

Language: English

Book: Ephesians

Introduction to Ephesians

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of Ephesians

1. Greeting and prayer for the spiritual blessings in Christ (1:1-23)
2. Sin and salvation (2:1-10)
3. Unity and peace (2:11-22)
4. Mystery of Christ in you, made known (3:1-13)
5. Prayer for riches of his glory to make them strong (3:14-21)
6. Unity of the Spirit, building up the Body of Christ (4:1-16)
7. New life (4:17-32)
8. Imitators of God (5:1-21)
9. Wives and husbands; children and parents; slaves and masters (5:22-6:9)
10. Armor of God (6:10-20)
11. Final greeting (6:21-24)

Who wrote the Book of Ephesians?

Paul wrote Ephesians. Paul was from the city of Tarsus. He had been known as Saul in his early life. Before becoming a Christian, Paul was a Pharisee. He persecuted Christians. After he became a Christian, he traveled several times throughout the Roman Empire telling people about Jesus.

The Apostle Paul helped start the church in Ephesus on one of his trips. He also lived in Ephesus for a year and a half and helped the believers there. Paul probably wrote this letter while he was in prison in Rome.

What is the Book of Ephesians about?

Paul wrote this letter to the Christians in Ephesus to explain God's love for them in Christ Jesus. He described the blessings that God was giving them because they were now united with Christ. He explained that all believers are united together, whether Jew or Gentile. Paul also wanted to encourage them to live in a way that pleases God.

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title, "Ephesians." Or they may choose a clearer title, such as "Paul's Letter to the Church in Ephesus" or "A Letter to the Christians in Ephesus."

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

What was the "hidden truth" in the Book of Ephesians?

The expression translated in the ULB as "hidden truth" or "hidden" occurs six times. By it Paul always meant something that God had to reveal to human beings because they could not know it on their own. It always referred to something about how God planned to save mankind. Sometimes it was about his plan to cause peace between himself and mankind. Sometimes it was about his plan to unite Jews and Gentiles through Christ. Gentiles are now able to benefit from the promises of Christ as equals with the Jews.

What did Paul say about salvation and righteous living?

Paul said much about salvation and righteous living in this letter and in many of his letters. He said that God has been very kind and saved Christians because they believe in Jesus. Therefore, after they become Christians, they should live in a righteous way to show that they have faith in Christ. (See: righteous)

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

Singular and plural "you"

In this book, the word "I" refers to Paul. The word "you" is almost always plural and refers to the believers who may read this letter. The three exceptions to this are: 5:14, 6:2, and 6:3.

What did Paul mean by the "new self" or the "new man"?

When Paul spoke of the "new self" or the "new man," he meant the new nature that a believer receives from the Holy Spirit. This new nature was created in God's image (See: 4:24). The phrase "new man" is also used for God causing peace between Jews and Gentiles. God brought them together as one people that belong to him (See: 2:15).

What did Paul mean by the expressions "in Christ," "in the Lord," and others like them?

This kind of expression occurs in 1:1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 20; 2:6, 7, 10, 13, 15, 16, 18, 21, 22; 3:5, 6, 9, 11, 12, 21; 4:1, 17, 21, 32; 5:8, 18, 19; 6:1, 10, 18, 21. Paul used these phrases to express the idea of a very close union between Jesus Christ and believers--that believers belong to Christ. Belonging to Christ means the believer is saved and is made a friend with God.

These phrases also have specific meanings that depend on how Paul used them in a particular passage. Depending on the the context, the word "in" can mean "because of," "by means of," "that agrees with," "in submission to," "in the manner of," or "in regard to." The translator may represent those more immediate senses. But, if possible, it would be good for the translator to choose a word or phrase that represents both the immediate sense and the sense of "in union with." (See: inchrist)

What are the major issues in the text of the Book of Ephesians?

- "in Ephesus" (1:1). Some early manuscripts do not include this expression, but it is probably in the original letter. The ULB, UDB, and many modern versions include it.
- "because we are members of his body" (5:30). Most modern versions, including the ULB, read in this way. Some older translations read, "because we are members of his body and of his bones." Translators might decide to choose the second reading if other versions in their area have it that way. If translators choose the second reading, they should put the additional words inside square brackets ([]) to indicate that they are probably not original to the Book of Ephesians.

Ephesians

Chapter 1

¹ Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God, to God's holy people in Ephesus, who are faithful in Christ Jesus. ^[1]

² Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

³ May the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ be praised, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. ⁴ God chose us in him from the foundation of the world, that we may be holy and blameless in his sight in love. ⁵ God predestined us ^[2] for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will. ⁶ Our adoption results in the praise of his glorious grace that he has freely given us in the One he loves. ⁷ In Jesus Christ we have redemption through his blood and the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace. ⁸ He multiplied this grace to us with all wisdom and understanding. ⁹ God made known to us the mystery of his will, according to what pleased him, and which he demonstrated in Christ, ¹⁰ with a view to a plan for the fullness of time, to bring all things together, all things in heaven and on earth, under one head, even Christ. ¹¹ In Christ we were given an inheritance, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything according to the purpose of his will. ¹² God appointed us as heirs so that we, who are the first to hope in Christ, would be for the praise of his glory. ¹³ In Christ, you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, you believed in him and were sealed with the

promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the possession, to the praise of his glory.

¹⁵ For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's holy people, ¹⁶ I have not stopped thanking God for you as I mention you in my prayers. ¹⁷ I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, will give to you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him. ¹⁸ I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, that you may know the hope to which he has called you and the riches of his glorious inheritance among all God's holy people. ¹⁹ In my prayers I ask that you may know the incomparable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of the strength of his might. ²⁰ This is the same power that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places. ²¹ He seated Christ far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named. Christ will rule, not only in this age, but also in the age to come. ²² God subjected all things under Christ's feet and gave him to the church as head over all things. ²³ The church is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

Footnotes

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- 1:1 ^[1]Some important and ancient Greek copies do not have,
 1:5 ^[2]Some interpreters place the last phrase of Ephesians 1:4

Ephesians 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

"I pray"

Paul structures part of this chapter like a prayer of praise to God. But Paul is not just talking to God. He is teaching the church in Ephesus. He also tells the Ephesians how he is praying for them.

Special concepts in this chapter

Predestination

Many scholars believe this chapter teaches on a subject known as "predestination." This is related to the biblical concept of "predestine." Some scholars take this to indicate that God has, from before the foundation of the world, chosen some people to eternally save. Christians have different views on what the Bible teaches on this subject. So translators need to take extra care when translating this chapter. (See: predestine)

Ephesians 1:1

General Information:

Paul names himself as the writer of this letter to the believers at the church at Ephesus. Except where noted, all instances of "you" and "your" refers to the Ephesian believers as well as all believers and so are plural.

Paul, an apostle ... to God's holy people in Ephesus

Your language may have a particular way of introducing the author of a letter and its intended audience. Alternate translation: "I, Paul, an apostle ... write this letter to you, God's holy people Ephesus"

who are faithful in Christ Jesus

"In Christ Jesus" and similar expressions are metaphors that frequently occur in the New Testament letters. They express the strongest kind of relationship possible between Christ and those who believe in him.

Ephesians 1:2

Grace to you and peace

This is a common greeting and blessing that Paul often uses in his letters.

Ephesians 1:3

General Information:

In this book, unless otherwise stated, the words "us" and "we" refer to Paul and the believers in Ephesus, as well as all believers.

Connecting Statement:

Paul opens his letter by talking about the believers' position and their safety before God.

May the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ be praised

This can be stated in an active form. Alternate translation: "Let us praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ"

who has blessed us
"for God has blessed us"

every spiritual blessing
"every blessing coming from the Spirit of God"

in the heavenly places
"in the supernatural world." The word "heavenly" refers to the place where God is.

in Christ
Possible meanings 1) the phrase "in Christ" refers to what Christ has done. Alternate translation: "through Christ" or "through what Christ has done" or 2) "in Christ" is a metaphor referring to our close relationship with Christ. Alternate translation: "by uniting us with Christ" or "because we are united with Christ"

Ephesians 1:4

from the foundation of the world
The author speaks of the world as if it were a building set on a foundation. Alternate translation: "from the time he created the world"

holy and blameless
Paul uses two similar words to emphasize moral goodness.

