:1-2)?

(c) How does this apply to us?

(d) An alternate way of interpreting this passage is that the Ephesians are being warned against the possibility of doing these sins and losing their salvation (v 6). Which interpretation do you prefer? Give reasons for your answer.

Verse 14 either summarises the teaching of an Old Testament verse like Isaiah 60:1 or is an extract from an early Easter or baptismal hymn.

From The New "Us" 6 studies on Ephesians chs 5-6 by Natalie Rosner, St Hilary's, Melbourne

vv 13-14: These verses seem to be saying that when we expose or 'reprove' the secret deeds of darkness, we not only show these things to be what they really are, we also open up the possibility of change for the person involved. J. B. Phillips translated it: "It is even possible (after all, it happened to you!) for light to turn the thing it shines upon into light also".

From the Bible Brief on Ephesians from The Briefing magazine # 273 by Tony Payne.



3. Read vv 7-8 again.  
Paul contrasts darkness and light. Notice he doesn't say "you are in the light" but "you *are* light".  
What does he mean (see also Matt 5:13-16)?



Verse 8: **Children of light**: a common epithet for those who are in right relationship with God (1 John 1:5–7; Ps. 27:1; Isa. 9:2; 42:6; 49:6; John 9:5; Acts 13:47; 26:18).  
From We are: the letter to the Ephesians Bray Park Community Church 2016.

4. Read Eph 5:15-17.  
Eph 5:15 ESV "Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise".  
(a) How do you walk wisely?



(b) How can we encourage each other to walk wisely?

(c) What do you think "making the most of every opportunity" (v 16) means?

(d) How do we know what the Lord's will is (v 17)?

5. (a) From Eph 5:18 and Eph 3:19 what does it mean to be filled with (or by) the Spirit?

(b) Why does Paul contrast it with being drunk?

6. Read Eph 5:19-21.  
(a) For us, what are the evidences of the ongoing filling by the Spirit?

(b) If you were compiling a list of what it means to be filled by the Spirit, what would you have written?



7. (a) Is verse 19 talking about church? Why/why not?

(b) What is music for?



(c) Is music important? Why/why not?

(d) What are the implications for our music?

### To finish

8. In this passage who is responsible for us
- (a) coming to know the truth?
  - (b) living out that truth in our lives?
9. What are the motivations for living the Christian life?

10. Tim Keller (a pastor and author from New York city) says are two types of people in a church. There are those who expect others to "feed" them and care for them - and if those things aren't happening, they are often bitter because they feel they should be the recipient of all of the church's concern. Usually, he says, these people are not satisfied no matter how many people reach out to them. Then there are those who instead of thinking about their needs being met, get up out of their seats, out of their comfort zone, and say, "What can I do for this family of mine?" And they serve without complaint or expectation. Usually, he finds, these people have ingrained in them a deep understanding of Jesus incredible love for them (Ephesians 3:14-20). As a natural overflow of the love they have received in Christ, they give themselves to others.

From Knowing, Ephesians Study 9 studies on Ephesians by Travis Mundy, Narrabeen Baptist 2016.

(a) Do you agree with Tim Keller (above)? Why/why not?

(b) Are there more than 2 types of people in a church?

If so, what other types of people go to church?

(c) Which type of person are you?

(d) How can you live each day in the love of Christ so that his love naturally pours out of you (see 4:20-24 again)?

## Study 14, Eph 5:18-6:9, Cultural context

### Getting started

1. What are some aspects of our parent's culture that are different to the culture we experience today? (Culture = the behaviours and beliefs characteristic of a particular social, ethnic or age group.)



In study 8 I asked the question “If someone were to ask you to read a certain section in the Bible and then explain it, what would you need to know about that section of the Bible in order to understand and explain it?” One thing you would need to know about is the cultural context of the passage. We will look at the cultural context of Paul's letter to the Ephesians.

