

Ephesians

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Summary: *Ephesians 1 opens with Paul's greeting and immediately launches into one of the most expansive theological statements in the New Testament — a single sentence in Greek (vv. 3-14) that sweeps from eternity past (predestination before the foundation of the world) through the present (redemption, forgiveness, the revelation of God's mystery) to eternity future (the summing up of all things in Christ). The chapter then transitions to a prayer of thanksgiving for the Ephesians' faith and a petition that they would know the hope of God's calling, the riches of his inheritance, and the surpassing greatness of his power — the same power that raised Christ from the dead and seated him at God's right hand, far above every authority, with all things under his feet.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Verses 3-14 constitute the longest sentence in the Greek New Testament — a cascading doxology with three movements: the Father's election (vv. 3-6), the Son's redemption (vv. 7-12), and the Spirit's sealing (vv. 13-14). Each section concludes with a refrain about God's glory. The cosmic scope is breathtaking: God's plan encompasses the reconciliation of 'all things in heaven and on earth' (v. 10). The prayer section (vv. 15-23) reaches its climax in a vision of Christ's authority over all cosmic powers and his headship over the church, which is his body.*

Translation Friction: *The words 'in Ephesus' (en Ephesō, v. 1) are absent from important early manuscripts (P46, Sinaiticus, Vaticanus), suggesting this may have been a circular letter. Paul's predestination language (vv. 4-5, 11) has generated centuries of theological debate between Calvinist and Arminian traditions. We render the Greek faithfully without resolving these disputes. The cosmic language of 'rulers and authorities' (v. 21) reflects first-century Jewish angelology.*

Connections: *The blessing formula (v. 3) echoes Jewish berakah prayers. The predestination language connects to Romans 8:28-30. The 'mystery' (v. 9) is developed throughout Ephesians (3:3-6, 5:32, 6:19). The 'all things under his feet' (v. 22) quotes Psalm 8:6, also used in 1 Corinthians 15:27. The church as Christ's body (v. 23) develops the theme of 1 Corinthians 12 and Colossians 1:18.*

¹Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints who are in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus: ²And from the lord jesus christ, grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father. ³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴According as he has chosen us in him prior to the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame prior to him in love:. ⁵After

predestinated us to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, in keeping with to the good pleasure of his will, ⁶Indeed, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he has made us accepted in the dear. ⁷In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, ⁸In which he has abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence. ⁹After appointed known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he has purposed in himself. ¹⁰That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather as one in one all matters in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth. Indeed in him:. ¹¹In him we have also been claimed as God's own, having been predestined according to the purpose of the one who accomplishes all things according to the counsel of his will, ¹²Indeed, that we should be to the praise of all his splendor, who first trusted in Christ. ¹³In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴Indeed, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of all his splendor. ¹⁵For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, ¹⁶I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, ¹⁷That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Parent of splendor, may provide to you the inner life of insight and revelation in the knowledge of him:. ¹⁸The sight of your understanding while enlightened. That you may recognize what is the confident expectation of his calling, and what the riches of the splendor of his inheritance in the saints,. ¹⁹What is the exceeding greatness of his authority to us-ward who trust, according to the working of his mighty authority,. ²⁰Indeed, which he wrought in Christ, when he brought him back to life, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,. ²¹Far beyond all principality, power, might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this present age, but also in that which is to come:. ²²And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, ²³The church is his body, the full expression of him who fills everything in every way.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The phrase 'in Ephesus' (en Ephesō) is absent from several of the earliest and best manuscripts, suggesting this may have been a circular letter with a blank space for the destination. The SBLGNT includes it. The word *hagiois* ('saints, holy ones') does not mean morally perfect people but those 'set apart' — consecrated to God's purposes. The qualifier *pistois* ('faithful, believing') further identifies them as the believing community.
2. Paul's standard greeting combining *charis* ('grace') and *eirēnē* ('peace'). The single preposition *apo* ('from') governs both God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, presenting them as coordinate sources of grace and peace.
3. The opening *eulogētos* ('blessed') begins a Jewish-style *berakah* (blessing formula) that extends through verse 14 in a single Greek sentence. The phrase *en tois epouraniois* ('in the heavenly places') is distinctive to Ephesians (1:20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12) — it designates the spiritual dimension where believers already exist 'in Christ.' The triple use of *eulog-* words (blessed, blessed, blessing) creates emphasis: God is blessed because he has blessed us with blessings. The phrase *en Christō* ('in Christ') is the letter's keynote — appearing about thirty-five times in Ephesians.
4. The verb *exelaxato* ('chose, elected') is aorist middle — God chose for himself. The temporal marker *pro katabolēs kosmou* ('before the foundation of the world') places the election in eternity past, before creation itself. The purpose of election is holiness: *einai hēmas hagiois kai amōmous* ('that we should be holy and blameless'). The word *amōmos* ('without blemish') is sacrificial language — a sacrificial animal had to be without defect. The phrase *en agapē* ('in love') is grammatically ambiguous — it could modify 'blameless before him in love' (describing the believer's character) or 'in love he predestined us' (describing God's motive). We punctuate it with verse 5 (God's love as the motive for predestination), though noting the ambiguity.
5. The verb *proorisas* ('having predestined, having determined beforehand') is from *pro* ('before') + *horizō* ('to set a boundary, to determine'). God established the boundary of his people before time. The goal of predestination is *hiothesia* ('adoption') — the same Roman legal concept Paul used in Galatians 4:5. The phrase *kata tēn eudokian tou thelēmatos autou* ('according to the good pleasure of his will') grounds predestination in God's sovereign delight, not in human merit or foreseen faith.
6. The first refrain: *eis epainon doxēs tēs charitos autou* ('to the praise of the glory of his grace'). The chain of genitives piles glory upon glory. The verb *echaritōsen* ('graced, favored, freely bestowed grace') is from the same root as *charis* ('grace') — God 'graced us with grace.' The title *ho ēgapēmenos* ('the Beloved') for Christ echoes the baptismal voice: 'This is my beloved Son' (Matthew 3:17). This refrain closes the first movement (the Father's election).
7. The second movement begins: the Son's redemption. The word *apolytrōsis* ('redemption, release through ransom') echoes the Old Testament *go'el* concept — ransom of a kinsman from bondage. The phrase *dia tou haimatos autou* ('through his blood') specifies the ransom price. The appositive *tēn aphesin tōn paraptōmatōn* ('the forgiveness of trespasses') defines redemption's content: release from guilt. The phrase *to ploutos tēs charitos* ('the riches of grace') — grace is not meager but lavish.
8. The verb *eperisseusen* ('caused to abound, lavished, poured out in excess') indicates overflowing abundance — God does not meter grace but floods it. The phrase *en pasē sophia kai phronēsei* ('with all wisdom and understanding') can modify either God (he lavished grace wisely) or the believers (he gave us wisdom and insight along with grace). Both readings are theologically sound; the latter connects to the revelation in verse 9.

9. The word *mystērion* ('mystery') in Paul does not mean 'mysterious' or 'unknowable' but refers to a divine plan once hidden but now revealed. The content of this mystery is disclosed in verse 10. The verb *proetheto* ('set forth, planned beforehand, purposed') indicates a deliberate, prior decision. The phrase *en autō* could refer to God himself ('in himself') or to Christ ('in him'). Given Ephesians' persistent *en Christō* theme, the christological reading is preferred.
10. The word *oikonomia* ('administration, plan, management of a household') pictures God as a master steward implementing his cosmic household plan. The phrase *tou plērōmatos tōn kairōn* ('of the fullness of the times') echoes Galatians 4:4 but extends it cosmically. The verb *anakephalaiōsasthai* ('to sum up, to bring together under one head, to recapitulate') is the theological center of Ephesians. It combines *ana* ('again') + *kephalē* ('head') — literally 'to re-head,' to bring everything back under its proper headship. God's plan is the reunification of a fractured cosmos under Christ's authority. The scope is total: *ta panta* ('all things'), *ta epi tois ouranois kai ta epi tēs gēs* ('things in heaven and things on earth').
11. The verb *eklērōthēmen* is debated: it could mean 'we obtained an inheritance' (active sense) or 'we were made an inheritance' (passive sense — God claimed us as his possession). The passive reading aligns with Deuteronomy 32:9 ('the LORD's portion is his people') and is preferred here. The phrase *tou ta panta energountos* ('the one who works all things') asserts God's comprehensive sovereignty. The phrase *kata tēn boulēn tou thelēmatos autou* ('according to the counsel of his will') layers purpose upon purpose — God's actions are deliberate, not arbitrary.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Deuteronomy 32:9. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. The second refrain: *eis epainon doxēs autou* ('for the praise of his glory'). The participle *proēlpikotas* ('having hoped beforehand, having been the first to hope') likely distinguishes Jewish believers (who hoped in the Messiah before his coming) from Gentile believers (addressed in v. 13). This closes the second movement (the Son's redemption).
13. The third movement begins: the Spirit's sealing. The sequence is hear believe be sealed. The 'word of truth' is defined as 'the gospel of your salvation' — two phrases in apposition. The verb *esphragisthēte* ('you were sealed') uses the image of a seal (*sphragis*) pressed into wax — marking ownership, authenticity, and security. In the ancient world, a seal guaranteed that a document or container had not been tampered with. The Spirit is the seal that marks believers as God's property. The phrase *tō pneumati tēs ehangēlias tō hagiō* ('with the Holy Spirit of the promise') identifies the Spirit as the fulfillment of God's promise (cf. Joel 2:28-29; Acts 2:33).
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Joel 2:28-29 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. The word *arrabōn* ('down payment, deposit, guarantee') is a commercial term — a first installment that guarantees the full payment to come. The Spirit is not the complete inheritance but the preview that guarantees the rest. The phrase *eis apolytrōsin tēs peripoiēseōs* ('until the redemption of the possession') likely means 'until God fully redeems those he has acquired as his own.' The third refrain closes the doxology: *eis epainon tēs doxēs autou* ('to the praise of his glory'). The Trinitarian structure is complete: Father (vv. 3-6), Son (vv. 7-12), Spirit (vv. 13-14), each section ending in praise.
15. The phrase *dia touto* ('for this reason') links the prayer to the doxology: because of everything God has done (vv. 3-14), Paul prays. The mention of 'hearing about' their faith (*akousas*) may support the circular letter theory — Paul would not need to hear about the faith of a church he founded. Some manuscripts omit 'love' (*agapēn*), but the SBLGNT includes it.
16. The present tense *ou pauomai* ('I do not cease') indicates continuous, habitual prayer. The phrase *mneian poioumenos* ('making mention, remembering') is a standard epistolary convention, but Paul's extended prayer (vv. 17-23) shows it is more than formula.
17. The title *ho patēr tēs doxēs* ('the Father of glory') is unique — God is the source and origin of all glory. The phrase *pneuma sophias kai apokalypseōs* ('a spirit of wisdom and revelation') could refer to the Holy Spirit or to a disposition of wisdom — the lowercase 'spirit' is deliberately ambiguous. The word *epignōsis* ('full knowledge, deep recognition') is stronger than *gnōsis* ('knowledge') — it implies experiential, relational knowledge, not merely intellectual.
18. The phrase *tous ophthalmous tēs kardias* ('the eyes of the heart') combines seeing and feeling — the heart in Hebrew/biblical thought is the center of understanding and will, not merely emotion. Paul prays for illumination of their deepest perception. Three 'what' (tis) clauses follow, each more expansive: (1) the hope of his calling, (2) the riches of his inheritance, (3) the greatness of his power (v. 19). The phrase 'his inheritance among the saints' is ambiguous: either the inheritance God gives to the saints or God's own inheritance in the saints (i.e., the saints themselves are God's treasured possession).
19. Paul piles four power-words: *dynamis* ('power, ability'), *energeia* ('working, effective operation'), *kratos* ('might, dominion, ruling power'), *ischys* ('strength, force'). The accumulation is deliberate — no single word can capture the magnitude of God's power directed toward believers. The participle *hyperballon* ('surpassing, exceeding, going beyond') suggests that this power overflows every container. This is not theoretical power but power 'toward us who believe' (*eis hēmas tous pisteuontas*).
20. The power Paul prays about is not abstract — it has a specific historical demonstration: the resurrection and exaltation of Christ. The verb *enērgēsēn* ('exerted, worked, put into operation') is the verbal form of the noun *energeia* from verse 19. The phrase *kathisas en dexia autou* ('having seated at his right hand') echoes Psalm 110:1, the most quoted Old Testament verse in the New Testament. The right hand is the position of authority, honor, and power.