Ephesians 1:5

God predestined us for adoption
The word "us" refers to Paul, the Ephesian church, and all believers in Christ. Alternate translation: "God planned long ago to adopt us"

God predestined us
"God chose us ahead of time" or "God chose us long ago"

for adoption as sons
Here "adoption" refers to becoming part of God's family. Here the word "sons" refers to males and females. Alternate translation: "to be adopted as his children"

through Jesus Christ
God brought believers into his family by the work of Jesus Christ.

his will
"God's will"

Ephesians 1:6

General Information:
The words "his" and "he" refer to God.

he has freely given us in the One he loves
"he has kindly given to us by means of the One he loves"

the One he loves
"the One he loves, Jesus Christ" or "his Son, whom he loves"

Ephesians 1:7

riches of his grace
Paul speaks of God's grace as if it were material wealth. Alternate translation: "greatness of God's grace" or "abundance of God's grace"

Ephesians 1:8

He multiplied this grace to us
"He gave us this great amount of grace" or "He was extremely kind to us"

with all wisdom and understanding
Possible meanings are 1) "because he has all wisdom and understanding" 2) "so that we might have great wisdom and understanding"

Ephesians 1:9

according to what pleased him
Possible meanings are 1) "because he wanted to make it known to us" or 2) "which was what he wanted."

which he demonstrated in Christ
"he demonstrated this purpose in Christ"

in Christ
"by means of Christ"

Ephesians 1:10

with a view to a plan
A new sentence can be started here. If you start a new sentence here, you will need to end 1:9 with a period instead of a comma. Alternate translation: "He did this with a view to a plan" or "He did this, thinking about a plan"

for the fullness of time
"for when the time is right" or "for the time that he has appointed"

Ephesians 1:11

we were given an inheritance, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God gave us an inheritance, having predestined us according to his plan. For he works"

Ephesians 1:12

so that we, who are the first to hope in Christ
The pronoun "we" refer to Paul and the other Jewish believers, not to the Ephesian believers.

the first to hope in Christ

"the first people to hope in Christ." They confidently expected that Christ would fulfill God's promises. Alternate translation: "the first to trust in Christ"

so that we, ... Christ, would be for the praise of his glory. Possible meanings are 1) other people would praise God because of the grace he had shown the believers ([Ephesians 1:6](#)). Alternate translation: "we, ... Christ, would live in a way that brings glory to God." or "people would praise God because of the glorious grace he showed us who ... Christ." Or 2) believers would praise God for his glory. Alternate translation: "so that we, ... Christ, would praise him for his glory as long as we live."

Ephesians 1:13

General Information:

Paul has been speaking in the previous two verses about himself and the other Jewish believers, but now he begins speaking about the Ephesian believers.

the word of truth

Possible meanings are 1) "the message about the truth" or 2) "the true message."

were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit

Wax was placed on a letter and stamped with a symbol representing the person who wrote the letter. Paul uses this custom as a picture to show how God has used the Holy Spirit to assure us that we belong to him. Alternate translation: "God has sealed you with the Holy Spirit that he promised"

Ephesians 1:14

the guarantee of our inheritance

What God has promised and will provide is spoken of as though it were property or wealth that one would inherit from a family member. Alternate translation: "the guarantee that we will receive what God has promised"

the redemption of the possession

The abstract nouns "redemption" and "possession" can be translated using the verbs "redeem" and "possess," respectively. Possible meanings of "possession" are 1) God possesses. Alternate translation: "God redeems us as his own people" Or 2) Christians possess. Alternate translation: "we take possession of our inheritance"

Ephesians 1:15

Connecting Statement:

Paul prays for the Ephesian believers and praises God for the power that believers have through Christ.

Ephesians 1:16

I have not stopped thanking God

Paul uses "not stopped" to emphasize that he continues to thank God. Alternate translation: "I continue to thank God"

Ephesians 1:17

a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him

"spiritual wisdom to understand his revelation"

Ephesians 1:18

that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened

Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's mind. The phrase "eyes of your heart" is a metaphor for one's ability to gain understanding. Alternate translation: "that you may gain understanding and be enlightened"

that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened

This may be stated in the active tense. Alternate translation: "that God may enlighten your heart" or "that God may enlighten your understanding"

may be enlightened

"may be made to see"

the hope to which he has called you

Here "the hope" refers to what God wants us to confidently expect. Alternate translation: "what he has called you to confidently expect" or "what he has called you to confidently wait for"

to which he has called you

to which he has invited you

the riches of his glorious inheritance among all God's holy people

What God has promised and will provide is spoken of as though it were property or wealth that one would inherit from a family member. Alternate translation: "the riches of all the glorious things he has promised to give to all God's holy people"

all God's holy people

"all those whom he has set apart for himself" or "all those who belong completely to him"

Ephesians 1:19

the incomparable greatness of his power

God's power is far beyond all other power.

toward us who believe

"for us who believe"

the working of the strength of his might

"the strength of his might that is at work for us"

the strength of his might

"his mighty strength" or "his very great strength"

Ephesians 1:20

raised him

"made him alive again"

when he raised him from the dead

Here "the dead" is a nominal adjective that means all dead people together in the underworld. To be raised from among them means to become alive again. Alternate translation: "when he brought him back to life" or "when he caused him to be alive again"

seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places

The person who sits "at the right hand" of a king sits at his right side and rules with all the authority of the king at whose right hand or side he sits. This is a metonym of location that represents the authority that the person in that location possesses. Alternate translation: "gave him all authority to rule from heaven"

seated him at his right hand

To sit at the "right hand of God" is a symbolic action of receiving great honor and authority from God. Alternate translation: "seated him in the place of honor and authority beside him"

in the heavenly places

"in the supernatural world." The word "heavenly" refers to the place where God is. See how you translated this in Ephesians 1:3.

Ephesians 1:21

far above all rule and authority and power and dominion

Rulers, authorities, dominions, and powers are different terms for the ranks of supernatural beings, both angelic and demonic. Alternate translation: "far above all types of supernatural beings"

every name that is named

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: Possible meanings are 1) "every name that man gives" or 2) "every name that God gives"

name

Possible meanings are 1) title or 2) position of authority.

in this age

"at this time"

in the age to come

"in the future"

Ephesians 1:22

subjected all things under Christ's feet

Here "feet" represents Christ's lordship, authority, and power. Alternate translation: "put all things under Christ's power" or "made all things subject to Christ"

head over all things

Here "head" refers to the leader or the one who is in charge. Alternate translation: "ruler over all things"

Ephesians 1:23

The church is his body

Just as with a human body, the head

his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all

Possible meanings are 1) the body is the fullness of Christ. This means Christ fills or gives to the church everything that he has to give, and Christ also fills all things in every way or 2) "the fullness" refers back to "him," that is, Christ in 1:22, and "him" in 1:23 refers to God the Father. This means the full deity of the Father dwells within Christ, and the Father fills all things in every way or 3) the body is the completion of Christ. This means that Christ as the "head" is completed by the church, which is "his body," and Christ fills all things in every way.

Chapter 2

¹ And as for you, you were dead in your trespasses and sins, ² in which you once walked, according to the ways of this world. You were living according to the ruler of the authorities of the air, the spirit that is working in the sons of disobedience. ³ Once we all lived among these people, fulfilling the evil desires of our flesh, and carrying out the desires of the flesh and of the mind. We were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of humanity. ⁴ But God is rich in mercy because of his great love with which he loved us. ⁵ While we were dead in trespasses, he made us alive together in Christ—by grace you have been saved. ⁶ God raised us up together with Christ, and God made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷ so that in the ages to come he might show to us the immeasurably great riches of his grace expressed in his kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this did not come from you, it is the gift of God, ⁹ not from works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good deeds that God planned long ago for us, so that we would walk in them.