### The story so far . . .

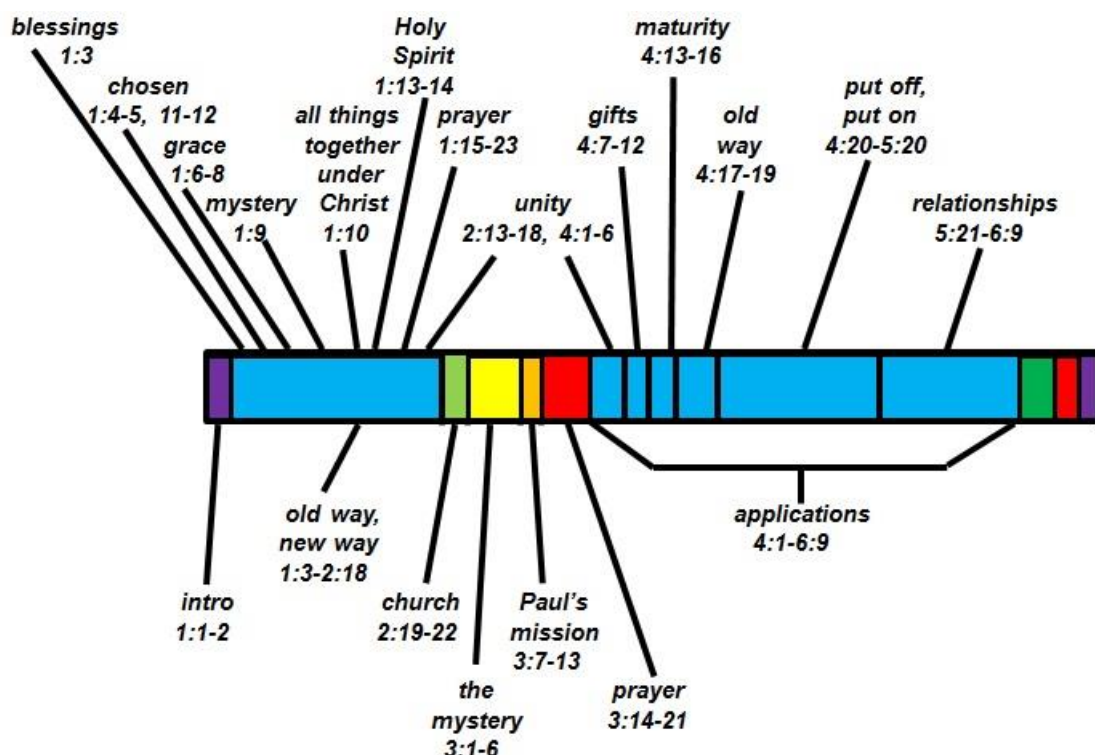
Ch 1 - Paul begins this letter with praise for God for the grace he has shown to his people i.e. God has given them every spiritual blessing, chosen/predestined them, made them holy and blameless, adopted them as sons, redeemed them, forgiven them, given them hope in Christ, saved them, marked them with the Holy Spirit and God promises to bring all things together under the headship of Jesus. Paul then prays for the Ephesians – for the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, for enlightenment to know hope, inheritance and power through Jesus.

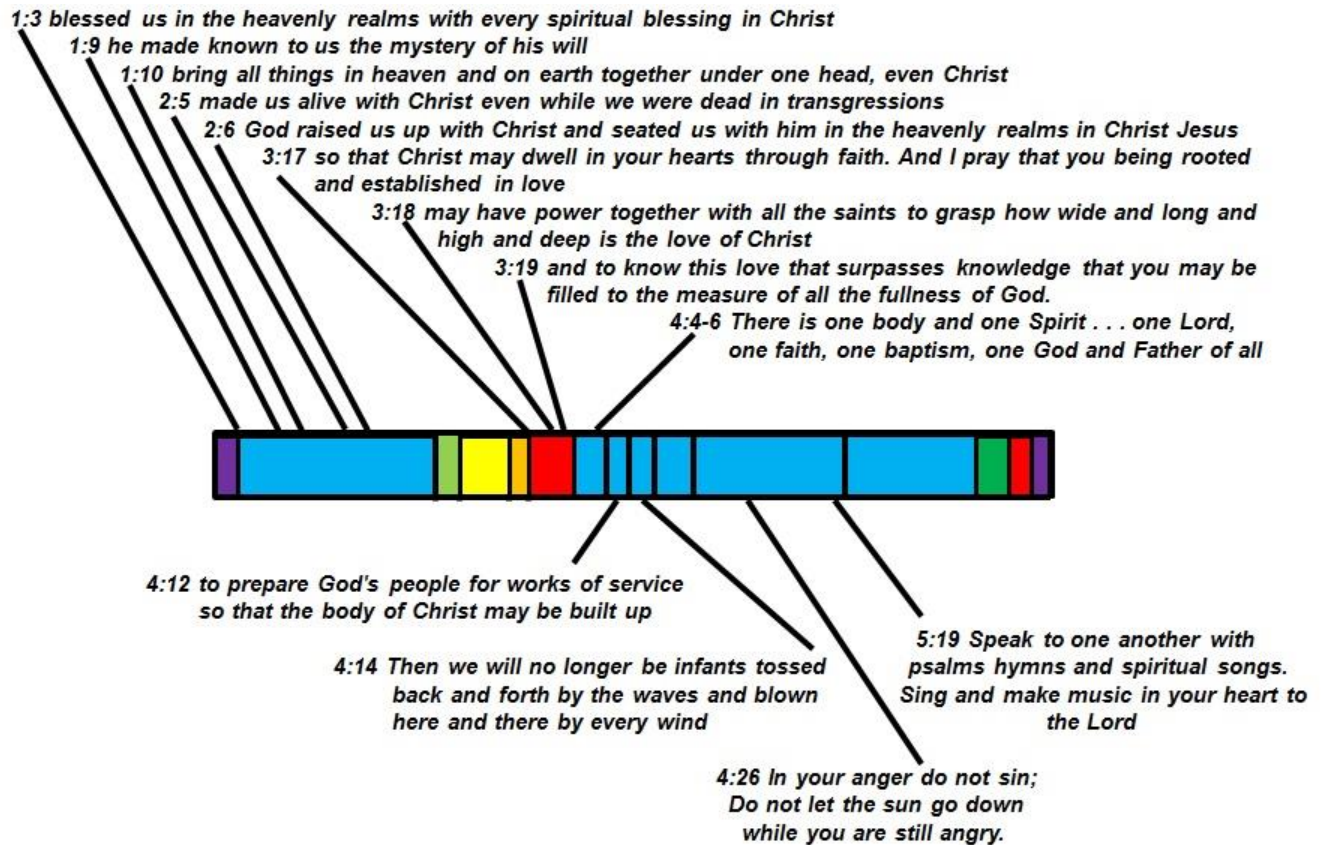
In ch 2 Paul describes what the Ephesians once were and what they are now thanks to Jesus. Paul addresses the Jew/Gentile problem and how that too has been solved by Jesus in uniting them with each other and with God. Together they are a building where God lives by his Spirit and with Jesus as the cornerstone.