- 20.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalm 110:1 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 21.** The four terms — archē ('ruler, principality'), exousia ('authority'), dynamis ('power'), kyriotēs ('dominion, lordship') — likely refer to ranks of spiritual beings in first-century Jewish angelology. Christ is exalted hyperanō ('far above') all of them. The phrase pantos onomatōs onomazomenou ('every name that is named') extends the scope beyond known categories — whatever power exists, named or unnamed, in any era, Christ is above it. The temporal extension 'not only in this age but also in the one to come' closes every loophole: Christ's supremacy is permanent.
- 22.** The phrase panta hypetaxen hypo tous podas autou ('put all things under his feet') quotes Psalm 8:6, applied to Christ as the true human who fulfills humanity's intended dominion over creation. The phrase kephalēn hyper panta ('head over all things') establishes Christ's universal lordship. But this cosmic head is 'given to the church' (edōken tē ekklēsia) — the church receives Christ as its head. The implication: the church is the community under Christ's direct authority, benefiting from his cosmic rule.
- 22.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalm 8:6. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 23.** The church is identified as Christ's sōma ('body') — not merely an organization but an organic extension of Christ's presence. The word plērōma ('fullness, completeness') is a dense theological term: the church is the plērōma of Christ. This could mean the church fills up Christ (the church is what completes Christ's presence in the world) or Christ fills the church (the church is full of Christ). The participle plēroumenou can be middle ('who fills') or passive ('who is being filled'). The active sense — Christ fills all things in every way — best fits the context's emphasis on Christ's cosmic authority. The church is where the cosmos-filling Christ is most fully present.

2

Summary: *Ephesians 2 moves from the cosmic heights of chapter 1 to the personal and corporate experience of salvation. The first section (vv. 1-10) describes humanity's condition — dead in trespasses, enslaved to the world, the flesh, and the devil — and God's response: making them alive with Christ, raising them with him, and seating them with him in the heavenly places. The pivot comes in verses 8-9, the definitive statement of grace-based salvation through faith. Verse 10 grounds the believer's new identity as God's 'workmanship, created for good works.' The second section (vv. 11-22) addresses the Jew-Gentile divide: Gentiles who were once excluded from the covenants of promise have been brought near through Christ's blood. Christ himself is their peace, breaking down the dividing wall of hostility, creating one new humanity, and reconciling both groups to God through the cross. The chapter climaxes with the image of the church as a holy temple, built on the foundation of apostles and prophets, with Christ as the cornerstone.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Verses 8-9 are among the most quoted verses in all of Scripture and the cornerstone of Reformation soteriology. The 'dividing wall of hostility' (v. 14) may allude to the physical barrier in the Jerusalem temple that separated the Court of the Gentiles from the inner courts — a wall with inscriptions threatening death to any Gentile who crossed it. The 'one new humanity' (v. 15) is a radical concept: God does not assimilate Gentiles into Israel or Jews into a Gentile church, but creates something entirely new. The temple imagery (vv. 19-22) presents the church as the new dwelling place of God — replacing the Jerusalem temple with a living structure.*

Translation Friction: *The phrase 'the law of commandments in ordinances' (v. 15) is debated: does Christ abolish the Mosaic law itself, or only the law as a barrier between Jews and Gentiles? The relationship between this text and Romans 3:31 ('we uphold the law') requires careful reading. The 'dividing wall' reference is historically specific — the temple barrier — but its theological application is broader.*

Connections: *The death-to-life movement (vv. 1-6) parallels Romans 6:1-11 and Colossians 2:13. Grace through faith (vv. 8-9) condenses the argument of Romans 3:21-28. The 'brought near' language (v. 13) echoes Isaiah 57:19. The temple imagery (vv. 19-22) connects to 1 Corinthians 3:16-17 and 1 Peter 2:4-5. The 'cornerstone' (v. 20) draws on Isaiah 28:16 and Psalm 118:22.*

¹And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, ²Wherein in moment past you walked according to the course of this age, according to the prince of the authority of the air, the inner life that now worketh in genuine offspring of disobedience: ³Among them we all also once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and we were by nature children of wrath, just like the rest of humanity. ⁴But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵Not even when we were no longer alive in wrongdoings, has quickened us together with Christ, (by grace

you are saved;). ⁶Has raised us up as one, and fashioned us take a seat together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:. ⁷Indeed, that in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us by way of Christ Jesus. ⁸For or by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not from yourselves; it is the gift of God, ⁹Indeed, not of works, lest any man should boast. ¹⁰For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared in advance so that we would walk in them. ¹¹Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh — called "the uncircumcision" by what is called "the circumcision," which is performed in the flesh by human hands — ¹²That at that occasion you were apart from Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and apart from God in the world. ¹³But now in Christ Jesus, you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the dividing wall of hostility, in his flesh, ¹⁵By his sacrifice he set aside the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create one new humanity out of two groups, making peace. ¹⁶That he might reconcile both to God in one body by the cross, after slain the enmity thereby:. ¹⁷And he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸For by way of him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹So then, you are no longer strangers and aliens, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of God's household, ²⁰Are built upon the foundation of the messengers and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone. ²¹In whom every one of the building fitly framed together groweth to an holy temple in the Lord:. ²²In whom you also are builded together for an habitation of God by way of the Spirit.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The sentence that begins here does not reach its main verb until verse 5 ('made us alive'). The accusative *hymas* ('you') is the object held in suspension — 'you who were dead.' The word *nekrous* ('dead') is not metaphorical softening but a real theological claim: apart from God's intervention, the human condition is spiritual death. The plural *paraptōmasin* ('trespasses, false steps') and *hamartiais* ('sins, failures to hit the mark') describe two aspects of the same reality.
2. Three powers controlled the pre-Christian life: (1) *ton aiōna tou kosmou toutou* ('the age/course of this world') — the present evil age's value system; (2) *ton archonta tēs exousias tou aeros* ('the ruler of the power of the air') — a personal spiritual adversary; (3) the spirit (*pneuma*) at work in 'the children of disobedience' (*tois huiōis tēs apeitheias* — a Hebraism meaning 'those characterized by disobedience'). The 'air' (*aeros*) was believed in ancient cosmology to be the domain of spiritual beings between earth and heaven.
3. The shift from 'you' (Gentiles, vv. 1-2) to 'we all' (*hēmeis pantes*, including Jewish believers) universalizes the indictment — everyone, Jew and Gentile alike, was in the same condition. The phrase *tekna physei orgēs* ('children by nature of wrath') means that this condition was not incidental but inherent — humanity's default state. The word *orgēs* ('wrath') refers to God's settled opposition to sin, not emotional anger. The universality ('just like the rest') prevents any Jewish claim to exemption.
4. The two-word pivot *ho de theos* ('but God') is among the most dramatic transitions in Scripture. After the comprehensive indictment of verses 1-3, the subject changes from human failure to divine initiative. God's mercy is not scarce but *plousios* ('rich, abundant, overflowing'). The motive is *agapē* — not human merit or potential but God's own love. The verb *ēgapēsen* ('he loved') is aorist, pointing to the definitive act of love in Christ.
5. The main verb finally arrives: *synezōpoiēsen* ('made alive together with'). The *syn-* prefix ('together with') is the first of three 'co-' verbs (made alive with, raised with, seated with) that define the believer's participation in Christ's experience. The parenthetical *chariti este sesōsmenoi* ('by grace you have been saved') is a compressed version of verses 8-9, inserted as if Paul cannot wait to state the principle. The perfect participle *sesōsmenoi* ('having been saved and remaining saved') indicates a completed action with permanent results.
6. The second and third 'co-' verbs: *synēgeiren* ('raised together with') and *synekathisen* ('seated together with'). What happened to Christ (1:20) has happened to believers 'in Christ.' The present tense of the believer's existence is described in past tenses — they have already been raised and seated. This is 'realized eschatology': the believer's spiritual position is already in the heavenly places, even while they live on earth. The *en Christō Iēsou* ('in Christ Jesus') is the key — apart from Christ, none of this is real.
7. The purpose of salvation extends into eternity: God saved us to put his grace on permanent display. The phrase *en tois aiōsin tois eperchomenois* ('in the ages that are coming upon us') indicates endless future ages — an infinite gallery in which redeemed humanity is the exhibit of divine grace. The verb *endeixētai* ('might display, might demonstrate, might prove') was used for putting evidence on display in a courtroom. The saved are God's evidence of grace.
8. This verse is the compressed theological center of Ephesians and one of the most important soteriological statements in the New Testament. The dative *tē chariti* ('by grace') indicates the ground or basis. The prepositional phrase *dia pisteōs* ('through faith') indicates the means or channel. The phrase *kai touto ouk ex hymōn* ('and this not from yourselves') has been debated: what does 'this' (*touto*, neuter) refer to? Since both *charis* and *pistis* are feminine, *touto* likely refers to the entire salvific event — the grace-faith-salvation complex — rather than to faith alone. *Theou to dōron* ('God's

gift') is emphatic by position: the gift belongs to God, not to human effort.