¹¹ Therefore remember that once you were Gentiles in the flesh. You are called "uncircumcision" by what is called the "circumcision" in the flesh made by human hands. ¹² For at that time you were separated from Christ, foreigners to citizenship in Israel, strangers to the covenants of the promise, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away from God have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, because he made us both one. By his flesh he broke down the dividing wall of hostility. ¹⁵ He set aside the law with its commands and ordinances so that he might create in himself one new man out of two, so making peace. ¹⁶ Christ reconciles both peoples into one body to God through the cross, putting to death the hostility. ¹⁷ Jesus came and proclaimed the good news of peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸ For through Jesus we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹ So then, now you Gentiles are no longer foreigners and strangers. Rather you are fellow citizens with God's holy people and members of the household of God. ²⁰ You have been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, and Christ Jesus himself is the cornerstone. ²¹ In him the whole building fits together and grows as a holy temple in the Lord. ²² It is in him that you also are being built together as a dwelling place for God in the Spirit.

Ephesians 2 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter focuses on a Christian's life before coming to believe in Jesus. Paul then uses this information to explain how a person's former way of living is distinct from a Christian's new identity "in Christ." (See: faith)

Special concepts in this chapter

One body

Paul teaches about the church in this chapter. The church is made of two different groups of people (Jews and Gentiles). They are now one group or "body." The church is also known as the body of Christ. Jews and Gentiles are united in Christ.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

"Dead in trespasses and sins"

Paul teaches that those who are not Christians are "dead" in their sin. Sin binds or enslaves them. This makes them spiritually "dead." Paul writes that God makes Christians alive in Christ.

Descriptions of worldly living

Paul uses many different ways to describe how non-Christians act. They "lived according to the ways of this world" and are "living according to the ruler of the authorities of the air," "fulfilling the evil desires of our sinful nature," and "carrying out the desires of the body and of the mind."

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"It is the gift of God"

Some scholars believe "it" here refers to being saved. Other scholars believe that it is faith that is the gift of God. Because of how the Greek tenses agree, "it" here more likely refers to all of being saved by God's grace through faith.

Flesh

This is a complex issue. "Flesh" is possibly a metaphor for a person's sinful nature. The phrase "Gentiles in the flesh" indicates the Ephesians once lived without any concern for God. "Flesh" is also used in this verse to refer to the physical part of man. (See: flesh)

Ephesians 2:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul reminds the believers of their past and the way they now are before God.

you were dead in your trespasses and sins

This speaks of sinful people being unable to obey God as if they were people who were physically dead.

in your trespasses and sins

The words "trespasses" and "sins" have similar meanings. Paul uses them together to emphasize the greatness of the people's sin. They can also be translated using the verbs "trespass" and "sin," respectively. Alternate translation: "because you had trespassed and sinned"

Ephesians 2:2

in which you once walked

The word "walked" is a metaphor for the way they lived their lives. To say that they "walked in" their trespasses and sins [Ephesians 2:1]

according to the ways of this world

The apostles also used "world" to refer to the selfish behaviors and corrupt values of the people living in this world. Alternate translation: "according to the values of people living in the world" or "following the principles of this present world"

according to the ruler of the authorities of the air

"doing what the ruler of the authorities of the air wants them to do." These words expand upon "according to the age of this world." The "ruler of the authorities of the air" is the devil or Satan.

the spirit that is working in the sons of disobedience

These words expand upon "the ruler of the authorities of the air." This is another way of speaking of the devil or Satan.

the sons of disobedience

Ephesians 2:3

the desires of the flesh and of the mind

The words "flesh" and "mind" represent the entire person.

flesh

This word is a metonym for the body, which is made of flesh. Alternate translation: "body"

children of wrath

people with whom God is angry

Ephesians 2:4

God is rich in mercy

"God is abundant in mercy" or "God is very kind to us"

because of his great love with which he loved us

"because of his great love for us" or "because he loves us very much"

Ephesians 2:5

by grace you have been saved

This can be stated in an active form. Alternate translation: "God saved us because of his great kindness toward us"

Ephesians 2:6

God raised us up together with Christ

Here to raise up is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. Possible meanings are 1) because God has caused Christ to come alive again, God has already given Paul and the believers in Ephesus new spiritual life.

Alternate translation: "God has given us new life because we belong to Christ" or 2) because God has caused Christ to come alive again, the believers in Ephesus can know that after they die they will live with Christ, and Paul can speak of the believers living again as if it has already happened. Alternate translation: "We can be sure that God will give us life as he has caused Christ to come alive again"

in the heavenly places

"in the supernatural world." The word "heavenly" refers to the place where God is. See how this is translated in Ephesians 1:3.

in Christ Jesus

"In Christ Jesus" and similar expressions are metaphors that frequently occur in the New Testament letters. They express the strongest kind

of relationship possible between Christ and those who believe in him.

Ephesians 2:7

in the ages to come
"in the future"

Ephesians 2:8

For by grace you have been saved through faith
God's kindness to us is the reason he made it possible for us to be saved from judgment if we simply trust in Jesus. Alternate translation: "God saved you by grace because of your faith in him"

this did not

The word "this" refers back to "by grace you have been saved by faith."

Ephesians 2:9

not from works, so that no one may boast
You may want to start a new sentence here.
Alternate translation: "Salvation does not come from works, so that no one may boast" or "God does not save a person because of what that person does, so no one can boast and say that he earned his salvation"

Ephesians 2:10

in Christ Jesus
"In Christ Jesus" and similar expressions are metaphors that frequently occur in the New Testament letters. They express the strongest kind of relationship possible between Christ and those who believe in him.

we would walk in them

Walking on a path is a metaphor for how a person lives his life. Here "in them" refers to the "good deeds." Alternate translation: "we would always and continually do those good deeds"

Ephesians 2:11

Connecting Statement:

Paul reminds these believers that God has now made Gentiles and Jews into one body through Christ and his cross.

Gentiles in the flesh

This refers to people who were not born Jewish.

uncircumcision

Non-Jewish people were not circumcised as babies and thus the Jews considered them people who do not follow any of God's laws. Alternate translation: "uncircumcised pagans"

circumcision

This was another term for Jewish people because all male infants were circumcised. Alternate translation: "circumcised people"

what is called the "circumcision" in the flesh made by human hands

Possible meanings are 1) "Jews, who are circumcised by humans" or 2) "Jews, who circumcise the physical body."

by what is called

This can be translated with an active form.
Alternate translation: "by what people call" or "by those whom people call"

Ephesians 2:12

separated from Christ

"not knowing Christ" or "not belonging to Christ"

foreigners to citizenship in Israel

"foreigners, not citizens of Israel"

strangers to the covenants of the promise

Paul speaks to the Gentile believers as if they had been foreigners, kept out of the land of God's covenant and promise. Alternate translation: "not belonging to those with whom God made the covenants of the promise"

having no hope

They had no reason to confidently expect anything good to happen. Specifically, they had no hope that God would save them and give them eternal life with him. Alternate translation: "not hoping in God" or "not confidently waiting for eternal life with God"

Ephesians 2:13

But now in Christ Jesus

Paul is marking a contrast between the Ephesians before they believed in Christ and after they believed in Christ.

you who once were far away from God have been brought near by the blood of Christ

Not belonging to God due to sin is spoken of as being far away from God. Belonging to God because of the blood of Christ is spoken of as being brought near to God. Alternate translation: "you who once did not belong to God now belong to God because of the blood of Christ"

by the blood of Christ

The blood of Christ is a metonym for his death. Alternate translation: "by Christ's death" or "when Christ died for us"

Ephesians 2:14

he himself is our peace

The word "himself" here emphasizes that Jesus alone is the reason that Jews and Gentiles can worship God as one peaceful community. Alternate translation: "he is the one who enables us to live in peace with each other"

our peace

The word "our" refers to Paul and his readers and so is inclusive.

he made us both one

"he made the Jews and Gentiles one"

By his flesh

The words "his flesh," his physical body, are a metonym for his body dying. Alternate translation: "By the death of his body on the cross" or "By dying on the cross" or "By his actions as a mortal man"

he broke down the dividing wall of hostility

Paul is speaking of Jews and Gentiles being hostile to each other and unable to worship God together as if they were on different sides of a wall. Because Jesus died, Gentiles as well as Jews can now worship God. Alternate translation: "he made it possible for Jews and Gentiles not to be hostile to each other anymore"

Ephesians 2:15

He set aside the law with its commands and ordinances

Jesus's blood satisfied the law of Moses so that both the Jews and Gentiles can live at peace in God.

one new man

a single new people, the people of redeemed humanity

in himself

It is union with Christ that makes reconciliation possible between Jews and Gentiles.