In ch 3 Paul explains his part in God's plan to convert Gentiles to faith in Christ. He prays for their strength and understanding of God's power and love, and concludes by giving glory to God.

In ch 4 Paul writes about the sort of people he wants them to be – their qualities of character, their unity, their roles as a church, and their growth and maturity. He describes again what they once were (see ch 2) and who they are now. They have a new identity in Christ with characteristics of truth, honesty, control, kindness and love.

In ch 5 Paul uses the metaphor of darkness and light to describe what they once were and what they are now. He shows how this applies in their relationships with each other.





## Bible

2. Before we look at tonight's passage look back over the previous material in Ephesians to see if Paul gives any indications of the culture of the people he is writing to. In particular look at ch 2, the second half of ch 4 and the first half of ch 5.

3. Read Eph 5:18-22.

Below are 3 different translations of Eph 5:18-22.

**NIV** Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, <sup>19</sup> speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, <sup>20</sup> always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>21</sup> Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. <sup>22</sup> Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord.

**Holman** And don't get drunk with wine, which leads to reckless actions, but be filled by the Spirit: <sup>19</sup> speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making music from your heart to the Lord, <sup>20</sup> giving thanks always for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>21</sup> submitting to one another in the fear of Christ. <sup>22</sup> Wives, submit<sup>[1]</sup> to your own husbands as to the Lord,

**ESV** And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, <sup>19</sup> addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, <sup>20</sup> giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>21</sup> submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. <sup>22</sup> Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.

The **NIV** sounds like different topics being addressed i.e.

1. Speak to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit because you are filled with the Spirit. (vv 18-19)
2. Sing and make music . . . (vv 19-20)
3. Submit to one another . . . (v 21)
4. Wives, submit to your husbands (v 22).

**Holman** and the **ESV** sound like the result of being filled with the Spirit (v 18) is addressing . . . (v 19), singing . . . (v 19), giving thanks . . . (v 20) and submitting . . . (v 21-22).

Holman has a footnote for "submit" in v 22 that says other manuscripts omit "submit". Verses 21-22 then become "submitting to one another in the fear of Christ,<sup>22</sup> wives as to your own husbands."

So, submission is not a new topic that Paul suddenly addresses, rather it is one of the aspects of what it means to be filled with the Spirit.

4. Read Eph 5:22-6:9.  
Are there any cultural indications in this passage? Be specific.

The mention of slaves suggests that some of Paul's readers (the slave owners) were fairly well off. Gordon D. Fee gives the following comments on the culture of the time.

Although the early believers lived in other kinds of settings—tenements; shopkeepers, who lived above their shops; etc.—this passage assumes a larger household which included wives, children, and slaves.

