



CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT THE RELIGION

BIBLE SURVEY

THE UN-DEVOTIONAL

**GALATIAN &
EPHESIANS**

Week 3

Glory in the Cross of Christ

DAY 15

Galatians 6:11-18

What is your favorite way to get in touch with friends? (a) send a homing pigeon, (b) fire off an email, (c) make a phone call, (d) write a letter, (e) wait until you see them again.

1. Why does Paul add his own handwriting to the work of his scribe (v. 11)? Is it to assure his readers that he had authored the letter? Would they know his handwriting?
2. In Paul's summary at the end of this letter, what did he say the false teachers were compelling the gentile Christians to do (vs. 12-13)?
3. What is the rule by which Paul says all Christians must walk (vs. 14-16)?
4. Whom were the false teachers most concerned about pleasing (vs. 12-15)? And Paul (vs. 14-17)?
5. Israel of old was a physical nation that descended from Abraham through Jacob. Who is the new Israel of God (v. 16)?
6. How does Paul end his message? With Encouragement? Hope? (v. 18)?

1. Can you openly discuss your commitment to the cross of Christ?
2. Do you feel that you are a new creation in Christ (v. 15)? Do mercy and peace rule your life?
3. Do your words and actions display the grace that Christ has given you?

*As many authors did in the first century, Paul used a **scribe** to put his dictated words onto papyrus. Scribes were skilled in writing the text legibly and accurately. As Paul did in this epistle, authors might personally pen a conclusion to their letters.*

OPENING

up to the Word

DIGGING

into the Word

LIVING

out the Word

WINDOW

on the Word

Introduction to Ephesians

Authorship: The letter says that it was written by Paul (1:1; 3:1). Tradition from the early church has supported that claim, though modern scholarship is divided on the subject of authorship.

Date: Paul lived in Ephesus for over two years, about A.D. 53-56. During that period he established the church, which consisted mostly of gentile Christians. Paul wrote this letter about A.D. 60 from prison, probably in Rome, to encourage members, lest his imprisonment cause doubt about the power of God and the truth of the gospel. He lived with his eyes riveted on the freedom of eternal life.

Setting and purpose: By A.D. 60, 30 years after the death of Christ, the church had changed from the fledgling organization of 120 individuals or households to many thousands of believers. The epistle to the local church at Ephesus reflects Paul's desire for unity among the saints. Paul addressed the relationship of Christ to the universal body of Christ, the church, by way of three analogies: a healthy physical body, a well-structured building and a loving marriage.

The letter deals initially with the Godhead—God the Father, Christ the Son, the Holy Spirit—and the nature of the body of Christ—the church (ch. 1). The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ were effective from before the foundation of the world, so that humanity might have its sin forgiven and receive eternal life. Enlightenment by the Spirit demonstrates the power of God working in Christ-followers, who individually and collectively comprise “the church.”

Before becoming Christians, we walked according to sinful human nature and the influence of Satan. But God, in his great love, extended his mercy to save us by grace through faith in Christ. Old-covenant distinctions between Jews and gentiles, as well as arbitrary divisions between ethnic groups, must cease (ch 2-3).

In chapters 4-6, Paul urges Christians to respond to God's grace with unity, holy living and the right use of spiritual gifts. Paul concludes his message with a “call to arms” (6:10-24) for Christian “soldiers.” Christians are called to put on the armor of God.

Background: Ephesus was the chief harbor city of Asia Minor. As the gateway into Asia from Rome, and on the network of roads to Syria, Ephesus provided a central meeting place. Mail came into Ephesus and then was distributed to outlying areas. This supports the theory that Ephesians may have been a “circular” epistle, designed for all the churches in the area. The earliest manuscripts do not name the Ephesian church as the only recipient of the epistle.

Ephesus was an ethnically and religiously diverse city of about 200,000. The temple to the goddess Artemis (called Diana in Latin) overshadowed the city and served as the focus for worship. In addition to the predominantly Greek and Asian religions, Egyptians worshiped Isis and Romans worshiped their gods and emperors.

A strong Jewish influence was also present in the city. Paul preached in an Ephesian synagogue at the end of his second missionary journey (Ac 18:19-20). Ephesus was Paul’s home for over two years on his third missionary journey.