Ephesians 2:16

Christ reconciles both peoples

"Christ brings the Jews and the Gentiles together in peace"

through the cross

The cross here represents Christ's death on the cross. Alternate translation: "by means of Christ's death on the cross"

putting to death the hostility

Stopping their hostility is spoken of as if he killed their hostility. By dying on the cross Jesus eliminated the reason for Jews and Gentiles to be hostile toward each other. Neither are now required to live according to the law of Moses. Alternate

translation: "stopping them from hating one another"

Ephesians 2:17

Connecting Statement:

Paul tells the Ephesian believers that present Gentile believers are also now made one with the Jewish apostles and prophets; they are a temple for God in the Spirit.

proclaimed the good news of peace

"proclaimed the good news that tells that God and people can be at peace with each other" or "proclaimed the good news that is itself the way that people can be at peace with each other"

you who were far away

This refers to the Gentiles or non-Jews.

those who were near

This refers to the Jews.

Ephesians 2:18

For through Jesus we both have access

Here "we both" refers the believing Jews

in one Spirit

All believers, both Jewish and Gentile, are given the right to enter into the presence of God the Father by the same Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 2:19

you Gentiles ... the household of God

Paul is using a metaphor to tell his Gentile readers that though God formerly did not consider them part of his people, God now considers them part of his people.

foreigners and strangers ... fellow citizens ... and members of the household

The words "foreigners" and "strangers" mean almost the same thing, so "strangers and foreigners" may be a doublet. However, Paul is contrasting "foreigners and strangers" with "fellow citizens ... and members." The word "citizens" refers to having political rights, so here "foreigners" probably refers to people living in a country not their own and having no political rights. The word "members" refers to being part of a family, so "strangers" probably refers to people who are not part of a family.

Ephesians 2:20

You have been built on the foundation

Paul speaks of God's people as if they were a building. Christ is the cornerstone, the apostles are the foundation, and the believers are the structure.

You have been built

This can be stated in the active tense. Alternate translation: "God has built you"

Ephesians 2:21

the whole building fits together and grows as a holy temple

Paul continues to speak of Christ's family as if it were a building. In the same way a builder fits stones together while building, so Christ is fitting us together.

In him ... in the Lord

"In Christ ... in the Lord Jesus" These metaphors express the strongest kind of relationship possible between Christ and those who believe in him.

Ephesians 2:22

in him

"in Christ" This metaphor expresses the strongest kind of relationship possible between Christ and those who believe in him.

you also are being built together as a dwelling place for God in the Spirit

This describes how believers are being put together to become a place where God will permanently live through the power of the Holy Spirit.

you also are being built together

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God is also building you together"

Chapter 3

¹ For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles— ² I assume that you have heard of the stewardship of the grace of God that was given to me for you. ³ The mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly. ⁴ When you read about this, you will be able to understand my insight into this mystery about Christ. ⁵ In other generations this mystery was not made known to the sons of men. But now it has been revealed by the Spirit to his holy apostles and prophets. ⁶ This hidden truth is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, and fellow members of the body, and they share the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

⁷ For I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given to me through the working of his power. ⁸ To me—although I am the least of all God's holy people—this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ ⁹ and to bring to light for everyone the plan—the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things. ¹⁰ This plan was made known through the church so the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places would come to know the many-sided nature of the wisdom of God. ¹¹ This happened according to the eternal plan that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. ¹² For in Christ we have boldness and access with confidence because of our faith in him. ¹³ Therefore I ask you not to be discouraged because of my tribulations for you, which is your glory.

¹⁴ For this reason I bend my knees to the Father, ¹⁵ from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named. ¹⁶ I pray that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with power through his Spirit, who is in your inner person. ¹⁷ I pray that Christ may live in your hearts through faith and that you may be rooted and founded in his love, ¹⁸ in order that you might be able to understand, along with all God's holy people, what is the width, the length, the height, and the depth, ¹⁹ and to know the love of Christ, which goes beyond knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

²⁰ Now to him who is able to do far beyond all that we ask or think, according to his power that works in us, ²¹ to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.

Ephesians 3 General Notes

Structure and formatting

"I pray"

Paul structures part of this chapter as a prayer to God. But Paul is not just talking to God. He is both praying for and instructing the church in Ephesus.

Special concepts in this chapter

Mystery

Paul refers to the church as a "mystery." The role of the church in the plans of God was once not known. But God has now revealed it. Part of this mystery involves the Gentiles having equal standing with the Jews in the plans of God.

Ephesians 3:1

For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles—

Paul started a sentence, but he did not finish it.

For this reason

This refers to what Paul was speaking about in chapter 2. Alternate translation: "Because of God's grace to you Gentiles" or "Because God has made you Gentiles members of his household"

the prisoner of Christ Jesus

Paul was in prison because people did not like him preaching about Christ Jesus. Alternate translation: "the prisoner for Christ Jesus" or "the prisoner for preaching about Christ Jesus"

Ephesians 3:2

the stewardship of the grace of God that was given to me for you

"the responsibility that God gave me to bring his grace to you"

Ephesians 3:3

The mystery was made known to me by revelation

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I learned about the mystery by revelation" or "God revealed the mystery to me"

The mystery

The mystery is God's plan, which God had not clearly told people about earlier. Alternate translation: "God's secret plan" or "The hidden truth"

as I have written briefly

Paul refers to another letter he had written to these people.

Ephesians 3:4

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Ephesians 3:5

In other generations this mystery was not made known to the sons of men

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God did not make this truth known to people in the past"

But now it has been revealed by the Spirit

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "But now the Spirit has revealed it" or "But now the Spirit has made it known"

his holy apostles and prophets

"the apostles and prophets whom God set apart to do this work"

Ephesians 3:6

the Gentiles are fellow heirs ... through the gospel

This is the hidden truth Paul began to explain in the previous verse. The Gentiles who receive Christ also receive the same things as the Jewish believers.

fellow members of the body

The church is often referred to as the body of Christ.

in Christ Jesus

"In Christ Jesus" and similar expressions are metaphors that frequently occur in the New Testament letters. They express the strongest kind of relationship possible between Christ and those who believe in him.

through the gospel

Possible meanings are 1) because of the gospel the Gentiles are fellow sharers in the promise or 2) because of the gospel the Gentiles are fellow heirs

and members of the body and fellow sharers in the promise.

Ephesians 3:7

General Information:

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Ephesians 3:8

unsearchable

unable to be completely known

riches of Christ

Paul speaks of the truth about Christ and the blessings he brings as if they were material wealth.

Ephesians 3:9

the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things

This can be stated in active form. "God, who created all things, kept this plan hidden for long ages in the past"

Ephesians 3:10

This plan was made known through the church

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God made this plan known by means of the church"

rulers and authorities

These words share similar meanings. Paul uses them together to emphasize that every spiritual being will know God's wisdom. See how you translated similar words in [Ephesians 1:21]

in the heavenly places

"in the supernatural world." The word "heavenly" refers to the place where God is. See how this is translated in Ephesians 1:3.

the many-sided nature of the wisdom of God

God's great and complex wisdom is spoken of as if it were an object with many sides. Alternate translation: "the great and complex wisdom of God"

Ephesians 3:11

according to the eternal plan

"in keeping with the eternal plan" or "consistent with the eternal plan"

Ephesians 3:12

Connecting Statement:

Paul praises God in his sufferings and prays for these Ephesian believers.

we have boldness

"we are without fear" or "we have courage"

access with confidence

It may be helpful to state explicitly that this access is into God's presence. Alternate translation: "access into God's presence with confidence" or "freedom to enter into God's presence with confidence"

confidence

"certainty" or "assurance"

Ephesians 3:13

for you, which is your glory

Here "your glory" is a metonym for the pride they should feel or will feel in the future kingdom. The Christians in Ephesus should be proud of what Paul is suffering in prison. This can be stated as a new sentence. Alternate translation: "for you. This is for your benefit" or "for you. You should be proud of this"

Ephesians 3:14

For this reason

You may need to make explicit what the reason is. Alternate translation: "Because God has done all this for you"

I bend my knees to the Father

Bowed knees are a picture of the whole person in an attitude of prayer. Alternate translation: "I bow down in prayer to the Father" or "I humbly pray to the Father"

Ephesians 3:15

from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named

The act of naming here probably also represents the act of creating. Alternate translation: "who created and named every family in heaven and on earth"

Ephesians 3:16

I pray that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with power

"I pray that God, because he is so great and powerful, would allow you to become strong with his power." This is the first item for which Paul bends his knees and prays.

would grant

"would give" or "would cause"

in your inner person

Here the phrase "inner person" refers to the personality, heart, or soul. Alternate translation: "in your heart" or "in your soul"

Ephesians 3:17

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues the prayer he began in Ephesians 3:14.