By law, the man was the master of his household. Paul writes in a context where the patriarchy was absolute, and sustained by law. Usually, but not always, he required the household to serve his gods. Unlike our understanding of home, such a household was not a place of consumption, but of production; not a private refuge, but often semi-public. His was the only public role, and part of the house often served as a place to do business and was basically open to others. The women, especially daughters, lived in the rear and were not permitted to stray into the public domain of the house for fear of becoming abused or a seductress.

The average age of the man when he married was 30, of the woman, less than 18. The reason for marriage was not "love" in our usual sense, but to bear legitimate children, to keep the family line going; indeed, failure to bear children, especially sons, was often cause for divorce. Moreover, almost all men were promiscuous. As Demosthenes says "Mistresses we keep for the sake of pleasure, concubines for the daily care of the body, but wives to bear us legitimate children." Wives, therefore, were often promiscuous as well—although they tried to be more discreet, since their infidelity was considered to be a matter of shame.

The idea that men and women might be equal partners in marriage simply did not exist, evidence for which can be seen in meals, which in all cultures serve as the great equalizer. In the Greek world, women scarcely ever joined their husbands and his friends at meals; and if they did, they did not recline at table (only the courtesans did that), but sat on benches at the end. And they were expected to leave after eating, when the conversation took a more public turn.

Indeed, perhaps the most radical thing was that all people who participated in God's new creation also shared a common meal together and thus celebrated their Lord's death until he was to come again—which, as 1 Corinthians 11 makes clear, created considerable tension for the traditional household.

From ch 4 *Gender Issues: Reflections on the Perspective of the Apostle Paul* by Gordon D. Fee in *Christian Perspectives on Gender, Sexuality, and Community* ed. By Maxine Hancock.

5. Read Eph 5:22-33.  
(a) What is Paul suggesting that is different from the cultural norm?

(b) What is Paul suggesting that is similar to the cultural norm?

Gordon D. Fee makes these comments from the same book:

In the relationships in Eph 5 & 6 three things need to be noted.

First, in the ordinary household the husband, father, and master are all the same person, while the wife, children, and slaves were different persons.

Second, when Paul tells the wives to submit, and children and slaves to obey, he is not offering some new idea, or countering insubordination, he is merely speaking within the culture. But those who are filled with

the Spirit and worship Christ as Lord, do so as those serving their true Lord, not an earthly one.

Third—and here is the truly radical moment—both the structure of the passage and the word count (four words to the husband for every one word to the wife) indicate that the emphasis lies with the husband/master/father. And the only thing Paul says to him is repeated three times: "Love your wife." Love (agape) is what rules, and agape, it must be noted emphatically, does not refer either to romance or sex. Rather, it refers to his giving his life in loving service to her for her sake.

One should note especially the regular emphasis on loving his **own** wife. V25 has love your wives; v28 has love your **own wives**; v33 has love your **own wives**. That eliminates the courtesans. His wife is the one who deserves all his love and commitment of loving service. [There is a problem here with some translations, like the NIV, not translating the word "own" as in "own wife". RV and NASB have "own wife".]

It is assumed in this text, of course, that the husband will continue to provide leadership in the household. But such leadership will be radically transformed into caring for the people, not having them around to serve his own self-interests. And that is why Paul goes on to speak of the slaves and the children. In each case, the husband, the master, and the father is the person Paul is after. If he can radicalize the home in light of the cross, the life of the child, of the slave, and of the woman is set into new perspective in the new creation.

6. Taken together, i.e. Paul's instructions to both husbands and wives, what do you see happening in the relationship between a husband and a wife?

7. The verb ["submit" v 21] here and in the following verses, . . . , literally means "subordinate," in the sense either of "arranging under" or of being "sub-ordinated to"; but it can also mean being "stationed under the shelter" of something or someone, like a horse tethered beneath an awning, or simply being "assigned" to someone. In the case of wives and husbands, the issue here does not seem to be merely one of domestic authority (which in the first century would have been regarded as a matter of positively banal obviousness), but also one of reciprocal service and protection. Hence, the verb has a very different connotation than does, say, . . . , which is used in the next chapter of the obedience of children to parents or of slaves to masters. In the world of late antiquity a household was under the authority of the paterfamilias; but it is also the case that, in an unpoliced society, households were often small fortresses with bolted outer gates and inner doors, wives were often much younger than their husbands, and male labor was the foundation of most of the economy. So, here, a husband's reciprocal responsibility to his wife — who is under the shelter of his household — is to lay down his life for her, on the model of Christ's self-sacrificial headship.

From The New Testament a translation by David Bentley Hart, footnotes pp 386-387.

(a) From Eph 5:22 what does it mean to submit to the Lord?

The church's submission to Christ = "Looking to its head for his beneficial rule, living by his norms, experiencing his presence and his love, receiving from him gifts that will enable growth to maturity and responding to him in gratitude and awe."

