
Book: Ephesians: A Primer for the Church

Ephesians is God's Magnum Opus for the Church. Ephesians is divided into two broad sections. From 1:1–4:16 we are given a conceptual foundation for church rooted in what **God has done**. These conceptual foundations are a focus of Calvinistic approaches to theology. Verses 4:17– 6:24 is practical application instructing us in what **we must do**. These instructions in practical application are often a focus of Arminian approaches to theology.

Table of contents

[Week 1: God's Eternal Plan](#)

[Week 2: God at work in history](#)

[Week 3: The revelation of the Church](#)

[Week 4: The five-fold ministry](#)

[Week 5: The consecration of the individual life](#)

[Week 6: The redemption of relationships](#)

[Week 7: Spiritual Warfare](#)

Week 1: God's Eternal Plan

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Chapter 1 is devoted to the broad philosophical foundation of the church. There are four basic principles that provide the foundation for the church: God has already provided every blessing, God used His foreknowledge to purpose his good pleasure and work out all things accordingly, God elected us in Him based on His foreknowledge and provided for our sanctification, We have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ.

God has already provided every blessing for us and embedded them in spiritual, quantum realms

God begins His laying of the foundation of the Church by embedding every blessing – every resource we have. Every resource we have or ever will need is already in existence. One short fall of our mortal fleshly thinking is to think that we must go out to get our future provision. These already exist in what is referred as ‘heavenly places’ in Scripture, but what might be rightly understood in modern scientific parlance as a quantum mechanical realm. Let’s look at some Scriptures

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

–Ephesians 1:3 KJV

According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

–2 Peter 1:3–4 KJV

But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

–Romans 10:6–10 KJV

God has already provided everything that we need. He has provided these in spiritual realms. He has embedded reality that exists in seed form in the words He speaks. It is these words that are the precious promises. It is these words that are the words of Faith. God has embedded spiritual reality that is released through faith and confession in the life of the individual believer and the believing Church.

Historically, this embedded reality has been understood as positional theology. When Christians would encounter verses – and there are a whole bunch of these – that claim things that we tend to think of as

ongoing or future as already done; theologians regard these as positionally true in Christ. This positional theology is used for the explanation of the discrepancy between what the bible says we should already have and what we actually experience. One example of this is found in Galatians 5:24 , “*And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.*” Very few Christians actually experience this; theologians would regard as true only in the positional sense. They had no better language to communicate that there are realities that are embedded in the word of God that are released into the experiential through confession of the word of Faith¹.

The emergence of Quantum Mechanics² provides a scientific interface for understanding how invisible spiritual realities can interact with the world of our physical experience. In quantum mechanics the objective existence of the physical world is either information rich energy or information in what is called the wave- function. The wave-function is a probability distribution of every physically feasible event and phenomena in states known as superposition. It is only when an observer conduct a measurement on the wave-function that a singular, particular value is obtained. This is called the collapse of the wave-function, and it results in information or energy being transformed into physical particles that comprise the objects of our experience. God has put His Word into the Wave-function so that, through confession of the word of Faith these hidden realities can be manifested in the world of our experience.

I cover these topics in more extensive detail in my book *The Conceptual God*. I introduce these concepts here to help in the analysis of God's plan for the Church.

God used His foreknowledge to purpose his good pleasure and work out all things accordingly

The book of Ephesians very early on lays the foundation for the Church of God in God Himself. God is presented here as being in complete control. There have been numerous debates concerning the role of Divine Sovereign and free will. The truth is that God preserves both. God uses His foreknowledge to administer His government of the universe in such a way that He preserves free will in other agents.

In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

-Ephesians 1:11 KJV

God works out all things according to "*the counsel of His will.*" This is a reference to God's foreknowledge. God's foreknowledge is fully conceptual. The word "fore" here means prior, signifying that He has knowledge of empirical or experiential reality prior to empirical observation. This knowledge prior to observation means He knows all of these things prior to classical measurement of space-time. He not only can know everything that will happen but everything that might happen. He know every possible world, every possible timeline, and every object and event occurring within these. As such He see the nature of every event. He therefore sees every free choice. He can conceive and perceive every possibility. The act of selecting a timeline in which human free

choices are made embeds free will in God's chosen timeline. We can see analogy of these in human created stories. Human authors can conceive alternate choices that are freely made by characters in the story and through writing select a timeline where the free choices made by the characters fit the story the author is seeking to communicate. Thus, there is free will within the story – a story that would be significantly different absent such free will. Outside the story the author's sovereignty is absolute. The sovereignty and character free will exist side by side in a story that has ontological significance as a story. It is the same in God's story of the cosmos. The story of the church is God's story. He is engineering every facet of this story – both the good and bad elements – to lead to a glorious unfolding at the end of the story.

Quantum mechanics provides the tools to understand how God can apply distinctions between inside the story of the cosmos and the outside in the setup of a governance of the universe that both allows Him absolute control and allows humans free will. These concepts involve locality and non-locality. locality simply means that a person or object in space-time must travel through space-time to produce an effect. If I wish to drink, I must travel through the space between me and the drink and travel through every moment of time between the start of my action and the end. non-locality involves skipping distance in space and time to exert an immediate effect. An example of non-locality would be if my leg was entangled with yours, and the moment I pinch my leg, you could **immediately** feel your leg pinched in spite of being miles way from me at the time I pinched mine.