I pray that Christ may live in your hearts through faith and that you may be rooted and founded in his love

This is the second item which Paul prays that God will "grant" the Ephesians "according to the riches of his glory." The first is that they would "be strengthened" ([Ephesians 3:16](#)).

that Christ may live in your hearts through faith

Here "heart" represents a person's inner being, and "through" expresses the means by which Christ lives within the believer. Christ lives in the hearts of believers because God graciously allows them to have faith. Alternate translation: "that Christ may live within you because you trust in him"

you may be rooted and founded in his love

Paul speaks of their faith as if it were a tree that has deep roots or a house built on a solid foundation. Alternate translation: "that you will be like a firmly rooted tree and a building built on stone because of his love"

Ephesians 3:18

that you might be able to understand

This is the first item which Paul says will be the result of the Christians being rooted and grounded in Christ's love ([Ephesians 3:17](#)).

all God's holy people

"all believers in Christ" or "all the saints"

the width, the length, the height, and the depth

Possible meanings are 1) these words describe the greatness of God's wisdom, Alternate translation: "how very wise God is" or 2) these words describe the intensity of Christ's love for us. Alternate translation: "how much Christ loves us"

Ephesians 3:19

to know the love of Christ, which goes beyond knowledge

This is the second item which Paul says will be the result of the Christians being rooted and grounded in Christ's love ([Ephesians 3:17](#)).

that you may be filled with all the fullness of God

This is the third item for which Paul bends his knees and prays ([Ephesians 3:14](#)). The first is that they would "be strengthened" ([Ephesians 3:16](#)), and the second is that they "can understand" ([Ephesians 3:18](#)).

Ephesians 3:20

General Information:

The words "we" and "us" in this book continue to include Paul and all believers.

Connecting Statement:

Paul concludes his prayer with a blessing.

Now to him who

"Now to God, who"

to do far beyond all that we ask or think

"to do much more than all that we ask or think" or
"to do things that are much greater than all that we
ask him for or think about"

Ephesians 3:21

General Information:

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Chapter 4

¹ I, therefore, as the prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk worthily of the calling by which you were called. ² I urge you to live with great humility and gentleness and patience, bearing with one another in love. ³ Do your best to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴ There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling. ⁵ And there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶ and one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. ⁷ To each one of us grace has been given according to the measure of the gift of Christ. ⁸ It is as scripture says:

"When he ascended on high,
he led the captives into captivity,
and he gave gifts to the people."

⁹ What is the meaning of "he ascended," except that he also descended into the lower regions of the earth? ¹⁰ He who descended is the same person who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things. ¹¹ Christ gave some to be apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers ¹² to equip God's holy people for the work of service, for the building up of the body of Christ, ¹³ until we all reach the unity of faith and knowledge of the Son of God, so that we become mature and reach the measure of the fullness of Christ. ¹⁴ Christ builds us up so that we should no longer be children who are tossed back and forth by the waves, carried away by every wind of doctrine and by the trickery of people in their deceitful schemes. ¹⁵ Instead, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, that is, Christ. ¹⁶ Christ builds the whole body, and it is joined and held together by every supporting ligament, and when each part works together, that makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

¹⁷ Therefore, I say and insist on this in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their minds. ¹⁸ They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their hearts. ¹⁹ They have become shameless and have committed themselves to sensuality, and they practice every kind of uncleanness with greed. ²⁰ But that is not how you learned about Christ. ²¹ I assume that you have heard about him, and that you were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus. ²² You were taught to put off what belongs to your former manner of life, to put off the old man. It is the old man that is corrupt because of its deceitful desires. ²³ You were taught to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, ²⁴ and to put on the new man that is created in the image of God—in true righteousness and holiness.

²⁵ Therefore, get rid of lies, and let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor, because we are members of one another. ²⁶ Be angry and do not sin. Do not let the sun go down on your anger. ²⁷ Do not give an opportunity to the devil. ²⁸ The one who had been stealing must steal no longer. Instead, he must labor, working at what is good with his hands, so that he may have something to share with those who are in need. ²⁹ Do not let any harmful talk come out of your mouth. Use only words that are good for the edification of those who need it, so that your words give grace to the hearers. ³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, for it is by him that you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹ Put away all bitterness, rage, anger, quarreling, and insults, along with every kind of evil. ³² Be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.

Ephesians 4 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in verse 8, which is quoted from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

Spiritual gifts

Spiritual gifts are specific supernatural abilities that the Holy Spirit gives to Christians after they come to believe in Jesus. These spiritual gifts were foundational to developing the church. Paul lists here only some of the spiritual gifts. (See: faith)

Unity

Paul considers it very important that the church is united. This is a major theme of this chapter.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Old man and new man

The term "old man" probably refers to the sinful nature with which a person is born. The "new man" is the new nature or new life that God gives a person after they come to believe in Christ.

Ephesians 4:1

Connecting Statement:

Because of what Paul has been writing to the Ephesians, he tells them how they should live their lives as believers and again emphasizes that believers are to agree with each other.

as the prisoner for the Lord

"as someone who is in prison because of his choice to serve the Lord"

walk worthily of the calling

Walking is a common way to express the idea of living one's life.

Ephesians 4:2

to live with great humility and gentleness and patience

"to always be very humble, gentle, and patient"

Ephesians 4:3

to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace

Here Paul speaks of "peace" as if it were a bond that ties people together. This is a metaphor for being united with other people by living peacefully with them. Alternate translation: "to live peacefully with one another and remain united, as the Spirit made possible"

Ephesians 4:4

one body

The church is often referred to as the body of Christ.

one Spirit

"one Holy Spirit"

you were called in one hope of your calling

Here the word "call" means "invite" or "choose." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God invited you to one hope when he invited you" or "God chose you to hope for one thing when he chose you"

one hope

Here the word "hope" refers to the thing to hope for. Alternate translation: "one thing to hope for" or "one thing to confidently wait for"

Ephesians 4:5

General Information:

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Ephesians 4:6

Father of all ... over all ... through all ... and in all

The word "all" here means "everything."

Ephesians 4:7

Connecting Statement:

Paul reminds believers of the gifts that Christ gives believers to use in the church, which is the whole body of believers.

To each one of us grace has been given

This can be stated using an active form. Alternate translation: "God has given grace to each one of us" or "God gave a spiritual gift to each believer"

grace has been given

Here grace refers to a spiritual gift or ability. Alternate translation: "a spiritual gift has been given" or "ability has been given"

according to the measure of the gift of Christ

Here "the gift of Christ" refers to a gift that Christ has given. Alternate translation: "according to the amount that Christ has given us"

Ephesians 4:8

General Information:

The quotation here is from the book of Psalms in the Old Testament. King David wrote this psalm.