From Lincoln A.T page 372, as quoted by Peter O'Brien (Pillar NT commentary on Ephesians) p 417.

(b) Therefore, what does it mean for wives to submit to their husbands?

(c) In what ways can this verse (5:22) be misunderstood and misapplied?

(d) How can we stop that happening?

8. (a) Is it significant that husbands are instructed to love their wives, rather than to lead them? Give reasons for your answer.

(b) What type of love is the husband to exhibit towards his wife (vv 25, 28)?

(c) What might this mean practically?

9. How do other passages in the Bible tell us how husbands and wives should relate to each other (see Gen 1:26-28, 2:18-25, Gal 3:26-29, Col 3:18-19, 1 Pet 3:1-7)?

### **To finish**

10. Do Paul's instructions in Eph 5:22-6:9 apply to us in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? Give reasons for your answer.

Gordon D. Fee again:

So where does that put us hermeneutically? I would argue that the structures are ultimately quite immaterial for believers; that is, first-century households can no more serve as models for Christian homes in the twenty-first century, than the Roman Empire with its self-serving, destructive economic policies and its insistence on emperor worship, should serve for contemporary political structures. All structures, ours as well as theirs, are predicated altogether on cultural givens. There simply is no biblical structure for the household.

## Study 15, Eph 6:1-9, Parents, Children, Masters & Slaves

### Getting started

1. In remembering your parents what event or aspect of their lives made the biggest impression on you?



### The story so far . . .

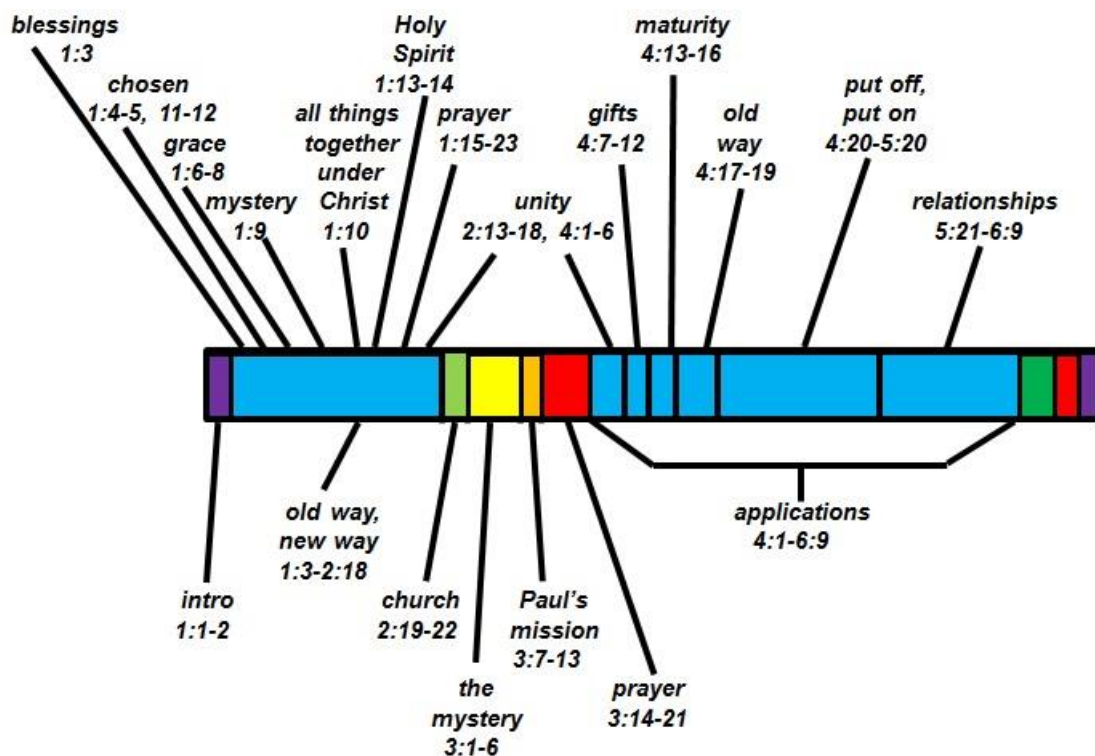
Ch 1 - Paul begins this letter with praise for God for the grace he has shown to his people i.e. God has given them every spiritual blessing, chosen/predestined them, made them holy and blameless, adopted them as sons, redeemed them, forgiven them, given them hope in Christ, saved them, marked them with the Holy Spirit and God promises to bring all things together under the headship of Jesus. Paul then prays for the Ephesians – for the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, for enlightenment to know hope, inheritance and power through Jesus.