9. The negative *ouk ex ergōn* ('not from works') excludes human effort as the basis for salvation. The purpose clause *hina mē tis kauchēsetai* ('so that no one might boast') reveals the reason for the exclusion: salvation by works would create grounds for human pride. Grace eliminates boasting by making salvation entirely God's initiative. This echoes Romans 3:27 ('Where then is boasting? It is excluded.').
10. The word *poiēma* ('workmanship, thing made, masterpiece') is from *poieō* ('to make') — we get 'poem' from this word. Believers are God's crafted work, his artistic creation. The verb *ktisthentes* ('having been created') is creation language — salvation is new creation, not self-improvement. Good works are the purpose (*epi ergois agathois*, 'for good works') but not the cause of salvation. The verb *proētoimasen* ('prepared beforehand, pre-arranged') indicates that even the good works were divinely planned — believers walk a path God laid out before they existed.
11. The section shifts from the individual experience of salvation (vv. 1-10) to its corporate, ethnic dimension: Jew-Gentile reconciliation. The verb *mnēmoneuete* ('remember') is an imperative — they must not forget where they came from. The labels 'uncircumcision' and 'circumcision' are introduced with double irony: both are 'called' (*legomenoi*) these names — they are conventional labels. The modifier *cheiropoiētou* ('made by hands') subtly relativizes physical circumcision — it is a human-made distinction (cf. 'not made by hands' in Colossians 2:11).
12. Five deprivations are listed: (1) *chōris Christou* ('without Christ, separated from the Messiah'); (2) *apēlotriōmenoi tēs politeias tou Israēl* ('alienated from Israel's citizenship' — excluded from the covenant community); (3) *xenoi tōn diathēkōn tēs epangelias* ('strangers to the covenants of promise' — the plural 'covenants' likely includes the Abrahamic, Mosaic, and Davidic); (4) *elpida mē echontes* ('having no hope'); (5) *atheoi en tō kosmō* ('without God in the world' — *atheoi* means 'godless,' the only use of this word in the New Testament). The catalog moves from the theological (no Messiah) to the existential (no hope, no God).
13. The pivot *nyni de* ('but now') parallels the 'but God' of verse 4. The far/near language (*makran/engys*) echoes Isaiah 57:19 ('Peace, peace, to the far and to the near'). In Jewish usage, 'those who are far' referred to Gentiles, 'those who are near' to Israel. The instrument of this approach is *en tō haimati tou Christou* ('by the blood of Christ') — Christ's sacrificial death removes the barrier. The verb *egenēthēte* ('you were made, you became') indicates a definitive change of status.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 57:19 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. Christ is not merely the peacemaker but is himself *hē eirēnē hēmōn* ('our peace'). The phrase *ta amphotera hen* ('the two things one') refers to Jew and Gentile made into a single entity. The *mesotoichon tou phragmou* ('the middle wall of the partition/fence') likely alludes to the physical barrier in the Jerusalem temple — the *soreg*, a stone wall with inscriptions in Greek and Latin warning Gentiles that crossing it meant death. Archaeologists have recovered two of these inscriptions. Christ's body (*en tē sarki autou*) is the instrument of demolition. The word *echthran* ('hostility, enmity') is in apposition to 'the wall' — the wall is the hostility.
15. The phrase *ton nomon tōn entolōn en dogmasin* ('the law of the commandments in/consisting of ordinances') specifies what was abolished: the law in its function as a barrier between Jew and Gentile — the specific regulations (*dogmasin*, 'decrees, ordinances') that separated the two communities. The verb *katargēsas* ('having rendered inoperative, having abolished') is strong. The purpose is creation: *ktisē* ('might create') — the same verb used for divine creation. The 'one new humanity' (*hena kainon anthrōpon*) is not Jews becoming Gentiles or Gentiles becoming Jews, but a new category entirely. The word *kainos* ('new in kind') indicates something unprecedented.
16. The verb *apokatallaxē* ('might fully reconcile') has the double prefix *apo-kata-* intensifying the reconciliation — thorough, complete restoration. The reconciliation is double: horizontal (Jew with Gentile, 'both') and vertical (both groups with God, *tō theō*). The instrument is the cross (*dia tou staurou*). The phrase *apokteiras tēn echthran en autō* ('having killed the enmity in/by it') is brilliantly paradoxical: on the cross, Christ was killed, but the enmity was the real casualty. The hostility died with Christ.
17. Paul echoes Isaiah 57:19 ('Peace, peace, to the far and to the near'). The repetition of *eirēnēn* ('peace') — once for each group — emphasizes that the same peace is offered to both. Christ's 'coming' (*elthōn*) may refer to his earthly ministry, his post-resurrection appearances, or his coming through the apostolic proclamation. The far/near categories of verse 13 return: Gentiles (far) and Jews (near) both receive the same gospel of peace.
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 57:19. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
18. The verse is implicitly Trinitarian: through Christ (*di' autou*), in the Spirit (*en heni pneumatī*), to the Father (*pros ton patera*). The word *prosaḡōgē* ('access, introduction, approach') was used for being formally introduced into the presence of a king. Both Jew and Gentile now have royal audience with the Father — through the same Christ, by the same Spirit. The word *amphoterōi* ('both') is emphatic: neither group has privileged access.
19. The status change reverses verse 12: *xenoi* ('strangers') becomes *sympolitai* ('fellow citizens'); *paroikoi* ('resident aliens, sojourners without full rights') becomes *oikeioi tou theou* ('members of God's household, family members'). The movement is from outsider to insider, from excluded to integrated. The two images — citizenship and household — combine political and familial belonging.
20. The building metaphor begins. The *themelion* ('foundation') is 'of the apostles and prophets' — likely meaning the foundation that the apostles and prophets laid (their teaching), though some read it as the foundation consisting of the apostles and prophets themselves. The *akrogōniaios* ('cornerstone' or 'capstone') is the stone that determines the alignment of the entire structure. Whether this is a foundation cornerstone (setting the building's angle) or a capstone (crowning the arch) is debated; either way, Christ is the structurally decisive element.

21. The verb *synarmologoumenē* ('being fitted together, being joined together') is an architectural term for precisely joining stones without mortar — each piece is cut to fit. The present tense indicates ongoing construction. The verb *auxei* ('grows') is striking — buildings do not normally grow. The mixture of architectural and organic metaphors (fitted structure that grows) suggests a living building. The goal is *naon hagion* ('a holy temple') — the church replaces the Jerusalem temple as God's dwelling place. The word *naos* (inner sanctuary) rather than *hieron* (whole temple complex) specifies the most sacred space.
22. The verb *synoikodomeisthe* ('you are being built together') has the *syn-* prefix again — Gentile believers are co-built with Jewish believers into a single structure. The word *katoikētērion* ('dwelling place, permanent residence') is stronger than *paroikia* ('temporary lodging'). God does not visit this temple — he lives there. The phrase *en pneumati* ('by/in the Spirit') identifies the Spirit as the agent or atmosphere of this construction. The chapter ends where it began — with God's initiative — but the focus has shifted from individual salvation (vv. 1-10) to corporate, cosmic reconciliation (vv. 11-22).

3

Summary: *Ephesians 3 reveals the content of the 'mystery' introduced in 1:9 — that Gentiles are fellow heirs with Israel, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise through the gospel. Paul describes his unique commission to proclaim this mystery and marvels that God's wisdom is now made known through the church even to cosmic powers. The chapter concludes with one of Paul's most majestic prayers: that believers would be strengthened by the Spirit in their inner being, that Christ would dwell in their hearts through faith, that they would comprehend the incomprehensible dimensions of Christ's love, and that they would be filled with all the fullness of God. A doxology closes the prayer.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The mystery of Gentile inclusion (vv. 5-6) is the theological heart of Ephesians. The church's role as God's classroom for cosmic powers (v. 10) is one of the most extraordinary ecclesiological claims in the New Testament. The prayer (vv. 14-21) is among the most theologically rich passages Paul ever wrote, with its four-dimensional love (breadth, length, height, depth) and the paradox of knowing what surpasses knowledge. The doxology (vv. 20-21) employs a double comparative: God can do 'exceedingly abundantly beyond' (*hyperekerperissou*) what we ask or imagine.*

Translation Friction: *Paul begins a sentence in verse 1 that he does not complete until verse 14 — the digression in verses 2-13 is one of the longest parenthetical passages in the New Testament. The phrase 'holy apostles and prophets' (v. 5) is sometimes cited as evidence against Pauline authorship, since Paul elsewhere does not call the apostles 'holy.' The cosmic powers in verse 10 are debated — angelic beings, demonic forces, or both.*

Connections: *The mystery revealed connects to Colossians 1:26-27. Paul's imprisonment (v. 1) links to Philippians 1:12-14 and Colossians 4:3. The prayer for inner strengthening parallels Colossians 1:9-12. The 'fullness of God' (v. 19) echoes 1:23. The doxology's 'in the church and in Christ Jesus' (v. 21) binds ecclesiology and Christology together.*

¹For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles — ²If you have listened to of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: ³He made the mystery known to me by direct revelation, as I briefly described earlier. ⁴When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, ⁵Which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it is now revealed to his sacred messengers and prophets by the Spirit. ⁶Here is the mystery: through the gospel, the Gentiles are fellow heirs with Israel, members of one body, and sharers together in the promise that comes through Christ Jesus. ⁷Of this gospel I was made a servant according to the gift of God's grace that was given to me by the working of his power. ⁸To me — the very least of all the saints — this grace was given: to proclaim to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, ⁹To make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the present age has been hid in God, who created all matters by Jesus Christ: ¹⁰God's intent was that now, through the church, the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms would come to know his wisdom in all its rich variety. ¹¹This was according to the eternal purpose that he carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, ¹²In him, and through faith in him, we may approach God with freedom and confidence. ¹³So I ask you not to lose heart over my sufferings for you, which are your glory. ¹⁴For this reason I kneel before the Father, ¹⁵Of whom the entire family in the heavens above and earth is named,