When he ascended on high

"When he went up to the very high place"

Ephesians 4:9

he ascended

"he went up"

he also descended

"he also came down"

into the lower regions of the earth

Possible meanings are 1) the lower regions are a part of the earth. Alternate translation: "into the lowest place on earth" or 2) "the lower regions" is

another way of referring to the earth. Alternate translation: "into the lower regions, the earth"

Ephesians 4:10

that he might fill all things

"so that he might be present everywhere in his power"

fill

"complete" or "satisfy"

Ephesians 4:11

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Ephesians 4:12

to equip God's holy people

"to prepare the people he has set apart" or "to provide the believers with what they need"

for the work of service

"so they can serve others"

for the building up of the body of Christ

Paul is speaking of people who grow spiritually as if they were doing exercises to increase the strength of their physical bodies.

building up

"improvement" or "strengthening"

body of Christ

The "body of Christ" refers to all of the individual members of Christ's Church.

Ephesians 4:13

reach the unity of faith and knowledge of the Son of God

The believers need to know Jesus as the Son of God if they are to be united in faith and mature as believers.

reach the unity of faith

"become equally strong in faith" or "become united together in faith"

Son of God

This is an important title for Jesus.

become mature

"become mature believers"

mature

"fully developed" or "grown up" or "complete"

Ephesians 4:14

be children

Paul refers to believers who have not grown spiritually as if they were children who have had

very little experience in life. Alternate translation: "be like children"

tossed back and forth ... carried away by every wind of doctrine

This speaks of a believer who has not become mature and follows wrong teaching as if that believer were a boat that the wind is blowing in different directions on the water.

by the trickery of people in their deceitful schemes

"by crafty people who trick believers with clever lies"

Ephesians 4:15

into him who is the head

Paul uses the human body to describe how Christ causes believers to work together in harmony as the head of a body causes the body parts to work together to grow healthy.

Ephesians 4:16

Christ builds the whole body ... makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love

Paul uses the human body to describe how Christ causes believers to work together in harmony as the head of a body causes the body parts to work together to grow healthy.

by every supporting ligament

A "ligament" is a strong band that connects bones or holds organs in place in the body.

Ephesians 4:17

Connecting Statement:

Paul tells the Ephesians what they should no longer do now that they as believers are sealed by the Holy Spirit of God.

Therefore, I say and insist on this in the Lord

"Because what I have just said, I will say something more to strongly encourage you because we all belong to the Lord"

that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their minds

The word "walk" here is a metaphor for the way a person lives his life, especially whether he does right or does wrong. Alternate translation: "stop living the way the Gentiles live, with their worthless thoughts"

Ephesians 4:18

They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God

Here "darkened in their understanding" is a metaphor that means not to be able to understand the truth. And "alienated from the life of God" is a metaphor that means to not have the life that God gives. Alternate translation: "They do not

understand what is true, and they do not have the life that God gives to people"

because of the ignorance that is in them
"because they refuse to learn what is true"

because of the hardness of their hearts
Here "hearts" is a metonym for people's minds. The phrase "hardness of their hearts" is a metaphor that means "stubbornness." Alternate translation: "because they are stubborn" or "because they refuse to listen to God"

Ephesians 4:19

have committed themselves to sensuality
Paul speaks of these people as if they were objects that they themselves were giving to other people, and he speaks of the way they want to satisfy their physical desires as if it were the person to whom they give themselves. Alternate translation: "only want to satisfy their physical desires"

they practice every kind of uncleanness with greed
"they are continually practicing every kind of uncleanness"

uncleanness
This word for ritual uncleanness is a metaphor for the guilt that comes from sinful acts. It can be translated using the word "unclean." Alternate translation: "sinful act"

Ephesians 4:20

But that is not how you learned about Christ
The word "that" refers to the way the Gentiles live, as described in [Ephesians 4:17-19](#). This emphasizes that what the believers learned about Christ was the opposite of that. Alternate translation: "But what you learned about Christ was not like that"

Ephesians 4:21

I assume that you have heard ... and that you were taught
Paul knows that the Ephesians have heard and been taught.

you were taught in him
Possible meanings are 1) "Jesus's people have taught you" or 2) "someone has taught you because you are Jesus's people."

as the truth is in Jesus
"as everything about Jesus is true"

Ephesians 4:22

to put off what belongs to your former manner of life
Paul is speaking of moral qualities as if they were pieces of clothing. Alternate translation: "to stop living according to your former manner of life"

to put off the old man
Paul is speaking of moral qualities as if they were pieces of clothing. Alternate translation: "to stop living as your former self did"

old man
The "old man" refers to the "old nature" or "former self."

that is corrupt because of its deceitful desires
Paul speaks of the sinful human nature as if it were a dead body falling apart in its grave.

Ephesians 4:23

to be renewed in the spirit of your minds
This may be translated with an active form. Alternate translation: "to allow God to change your attitudes and thoughts" or "to allow God to give you new attitudes and thoughts"

Ephesians 4:24

in true righteousness and holiness
"truly righteous and holy"

Ephesians 4:25

get rid of lies
"stop telling lies"

we are members of one another
"we belong to one another" or "we are members of God's family"

Ephesians 4:26

Be angry and do not sin
"You may get angry, but do not sin" or "If you become angry, do not sin"

Do not let the sun go down on your anger
The sun going down represents nightfall or the end of the day. Alternate translation: "You must stop being angry before night comes" or "Do not let the sun set while you are still angry with someone"

Ephesians 4:27

Do not give an opportunity to the devil
"Do not give the devil an opportunity to lead you into sin"

Ephesians 4:28

General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.

Ephesians 4:29

harmful talk
This refers to speech that is cruel or rude.

for the edification of those

"for encouraging those" or "for strengthening those"

give grace to the hearers

"help those who hear you"

Ephesians 4:30

do not grieve

"do not distress" or "do not upset"

for it is by him that you were sealed for the day of redemption

The Holy Spirit assures believers that God will redeem them. Paul speaks of the Holy Spirit as if he were a mark that God puts on believers to show that he owns them. Alternate translation: "for he is the seal that assures you that God will redeem you on the day of redemption" or "for he is the one who assures you that God will redeem you on the day of redemption" or

the day of redemption

Here redemption is a metaphor for causing people to no longer be affected by sin. The idea in the noun

"redemption" can be expressed with a phrase.

Alternate translation: "the day when God will redeem his people" or "the day when God will free his people from sin"

Ephesians 4:31

Connecting Statement:

Paul finishes his instructions on what believers should not do and ends with what they must do.

Put away all bitterness, rage, anger

"Put away" here is a metaphor for not continuing to have certain attitudes or behaviors. Alternate translation: "You must not allow these things to be part of your life: bitterness, rage, anger"

rage

intense anger

Ephesians 4:32

Be kind

"Instead, be kind"

tenderhearted

"gentle and compassionate towards others"

Chapter 5

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

³ But sexual immorality or any kind of uncleanness or of greed must not even be named among you, for these are improper for God's holy people. ⁴ Let there be no filthiness, no foolish talk, and no crude jokes—all of which are improper. Instead there should be thanksgiving. ⁵ For you know and are certain that no sexually immoral, impure, or greedy person—that is, an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. ⁶ Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience. ⁷ Therefore, do not join in with them. ⁸ For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light ⁹ (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), ¹⁰ and test and approve what is pleasing to the Lord. ¹¹ Do not associate with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. ¹² For it is disgraceful even to mention the things they do in secret. ¹³ But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible. ¹⁴ For anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says,

"Awake, you sleeper,
and arise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you."

¹⁵ Look carefully how you walk—not as unwise but as wise. ¹⁶ Redeem the time because the days are evil. ¹⁷ Therefore, do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. ¹⁸ And do not get drunk with wine, for that leads to reckless behavior. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit, ¹⁹ speaking to each other in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart, ²⁰ always giving thanks for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God the Father, ²¹ being subject to one another in reverence for Christ.

²² Wives, submit to your husbands, as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ also is the head of the church, himself the Savior of the body. ²⁴ But as the church is subject to Christ, so also wives to their husbands in everything. ²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ²⁶ so that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷ so that he might present the church to himself as glorious, without stain or wrinkle or any such thing, but holy and blameless. ²⁸ In the same way husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself. ²⁹ For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and treats it with care, just as Christ nourishes and treats the church with care, ³⁰ because we are members of his body. ³¹ "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and will be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." ³² This hidden truth is great—but I am speaking about Christ and the church. ³³ Nevertheless, each of you also must love his own wife as himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

Ephesians 5 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in verse 14.