God conducted a classical measurement of overall space-time to cause the current time line to materialize. He did not move through space and

time to cause any effect. God did not interfere with freely chosen actions that exist within space-time. He acted from **outside** of space-time to bring one timeline out of nigh infinite possible timelines from a state of possibility to actuality. God acted nonlocally.

God elected us in Him based on His foreknowledge and set His love upon us.

God, as part of His administration of the universe based on His foreknowledge, elected those who would choose Him. God could foresee all who would put their faith in Him and what circumstances could serve as precursors to the emergence of faith.

According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

-Ephesians 1:4-6 KJV

The phrase **“he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world”** signifies that He anticipated the possibilities of our free choice in His foreknowledge, and elected us logically prior to the beginning of creation. Our election and salvation are absolutely certain and commenced solely according to God’s pleasure, yet done in a way that preserved our freedom. Why? Because God loves us and sought a love relationship. Such relationship is impossible with out the partnbers freely coming together. God’s pleasure is found in working out history for our good.

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did

foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

-Romans 8:28-37 KJV

God wishes to give us “all things” and make us “more than conquerors.” God’s administration of predestination in the context of his foreknowledge was motivated out of love. He seeks to redeem a people would be his bride

We have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ.

We have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ, so that we might be given an inheritance. We have been predestined for salvation, been promised a glorious inheritance that involved the glorious restoration of all things and ruling with Christ forever. We will inherit with Christ all things God has. In the meantime we have been given the Holy Spirit so that God is working in us to bring the Church to a place of maturity where she can possess the glorious inheritance God has promised

In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; Having made known unto us the mystery of

his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

-Ephesians 1:7-14 KJV

Paul Prays for God to initiate a paradigm change of thought in the Church.

In verse 17, Paul starts to pray for God to initiate a paradigm change in how the saints thought. He wants us to see the greatness of God's power, that this power is available to work through us, that this power rules over all kingdoms and dominions, and that it is exercised on behalf of the Church.

That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

-Ephesians 1:17-23 KJV

The remainder of the book will be an exposition of the work God intends to do to the Church and through the Church, until we attain to the glorious inheritance of the fullness of Christ.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Week 2: God at work in history

God saved us at a specific moment in space–time history from our past sins.

Our salvation occurs at a specific time in history. We are not born from the womb as born again believers. God acted in history to redeem us. We were born with an inclination to pursue the lusts of the flesh. There was a moment in our life on this earth where we pass from death to life.

And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

–Ephesians 2:1–5 KJV

While God acted in history here, there is more than simply a space–time event. Our salvation was also an event in spiritual, quantum realms that are beyond this world. Our salvation is grounded in a foundation that transcends this world.

God unites us with Christ in heavenly quantum realms.

Our salvation in space–time history was not limited in its effect to this timeline. when we were saved, we entered into quantum entanglement with Christ. We became united with Christ in spiritual realms, instantly acquiring a position in Heavenly places.

Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

-Ephesians 2:5-6 KJV

We became seated with Christ. Where is Christ seated? He is now seated on His Throne in Heaven.

Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

-Hebrews 12:2 KJV

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

-Revelation 3:20-21 KJV

Christ is seated on His Throne. If we are seated with Christ, we are seated on thrones next to His Throne. We have been redeemed to be kings and Priests.

And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

-Revelation 1:5-6 KJV

We have been made kings and priests for the purpose of ruling alongside Christ. This early proclamation is repeated again in parallel fashion in Rev 5:6. Notice that it is the self-testimony of the Twenty-Four elders in 5:6. We are indeed seated on thrones before Christ in Heavenly places.

And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

-Revelation 5:8-10 KJV

Our position in Christ is secured as a done deal. Our spirit is already with Christ in God in heavenly places. Our spirit, the seat of consciousness, is seated on a throne beside Christ. The testimony of the elders indicates, however, that the reign upon the earth is future? Why?

God desires to manifest the fruits of this salvation in space-time histories.

While we are presently given a seat with Christ, our reign upon the earth is future. This is because we still live upon the earth in our corrupted bodies. There is an ongoing process - a battle - to learn how to walk in that which we have. There is an ongoing process in which faith is revealed in ever increasing measure. We must learn how to occupy the Heavenly position we have been given

And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the

exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

–Ephesians 2:6–7 KJV

God is at work in history to reveal to us what He has already given us. These are not things to reach for, but learning how to walk in that which He has given us

God has ordained from before the foundation of the world the work He has called us to do.