¹⁶That he would grant you, in keeping with to the riches of all his splendor, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; ¹⁷Indeed, that Christ may dwell in your hearts by way of faith. That you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸May be able to grasp together with all of God's people what is the breadth, length, depth, and height; ¹⁹To know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that you might be overflowing with every one of the fulness of God. ²⁰Now to the one who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, ²¹To him be splendor in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, present age without end. Amen.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. Paul begins a prayer ('for this reason... I bow my knees') but interrupts himself with a lengthy digression about his ministry (vv. 2-13) before resuming the prayer in verse 14. The title *desmios tou Christou Iēsou* ('prisoner of Christ Jesus') reframes his Roman imprisonment as Christ's assignment: he is Christ's prisoner, not Rome's. The phrase *hyper hymōn tōn ethnōn* ('on behalf of you Gentiles') identifies the cause of his imprisonment — his Gentile mission provoked the hostility that led to his arrest.
2. The conditional *ei ge ēkousate* ('if indeed you have heard') is not expressing doubt but invoking known information — 'as you surely have heard.' The word *oikonomia* ('stewardship, administration, management') pictures Paul as a household manager entrusted with distributing God's grace to the Gentiles. Grace is not just Paul's personal possession but a trust to be administered.
3. The phrase *kata apokalypsin* ('by revelation') echoes Galatians 1:12 — the mystery came through direct divine disclosure, not human instruction. The phrase *kathōs proeγραψα en oligō* ('as I wrote briefly before') likely refers to the earlier section of this same letter (1:9-10; 2:11-22) rather than to a separate earlier letter.
4. The phrase *tēn synesin mou* ('my understanding, my insight') is not self-congratulation but a claim to genuine comprehension of the mystery through revelation. The phrase *en tō mystēriō tou Christou* ('in/regarding the mystery of Christ') specifies the content: this is Christ's mystery — it belongs to him and concerns him.
5. The comparison *hōs nyn* ('as it has now') does not say the mystery was completely unknown before, but that it was not known with the clarity it now possesses. The phrase *hagiois apostolois kai prophētais* ('holy apostles and prophets') has been debated — some find 'holy' applied to apostles to be un-Pauline. The 'prophets' are likely New Testament prophets (cf. 2:20; 4:11) rather than Old Testament figures. The means of revelation is the Spirit (*en pneumati*).
6. The mystery's content is finally stated in three syn- compounds: *synklēronoma* ('co-heirs'), *syssōma* ('co-bodied, members of the same body'), and *symmetocha* ('co-sharers'). Each prefix *syn-* ('together with') emphasizes full participation alongside Jewish believers. The word *syssōma* appears only here in Greek literature — Paul likely coined it. Gentiles are not second-class members or honorary additions but fully integrated into the one body. The instrument is the gospel (*dia tou euangeliou*); the sphere is Christ (*en Christō Iēsou*).
7. The verb *egenēthēn* ('I was made, I became') is passive — Paul did not choose this ministry; he was appointed. The word *diakonos* ('servant, minister') carries no hierarchical weight here — Paul is a servant of the gospel. The phrase *kata tēn energeian tēs dynamēōs autou* ('according to the working of his power') attributes Paul's entire ministry to divine empowerment, not personal ability.
8. The word *elachistoterō* is a grammatical impossibility — a comparative form of a superlative ('leaster than the least'). Paul intensifies 'least' beyond normal grammar to express how undeserving he feels, likely in view of his persecution of the church (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:9). The adjective *anexichniaston* ('untraceable, unfathomable, inscrutable') was used for footprints that cannot be followed — Christ's riches are too vast to track to their source.
9. The verb *phōtīσαι* ('to illuminate, to bring to light') continues the light/darkness theme. The mystery was *apokekrymmenou* ('having been hidden') — perfect participle indicating long concealment — *apo tōn aiōnōn* ('from the ages, since eternity'). The mystery's hiding place was *en tō theō* ('in God') — only God knew the plan. The participial phrase *tō ta panta ktisanti* ('who created all things') connects the mystery of redemption to creation — the same God who made everything now reveals his plan for reuniting everything.
10. This is one of the most remarkable verses in Ephesians: the church is God's instrument for instructing cosmic powers. The adjective *polypoikilos* ('many-colored, multi-faceted, richly varied') is extremely rare — used for elaborately embroidered fabric. God's wisdom is not monochrome but endlessly complex and beautiful. The 'rulers and authorities in the heavenly places' (*tais archais kai tais exousiais en tois epouraniois*) are spiritual beings who learn about God's wisdom by observing what he does in the church. The reconciliation of Jew and Gentile into one body is the curriculum.
11. The phrase *prothesin tōn aiōnōn* ('purpose of the ages, eternal purpose') frames God's plan as spanning all of history. The verb *epoiēsen* ('he made, he carried out') indicates that this eternal purpose has been realized — it is accomplished fact, not merely intention. Christ Jesus is both the sphere and the agent of this accomplishment.
12. The word *parrēsia* ('boldness, freedom of speech, confidence') was used for the right of a citizen to speak openly in the assembly. The word *prosaḡōgē* ('access, introduction') repeats from 2:18. The phrase *en pepoihēsei* ('with confidence, in trust') intensifies the access — believers approach God not with cringing fear but with bold assurance. The phrase *dia tēs pisteōs autou* ('through his faithfulness/through faith in him') again raises the subjective/objective genitive question.

13. The verb *aitoumai* ('I ask, I request') closes the digression and prepares for the return to prayer. Paul's concern is not his own suffering but the Galatians' potential discouragement at it. The phrase *hētis estin doxa hymōn* ('which is your glory') reframes Paul's imprisonment: his suffering for their sake is their badge of honor — proof that God considers them worth suffering for.
14. Paul resumes the prayer interrupted at verse 1. The phrase *kamptō ta gonata mou* ('I bend my knees') is notable because Jews typically stood to pray; kneeling indicated extraordinary intensity or urgency. The preposition *pros* ('toward, before') indicates movement toward the Father in prayer.
15. There is a wordplay between *patēr* ('father') and *patria* ('family, clan, lineage'). Every family — heavenly and earthly, angelic and human — takes its identity from the one Father. The phrase *en ouranois kai epi gēs* ('in heaven and on earth') encompasses the entire created order.
16. The first petition: inner strengthening. The phrase *kata to ploutos tēs doxēs autou* ('according to the riches of his glory') sets the scale of God's giving — he gives according to the measure of his infinite glory, not according to human capacity. The phrase *eis ton esō anthrōpon* ('in the inner person') refers to the deepest level of human identity — the self that is being renewed by the Spirit (cf. 2 Corinthians 4:16; Romans 7:22).
17. The second petition: Christ's indwelling. The verb *katoikēsai* ('to dwell, to take up permanent residence') is stronger than *paroikēō* ('to sojourn temporarily'). Christ does not visit the heart — he moves in permanently. The perfect participles *errizōmenoi* ('having been rooted') and *tethemeliōmenoi* ('having been established on a foundation') mix botanical and architectural metaphors: love is both the soil and the foundation of the Christian life.
18. The third petition: comprehension of Christ's love. The verb *exischysēte* ('may have full strength, may be empowered') suggests this comprehension requires supernatural enablement. The four dimensions — *platos* ('breadth'), *mēkos* ('length'), *hypsos* ('height'), *bathos* ('depth') — describe something immeasurable. The object is unstated — what is four-dimensional? Most likely Christ's love (specified in v. 19), though some suggest the mystery, God's plan, or Christ himself. The phrase *syn pasin tois hagiois* ('with all the saints') indicates this is not private mysticism but communal knowledge.
19. The deliberate paradox: *gnōnai* ('to know') the love that *hyperballousan tēs gnōseōs* ('surpasses knowledge'). Paul prays for experiential knowledge of something that transcends intellectual comprehension. The final petition reaches the summit: *hina plērōthēte eis pan to plērōma tou theou* ('that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God'). The preposition *eis* ('unto, toward') indicates a goal that is never fully reached — believers are being filled toward God's own fullness. The scope of this prayer is staggering: nothing less than God's own fullness as the measure of human transformation.
20. The doxology opens with one of Paul's most exuberant expressions: *hyperekperissou* ('super-abundantly beyond, immeasurably more'). This compound adverb piles prefix upon prefix: *hyper* ('beyond') + *ek* ('out of') + *perissou* ('abundance'). God's ability exceeds both our requests (*aitoumetha*, 'we ask') and our imagination (*nooumen*, 'we conceive, we think'). The power standard is not theoretical but experiential: *kata tēn dynamin tēn energoumenēn en hēmin* ('according to the power working in us'). The same power that raised Christ (1:19-20) is presently at work in believers.
21. The doxology's unique feature: glory is ascribed *en tē ekklēsia kai en Christō Iēsou* ('in the church and in Christ Jesus'). The church and Christ are paired as the dual venue of God's glory — an extraordinary elevation of the church's significance. The temporal phrase *eis pasas tas geneas tou aiōnos tōn aiōnōn* ('unto all the generations of the age of the ages') extends the doxology through all human history and beyond into eternity.

4

Summary: Ephesians 4 marks the transition from theology (chapters 1-3) to ethics (chapters 4-6), opened by Paul's appeal to 'walk worthy of the calling.' The chapter addresses church unity through a sevenfold confession (one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God), the diversity of spiritual gifts given by the ascended Christ, and the purpose of those gifts — building up the body until it reaches maturity. The second half contrasts the old way of life ('the old self') with the new ('the new self'), calling believers to put off falsehood, anger, stealing, corrupt speech, and bitterness, and to put on truth, generosity, edifying speech, kindness, and forgiveness.

What Makes This Remarkable: The sevenfold unity formula (vv. 4-6) may preserve an early baptismal confession. The quotation from Psalm 68:18 in verse 8 is modified from the original ('received gifts from people' becomes 'gave gifts to people'), a reading that follows an interpretive tradition also found in the Aramaic Targum. The 'descending/ascending' passage (vv. 9-10) is one of the most debated christological texts — does Christ descend to earth (incarnation), to Hades (descent to the dead), or is this the Spirit's descent at Pentecost? The 'speaking the truth in love' phrase (v. 15) has become proverbial.

Translation Friction: The modification of Psalm 68:18 raises questions about Paul's exegetical method. The phrase 'lower parts of the earth' (v. 9) is ambiguous. The list of ministry gifts (v. 11) is debated in terms of whether these are permanent offices or temporary functions. The relationship between 'apostles' here and modern claims to apostleship is contested across traditions.

Connections: The 'worthy walk' echoes Colossians 1:10 and Philippians 1:27. The gift lists connect to Romans 12:6-8 and 1 Corinthians 12:4-11. The old self/new self language parallels Colossians 3:9-10. The ethical instructions share material with the vice/virtue catalogs of Galatians 5:19-23. The 'sealed with the Holy Spirit' (v. 30) echoes 1:13.

¹I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, ²With all lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love; ³Endeavouring to observe the unity of the Inner life in the bond of wholeness. ⁴There is one body and one Spirit — just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call — ⁵One baptism,, one Lord, one faith. ⁶And in you all, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all. ⁷But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. ⁸Therefore it says, "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to people." ⁹(Now the phrase "he ascended" — what does it mean except that he also descended to the lower regions, namely the earth? ¹⁰The one who descended is the same one who also ascended far above all the heavens, so that he might fill all things.) ¹¹And he himself gave some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, ¹²to equip God's people for the work of ministry, so that the body of Christ would be built up, ¹³until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God, becoming mature and growing to the full measure of Christ himself. ¹⁴Then we will no longer be like infants, tossed back and forth by waves, and blown around by every new teaching and by the cunning trickery of people who scheme to deceive. ¹⁵Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, ¹⁶Indeed, from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, makes increase of the body to the edifying of itself in love. ¹⁷So this I say and insist on in the Lord: you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. ¹⁸They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to the hardness of their hearts. ¹⁹Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity with a continual craving for more. ²⁰But that is not how you learned Christ! ²¹If so be that you have listened to him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: ²²That you put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt in keeping with to the deceitful lusts; ²³Let your thinking be made completely new; ²⁴That you put on the new man, which following God is created in righteousness and true holiness. ²⁵Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each of you speak truth with your neighbor, for we are members of one another. ²⁶Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷Neither give location to the devil. ²⁸Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need. ²⁹Let no unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is good for building up, as the need arises, so that it may give grace to those who hear. ³⁰And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. ³²Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ forgave you.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The word *oun* ('therefore') connects the ethical exhortation to the theological foundation of chapters 1-3. The verb *parakaleō* ('I urge, I appeal, I exhort') is not a command but a pastoral appeal. Paul again identifies himself as *desmios* ('prisoner'), lending moral authority to his exhortation. The phrase *axiōs peripatēsai* ('to walk worthily') uses the standard Pauline metaphor for daily conduct. The calling (*klēseōs*) refers to God's call described in chapters 1-3.
2. Four qualities define the worthy walk: *tapeinophrosynē* ('humility' — a virtue despised in Greco-Roman culture but prized in Christianity), *prautēs* ('gentleness, meekness' — strength under control), *makrothymia* ('patience, long-suffering' — a slow fuse), and *anechomenoi allēlōn en agapē* ('bearing with one another in love' — tolerating others' weaknesses because love absorbs offense). These are the same qualities that characterize the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23).