Outline:

I. THE WORK OF FATHER, SON AND HOLY SPIRIT, 1

- A. Blessings of Adoption, 1:1-6
- B. Why You Need Redemption, 1:7-12
- C. Earnest Money, 1:13-23

II. CHRISTIAN MINISTRY: SALVATION BY GRACE, THROUGH FAITH, 2-3

- A. Amazing Grace, 2:1-10
- B. Reconciled in Christ, 2:11-22
- C. A Ministry of the Mystery, 3:1-13
- D. All in the Family, 3:14-21

III. CHRISTIAN CONDUCT AS A WAY OF LIFE, 4-6

- A. Live in Love, 4:1-6
- B. Live According to God’s Gifts, 4:7-16
- C. Live as a New Creation, 4:17-24
- D. Live as God’s Children, 4:25-5:5
- E. Live in the Light, 5:6-21
- F. Live in Marital Love, 5:22-33
- G. Live in Family Peace, 6:1-9
- H. Live to Win the Battle, 6:10-24



Ruins of the Roman Library at Ephesus, the most important city in the Roman province of Asia. Ephesus was the site of the Temple of Artemis, the largest building in the Greek world. In New Testament times, Ephesus became a base for the evangelization of Asia Minor.

Blessings of Adoption

DAY 16

Ephesians 1:1-6

A well-known hymn goes: “Count your many blessings, name them one by one; Count your many blessings, see what God has done.” What blessings can you name?

1. How does Paul’s introduction differ in tone from his greeting to the Galatians? How is it similar to his greetings in Romans, Corinthians, Philippians and Colossians?
 2. In the Greek original, one long sentence spans verses 3 through 14, telling us about the triune Godhead. How would you divide this complex sentence into three parts that tell us about God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit?
 3. Since everything comes from God, what response do you believe the Father expects from his children (vs. 4-6)?
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1. Do you allow your moods to affect your relationship with your friends and family? How about those with whom you have disagreements?
 2. As in Galatians, Paul again speaks of “adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ” (v. 5). What does this mean, in terms of your day-to-day relationship with God?
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God chose us to be adopted by his gift of grace. Adoption was common in the Roman world, for property could be passed on only to children—either natural or adopted. Paul uses the term to show that human beings, who are by nature estranged from God, can become his sons and daughters by spiritual rebirth.

OPENING
up to the Word

DIGGING
into the Word

LIVING
out the Word

WINDOW
on the Word

Why You Need Redemption

Ephesians 1:7-12

OPENING
up to the Word

How do you show your joy? (a) smiles, (b) sharing, (c) gratitude (d) humor.

DIGGING
into the Word

1. How did the Ephesians view redemption, in light of their previous bondage to sin (v. 7)?
2. Why do you think it was important for Paul to emphasize the forgiveness of sin (v. 7)? How does forgiveness relate to grace and the knowledge of God's wisdom and his will (vs. 8-9)?
3. What is "the mystery of his will" (v. 9)? Does it include knowledge about God, the plan of salvation, the kingdom of God, the gospel? Does the mystery center in Christ (Co 2:2; 1Co 2:7-8)?
4. Have we already obtained an inheritance (v. 14)? To what degree? For what purpose (v. 12)?

LIVING
out the Word

1. Have you been redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus? How are your sins forgiven?
2. How have you added to the "pleasure" of Jesus Christ (v. 5)? Have you responded to his love and grace by loving others?
3. Have you done anything to promote the reconciliation and unity of all races in Jesus?
4. Today, in what way can you do everything to "the praise of his glory" (v. 12)?

WINDOW
on the Word

*The theme of **redemption** flows through the Bible. The fall of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden defined the problem for all humanity: the consequence of sin is death. This calamity was reversible only by redemption—that is, the payment someone else gave to rescue people who were unable to pay their own debts. Daily sacrifices in the Tabernacle and the Temple foreshadowed the future sacrifice of Jesus. The redemption of the nation of Israel from Egyptian slavery was a physical example of the redemption of humanity from slavery to sin. Only Jesus, who was both human and divine, was a sufficient sacrifice to redeem sinful humanity and give believers salvation.*

Earnest Money

DAY 18

Ephesians 1:13-23

Have you ever tried to purchase a house? What amount of “earnest money” was required by the real estate agent and escrow officer for you to demonstrate the sincerity of your offer? Did you complete the purchase?