In ch 2 Paul describes what the Ephesians once were and what they are now thanks to Jesus. Paul addresses the Jew/Gentile problem and how that too has been solved by Jesus in uniting them with each other and with God. Together they are a building where God lives by his Spirit and with Jesus as the cornerstone.

In ch 3 Paul explains his part in God's plan to convert Gentiles to faith in Christ. He prays for their strength and understanding of God's power and love, and concludes by giving glory to God.

In ch 4 Paul writes about the sort of people he wants them to be – their qualities of character, their unity, their roles as a church, and their growth and maturity. He describes again what they once were (see ch 2) and who they are now. They have a new identity in Christ with characteristics of truth, honesty, control, kindness and love.

In ch 5 Paul uses the metaphor of darkness and light to describe what they once were and what they are now. He shows how this applies in their relationships with each other.









(v) What are the different parts of the package (compare Prov 22:15; 29:15)?

4. Read Eph 6:5-9 again.

There are two common mistakes made in reading the passage on slaves and masters:

- one is to equate the slave/master relationship directly with the employee/employer relationship; it was not the same. The slave was a bonded servant, often as a result of bankruptcy. The level of obedience and authority involved went beyond the normal work contract of most 21st century employees.
- the second misunderstanding is to view first century slavery as being the same as, say, the forced slavery of Negroes in 19<sup>th</sup> century America. The system of slavery in the ancient world was quite different from that. It was by no means always the oppressive denial of human rights that we associate with the word 'slavery'. In many respects, it was how they dealt with bankruptcy.

From the Bible Brief on Ephesians from The Briefing magazine # 273 by Tony Payne.

(a) Under what circumstances would a slave be tempted to work poorly or disobediently?

(b) What might make a master think that he could get away with treating slaves badly?

(c) How does recognizing that Christ is the true and ever-present Master change the attitude of both slave and master?

**To finish**

5. We have many obligations and responsibilities in life, including our daily work. How does the teaching of these verses challenge your attitudes

(i) to those whom you owe an obligation?

(ii) to those you have some authority over?

(iii) to people with authority at church?

Listen to these sound bites from sermons by John Dickson from St Andrews, Roseville: 1/7/2012  
MinistersAuthorityHeb13JohnDickson01072012.mp3  
and May 2013  
MinistersAuthority02babyBathwaterDicksonActs2\_36to47.mp3

## Study 13, Eph 6:10-24, Spiritual warfare

### Getting started

1. (a) Do you view your daily life as a cosmic spiritual conflict? Why/why not?



- (b) What is your reaction to this perspective – ridiculous, exaggerated, scary, trusting or what?

### The story so far . . .

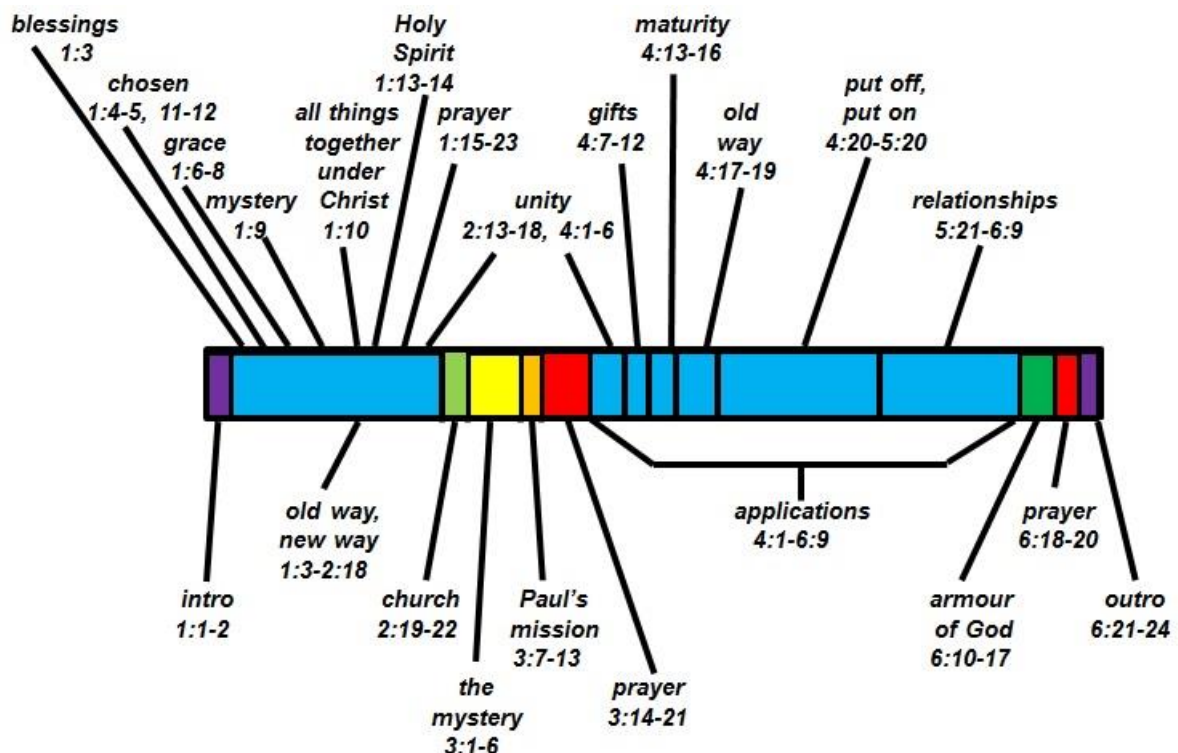
Ch 1 - Paul begins this letter with praise for God for the grace he has shown to his people i.e. God has given them every spiritual blessing, chosen/predestined them, made them holy and blameless, adopted them as sons, redeemed them, forgiven them, given them hope in Christ, saved them, marked them with the Holy Spirit and God promises to bring all things together under the headship of Jesus. Paul then prays for the Ephesians – for the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, for enlightenment to know hope, inheritance and power through Jesus.