Special concepts in this chapter

Darkness and Light

In this chapter Paul teaches how God's people should live. He uses the image of darkness to represent sin and the image of light to represent righteousness.

Christ and his church as a model for marriage

Paul teaches husbands and wives to relate to each other as Christ and the church relate to each other.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Wives, submit to your husbands

Scholars are divided over how to understand this passage in its historical and cultural context. Some scholars believe men and women are perfectly equal in all things. Other scholars believe God created men and women to serve in distinctly different roles in marriage and the church. Translators should be careful not to let how they understand this issue affect how they translate this passage.

Ephesians 5:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues to tell the believers how they should and should not live as God's children.

Therefore be imitators of God

"Therefore you should do what God does."

Therefore refers back to Ephesians 4:32 which tells why believers should imitate God, because Christ forgave believers.

as beloved children

God desires us to imitate or follow him since we are his children. Alternate translation: "as dearly loved children imitate their fathers" or "because you are his children and he loves you dearly"

Ephesians 5:2

walk in love

Walking is a common way to express the idea of living one's life. Alternate translation: "live a life of love" or "always love each other"

a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God

"like a sweet-smelling offering and sacrifice to God"

Ephesians 5:3

But sexual immorality or any kind of uncleanness or of greed must not even be named among you

"Do not do anything that would let anyone think that you are guilty of sexual immorality or any kind of uncleanness or greed"

any kind of uncleanness

"any moral uncleanness"

uncleanness

This word for ritual uncleanness is a metaphor for the guilt that comes from sinful acts. It can be translated using the word "unclean." Alternate translation: "sinful act"

Ephesians 5:4

Instead there should be thanksgiving

"Instead you should thank God"

Ephesians 5:5

inheritance

Receiving what God has promised believers is spoken of as if it were inheriting property and wealth from a family member.

Ephesians 5:6

empty words

words that have no truth to them

Ephesians 5:7

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Ephesians 5:8

For you were once darkness

Just as one cannot see in the dark, so people who love to sin lack spiritual understanding.

but now you are light in the Lord

Just as one can see in the light, so people whom God has saved understand how to please God.

Walk as children of light

Walking on a path is a metaphor for how a person lives his life. Alternate translation: "Live as people who understand what the Lord wants them to do"

Ephesians 5:9

the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness, and truth

"Fruit" here is a metaphor for "result" or "outcome." Alternate translation: "the result of living in the light is good work, right living, and truthful behavior"

Ephesians 5:10

General Information:

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Ephesians 5:11

Do not associate with the unfruitful works of darkness

Paul speaks of the useless, sinful things that unbelievers do as if they are evil deeds people do in the dark so no one will see them. Alternate translation: "Do not do useless, sinful things with unbelievers"

unfruitful works

actions that do nothing good, useful, or profitable. Paul is comparing evil actions to an unhealthy tree that produces nothing good.

expose them

Speaking against the works of darkness is spoken of as bringing them out into the light so that people can see them. Alternate translation: "bring them out into the light" or "uncover them" or "show and tell people how wrong these actions are"

Ephesians 5:12

General Information:

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Ephesians 5:13

when anything is exposed by the light

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "when the light shines on something"

Ephesians 5:14

General Information:

It is unknown if this quotation is a combination of quotations from the prophet Isaiah or a quotation from a hymn sung by the believers.

anything that becomes visible is light

"people can clearly see everything that comes into the light." Paul makes this general statement in order to imply that God's Word shows people's actions to be good or bad. The Bible often speaks of God's truth as if it were light that could reveal the character of something.

Awake, you sleeper, and arise from the dead

Possible meanings are 1) Paul is addressing unbelievers who need to wake up from being dead spiritually just as a person who has died must come alive again in order to respond, or 2) Paul is addressing the Ephesian believers and using death as a metaphor for their spiritual weakness.

the dead

All those who have died. This expression describes all dead people together in the underworld. To arise from among them speaks of becoming alive again.

you sleeper ... shine on you

These instances of "you" refer to the "sleeper" and are singular.

Christ will shine on you

Christ will enable an unbeliever to understand how evil his deeds are and how Christ will forgive him and give him new life, just as light shows what actually is there that darkness hid.

Ephesians 5:15

Look carefully how you walk—not as unwise but as wise

Wise people can identify sin, so they guard themselves from it and flee from it. Alternate translation: "Therefore you must be careful to live as a wise person rather than a foolish person"

Ephesians 5:16

Redeem the time

Using time wisely is spoken of as if it were redeeming the time. Alternate translation: "Do the best things you can with your time" or "Use time wisely" or "Put time to its best use"

because the days are evil

The word "days" is a metonym for what people do during those days. Alternate translation: "because the people around you are doing all kinds of evil things"

Ephesians 5:17

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Ephesians 5:18

Connecting Statement:

Paul ends his instructions on how all believers should live.

And do not get drunk with wine

"You should not get drunk from drinking wine"

Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit

"Instead, you should be controlled with the Holy Spirit"

Ephesians 5:19

psalms and hymns and spiritual songs

Possible meanings are that 1) Paul is using these words as a merism for "all sorts of songs to praise God" or 2) Paul is listing specific forms of music.

psalms

These are probably songs from the Old Testament book of Psalms that Christians sang.

hymns

These are songs of praise and worship that may have been written specifically for Christians to sing.

spiritual songs

Possible meanings are 1) these are songs that Holy Spirit inspires a person to sing right at that moment or 2) "spiritual songs" and "hymns" are doublets and mean basically the same thing.

with all your heart

Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's thoughts or inner being. The phrase "with all your heart" means to do something with enthusiasm. Alternate translation: "with all of your being" or "enthusiastically"

Ephesians 5:20

in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ

"because you belong to our Lord Jesus Christ" or "as people who belong to our Lord Jesus Christ"

Ephesians 5:21

General Information:

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Ephesians 5:22

Connecting Statement:

Paul begins to explain how Christians are to submit themselves to one another ([Ephesians 5:21](#)). He starts with instructions to wives and husbands on how they should act toward each other.

Ephesians 5:23

the head of the wife ... the head of the church

The word "head" represents the leader.

Ephesians 5:24

Christ, so also wives to their husbands

"Christ, so also must wives be subject to their husbands" or "Christ. In the same way, wives also must be subject to their husbands"

Ephesians 5:25

love your wives

"unselfishly serve your wives"

gave himself up

"allowed people to kill him"

for her

Paul speaks of the assembly of believers as though it were a woman whom Jesus will marry. Alternate translation: "for us"

Ephesians 5:26

sanctify her ... cleansed her

Paul speaks of the assembly of believers as though it were a woman whom Jesus will marry. Alternate translation: "sanctified us ... cleansed us"

having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word

Possible meanings are 1) Paul is referring to God making Christ's people clean by God's word and

through water baptism in Christ or 2) Paul speaks of God making us spiritually clean from our sins by the message as if God were making our bodies clean by washing them with water.

Ephesians 5:27

without stain or wrinkle

Paul speaks of the church as though it were a garment that is clean and in good condition. He uses the same idea in two ways to emphasize the church's purity.

holy and blameless

The word "blameless" means basically the same thing as "holy." Paul uses the two together to emphasize the church's purity.

Ephesians 5:28

as their own bodies

That people love their own bodies may be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "as husbands love their own bodies"

Ephesians 5:29

his own flesh

The word "flesh" here is a metonym for the body that is made of flesh. Alternate translation: "his own body"

but nourishes

"but feeds"

Ephesians 5:30

we are members of his body

Here Paul speaks of the close union of believers with Christ as if they were part of his own body, for which he would naturally care.

Ephesians 5:31

General Information:

The quotation is from the writings of Moses in the Old Testament. The words "his" and "himself" refer to a male believer who marries.