1. How did Christ unify Jews (vs. 10-12) and gentiles (vs. 13-14, see Col 1:16-23)?
2. How were the gentiles sealed (vs. 13-14)? Does the “promise” refer to the statement of God to Abraham that he would send a seed to bless all humanity (see Gal 3:16-18)?
3. How is the Holy Spirit a guarantee (vs. 13-14)?
4. Examine Paul’s intercessory prayer (vs. 15-23). Why does the faith and love of believers need the addition of the spirit of wisdom and revelation?
5. How is the power of God emphasized (vs. 19-23)? How is the power of Jesus emphasized? Does it call for submission?

1. Write a brief statement of your trust in Jesus. Is it similar to Paul’s testimony of the Ephesians’ trust?
2. How do you demonstrate your faith in the Lord Jesus? How about your love for all the saints?
3. Pray for a deeper understanding of Jesus Christ and for a closer relationship with him.
4. How do you communicate your needs to the head of the body, Jesus Christ?

*Paul used the analogy of the **human body** to explain the relationship of Christians to the Lord Jesus Christ. Although there are many individual Christ-followers, small groups, congregations and denominations, each with various strengths, our collective mission should be to further the gospel of Jesus (Mt 28:19, 20).*

OPENING

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*“But because of his
great love for us, God,
who is rich in mercy,
made us alive with
Christ even when we
were dead in
transgressions....”*