3. The verb *spoudazontes* ('making every effort, being diligent, being zealous') indicates that unity requires active work, not passive agreement. The 'unity of the Spirit' (*tēn henotēta tou pneumatos*) is unity created by the Spirit — it already exists and must be maintained (*tērein*, 'to keep, to guard'), not manufactured. The 'bond of peace' (*syndesmō tēs eirēnēs*) is the ligament that holds the community together — peace is the binding agent.
4. The sevenfold confession begins. The first triad relates to the Spirit's work: one body (the church), one Spirit (the Holy Spirit who animates it), one hope (the eschatological expectation the Spirit generates). The number seven — the biblical number of completeness — may be deliberate: the unity is total.
5. The second triad relates to the Son's work: one Lord (Jesus Christ), one faith (the faith response to the one Lord), one baptism (the rite of initiation into the one body). 'One baptism' may be stated to counter the idea that different types of baptism produce different levels of membership. The creedal rhythm suggests this may be a pre-Pauline confessional formula.
6. The confession climaxes with the Father: one God who is *epi pantōn* ('over all' — sovereign), *dia pantōn* ('through all' — pervasive), *en pasin* ('in all' — immanent). The three prepositions describe God's relationship to creation and to the community from three angles: transcendence, pervasion, and indwelling. The Trinitarian structure of the confession is clear: Spirit (v. 4), Son (v. 5), Father (v. 6).
7. Paul pivots from unity to diversity: *heni de hekastō* ('but to each one'). Unity does not mean uniformity. The passive *edothē* ('was given') attributes the gift to divine initiative. The phrase *kata to metron tēs dōreas tou Christou* ('according to the measure of Christ's gift') indicates Christ determines the distribution — each person receives a measured portion appropriate to their role.
8. Paul quotes Psalm 68:18, but with a significant change: the Hebrew and Greek OT read 'received gifts from/among people,' while Paul writes 'gave gifts to people.' This may follow an interpretive tradition preserved in the Aramaic Targum of Psalm 68, which also reads 'gave.' Paul applies the psalm to Christ's ascension: as a conquering king who distributes spoils to his people, Christ ascended and distributed gifts (the ministry roles of v. 11) to the church.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalms 68:18 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. The phrase *ta katōtera merē tēs gēs* ('the lower parts of the earth') is debated: (1) the earth as the lower region compared to heaven — 'the lower regions, namely the earth' (genitive of apposition), referring to the incarnation; (2) the regions beneath the earth — Hades/Sheol, referring to a descent to the dead between crucifixion and resurrection. Reading (1) is preferred by most modern commentators because the context focuses on incarnation and ascension, not a descent to the dead. We render with the appositional reading while noting the alternative.
10. The identity statement is emphatic: *ho katabas autos estin kai ho anabas* ('the one who descended is himself also the one who ascended'). One person encompasses the full trajectory from highest heaven to lowest earth and back again. The purpose clause *hina plērōsē ta panta* ('so that he might fill all things') connects to 1:23 — Christ fills the entire cosmos with his presence and authority.
11. Christ's gifts to the church are not things but people — he gave persons to serve in specific roles. Five roles (or four, if 'pastors and teachers' is one combined role — the Greek structure *tous de poimenas kai didaskalous* shares a single article, suggesting one role with two functions) are listed. These are not exhaustive (cf. Romans 12; 1 Corinthians 12) but emphasize leadership gifts for the church's growth. The word *euangelistas* ('evangelists') appears only here, in Acts 21:8, and in 2 Timothy 4:5.
12. The noun *katartismōn* ('equipping, preparing, training') was used for setting a broken bone or outfitting a ship for a voyage. The leaders' purpose is not to do all the ministry themselves but to equip the saints (*tous hagious*) to do the work (*ergon diakonias*). Ministry belongs to the entire community; leaders prepare the community for it. The goal is *oikodomēn tou sōmatos tou Christou* ('building up the body of Christ') — growth and maturation of the church.
13. Three goals define the church's maturity: (1) unity in faith and knowledge, (2) mature personhood (*andra teleion* — *teleios* means 'complete, having reached the goal, mature'), (3) the measure of Christ's fullness (*metron hēlikias tou plērōmatos tou Christou*). The third standard is breathtaking: the church's growth target is nothing less than Christ's own fullness. The word *hēlikia* can mean 'stature' or 'maturity/age' — both senses apply.
14. The negative purpose: growth prevents childishness (*nēpioi*, 'infants' — the same word as 'minors' in Galatians 4:1). Two nautical metaphors describe doctrinal instability: *klydōnizomenoi* ('tossed by waves') and *peripheromenoi* ('carried about, driven off course'). The source of the instability is false teachers characterized by *kybeia* ('dice-playing, trickery' — loaded dice), *panourgia* ('craftiness, unscrupulousness'), and *methodeia* ('scheming, stratagems' — from *methodos*, 'a pursuing after, a method of attack').
15. The participle *alētheuontes* ('truthing, being truthful') is broader than just speech — it means living authentically, dealing honestly, being genuine in all things. The qualifier *en agapē* ('in love') prevents truth from becoming a weapon. Growth is directional: *eis auton* ('into him') — the church grows toward and into Christ, its head. The word *kephalē* ('head') carries both authority ('the one in charge') and origin ('the source of life').
16. An anatomical description of the church as Christ's body. The verb *synarmologoumenon* ('being fitted together') repeats from 2:21. The verb *syμβιβασομενον* ('being held together, being knit together') adds the idea of organic connection. The phrase *dia pasēs haphēs tēs epichorēgias* ('through every joint/ligament of supply') pictures the body's connective tissue — each joint or ligament supplies what the neighboring parts need. The phrase *kat' energeian en metrō henos hekastou merous* ('according to the working in the measure of each individual part') means every single member contributes according to their proportion. The result: growth and self-building in love.

17. The verb *martyromai* ('I insist, I testify, I solemnly declare') intensifies the exhortation. The phrase *en mataiotēti tou noos autōn* ('in the futility/emptiness of their mind') diagnoses the root problem: pagan life is characterized by disordered thinking. The word *mataiotēs* ('futility, emptiness, pointlessness') echoes Romans 1:21 ('they became futile in their thinking'). The ethical collapse Paul describes in verses 17-19 is rooted in intellectual and spiritual dysfunction.
18. A chain of spiritual dysfunction: darkened understanding (*eskotōmenoi tē diainoa*) alienation from God's life (*apēlotriōmenoi tēs zōēs tou theou*) ignorance (*agnoian*) hardness of heart (*pōrosin tēs kardias*). The word *pōrosis* ('hardening, callousness') was a medical term for the calcification of bone around a fracture — the heart has become calcified, unable to feel or respond. The chain moves from symptom (darkness) to root cause (hardness).
19. The verb *apēlgēkotes* ('having become callous, having ceased to feel pain') describes moral numbness — the conscience no longer registers wrongdoing. The verb *paredōkan* ('they handed themselves over') echoes Romans 1:24, 26, 28 where God 'hands them over' — here the Gentiles actively surrender themselves. The triad of *aselgeia* ('sensuality'), *akatharsia* ('impurity'), and *pleonexia* ('greed, insatiable desire for more') describes a moral spiral: sensuality leads to impurity, driven by a craving that is never satisfied.
20. The phrase *emathete ton Christon* ('you learned Christ') is unusual — one normally learns about someone or from someone, not learns a person. Christ himself is the content of Christian education, not merely its subject. The emphatic *hymeis de ouch houtōs* ('but you — not in this way!') draws a sharp line between the Gentile lifestyle just described and the believers' new reality.
21. The conditional *ei ge* ('if indeed, assuming that') presumes the condition is met. The phrase *auton ēkousate* ('you heard him') suggests they heard Christ himself through the apostolic proclamation. The phrase *en autō edidachthēte* ('you were taught in him') means their instruction took place within the sphere of Christ's reality. The phrase *kathōs estin alētheia en tō Iēsou* ('just as truth is in Jesus') is striking — Paul rarely uses the bare name 'Jesus' without 'Christ' or 'Lord.' Here the human name may emphasize the concrete, historical reality of Jesus's life and teaching as the standard of truth.
22. The infinitive *apothesthai* ('to put off, to lay aside') uses the clothing metaphor — the old self is a garment to be removed. The *ton palaion anthrōpon* ('the old person, the old self') is not merely old habits but the entire pre-Christian identity. The present participle *phtheiromenon* ('being corrupted, being destroyed') indicates the old self was in a process of active decay — it was not merely flawed but disintegrating. The desires are *tēs apatēs* ('of deception') — they promise satisfaction but deliver destruction.
23. The infinitive *ananeousthai* ('to be renewed') is present tense — renewal is an ongoing process, not a one-time event. The passive voice indicates God's agency in the renewal. The phrase *tō pneumati tou noos hymōn* ('in the spirit of your mind') targets the deepest level of mental and spiritual orientation — the mindset, the inner disposition, the controlling attitudes that shape all thinking and behavior.
24. The clothing metaphor continues: *endysasthai* ('to put on, to clothe yourself with') the *ton kainon anthrōpon* ('the new self'). This new self is not self-generated but *kτισtenta* ('created') — the same creation language as 2:10. The phrase *kata theon* ('according to God, in God's likeness') echoes Genesis 1:26-27 — the new creation restores the divine image. The qualities are *dikaiosynē* ('righteousness' — right relationship) and *hosiotēs* ('holiness, devout integrity') *tēs alētheias* ('of truth' — genuine, not counterfeit).
24. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Genesis 1:26-27. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
25. Paul applies the old self/new self principle to specific behaviors. The first: replace *to pseudos* ('falsehood, the lie') with *alētheia* ('truth'). Paul quotes Zechariah 8:16. The motivation is body-theology: *esmen allēlōn melē* ('we are members of one another'). Lying to a fellow believer is like one body part deceiving another — it is self-destructive absurdity.
25. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Zechariah 8:16 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
26. Paul quotes Psalm 4:4 (LXX). The imperative *orgizesthe* ('be angry') may be permissive ('if you become angry') or genuine ('anger is appropriate in some circumstances'). The qualifier *mē hamartanete* ('do not sin') separates anger from sin — anger itself is not inherently sinful, but it easily becomes so. The sun-going-down image imposes a time limit: anger must be resolved daily, not allowed to fester overnight. The word *parorgismō* ('anger, provocation, irritation') suggests the simmering variety.
26. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalms 4:4. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
27. The word *topon* ('place, room, opportunity') pictures unresolved anger as a beachhead — a foothold from which the devil (*tō diabolō*, 'the slanderer, the accuser') can expand his influence in the community. The connection between anger and the devil suggests that prolonged anger opens the door to evil's work in relationships.
28. The transformation is threefold: from stealing to honest labor to generous sharing. The ethic does not merely stop a negative behavior but redirects the energy toward a positive purpose. The motivation for work is not self-enrichment but *hina echē metadidonai* ('so that he may have something to share'). The entire economic orientation shifts from taking to giving.
29. The adjective *sapros* ('rotten, putrid, unwholesome') was used for rotten fruit or spoiled fish. The replacement is speech that is *agathos pros oikodomēn* ('good for building up') — constructive, timely, grace-giving. The phrase *hina dō charin tois akouousin* ('so that it may give grace to those who hear') makes speech a vehicle of grace — words are not neutral but carry either corruption or grace to their hearers.