If God has given us everything necessary for godliness, this would include ordaining the works He has called us to do. We can rest peacefully in His predestination; knowing our life at any moment is exactly where He wants us, and that He is working in us to will and do his good pleasure(Phillippians 2:12–13)

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

–Ephesians 2:8–10 KJV

Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

–Philippians 2:12–13 KJV

To “work out of our salvation” literally means to work outward. It is not a call to engage in performance to earn salvation. It means to manifest

outwardly that salvation which is already there internally. God has already ordained the works we are to do. He not only has ordained the flow of our stories in conducting a classical measurement on the timeline, but He is working in us. He is managing our situation and our hearts to remain focused on Him and looking to Him. He is working in each of us individually, and He is working collectively among both people in the church and in the world to bring about his purposes.

The two-fold outworking of the Kingdom of God in space-time history

The outworking of the Kingdom of God in the lives of his people is two-fold. God's actions in history work to set up both a body politic and a spiritual assembly. Both are needed to establish the Kingdom of God on earth. The spiritual assembly exists to foster connection to God, and a body politic is necessary to establish a mechanism to establish physical possession and control over land, resources, and police power.

God established a body politic with Israel. He began with promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that included future sovereign possession of a piece of land; which were confirmed in Moses. Israel began as a theocratic republic with the Torah (God's Law) as the legislative branch, local elders as the judicial branch, and the people as the executive. Furthermore, there was a separation between the government of the temple and civil government. This was the paradigm through which the ancient land of Israel was governed.

God also established a spiritual assembly in Abraham, justifying him by faith (Gen 15:6). This justification is a template for reconciliation with

God that is confirmed with Jesus Christ. His death and resurrection are the foundations of the spiritual assembly of God's people – the Church.

Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

–Ephesians 2:11–18 KJV

These two components, Israel and the church, are now separated. Jewish people by and large are not believers that Jesus is the Messiah. The tension between Judaism and Christianity came to a head in AD 135. When Jewish believers in Jesus rejected Simon bar Kochba as the Jewish Messiah, thereby refusing to aid his rebellion. Unbelieving Jews blamed Christianity for the failure of the rebellion. To make a long story short, the Jews declared belief in Jesus Christ heretical, and Christians returned the favor. For almost two thousand years their histories have been separate.

God's plan, however, was to unite these two. As the text says here in Ephesians, Christ died to make peace between the two. Specifically, Christ died to make gentile believers fellow citizens with Israel. God

intended for members of the Church to be citizens with Israel. The Church, as a spiritual assembly, is intended to function as citizens of the body politic of Israel.

Participation in the church through accepting Christ as Lord and Savior makes one a citizen of Israel. Paul writes in Romans 11 about how the church is grafted into the vine of Israel. The text in Romans 11 nicely sets up a two phase restoration. The grafting in would begin with the former rain revival that began in Acts.

What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day. And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompence unto them: Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway. I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness? For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office: If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them.

-Romans 11:7-14 KJV

Ancient Israel rejected her Messiah and therefore failed to obtain her objective. Her apostasy, however, created the opportunity for others to be able to claim the benefits God promised to Israel. The ability of the kingdom of God to operate politically on the earth was retained. The falling away of Israel opened the door for gentiles to benefit from the

former rain revival that God sent to Israel. This text products a certain restoration of Israel that will be “*life from the dead.*” This is a reference to the general resurrection of saints that occurs after the latter rain revival. The restoration of Israel will be part of the Final Great Awakening.

This good news comes with a warning: New Testament saints are under the same warning to live holy lives and remain faithful to God, and they risk the same prospect of getting cut off from Israel for faithlessness. Notice that this context here is focused on citizenship with Israel. We are citizens of Israel by faith.

For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead? For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches. And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear: For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee.

-Romans 11:15-21 KJV

Damnable unbelief obviously separates one from Israel. The larger story of predestination in Romans 8:29-11th chapter includes a discussion of God’s election of saints to enjoy eternal life with Him. Chapter 11 discusses the place of Israel of God’s program of election. Damnable unbelief, in addition to disqualifying one from eternal life, also disqualifies one from citizenship in Israel.

The necessity of faith as the ground for citizenship in Israel sets up two challenges. One is that refusing to believe in Jesus Christ as the Messiah disqualifies the natural Jew from his inheritance as a citizen of Israel. This required chastening from God to bring them to a place where they are open to them to restoration.

Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graff them in again. For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree? For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:

-Romans 11:22-26 KJV

Jesus Christ Himself said in Matthew 23:37-39 that Israel would not see Him again until they said “blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord.” This is a reference to Psalms 118, which describes the global threat of Armageddon against God’s people. This Psalm also describes Israel as once again seeking God. Jews will once again become open to her Messiah, and in doing so become citizens of Israel once again.

Built on the foundation of Christ

The restoration of the natural children of Abraham, Issac, and Jacob is the focus of Romans 11. Ephesians, however, is focused on the citizenship of those who are not naturally Jews but were grafted in

through the New Testament. Paul here is concerned about the church being properly rooted and grounded as fellow citizens in Israel. Just as the natural children of Abraham, Issac, and Jacob could become unable to make use of their promises due to unfaithfulness or other forms of faithlessness, so could the New Testament saints. There are ill-advised approaches to faith that can hinder us from fulfilling our prophetic destiny.

If New Testament saints believe that the church has replaced Israel, then they do not understand what God is doing and will have difficulties occupying their royal and priestly position before the Throne of God.