Ephesians 2:4-5

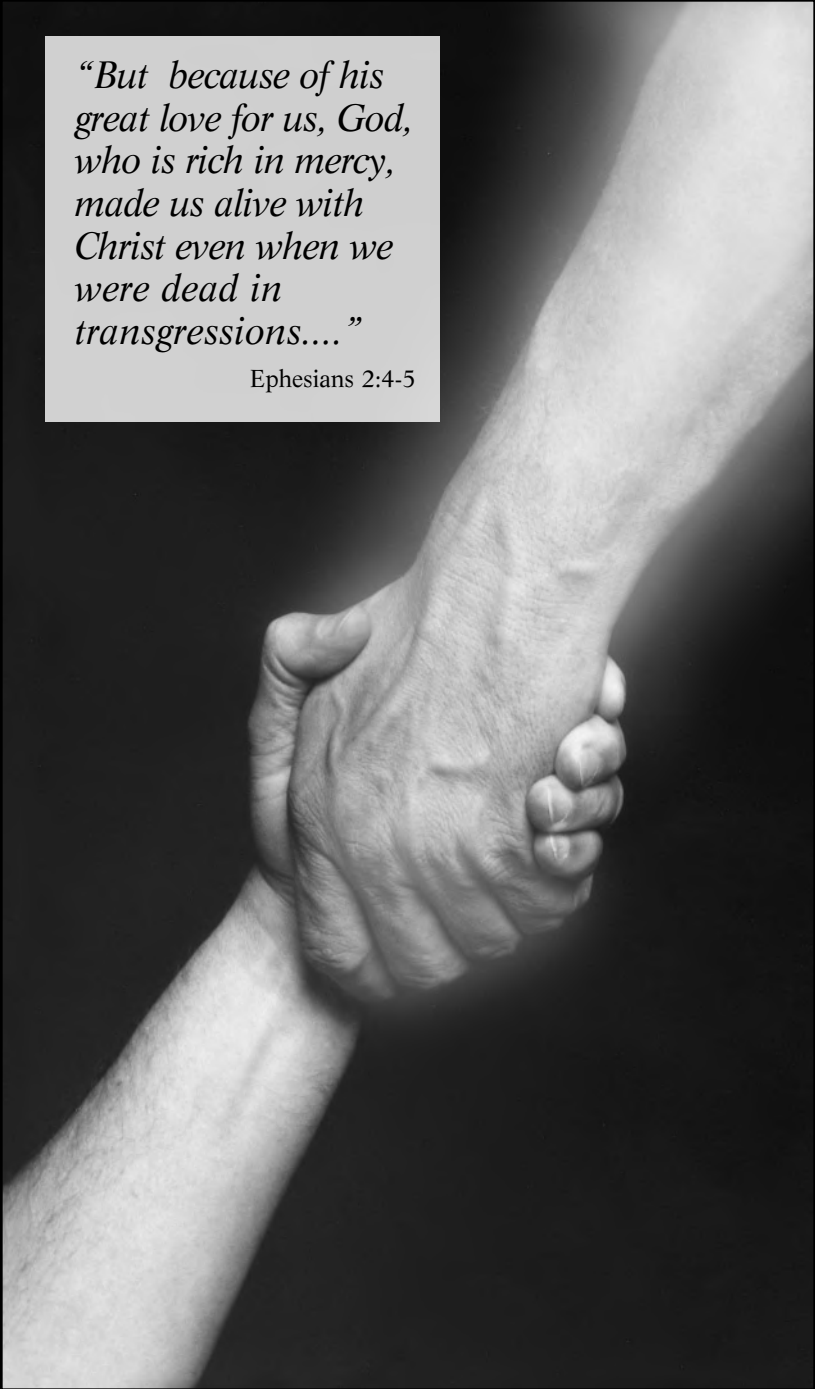


Photo by Monte Wolverton—PTM

Ephesians 2:1-10

Have you ever given someone a gift or performed an act of kindness which you knew could never be re-paid? How did the person react?

1. In what state did we live before our conversion to Jesus Christ (vs. 1-3)? What past actions dominated our lives?
2. Why did God take human beings who were “dead in transgressions” (v. 5) and make them alive?
3. What is the present state of Christians (vs. 5-6)? What emotional impact do Paul’s figurative words have?
4. What is the role of grace (vs. 7-10)? Of faith? Of works?
5. How does a person “travel” from one kingdom (vs. 1-7) to the greater kingdom (vs. 8-10)?

1. Are you dead in sin? Or alive in Jesus Christ? Or both?
2. Do you choose to walk in the “ways of this world” (v. 2) or sit in “heavenly realms” (v. 6)?
3. How does doing good works as a means of gaining salvation fall flat on its face?
4. How does the life Christ lives in you demonstrate the riches of his grace? Has God’s handiwork in you inspired you to good works?
5. Try performing an act of kindness to make someone happy.

*In Ephesians, Paul emphasized the **infinite goodness of God’s grace** by which we have been rescued, enabling us to be in union with Christ (1:7; 2:5, 7, 8). Furthermore, God’s grace enables Paul’s ministry (3:2, 7, 8). And his grace is with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ (6:24).*

OPENING

up to the Word

DIGGING

into the Word

LIVING

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WINDOW

on the Word

Reconciled in Christ

Ephesians 2:11-22

OPENING
up to the Word

What “walls” of physical difference affect your perception of other people? (a) racial differences, (b) size/stature, (c) physical appearance, (e) disability.

DIGGING
into the Word

1. What was the previous state of the gentile believers in Asia Minor (vs. 11-12)? How were they alienated? How were distinctions made?

2. What is the basis for unity among all believers (vs. 13-18)? How is reconciliation achieved?

3. In what two ways was humanity “far away” before the cross? Compare 2:13-15 and 2:16-18.

4. Is there evidence of the threefold nature of God in this passage (vs. 18, 22)?

5. What is the role of the universal, visible and invisible, body of Christ? (vs. 19-22)? How does Paul’s imagery of a building help to portray the dynamic work of God within the body of Christ?