- 30.** The verb *lypeite* ('grieve, cause sorrow') attributes personal emotion to the Holy Spirit — the Spirit can be grieved by believers' conduct. This presupposes the Spirit's personhood. The reference to sealing (*esphragisthēte*) recalls 1:13. The phrase *eis hēmeran apolytrōseōs* ('for/until the day of redemption') indicates the seal holds until the final day — the Spirit's presence is the guarantee of complete, future redemption. The ethical implications are profound: the Spirit who guarantees salvation is wounded by the very sins Paul has been cataloging.
- 31.** Six vices are expelled: *pikria* ('bitterness' — resentment that poisons), *thymos* ('wrath' — explosive fury), *orgē* ('anger' — settled hostility), *kraugē* ('clamor' — loud quarreling, shouting), *blasphēmia* ('slander, abusive speech' — not only against God but against people), and *kakia* ('malice' — the general disposition of ill will). The imperative *arthētō* ('let it be removed') is passive — these are to be taken away, eliminated from the community.
- 32.** Three replacement virtues: *chrēstōi* ('kind, good, generous' — related to *Christos* by sound, a connection early Christians noticed), *eusplanchnoi* ('tenderhearted, compassionate' — literally 'good bowels,' since the intestines were considered the seat of deep emotion), and *charizomenoi heautois* ('forgiving one another' — from *charizomai*, 'to give freely, to grace'). The standard for forgiveness is divine: *kathōs kai ho theos en Christō echarisato hymin* ('just as God in Christ forgave you'). God's forgiveness is both the model and the motivation for human forgiveness.

5

Summary: *Ephesians 5 continues the ethical exhortation, calling believers to imitate God and walk in love as Christ loved them. Paul warns against sexual immorality, impurity, greed, and coarse talk — behaviors that have no place among 'children of light.' He contrasts the darkness of the old life with the fruit of light. The chapter then addresses wise living: making the most of every opportunity, understanding the Lord's will, being filled with the Spirit (expressed through psalms, hymns, thanksgiving, and mutual submission). The final section introduces the household code, beginning with the husband-wife relationship, which Paul elevates to a profound mystery about Christ and the church.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The command to 'be filled with the Spirit' (v. 18) is followed not by charismatic manifestations but by worship, thanksgiving, and mutual submission — the Spirit's fullness is expressed communally. The husband-wife passage (vv. 22-33) contains Paul's deepest reflection on marriage as an image of Christ's relationship with the church. The quotation of Genesis 2:24 ('the two shall become one flesh') is called a 'profound mystery' (v. 32) that Paul applies to Christ and the church. The 'Awake, O sleeper' fragment (v. 14) may preserve an early Christian hymn or baptismal formula.*

Translation Friction: *The household code (vv. 22-33) reflects patriarchal assumptions of the first-century Greco-Roman world. Paul both works within and subverts these structures: the call for wives to submit is framed by mutual submission (v. 21) and matched by the radical demand that husbands love their wives as Christ loved the church — sacrificially unto death. We render the text faithfully without either flattening or amplifying its cultural context. The verb 'submit' in verse 22 is not actually present in the Greek — it is carried over from verse 21.*

Connections: *Walking in love (v. 2) echoes 1 John 4:7-12. The light/darkness contrast parallels Romans 13:11-14 and 1 Thessalonians 5:4-8. The Spirit-filling connects to Acts 2 and Galatians 5:16-25. The household code parallels Colossians 3:18-4:1 and 1 Peter 3:1-7. The Christ-church marriage typology draws on Old Testament imagery of God as Israel's husband (Hosea 2; Isaiah 54; Ezekiel 16).*

¹Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. ²Conduct your lives in devotion, as Christ as well has loved us, and has granted himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour. ³But sexual immorality and any kind of impurity or greed must not even be mentioned among you, as is fitting for saints. ⁴Obscene language, foolish talk, and crude joking have no place among you. Instead, let there be thanksgiving. ⁵For you can be sure of this: no sexually immoral or impure or greedy person — such a person is an idolater — has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. ⁶Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the children of disobedience. ⁷Therefore do not become partners with them. ⁸For at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light, ⁹(For the fruit of the Inner life is in all goodness and moral integrity and truth;). ¹⁰Indeed, proving what is acceptable to the Lord. ¹¹Take no part in the fruitless works of darkness, but instead expose them. ¹²For it is shameful even to speak of the things they do in secret. ¹³But everything exposed by the light becomes visible, ¹⁴For this reason he says, Awake

you that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light. ¹⁵Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise people but as wise, ¹⁶Indeed, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. ¹⁷Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. ¹⁸And do not get drunk with wine, for that leads to reckless living. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹Speak to one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord. ²⁰Giving thanks always for all things to God and the Father by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ; ²¹Submit to one another out of reverence for God. ²²Wives, submit to your own husbands as to the Lord, ²³For the husband is the skull of the wife, indeed as Christ is the head of the church — then he is the saviour of the body. ²⁴Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. ²⁵Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, ²⁶Indeed, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the message, ²⁷That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any these people thing. But that it should be sacred and without blemish. ²⁸In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, ³⁰Indeed, since we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. ³¹"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." ³²This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. ³³However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife respect her husband.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The word *mimētai* ('imitators') gives us the English word 'mimic.' Children naturally imitate their parents — believers imitate their Father. The standard is breathtaking: imitate God. The phrase *hōs tekna agapēta* ('as beloved children') provides the relational basis: imitation flows from the security of being loved, not from the anxiety of earning approval.
2. Christ's self-giving love defines the content of the 'walk in love' command. The verb *paredōken heauton* ('gave himself over') echoes Galatians 2:20. Christ is both priest and offering. The phrase *prophoran kai thysian* ('offering and sacrifice') uses Old Testament sacrificial terminology. The phrase *eis osmēn euōdias* ('for a fragrant aroma') quotes the language of acceptable sacrifice from Leviticus 1:9, 13, 17 — Christ's self-offering is the sacrifice God receives with pleasure.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Leviticus 1:9. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
3. The triad *porneia* ('sexual immorality'), *akatharsia* ('impurity'), and *pleonexia* ('greed') groups sexual and economic sin together — both involve taking what belongs to another. The phrase *mēde onomazesthō* ('must not even be named') indicates these behaviors should be so absent from the community that they are not even a topic of conversation. The standard is *kathōs prepei hagiois* ('as is fitting for holy ones') — the believers' identity as 'saints' defines what is appropriate.
4. Three speech vices: *aischrotēs* ('obscenity, shameful speech'), *mōrologia* ('foolish talk, silly speech'), and *eutrapelia* ('coarse wit, crude joking'). The last word (*eutrapelia*) was considered a virtue in Greek rhetoric — 'ready wit' — but Paul regards it as inappropriate when it crosses into sexual or degrading humor. The replacement is *eucharistia* ('thanksgiving') — speech directed upward rather than downward.
5. The equation *pleonektēs, ho estin eidōlōlatrēs* ('the greedy person, who is an idolater') identifies greed as a form of idolatry — the worship of material acquisition (cf. Colossians 3:5). The phrase *tē basileia tou Christou kai theou* ('the kingdom of Christ and of God') uses a single article governing both nouns, closely associating Christ and God as joint rulers of the kingdom. This is one of the strongest christological statements in Ephesians.
6. The 'empty words' (*kenois logos*) may refer to those who argued that grace covers all behavior — a libertine distortion of Paul's own teaching. The phrase *tous huiōis tēs apeitheias* ('the children of disobedience') repeats from 2:2, forming an inclusion: the lifestyle described in 2:1-3 brings divine wrath, and believers must not return to it.
7. The word *symmetochoi* ('co-partners, co-sharers') warns against participation in the behaviors of verse 3-5, not against all contact with unbelievers. The command is about shared practice, not social isolation.
8. Paul does not say they were 'in darkness' but that they were darkness (*ēte skotos*) — darkness was their identity, not merely their environment. Similarly, they do not merely have light — they are light (*phōs en kyriō*). The transformation is ontological, not merely behavioral. The qualifier *en kyriō* ('in the Lord') prevents this from becoming self-congratulation: they are light only in connection with the Lord.
9. The SBLGNT reads 'fruit of the light' (*phōtos*) rather than 'fruit of the Spirit' (*pneumatōs*) found in some manuscripts. The triad *agathōsynē* ('goodness'), *dikaioōsynē* ('righteousness'), and *alētheia* ('truth') describes the harvest produced by a life lived in the light.
10. The verb *dokimazontes* ('testing, discerning, approving after testing') indicates active moral discernment — not following rules mechanically but testing what genuinely pleases the Lord in each situation. This is mature Christian ethics: not a codebook but a relationship with the Lord that develops discernment.