Ephesians 5:32

General Information:

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Ephesians 5:33

General Information:

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Chapter 6

¹ Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is proper. ² "Honor your father and mother" (which is the first commandment with promise), ³ "so that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth." ⁴ Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger. Instead, raise them in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

⁵ Slaves, be obedient to your masters according to the flesh with deep respect and trembling, in the honesty of your heart. Be obedient to them as you would be obedient to Christ. ⁶ Be obedient not only when your masters are watching, in order to please them. Instead, be obedient as slaves of Christ, who do the will of God from your heart. ⁷ Serve with all your heart, as though you were serving the Lord and not people, ⁸ because we know that for whatever good deed each person does, he will receive a reward from the Lord, whether he is slave or free.

⁹ Masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them. You know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no partiality with him.

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. ¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to stand against the scheming plans of the devil. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. ¹³ Therefore put on the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to stand in the evil day, and after you have done everything, to stand firm. ¹⁴ Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵ and, with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. ¹⁶ In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, by which you will be able to put out all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷ And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. ¹⁸ With every prayer and request, pray at all times in the Spirit. To this end, always be watching with all perseverance as you offer prayers for all God's holy people. ¹⁹ And pray for me, that a message might be given to me when I open my mouth. Pray that I might make known with boldness the hidden truth about the gospel. ²⁰ It is for the gospel that I am an ambassador who is kept in chains, so that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

²¹ Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful servant in the Lord, will make everything known to you, so that you may know how I am doing. ²² I have sent him to you for this very purpose, so that you may know how we are, and so that he may encourage your hearts.

²³ Peace be to the brothers, and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ Grace be to all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an incorruptible love.

Ephesians 6 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Slavery

Paul does not write in this chapter about whether slavery is good or bad. Paul teaches about working to please God whether as a slave or as a master. What Paul teaches here about slavery would have been surprising. In his time, masters were not expected to treat their slaves with respect and not threaten them.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Armor of God

This extended metaphor describes how Christians can protect themselves when spiritually attacked.

instructions to children, fathers, workers, and masters.

Ephesians 6:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues to explain how Christians are to submit themselves to each other. He gives

Children, obey your parents in the Lord

"Children, as followers of the Lord, obey your parents" or "Children, it is your duty as Christians to obey your parents"

Ephesians 6:2

General Information:

Here Paul quotes Moses. Moses was talking to the people of Israel as though they were one person, so "your" is singular. You may need to translate it as plural.

Ephesians 6:3

General Information:

Here Paul continues quoting Moses. Moses was talking to the people of Israel as though they were one person, so "you" is singular. You may need to translate it as plural.

Ephesians 6:4

do not provoke your children to anger

"do not make your children angry" or "do not cause your children to be angry"

raise them in the discipline and instruction of the Lord

The abstract nouns "discipline" and "instruction" can be expressed as verbs. Alternate translation: "teach them to become adults by making sure that they know and do what the Lord wants them to do"

Ephesians 6:5

be obedient to

"obey." This is a command.

your masters according to the flesh

The word "flesh" here is a metonym for the physical world. Alternate translation: "your human masters" or "your masters in this world"

deep respect and trembling

The phrase "deep respect and trembling" uses two similar ideas to emphasize the importance of slaves honoring their masters.

and trembling

Here "trembling" is an exaggeration used to emphasize how important it is that slaves obey their masters. Alternate translation: "and fear" or "as though you were shaking with fear"

in the honesty of your heart

Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's mind or intentions. Alternate translation: "with honesty" or "with sincerity"

Ephesians 6:6

as slaves of Christ

Serve your earthly master as though your earthly master were Christ himself.

from your heart

Here "heart" is a metonym for "thoughts" or "intentions." Alternate translation: "with sincerity" or "enthusiastically"

Ephesians 6:7

Serve with all your heart

Here "heart" is a metonym for "thoughts" or "inner being." Alternate translation: "Serve with all of your being" or "Be completely dedicated when you serve"

Ephesians 6:8

General Information:

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Ephesians 6:9

treat your slaves in the same way

"you also must treat your slaves well" or "just as slaves must do good to their masters, you also must do good to your slaves" ([Ephesians 6:5](#))

You know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven

"You know that Christ is the Master of both slaves and their masters, and that he is in heaven"

there is no partiality with him

"he judges everyone the same way"

Ephesians 6:10

Connecting Statement:

Paul gives instructions to make believers strong in this battle we live for God.

the strength of his might

"his great power." See how "the strength of his power" is translated near the end of Ephesians 1:21.

Ephesians 6:11

Put on the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to stand against the scheming plans of the devil

Christians should use all the resources God gives to stand firmly against the devil just as a soldier puts on armor to protect himself from enemy attacks.

the scheming plans

"the tricky plans"

Ephesians 6:12

flesh and blood

This expression refers to people, not spirits who do not have human bodies.

against the powers over this present darkness

Here it is implied that "the powers" refers to powerful spiritual beings. Here "darkness" is a metaphor for things that are evil. Alternate translation: "against the powerful spiritual beings that rule over people during this present evil time"

Ephesians 6:13

Therefore put on the whole armor of God

Christians should use the protective resources God gives them in fighting the devil in the same way a soldier puts on armor to protect himself against his enemies.

so that you may be able to stand ... to stand firm

The words "stand" and "stand firm" represent successfully resisting or fighting something. Alternate translation: "so that you may be able to resist evil ... to remain strong"

in the evil day

Here the word "day" can refer to any short period of time, even a period longer than a day. Alternate translation: "at the evil time" or "when people do evil deeds"

Ephesians 6:14

Stand firm

Successfully resist or fight against something. You may need to make explicit what it is that the readers are to resist. See how you translated these words in [Ephesians 6:13]

the belt of truth

Truth holds everything together for a believer just as a belt holds the clothing of a soldier together.

truth ... righteousness

We are to know the truth and act in ways that please God.

the breastplate of righteousness

Possible meanings are 1) the gift of righteousness covers a believer's heart just as a breastplate protects the chest of a soldier or 2) our living as God wants us gives us a clear conscience that protects our hearts the way a breastplate protects a soldier's chest.

Ephesians 6:15

and, with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace

Just as a soldier wears shoes to give him solid footing, the believer must have solid knowledge of

the gospel of peace in order to be ready to proclaim it.

Ephesians 6:16

In all circumstances take up the shield of faith

The believer must use the faith that God gives for protection when the devil attacks just as a soldier uses a shield to protect him from enemy attacks.

the flaming arrows of the evil one

The attacks of the devil against a believer are like flaming arrows shot at a soldier by an enemy.

Ephesians 6:17

take the helmet of salvation

Salvation given by God protects the believer's mind just as a helmet protects the head of a soldier.

the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God

The writer speaks of God's instructions to his people as if they were a sword that his people could use to fight an enemy,

Ephesians 6:18

With every prayer and request, pray at all times in the Spirit

"Pray at all times in the Spirit as you pray and make specific requests"

To this end

"For this reason" or "Keeping this in mind." This refers to the attitude of taking God's armor.

be watching with all perseverance as you offer prayers for all God's holy people

"be watching, and even when it is difficult, keep praying for all the believers "

Ephesians 6:19

Connecting Statement:

In his closing, Paul asks them to pray for his boldness in telling the gospel while he is in prison and says he is sending Tychicus to comfort the Corinthians (6:21).

that a message might be given to me

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that God might give me the word" or "God might give me the message"

when I open my mouth. Pray that I might make known with boldness

"when I speak. Pray that I boldly explain"

open my mouth

This is a metonym for speaking. Alternate translation: "speak"

Ephesians 6:20

It is for the gospel that I am an ambassador who is kept in chains

The words "in chains" are a metonym for being in prison. Alternate translation: "I am now in prison because I am a representative of the gospel"

so that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak

The word "pray" is understood from verse 19. Alternate translation: "so pray that whenever I teach the gospel, I will speak it as boldly as I should" or "pray that I may speak the gospel as boldly as I should"

Ephesians 6:21

Tychicus

Tychicus was one of several men who served with Paul.

the beloved brother

"my beloved brother"

make everything known

"will tell you everything about me"

Ephesians 6:22

so that he may encourage your hearts

Here "hearts" is a metonym for people's inner beings. Alternate translation: "so that he may encourage you"

Ephesians 6:23

Connecting Statement:

Paul closes his letter to the Ephesian believers with a blessing of peace and grace on all believers who love Christ.

Ephesians 6:24

General Information:

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