LIVING
out the Word

1. How can you eliminate racial prejudice from your thinking and your treatment of others?

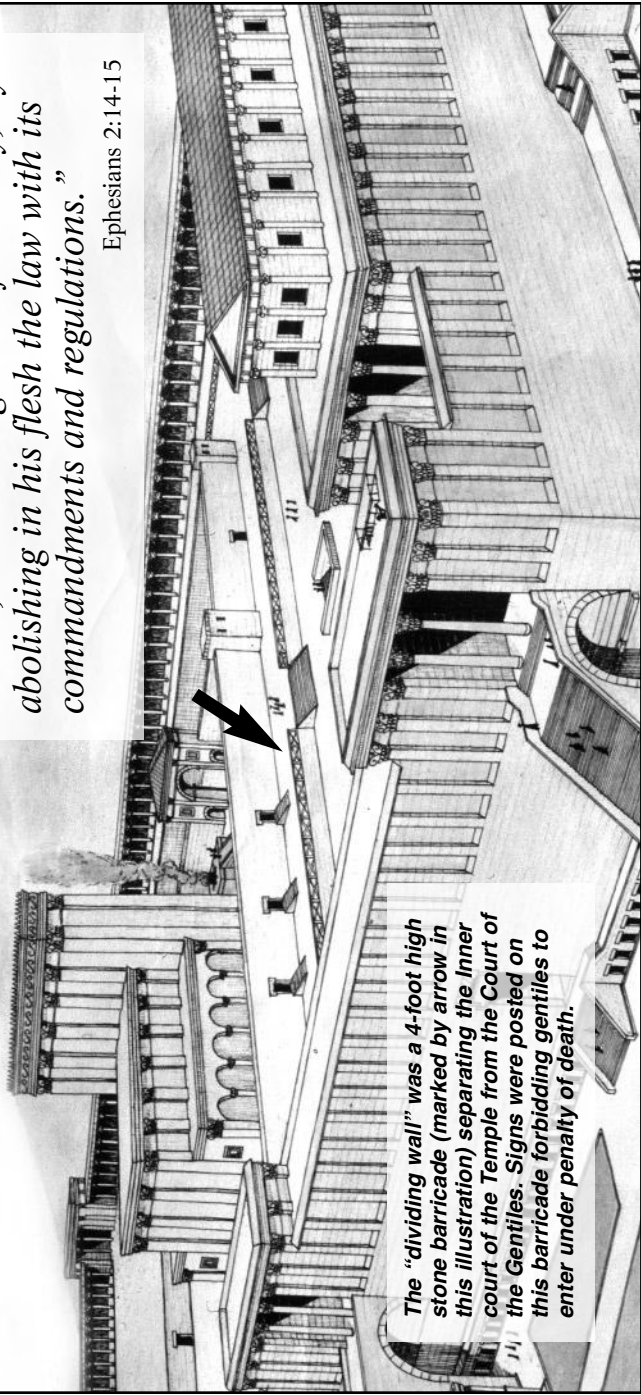
2. In what ways can you preach peace (vs. 17)? Consider using verse 18 as your key text.

WINDOW
on the Word

Jesus abolished the requirement to keep the law of commandments found in the old covenant, which had been given to Israel. That law included circumcision (v. 11) as one of many laws (including Sabbath and holy day requirements) designed to separate Israel from other nations. The “dividing wall” probably refers to the restraining wall in the temple compound in Jerusalem. This wall had signs on it prohibiting gentiles from entering the court of Israel. Paul used this wall as a symbol of the restrictions and limitations of the old covenant.

“For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations.”

Ephesians 2:14-15



The “dividing wall” was a 4-foot high stone barricade (marked by arrow in this illustration) separating the Inner court of the Temple from the Court of the Gentiles. Signs were posted on this barricade forbidding gentiles to enter under penalty of death.

A Ministry of the Mystery

Ephesians 3:1-13

OPENING
up to the Word

Have you read or seen a good mystery lately? What was the plot? How were the characters developed? The hero? The heroine? The villain?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. How did Paul see himself as a preacher to share the gospel of grace (vs. 1-13)? He was a prisoner in Rome when he wrote this letter.
2. What mystery was revealed to Paul (vs. 3-6; see 1:9 and 1Co 2:6, 7, 10-16)?
3. How did God's grace change Paul from persecuting Christians into a preacher of Christianity (vs. 7-13)? See Acts 9:1-18 for Paul's conversion.
4. Why did Paul emphasize that the mystery was made known to humans first and then, through the church, made known to the angelic world (vs. 10, "rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms")?
5. What was revealed to angelic beings (vs. 10)?
6. How did Paul intend this message to help the reader (vs. 13)?

LIVING
out the Word

1. Are you a prisoner of Jesus Christ? In spite of the restraints of human frailty, how are you free?
2. Have you, like Paul, yielded yourself to Christ so that his message of grace might be reflected by your life?
3. Have you thanked God for your fellow heirs of salvation (v. 6)?
4. How do you approach God in prayer? With fear or through faith with freedom (v. 12)?

WINDOW
on the Word

*Ephesus was a city of gentiles who for centuries had worshiped Diana (Artemis). The **Temple of Diana** was one of the seven wonders of the world. These people in Asia Minor believed there were many gods and goddesses. Magic, mysticism and mystery played an important part in the the worship of these deities, and in the invocation of their power. Paul teaches that God's **mystery** is understood in Jesus, and that Jesus is supreme above all other powers, real and imagined.*