If New Testament saints believe that the church and Israel have separate histories and separate destinies, then they do not understand what God is doing and will have difficulties occupying their royal and priestly position before the Throne of God.

If New Testament saints regard their natural political identity (even if that identity is America or modern Israel) as more fundamental than their identity as a citizen of Israel through Jesus Christ the Messiah, then they do not understand what God is doing and will have difficulties occupying their royal and priestly position before the Throne of God.

If New Testament saints regard believe that the Kingdom of God is advanced through carnal weapons of conquest rather than the spiritual weapons that originate from the Throne of God, then they do not understand what God is doing and will have difficulties occupying their royal and priestly position before the Throne of God. More on spiritual warfare in Eph 6.

Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

-Ephesians 2:19-22 KJV

This building being built “on the foundations of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.” The text makes it plain that Christ is IN the foundation as the chief cornerstone. Does this mean that the apostles are also embedded into the foundation as well?

We have the answer in Revelation 21:14 “Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.” This future city, while literally existing in the world to come, is also an analogy of the church. The foundations of this city have the names of the twelve apostles of the lamb engraved on it. The tradition of engraving names on a foundation stone of a building indicates the identity of the **builder** of that building. The apostles are not embedded into the foundation but laid it. This foundation is Christ and His riches. In the next installment I will show what this means.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Week 3: The revelation of the Church

In the last chapter we discovered how God works in space–time history. This involves both the predestination of good works and the outworking of this in advancing His Kingdom on earth through building both a body politic in Israel and a spiritual assembly in the Church. In chapter 3 Paul described the apostolic ministry that births the Church. He refers to this as a mystery not known to the Old Testament Saints. But exactly what is this mystery? pretty much everything Christ is doing through the Church can be discovered from Old Testament Scripture: operations that regularly occur in the church through Christ such as justification by faith, substitutionary atonement of believers, the preaching of the word of Faith, salvation of the Gentiles, the return of the Messiah to rule over the whole earth, etc.

The Mystery is in the nature of how the Church is supposed to operate. Israel in the OT operated by physical force. The Mosaic Covenant in particular depended on the ability to do good works(). The paradigm often involved God commanded a promise, and then gave power to people as they performed what God required of them. This does not mean that grace was absent or that the Old Testament work of God was based on human ability. It is apparent from a New Testament perspective that God's grace has been paramount throughout history. The difference is in the orientation of the Old Testament saints; they were simply unable to imagine fully how the grace of God works. They saw grace as something extraordinary that God did with rare persons or rare circumstances, with the norm being man trying to do the works God required with their own energy.

The Old Testament saw sin as a huge barrier that separated them from God, a separation that was segmented only by the occasional open door to Heaven. which would manifest in the “Spirit of the Lord” coming upon someone momentarily, “the word of the Lord” coming to someone momentarily, or a season of signs and wonders that would come to an end. The book of Hebrews gives an excellent explanation of why the blood of animals could never take away sins.

The New Testament that Christ administered, however, answers this problem. Christ’s shed blood removed the barrier between man and God. New Testament saint can now “boldly approach the Throne of Grace (Hebrews 4:16).” The path is clear now between man and God. We can now approach God and ask for His help out of His abundance.

For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:

-Ephesians 3:1-9 KJV

Paul described this ministry here as preaching “***the unsearchable riches of Christ.***” This means presenting the gospel to people, both in evangelism to those who do not know Christ and to those who know Him

to equip them to walk in relationship to Him. This involves presenting to the Church God's abundance – His resources. There are two extremes to avoid here is describing the riches of Christ. One extreme is to think of this primarily in terms of carnal money. The term is much broader here. the phrase "riches of Christ" refers to such things as forgiveness of sins, peace with God, and substantial healing of diseases. The other extreme is to think of the riches of Christ in a wholly otherworldly fashion to does not relate to our current sojourn on the earth. The riches of Christ can include financial blessing. Paul promises a blessing to the Philippians who faithfully supported his ministry. He wrote to them that "***my God shall supply all your needs according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus*** (Philippians 4:19)." God riches are His resources to be deployed at His command.

The endgame of God making available His abundance to the Church is not primarily about amassing carnal money or carnal goods. We need such during our sojourn, and God provides resources to us with thr understanding that we will be good stewards of our private properties. The endgame, however, is to advance God's Kingdom. In Deuteronomy 8:18 it is written that it is God "**giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day.**"

The most important work that is needed to advance God's Kingdom is to be trained to approach His Throne. It is here that your needs are fulfilled. It is here that kingdoms rise and fall. It is here that justice proceeds from the Throne. It is from this Throne that Christ returns to

the earth to fully instantiate His rule over the earth. It is here that we do battle against the enemy Satan, who is chief of the enemy principalities and powers that approach the royal courts of Heaven.

To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him. Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.

–Ephesians 3:10–13 KJV

This making known the “***manifold wisdom of God***” to the “***principalities and powers in heavenly places***” is simply the people of God approaching His Royal Court to oppose the enemy. Rev 12 describes this is a legal battle in court where the saints defeat Satan with the “blood of the lamb and the word of their testimony.” Our testimony is the confession of the “manifold wisdom of God” in open court. We are to enter his Courts with praise and thanksgiving(Psalm 100), then make confessions and offer petition as we make our case in court. Our confession release supernatural power.