In ch 2 Paul describes what the Ephesians once were and what they are now thanks to Jesus. Paul addresses the Jew/Gentile problem and how that too has been solved by Jesus in uniting them with each other and with God. Together they are a building where God lives by his Spirit and with Jesus as the cornerstone.

In ch 3 Paul explains his part in God's plan to convert Gentiles to faith in Christ. He prays for their strength and understanding of God's power and love, and concludes by giving glory to God.

In ch 4 Paul writes about the sort of people he wants them to be – their qualities of character, their unity, their roles as a church, and their growth and maturity. He describes again what they once were (see ch 2) and who they are now. They have a new identity in Christ with characteristics of truth, honesty, control, kindness and love.

In chs 5 and 6 Paul uses the metaphor of darkness and light to describe what they once were and what they are now. He shows how this applies in their relationships with each other and encourages them to stand firm in their faith.



## Bible

2. Read Eph 6:10-17.

(a) (i) What are the bits that make up the armour of God?



(ii) In which of these areas are you vulnerable?

(iii) How can you strengthen your position?

**Belt of truth:** this refers to both knowing and appropriating the truth of one's new identity in Christ and developing the practice of speaking and living the truth

**Breastplate of righteousness:** the imputation of Christ's righteousness, which is given to us freely; but also the cultivation of righteous living

**Shoes for your feet:** readiness to share the gospel; the message of peace with God

**Shield of faith:** trust in God's power and his assurances about our new identity in Christ

**Helmet of salvation:** Christ reigns over all spiritual forces, and as people who have been made alive with Him, we, too, participate in his power and authority over that realm

**Sword of the Spirit:** the Scriptures; which are a means of defence against every form of demonic attack.

From We are: the letter to the Ephesians Bray Park Community Church 2016.

(b) Can you sum up the armour of God in a single phrase?

(c) (i) How do we put on the armour of God?

(ii) How does the church make a difference (if any) to your putting on the armour of God?

(iii) Paul uses the word "pale" (translated in the NIV as 'struggle' in v 22). "Pale", a type of wrestling, was the most popular organised sport in ancient Greece. Naked competitors would patiently try to find a weakness in each other's defences before seeking to throw their opponent to the ground.

From Pictures of Us Ephesians 4 studies on Ephesians by Brett Middleton, St Luke's Anglican Church, Miranda 2018

Why do you think Paul would use this particular competition to describe the church's spiritual battle?

3. Read Isaiah ch 59.

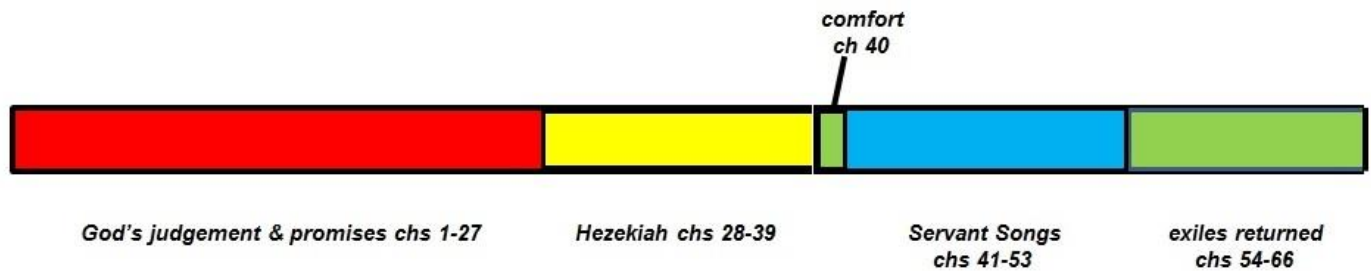
Context: In the first 39 chapters Isaiah deals mostly with God's judgement and the Assyrian threat. Babylon becomes the next aggressor and God's people are taken into exile. In the following chapters Isaiah's vision leaves current affairs behind and looks further into the future.