11. The command has two parts: non-participation (*mē synkoinōneite*, 'do not co-participate') and active exposure (*elenchete*, 'reprove, expose, bring to light'). The adjective *akarpois* ('fruitless, unproductive') contrasts with the 'fruit of the light' in verse 9. Darkness produces nothing of lasting value. The verb *elenchō* means both verbal rebuke and the act of exposing something to the light.
12. The phrase *ta krypte ginomena* ('the things done in secret') suggests practices too degrading to describe publicly. Paul's reticence stands in contrast to the Greco-Roman cultural tolerance — or celebration — of such behavior. The verb *legein* ('to speak of') indicates that detailed description would itself be a form of participation.
13. Light's function is revelation: *elenchomena hypo tou phōtos phaneroutai* ('things exposed by the light are made visible'). The light does not destroy but reveals — making the hidden visible. This is both a statement about moral truth (sin cannot hide from light) and about the community's prophetic function (believers' lives expose darkness).
14. The quotation is not from any known Old Testament text. It may be: (1) a free adaptation of Isaiah 60:1 ('Arise, shine, for your light has come'), (2) an early Christian hymn, or (3) a baptismal formula sung when candidates emerged from the water. The imagery of waking from sleep and rising from the dead suggests baptism as a transition from death/darkness to life/light. The promise *epiphausei soi ho Christos* ('Christ will shine on you') makes Christ the source of the light.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 60:1. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. The adverb *akribōs* ('carefully, precisely, accurately') modifies either *blepete* ('look carefully') or *peripatite* ('walk carefully'). Either way, the point is deliberate attention to one's conduct. The wisdom/foolishness contrast echoes Old Testament wisdom literature (Proverbs, Ecclesiastes) and connects to the earlier warning about being 'tossed about' (4:14).
16. The participle *exagorazomenoi* ('buying up, redeeming, making the most of') uses marketplace language: snapping up a bargain before it disappears. The word *kairos* ('opportunity, critical moment') denotes not clock-time (*chronos*) but moments of significance. The reason for urgency: *hai hēmerai ponērai eisin* ('the days are evil'). The present era is hostile territory; opportunities for good must be seized.
17. The contrast between *aphrones* ('senseless, foolish') and *syniete* ('understand, put together') frames Christian living as an exercise in discernment. The goal is understanding to *thelēma tou kyriou* ('the will of the Lord') — not abstract theological knowledge but practical perception of what God wants in each situation.
18. The contrast between wine-intoxication and Spirit-filling is not merely illustrative but substitutionary: where pagans sought ecstasy through wine (particularly in Dionysian worship), believers find genuine fullness through the Spirit. The word *asōtia* ('reckless living, dissipation, debauchery' — literally 'unsaved-ness') describes the waste that drunkenness produces. The imperative *plērousthe* ('be filled') is present tense (continuous: 'keep on being filled'), passive (the Spirit does the filling, not the believer), and plural (this is a community experience). The four participles that follow (vv. 19-21) describe how Spirit-filling manifests.
19. The first expression of Spirit-filling is communal worship. The three categories — *psalmois* ('psalms' — possibly the Old Testament Psalter), *hymnois* ('hymns' — compositions praising God), and *ōdais pneumatikais* ('spiritual songs' — Spirit-inspired compositions) — may overlap. The phrase *tē kardia hymōn* ('with your heart') indicates that external singing must be accompanied by internal reality. Worship is directed *tō kyriō* ('to the Lord').
20. The second expression: thanksgiving. The scope is *pantote* ('always') and *hyper pantōn* ('for everything'). The phrase *en onomati* ('in the name of') indicates that thanksgiving is offered through Christ's mediation and on his authority. Thanksgiving is directed *tō theō kai patri* ('to God the Father').
21. The third expression of Spirit-filling: mutual submission. The participle *hypotassomenoi* ('submitting, placing yourselves under') is reciprocal — *allēlois* ('to one another'). This verse functions as both the conclusion of the Spirit-filling section and the heading for the household code that follows (5:22-6:9). The phrase *en phobō Christou* ('in the fear/reverence of Christ') provides the motive: submission to others flows from reverence for Christ, not from inferiority.
22. The verb 'submit' does not appear in the Greek of this verse — it is carried over from the participle *hypotassomenoi* in verse 21. This grammatical link means the wife's submission to her husband is a specific instance of the mutual submission all believers owe one another. The phrase *hōs tō kyriō* ('as to the Lord') sets the analogy: the husband-wife relationship is patterned on the Christ-church relationship. The word *idiois* ('own') distinguishes this from a general submission of all women to all men.
23. The word *kephalē* ('head') is debated: it can mean 'authority over' or 'source of.' In context, the Christ-church analogy emphasizes sacrificial care more than hierarchical authority (see vv. 25-27). The additional phrase *autos sōtēr tou sōmatos* ('he himself is Savior of the body') applies uniquely to Christ — the husband is not the wife's savior. The analogy has limits, and Paul here acknowledges one.
24. The comparison is drawn: the church's submission to Christ provides the pattern for the wife's submission to her husband. The phrase *en panti* ('in everything') is comprehensive but must be read in light of the analogy's controlling context — submission to Christ is never dehumanizing, and submission 'as to the Lord' (v. 22) sets Christ, not the husband's will, as the ultimate authority.
25. The husband's obligation is staggering: *agapate tas gynaikas* ('love your wives') with the standard *kathōs kai ho Christos ēgapēsen tēn ekklēsia* ('just as Christ loved the church'). Christ's love for the church was expressed in total self-sacrifice (*heauton paredōken hyper autēs*, 'he gave himself up for her'). The husband is called not to command but to die — to sacrifice his own interests for his wife's well-being. In the patriarchal context, this demand was revolutionary.

26. The purpose of Christ's self-giving: *hagiasē* ('to make holy, to sanctify'). The means: *tō loutrō tou hydatos* ('by the washing of water') — almost certainly a reference to baptism — *en rhēmati* ('with the word, in connection with the word'). The word (*rhēma*) may refer to a spoken baptismal confession, to the gospel proclaimed, or to Christ's authoritative word. Christ's sanctifying work combines water (the physical act) and word (the verbal/spiritual reality).
27. The image shifts to a bridal presentation: Christ prepares the church like a bride being prepared for her wedding day. The verb *parastēsē* ('present, place alongside') was used for presenting a bride to the groom. The adjectives describe bridal perfection: *endoxon* ('glorious, splendid'), without *spilon* ('spot, stain'), *rhytida* ('wrinkle'), or any blemish. The goal is *hagia kai amōmos* ('holy and blameless') — the same words used of believers in 1:4. Christ's sanctifying work completes what election purposed.
28. Paul shifts from the Christ-church analogy to a body-analogy: since husband and wife are 'one flesh' (v. 31), loving one's wife is loving oneself. The verb *opheilousin* ('ought, owe, are obligated') frames love not as optional generosity but as marital duty. The logic is profoundly practical: self-interest and spousal love converge in the one-flesh union.
29. The verbs *ektrephei* ('nourishes, feeds, raises to maturity') and *thalpei* ('cherishes, warms, tenderly cares for') describe intimate, nurturing care. The argument from nature: since everyone naturally cares for their own body, and since husband and wife share one body, spousal care is an extension of self-care. The Christ-church analogy returns: Christ nourishes and cherishes the church as his own body.
30. The simple statement *melē esmen tou sōmatos autou* ('we are members of his body') grounds the entire discussion: believers' union with Christ is bodily, intimate, and real. Some manuscripts add 'of his flesh and of his bones' — echoing Genesis 2:23 (Eve from Adam's body) and strengthening the marriage typology. The SBLGNT does not include this addition.
30. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 2:23 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
31. Paul quotes Genesis 2:24 (LXX). The verb *proskollēthēsetai* ('will be joined, will be glued, will cleave') indicates permanent, inseparable attachment. The phrase *eis sarka mian* ('into one flesh') describes a new unity that transcends the original family bond. Paul quotes this not primarily to teach about marriage (though it does) but to reveal the deeper reality to which marriage points — as he explains in verse 32.
31. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 2:24. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
32. The word *mystērion* ('mystery') here does not mean 'puzzling' but 'a hidden reality now revealed.' The Genesis text about husband and wife becoming one flesh contains a deeper meaning (a 'mystery'): it prophetically describes the union of Christ and the church. Marriage is a living parable of the gospel. The Vulgate translated *mystērion* as *sacramentum*, which led to marriage being classified as a sacrament in Western Christianity. Paul's point is christological: marriage's deepest meaning is found in Christ's union with his people.
33. Paul returns from the cosmic typology to practical application. The verb *agapatō* ('let him love') reiterates the husband's primary obligation. The word *phobētai* ('respect, revere') for the wife is debated — *phobos* can mean 'fear' or 'deep respect.' In context (where the controlling image is reverence for Christ, v. 21), 'respect' captures the sense. The summary is asymmetric: husbands are told to love; wives to respect. This may reflect different temptations in first-century marriage, not a permanent hierarchy of duties.

6

Summary: *Ephesians 6 completes the household code with instructions for children and parents, then slaves and masters. The chapter's climax is the armor of God passage (vv. 10-20), one of the most vivid and beloved sections in Paul's letters. Paul identifies the true battle — not against flesh and blood but against cosmic spiritual forces — and equips believers with divine armor: the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shoes of the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit. The chapter closes with personal notes about Tychicus and a final benediction.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The armor of God passage draws on Isaiah's description of God's own armor (Isaiah 59:17; 11:5) — believers wear God's equipment, not their own. The list of spiritual enemies (v. 12) is the fullest taxonomy of evil powers in the New Testament. The only offensive weapon in the armor is 'the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God' (v. 17). Prayer (vv. 18-20) is not a separate piece of armor but the atmosphere in which all the armor functions. Paul's request for prayer that he might speak boldly 'in chains' (v. 20) is poignant — the ambassador is in prison.*

Translation Friction: *The slave-master instructions (vv. 5-9) operate within the institution of slavery without explicitly condemning it. Paul subverts slavery from within (masters and slaves have the same Master in heaven, v. 9) but does not call for abolition. The spiritual warfare language (vv. 10-20) raises questions about how literally to read the cosmic powers. We render the text as given without either literalizing or*

demythologizing.