The text in verses 14–21 is a an account of Paul approaching the Throne of Grace. The act Paul describes as “***bow my knees***(vs 14)” is a reference to the act of obeisance one gives when they approach a King seated on His Throne. The rest of the passage describes the petitions. He ask God to strengthen the inner man of the saints with His Holy Spirit so that Christ could have unhindered operation in the lives of believers. He also asks God to allow us to see the length, breadth,width, and height. This means that he desires us to the full extent of God plan and

His operations in the unfolding of His Story. It is interesting that Paul uses spatial terminology and lists four dimensions here. As Paul could not have known through his natural wisdom about the modern cosmological concept of four dimensional space-time with the dimensions of length, width, height, and time; the language used here was the closest thing he had access to in communicating this supernatural revelation. He also petitions God to make us intimately familiar with the love of Christ, so that we may be filled with all of the fulness of God.

For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

-Ephesians 3:14-21 KJV

Paul ends this petition with the exclamation that God is “**able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.**” God has access to infinite worlds of possibility that go beyond what we could even imagine or ask. This ability operates “*according to the power that worketh in us.*” We were saved so that we could, through God’s resources, access these worlds of infinite possibilities. This is confirmed in Revelation, which

instruct us that we are redeemed to be Kings and Priests to take our Royal, Priestly place before the Throne of God Almighty, the King of kings and Lord of lords.(Rev 1:6; 17:14).

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Week 4: The five-fold ministry

The last chapter presented in aggregate the mission of the Church in presenting the gospel, a mission which involves both evangelism, discipleship, and spiritual warfare before the Throne of God. In this chapter Paul lays out the architecture of how this works in the Church. This architecture includes the foundation and necessity of the underlying unity, the diversity of empowerment of leaders, and their role in equipping all of the saints so that the Church can fulfill her prophetic role.

Paul begins with unity. Unity is considered a very powerful thing in Scripture. We see three benefits to unity. Unity brings synergy, keeps us connected to the source of divine anointing and unhindered operation of the Divine Presence, and facilitates our glorification with the glory Christ shares with us as His bride.

The fact that unity brings synergy is well known in the natural world. It was this concept that fueled the industrial revolution in general and the assembly line in particular. What synergy means is that the results of a unified effort are greater than the sum of the individual efforts. Imagine that an individual can build one cart a day by himself. A team of ten where each works individually will make ten carts. Now take this same team, with the same tools and the same materials, and unite their efforts into two assembly lines in a four step process. This same team, organized in a united effort, can now produce fifty carts a day. Uniting the effort made each individual five times more productive than working alone.

The modern concept of the assembly line did not exist in the days of the Bible saints, but the concept of synergy did. Solomon, who wrote Ecclesiastes, understood this. Solomon understood that united labor produced a greater result than that of one individual. He even points to one example that would have been known to the ancients where the results of unity would be greater than the sum of the individuals. A three fold cord, composed of three cords intertwined together, would be more than three times stronger than the individual cords. It would have been known to the ancients that the act of intertwining added strength to the composite cord on top of the strength of the individual cords.

*Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up. Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a **threefold cord** is not quickly broken.*

-Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 KJV

Synergy is not merely something occurring in the natural realm. God will give synergy as part of His blessing or cursing. We see several examples of references to battles where adding additional soldiers multiplied the effects of success or failure rather than added. If one can chase a thousand and two chase ten thousand, then doubling soldiers produced a ten fold result and multiplied the deadliness of each individual by five times. If five chase a hundred and one hundred chase ten thousand, then a 20-fold increase in soldiers produces a hundred-fold increase in results, making each soldier five times as deadly.

O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end! How should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight, except their Rock had sold them, and the LORD had shut them up?

-Deuteronomy 32:29-30 KJV

And ye shall chase your enemies, and they shall fall before you by the sword. And five of you shall chase an hundred, and an hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight: and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword. For I will have respect unto you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you, and establish my covenant with you.

-Leviticus 26:7-9 KJV

Unity keep us better connected to the Divine presence because synergy also works in supernatural spiritual things as well. Psalm 133 connects unity in the fellowship to the Divine anointing. This Psalm specifically mention the dew of Hermon, where God pronounced the blessings of the covenant. If unity under the Mosaic Covenant can facilitate the flow of divine blessings, then how much more can unity in Christ can facilitate the blessings of the New Testament.

A Song of degrees of David. Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.

-Psalms 133:1-3 KJV

Unity facilitates our glorification with Christ by removing things contradictory to the move of God as well as applying synergy. In John 17, Christ prays some rather strong prayers for unity. Christ bases this unity on being sanctified or set apart by truth. If truth be the basis of unity

here, then unity in truth must involve removing contradictions as at least one side of a contradiction is necessarily separate from truth via the law of non-contradiction. Christ's prayer for unity is extreme here, as He seeks that we be one in Him as He is one with the Father. He is one in essence with God the Father. He seeks that we enter into metaphysical communion with Him. We are destined to enter into a form of communion that allows us to enjoy access to all that God is without losing our metaphysical difference in the same way a wife becomes one with her husband without losing her distinct identity.

Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

-John 17:17-23 KJV

There are seven pillars of unity for the church. These seven are things that are all true of the church. These tie us metaphysically, morally, and epistemologically (knowledge) with God.

I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

-Ephesians 4:1-6 KJV

Notice that all seven of these are organic. None of these is tied to any particular organization or humanly devised creed outside of the gospel itself. These, taken together, provide a good, strong foundation to begin constructing the Church. The unity of one Lord means Christ alone as the final authority in the Church. The unity of one body means that everyone has an organic place in the church relative to Christ as Head and **their potential capabilities** to function in the body. The unity of the Spirit means that the same Holy Spirit is the common source of both enlightenment and spiritual empowerment to the body. Our unity of hope means we are promoting the same meta-narrative. The unity of the faith here means we have the commonality of trusting Christ rather than men or our own devices. The unity of baptism means we are all crucified with Christ and raised to new life in Christ. The unity of the Godhead means that we are all worshipping the same God.

But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

–Ephesians 4:7–11 KJV

There is one body. We are all part of an extended body of Christ. As such we have access to the same network that feeds us nutrition, provide immune system defense against spiritual pathogens, and receives instructions from a common brain. In this body Christ is our Head. As part of an extended body that is the bride of Christ, we will someday

have a level of spiritual intercourse with Christ that is analogous with sexual intercourse in a natural marriage.

There is one Spirit. The same Holy Spirit that worked in the New Testament Church is active in each Christian today. We have access to the same resources and the same offer of intimacy that the apostles and their associate were offered.

There is one hope of your calling. There is a common good to which all of those faithful in Christ look forward. Everyone who is truly born again looks forward to when Christ takes possession of the earth and restore her to a state where God dwells fully with humanity, having vanquished all sin and death.

There is One Lord. As such we all have the same sovereign and a common allegiance. For all true Christians the supreme allegiance is to Jesus Christ. We follow Christ above everything else. While Christians may have numerous earthly ties and allegiances, allegiance to Christ is supreme and is to be rendered to Him even at the cost of our prosperity, lives or liberty.

There is one faith. This faith means the ability to reach out to Christ to trust Him and follow Him by virtue of receiving and believing His Word. Faith, in this context, has not matured to the point at which everyone holds identical doctrine. Doctrinal unity of the faith is the final result of the successful ministry of the church realized at the end of the church age (Eph 4:14–16). Faith here refers to the minimal set of doctrines whose assent is necessary to reach out to Christ. One must, for example believe such things as: God is holy and refused to coexist with sin and evil, humanity is corrupted by sin needs to be saved from sin, Christ is

the only one who can save us from our sins and the only path to reconciliation to God. There is only one such faith that initially connect us with Christ, and this faith must be foundational(Hab 2:4, Rom 1:17, Gal 3:11;Hebrews 10:38). It is the beliefs that are foundational to our lives that will determine our connection to Christ. One can be creed-ally orthodox on his face and end up burning in hell, and one could be creed-ally unorthodox on his face but actually base their lives on orthodox beliefs and be counted among the saved.

There is one baptism. Everything presented as baptism in the New Testament points to being united with Christ in His crucifixion and death. Everyone who has, or will, be saved is united in Christ in His death and united in his resurrection. Saving faith is also cognizant of all of these pillars of unity.

One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. There is one God who is the source and wellspring of every operation of God through the Church.

These organic unities are our spiritual DNA. Just as a common physical DNA can have diverse expressions within a physical body, spiritual DNA can give rise to diverse operations that occur in the Church. God provides four offices whose mission is to build the church:

God gives some to be apostles. There is too much to be revealed here in this short space, but let it be known that apostles are witnesses to resurrected Christ and His glory. As such they receive authoritative revelation meant to be given to the whole church. It was through apostolic ministry that the New Testament was written. Prophets have a similar ministry, but focused more precisely on handling the Words of

God. Evangelists were the communication systems of the church, distributing the words of the apostles to the church and administering **both** the internal communications of the church **and** the external communication of the gospel message from the church to sinners. Pastor-teachers insure that believers in each local assembly are instructed and trained in the gospel.

These leaders have three basic function for each role. They are (1) to equip for ministry those whom they mentor, (2) do the work of ministry while their students are still in training, and (3) reach out to people the Lord intends to add to the church so that the church may grow.

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: 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, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

-Ephesians 4:11-16 KJV

The work of these leaders has three basic goals. They are doctrinal unity and maturity, spiritual maturity so that the church may become a bride ready for the marriage altar and the marriage bed, and the ability to partake in the fullness of all God has for us.