A new phase in God's dealing with his people begins to unfold in chapter 40 – a time of comfort and forgiveness.

Chapters 41 and 42 - God is ruler of the nations. He will bring justice to the nations through his Servant.

Chapters 43 to 55 – Isaiah explains how God fulfils his promises through his Servant.

Chapters 56 to 59 – Although God will bring his people back from their punishment in exile, they will continue to sin. God will deal with their sins and redeem those who repent.



Who are (a) "they" vv 2-8?

(b) "we" vv 9-15?

(c) What is God going to do about "their" sins and "our" sins (vv 15b-21)?

(d) (i) What items of armour are mentioned in Is 59:15b-21?

(ii) Who is going to put on this armour?

(iii) How does Is 59 help us understand putting on armour in Eph 6:10-17?

4. Read again Eph 6:10-17.

(a) What are the forces against us?

(b) Why is prayer so important in this battle?

(c) Once we put this armour on, what do we do next (see also James 4:7)?

We don't have to do much because; by Jesus' life, death and resurrection; he has already defeated sin, death and the devil (read Rom 6:3-4). If the devil could bring a charge against us or if he could condemn us then that would be a problem for us but he can't because of Jesus (read Rom 8:33-39) and we are absolutely secure from the devil (read John 10:27-28).

**At one extreme, some people don't take Satan seriously enough; at the other, many Christians take him far too seriously.** Many churches become too preoccupied with Satan and mistakenly believe that he has more power than he does. For the Christian, Satan has been stripped of his power. All we have to do against the devil is to stand! Don't go looking for him. Don't go asking for a fight. Don't seek out exorcism opportunities. Simply be strong in the Lord, have confidence in what God has done for us and stand firm. As James says, resist the devil and he will flee (Jas 4:7). In other words, forget the movies about objects being thrown about the room and heads spinning round. The only power the devil has is the power we give him when we believe his lies. Just resist him. Be strong and you will triumph. That's because God's children are protected by the armour of God.

From the Matthias Media Interactive Bible Study booklet Walk this Way by Bryson Smith p 58.

Now, neither Jesus nor Paul would deny that God, the Father of Jesus Christ, was **truly in charge** of this world. There is no 'dualism' in the Bible, with God and the devil being equal and opposite forces arrayed against each other, as suggested by the (rather exciting!) Christian novels of Frank Perretti. God never loses control. This is always his world. But it is a fallen world and God has answered our sin with his judgement. And part of this judgement is to deliver the world over to Satan. . . . God is always in ultimate control and human beings are always firmly under his loving care, but he has permitted the devil an enormous influence. In a real sense, the world has been given (that is, by God) to the devil. He is the one who has led the whole world astray, and so the whole world is under his control (Rev 12:9, 1 John 5:19). He is the prince of this world, and we have all fallen into his slavery.

From Living with the Underworld by Peter Bolt p 71.

5. Read Eph 6:17-18, 5:18, 3:17-19.  
What does it mean to pray "in the Spirit"?

6. Why does Paul want his readers to be alert (Eph 6:18)?



7. Read Eph 6:19-24.  
(a) What does Paul want the Ephesians to pray for him?

(b) What is the mystery in v 19 (see Eph 3:6)?

(c) (i) What is the emphasis of v 24?

(ii) Why does Ephesians end on that note?

**To finish**

8. (a) How would you reply to someone who excused themselves for a particular sin by saying “the devil made me do it”?



- (b) Can the devil cause us to sin? Give reasons for your answer.

- (c) What can the devil do?

Jesus said he was a liar and a murderer from the beginning (John 8:44). That about sums up what he does. He lies to deceive, and once he has deceived, he kills. Most of us don't really want to be vampires or Satan-worshippers; most of us would prefer to be just ordinary human beings. What has this master of the underworld got to do with us? The answer is that we, too, are deceived in order to be killed.

From Living with the Underworld by Peter Bolt p 67.