Connections: *The children/parents instruction parallels Colossians 3:20-21. The slave/master code parallels Colossians 3:22-4:1 and Philemon. The armor imagery draws on Isaiah 59:17 and 11:5, and parallels 1 Thessalonians 5:8 and Romans 13:12. Tychicus also appears in Colossians 4:7-8, Acts 20:4, 2 Timothy 4:12, and Titus 3:12.*

¹Because this was right, children, obey your parents in the Lord: ²"Honor your father and mother" — this is the first commandment with a promise — ³so that it may go well with you and that you may live long on the earth." ⁴Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. ⁵Slaves, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would obey Christ, ⁶Do not work only when they are watching, just to win their approval. Instead, work as servants of Christ, carrying out God's will wholeheartedly. ⁷With upright will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men. ⁸Indeed, knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same will he accept of the Lord, whether he be bond or free. ⁹And masters, treat them the same way. Stop threatening, knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him. ¹⁰Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. ¹¹Put on the full armor of God, so that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. ¹²For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. ¹³Therefore take up the full armor of God, so that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. ¹⁴Stand therefore, having fastened the belt of truth around your waist and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵Your ankles shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. ¹⁶In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the message of God: ¹⁸Praying always with all prayer and earnest prayer in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and earnest prayer for all saints; ¹⁹For me, that utterance may be granted to me, that I may unlock my lips boldly, to render known the mystery of the gospel. ²⁰For which I am an ambassador in bonds — that in it I may speak boldly, as I anything to speak. ²¹So that you also may know how I am and what I am doing, Tychicus the beloved brother and faithful servant in the Lord will tell you everything. ²²I am sending him to you for this very purpose, so that you may know how we are and that he may encourage your hearts. ²³Peace to the brothers and sisters, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The verb *hypakouete* ('obey, listen to, respond to') is stronger than *hypotassō* ('submit'): children are to obey, not merely defer. The phrase *en kyriō* ('in the Lord') qualifies the obedience — it is rendered within the context of the Lord's authority, not unconditionally. The word *dikaion* ('right, just') appeals to a universal moral principle recognized across cultures.
2. Paul quotes the fifth commandment (Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16). The designation 'first commandment with a promise' (*entolē prōtē en epangelia*) is debated — the second commandment also contains a promise of sorts. Paul may mean 'first' in sequence among the commandments that regulate human relationships, or 'first in importance.' The verb *tima* ('honor') encompasses more than obedience — it includes respect, care, and financial support in old age.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 20:12. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Deuteronomy 5:16. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
3. The promise is twofold: *eu soi genētai* ('it may go well with you') and *esē makrochronios epi tēs gēs* ('you may be long-lived on the earth'). The original Deuteronomy text refers to 'the land' (the promised land of Israel). Paul universalizes it to 'the earth' (*tēs gēs*), applying the promise to all believers regardless of geography.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Exodus 20:12 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. The counter-instruction to fathers (*pateres*, which could include both parents) limits parental authority: *mē parorgizete* ('do not provoke to anger, do not exasperate'). Harsh, arbitrary, or demeaning treatment drives children to frustration and resentment. The positive instruction: *ektrepheete* ('bring up, nourish, raise to maturity') *en paideia kai nouthesia kyriou* ('in the discipline and instruction of the Lord'). *Paideia* ('discipline, training,

education') and nouthesia ('instruction, admonition, correction') together cover the full range of child-rearing — the Lord's standards, not the parents' whims, set the curriculum.

5. The word *douloi* ('slaves') refers to actual enslaved persons, not employees. The qualifying phrase *kata sarka* ('according to the flesh') relativizes the master's authority — they are masters only in the physical realm, not spiritually. The phrase *meta phobou kai tromou* ('with fear and trembling') is the same phrase Paul uses for approaching God's work (Philippians 2:12) — it suggests conscientious seriousness, not cringing terror. The phrase *en haplotēti tēs kardias* ('in sincerity of heart') means without duplicity.
6. The compound *ophthalmodouleian* ('eye-service, working only when watched') may be a Pauline coinage. The contrast: *anthrōpareskoi* ('people-pleasers') versus *douloi Christou* ('slaves of Christ'). The true master is Christ, and his 'eye' is always present. The phrase *ek psychēs* ('from the soul, from the heart') demands interior motivation, not merely external compliance.
7. The phrase *met' eunoias* ('with good will, with genuine enthusiasm') transforms compulsory labor into willing service. The phrase *hōs tō kyriō kai ouk anthrōpois* ('as to the Lord and not to people') reframes the entire master-slave relationship: every act of service, however menial, is rendered to Christ. This does not endorse slavery but radically transforms the slave's experience of it.
8. The verb *komisetai* ('will receive back, will be repaid') promises divine recompense for all good work. The equalizer *eite doulos eite eleutheros* ('whether slave or free') demolishes the social distinction before the Lord's judgment seat: at the final accounting, social status is irrelevant. The Lord evaluates and rewards the substance of the work, not the status of the worker.
9. The command to masters is revolutionary for its context: *ta auta poieite pros autous* ('do the same things toward them') — treat slaves with the same good will and sincerity required of slaves. The imperative *anientes tēn apeilēn* ('stop the threatening') uses the present participle suggesting an ongoing practice that must cease. The theological grounding is devastating to the institution: *kai autōn kai hymōn ho kyrios estin en ouranois* ('both their Lord and yours is in heaven'). Master and slave share the same Master. The word *prosōpolēmpsia* ('favoritism, partiality, respect of persons') literally means 'face-taking' — the heavenly Master does not judge by social face.
10. The phrase *tou loipou* ('finally, henceforth') signals the letter's closing section. The passive imperative *endynamousthe* ('be empowered, be made strong') indicates that the strength is not the believer's own but is received from outside — *en kyriō* ('in the Lord'). The phrase *en tō krati tēs ischyos autou* ('in the strength of his might') reuses two of the four power-words from 1:19, connecting the armor passage to the resurrection-power prayer. The same divine power that raised Christ is now the believer's equipment for spiritual battle.
11. The word *panoplian* ('full armor, complete equipment') is a military term for the complete outfit of a heavily armed soldier — not piecemeal protection but comprehensive equipment. It is *tou theou* ('of God') — God's own armor, not human manufacture. The purpose is *stēnai* ('to stand, to hold your ground'). The enemy's strategy is *methodeias* ('schemes, stratagems, cunning tactics') — the devil attacks through deception, not merely through force. The word *methodeias* (from *methodos*, 'a following after, a pursuit') suggests systematic, calculated attack plans.
12. The word *palē* ('wrestling, struggle') denotes hand-to-hand combat. The fourfold repetition of *pros* ('against') identifies the real enemies: (1) *archas* ('rulers, principalities'), (2) *exousias* ('authorities'), (3) *kosmokratōras tou skotous toutou* ('world-rulers of this darkness' — *kosmokratōr* is a title used for powerful gods and emperors), (4) *pneumatika tēs ponērias en tois epouraniois* ('spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places'). The phrase 'flesh and blood' (*haima kai sarka* — note the reversed order) means other human beings. The real enemy is never the person in front of you but the spiritual forces behind them.
13. The imperative *analabete* ('take up, pick up') pictures a soldier reaching for weapons laid out before him. The phrase *en tē hēmera tē ponēra* ('in the evil day') could mean the final eschatological battle, a particularly intense season of testing, or any day of spiritual conflict. The goal is twice stated: *antistēnai* ('to resist, to withstand') and *stēnai* ('to stand'). The phrase *hapanta katergasamenoi* ('having accomplished everything, having done all') means after exhausting every effort — when the battle is over, still standing.
14. The first two pieces: (1) The belt (*perizōsamenoī tēn osphyn*, 'having girded the waist') of truth (*en alētheia*). The Roman soldier's belt held the tunic in place for movement and supported the scabbard — everything depended on it. Truth (both doctrinal integrity and personal honesty) is the foundation that holds all else together. (2) The breastplate (*thōraka*) of righteousness (*tēs dikaiosynēs*). The breastplate protected vital organs. Righteousness — both the imputed righteousness of Christ and the lived righteousness of the believer — protects the heart. This draws on Isaiah 59:17 where God puts on righteousness as a breastplate.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 59:17. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. The third piece: military sandals (*caligae*) that gave soldiers sure footing on any terrain. The word *hetoimasia* ('readiness, preparation, firm footing') suggests either readiness to proclaim the gospel or the firm footing that the gospel provides. The phrase *tou euangelioi tēs eirēnēs* ('of the gospel of peace') is striking in a military context — the soldier's weapon is a message of peace. This echoes Isaiah 52:7 ('How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news of peace').
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 52:7 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
16. The fourth piece: the *thyreon* ('large shield, door-shaped shield') — the Roman *scutum*, a full-body shield that could be interlocked with others to form a wall. Faith as shield provides comprehensive protection. The phrase *ta belē tou ponērou ta pepyromēna* ('the flaming arrows/missiles of the evil one') refers to arrows dipped in pitch and ignited — designed to set targets on fire. The verb *shesai* ('to extinguish, to quench') suggests the shield soaks the fire-arrows, absorbing their destructive power.

- 17.** The fifth piece: the helmet (perikephalaian) of salvation (tou sōtēriou). The helmet protects the head — salvation guards the mind. This echoes Isaiah 59:17 and 1 Thessalonians 5:8. The sixth piece: the sword (machairan) of the Spirit (tou pneumatos) — the only offensive weapon. It is identified as rhēma theou ('the word of God'). The word rhēma (a specific spoken word) rather than logos (the broader concept of word/message) may emphasize the specific, situational application of Scripture — the right word at the right moment, wielded by the Spirit's guidance.
- 17.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 59:17. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 18.** Prayer is not a seventh piece of armor but the atmosphere in which the armor functions — the breath of the warrior. Four 'all' words emphasize comprehensiveness: dia pasēs proseuchēs ('with every prayer'), en panti kairō ('at every opportunity'), en pasē proskarterēsei ('with all perseverance'), peri pantōn tōn hagiōn ('for all the saints'). The phrase en pneumatī ('in the Spirit') indicates Spirit-empowered prayer. The verb agrypnountes ('staying alert, keeping watch') is a military term for sentinel duty — spiritual warfare demands constant vigilance.
- 19.** Paul requests prayer for himself — not for release from prison but for effective proclamation. The passive dothē logos ('words may be given') attributes effective speech to divine gift. The phrase en parrēsia ('with boldness, with freedom of speech') echoes 3:12. The content is to mystērion tou euangeliou ('the mystery of the gospel') — the full truth about Christ's universal reconciliation, the letter's central theme.
- 20.** The phrase presbeuō en halysei ('I am an ambassador in chains') is magnificently ironic. An ambassador (presbeuō) carries the authority and dignity of the sovereign who sent him; a prisoner (en halysei, 'in a chain') has no authority or dignity. Paul is both — a royal envoy in shackles. The phrase hōs dei me lalēsai ('as it is necessary for me to speak, as I ought to speak') indicates that bold proclamation is not optional but obligatory.
- 21.** Tychicus is described as agapētos adelphos ('beloved brother') and pistos diakonos ('faithful servant/minister'). He serves as the letter carrier and Paul's personal representative. The nearly identical wording in Colossians 4:7 suggests these letters were sent together. Tychicus would supplement the letter with firsthand reports about Paul's situation.
- 22.** The dual purpose: (1) information about Paul (hina gnōte ta peri hēmōn, 'so that you may know about us'), and (2) encouragement (parakalesē tas kardias hymōn, 'that he may encourage your hearts'). The verb parakaleō here carries its comforting, encouraging sense — the Ephesians may have been anxious about Paul's imprisonment.
- 23.** The benediction is unusual in its third-person form ('peace to the brothers') rather than the typical second-person ('peace to you'). This may support the circular-letter theory — the blessing addresses a wider audience. The triad eirēnē ('peace'), agapē ('love'), and pistis ('faith') summarizes the letter's major themes. The source is double: apo theou patros kai kyriou Iēsou Christou ('from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ').
- 24.** The final word is en aphtharsia ('in incorruptibility, with an imperishable love'). The word aphtharia is typically used for immortality or imperishability (1 Corinthians 15:42, 50, 53-54). Applied to love for Christ, it describes a love that does not decay, fade, or end. The letter that began with grace (1:2) ends with grace — the alpha and omega of the Christian life.