Notice three consequences of this model of ministry:

The first is that there is no mention of the offices associated with visible constructs of religion in this book that is the magnum opus of the Church. There is no mention of elders, deacons, bishops, or directors. The only term associated with such used here is “pastor.” In this context, pastor refers to anyone who teaches and nurtures and is not limited to those who formally sit in the ecclesiastical office. The description is organic, and it is so because God’s Church is an organism and not a artificial construct. Constructs of religion that recognize and facilitate expression of the organic nature of the church are useful. Constructs of religion that ignore the organic nature of the Church are hindrances to genuine revival.

The Second follows from the first. The purpose of the ministry of the leaders of these four offices is to equip everyone to do all that they do. Ministry was not meant to be something that was the property only of the elite. Scripture condemns such elitism in the strongest terms. In Revelation Jesus identifies this as the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, the one thing He hates more than anything else. It is God’s will for everyone to minister in the church by “speaking the truth in love.”

The Third follows from the second. The act of leaders teaching the people everything to equip them to act as the leaders act prefigures the plan of Christ for the Church. Christ plans to marry the Church and offer up to her **everything**.

There is a necessity of discipleship, discipline, and development to prepare God’s people to receive the inheritance of the fullness of God. Putting immature, carnal believers into such power and glory is, in God’s

eyes, analogous (and abominable) as putting a six year old girl into a marriage bed. The church must shed off carnal and immature ways so that she may be prepared to enter the marriage bed with her King and lover, the Lord Jesus Christ.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Week 5: The consecration of the individual life

Given all of the glorious promises toward us in the church, We need to undergo a change of thinking. We must not continue to think as lustful world people driven by what is presented immediately to their senses. We must not be driven by “deceitful lusts.” The desire for self-preservation and self-advancement driven by relativism to the immediate environment have been the driving force behind humanity since the fall. Adam’s rebellion not only changed the human paradigm from the moment of Adam’s sin, but back-loaded a billion evolutionary history that did not originally occur.

This back-loaded history shaped human nature in several dark ways. This self-centered, tribalistic drive rooted in perceptions of immediate circumstances is called deceitful lusts here in this text. It is also known to science but under terms such as “survival of the fittest.” This was not the original paradigm of humanity.

The understanding of humanity was darkened due to being alienated from the life of God. Man was created in the image of God with a conceptual understanding of God and His ways, but lost much of that in Adam’s rebellion. As humanity lost their connection to God, people did not know how to act as creatures created in the image of God. While the fundamental reality of man as a created image of God was there, the material aspect of human nature increasingly took over. This is what Christ reversed at the cross.

This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding

darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. But ye have not so learned Christ; If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.

-Ephesians 4:17-25 KJV

We are to do three things:

We are to **“put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;** We must bail from the old thought patterns conditioned by a billion year back-story that didn't even originally happen.

We are to **be renewed in the spirit of your mind;** We must be opened up to a new paradigm of thinking that is not conditioned to follow deceitful lusts.

We are to **And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.** This involves identification with Christ, viewing life through His perspective.

How do we accomplish these? We are to be filled with the Holy Spirit,. This cannot be done in mere human power. There are three action that attend this. One is praise and worship. There is power in praise and worship¹. These songs involve faith and confession of God's Word². This confession involves Thanksgiving in all things. It involves therefore the sacrifice of praise. We are to praise God and proclaim His Word,

believing it to be so solely because God says so even when circumstances are united against the promises of God. As we do this, our confession is transformed into salvation and sanctification.

See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

-Ephesians 5:15-21 KJV

Putting on Christ is just the beginning of a process that will end in complete communion between humanity and God in Christ. The endgame is intimacy with God where we follow Him step by step and where He gives us everything He is and everything He has. The text here presents this lesson with an analogy between marriage of husband and wife

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall

a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.

This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

-Ephesians 5:22-33 KJV

The Endgame to our relationship to Christ is total intimacy with Christ. In my book Revelation Revealed there is more information concerning the marriage of Christ and the Church. I will conclude this chapter with a quote from that source.

It is at the point of the rapture/ resurrection of the saints that the church consummates her relationship with Christ. At this moment she engages in the analogous of having sexual intercourse with the Lord Jesus Christ, her husband and King. It is the receiving of the resurrection body that will accomplish the one-flesh relationship. The text in 1 Corinthians 15 tells us that the resurrection body will be far greater than a resuscitation of our natural. We will receive a glorified, spiritual body that is far more powerful than the bodies we currently possess. Ephesian 4 promises us that we will eventually be able to access "all of the fulness of God." It's fulfillment in a marriage of the church to Jesus Christ will requires bodies that can contain all that He has. This will require a resurrection body. These resurrection bodies will experience all of God's pleasure continuously for all eternity as we experience hyper-dimensional, eternal life.

Revelation Revealed, Week 21, para 8

<https://christiannetguide.info/books/revelation-revealed/#t003>

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Week 6: The redemption of relationships

If the Endgame to our relationship to Christ is total intimacy with Christ, then the gospel provides for the redemption of human relationships. If each member of the body of Christ has all of Christ in them and all of self in Christ, then each us has a common communion in Christ as a foundation for communion with each other. In Ephesians 4:25– 6:9 are practical instructions for fostering good relations within the Church.

The prime directive of our relations within the body is to treat other individuals as you want to be treated. This is the Second Great Commandment. There are three grounds: Each life has been assigned infinite worth by God as Christ sacrificed Himself upon the Cross, that we also have communion with each other as we have communion with Christ, and we have been sealed by the Holy Spirit who has been given as a deposit of the infinite inheritance of God that is to come.

Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another. Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil. Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

-Ephesians 4:25–5:2 KJV

If we are truly children of the King, members of each other and have been redeemed and filled with the Holy Spirit, then we have a duty to live lives of integrity, holiness, and love toward the brothers and sisters. We should take every opportunity to edify our brothers and sisters in their walk with Christ. We should approach these relationships with genuine love rather than through lust, greed, and other selfish desires.

In addition to sanctifying our relationship in the body of Christ, we are not to go be unequally yoked with unbelievers, but pursue total sanctification in community. We must watch our **close** relationships so that we do not develop ungodly soul ties with worldly people. Such people are targets of God's wrath, and if we come into entanglement with them we make ourselves targets. Those who are in Christ were once of this darkness, but Christ has set us free to be children of light. We must walk as children of light. In 2 Corinthians 6 we are forbidden from being unequally yoked.

But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them. For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

-Ephesians 5:3-11 KJV

This unequal yoking includes not only from ungodly individuals but ungodly works. This can include ungodly works by immature brothers and sisters or systemic evil. We are not only to divorce ungodly soul ties to evil individuals but to systems of evil created by evil people and that hold evil biases embedded into them by their wicked creators. Such systemic evil is why corrupt systems are extremely difficult (and ultimately impossible) to reform. We have seen this in politics where new comers would “run out the rascals” only to end up becoming rascals themselves by the time they acquired sufficient influence to change the system.

Evil systems have biases built in that impede attempts to change them. The process of acquiring a sufficient platform within a system to be able to change often requires indoctrination in the key concepts of that system. This often occasions the entanglement with ungodly soul ties that perpetuate the type of evil afflicting the system. Evil becomes instantiated in the would-be reformer, and by the time he or she is able to change the system they are no longer minded to do anything beyond optimizing it for use by themselves and their cronies. We must disentangled ourselves from any close relationship with both ungodly individuals and ungodly systems (2 Cor 6:14–18).

Spirit-Filled communion foundation of Christian life

Both the cultivation of godly relationship and the pruning of ungodly relationships is ultimately grounded in a common life of being fullled with the Holy Spirit. To this end we are encouraged to press into God’s Presence through worship.

For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. But all things that are reproved are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light. Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

-Ephesians 5:12-21 KJV

Our common life in the Spirit produces a profound metaphysical equality. In the church one's gender identity, racial identity, political identity, and socioeconomic identity hold no meaning. What counts is our identity in Christ. This equality is the baseline for relations in the church and acts as a constraint in contexts where there must be rules specific to certain groups.

Instruction specifics to specific groups.

While legal and moral equality of each individual is a basic principle in the gospel, it is not always possible to avoid inequality and even hierarchy in particular contexts. This is because inequality exists in nature and rules must exist to deal with that. There are significant differences between males and females that effect how marriage works. Children lack cognitive capacities and experience to be equal to their parents. In these cases equity is pursued. Every privilege is counterbalanced by a responsibility. Because people are fundamentally

equal, there no one-way street of obligation to serve. Even Jesus Christ, the son of God and King of kings, undertook an obligation to serve.

In the Kingdom of God all are called upon to serve. In equality simply distributes services into various roles. When there exists a requirement to concentrate power or authority in God's Kingdom, it is always tethered to a rational basis. Scripture stands against arbitrary authority and positivism. Even God, in the Old Testament, employed reasons why the Israelites should obey the Law and set up a system of laws that would foster human flourishing in the context in which they lived. How much more should humans set tether social constructs and system of authority to rational bases.

When rational basis authority is invoked together with counterbalancing, the endgame is liberty and equality for all. Children should obey their parents because they do not have the cognitive skills and life experience to competently make decisions. Parents are obligated to raise up their children to be equipped to acts as free, mature adults who walk with God. God put husbands in charge to have an orderly authority structure, but requires husbands to nurture and protect their wives, even at the cost of their own lives. The endgame here is two hearts joined in one flesh and a common life that is not strictly the husband or the wife but an integrated whole.

Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every

thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free. And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.

–Ephesians 5:21–6:9 KJV

The ancient relations between slaves and masters is also tethered to a rational basis and counterbalanced – and done so in a way that it leads to the abolition of slavery. People sometimes ask why God did not simply end slavery in a stroke. One of the banes of the fall of man and human corruption is that the primary engine for economies of scale for much of

human history was to invoke various forms of servitude under a single leader. Organizing work under arrangements that allowed economies of scale allowed for greater prosperity and a more powerful civilizations to emerge. Slavery gave nations a competitive advantage economically, which was why it was nearly universal in the ancient world. This was true before the rise of the scientific and industrial revolutions, which replaced labor intensive economies of scale with technology- based economies of scale.

God worked to end slavery by regulating it and doing so in such a way that slavery would wither away in the long run and slaves would have their interests protected in the meantime. Slaves were told to serve their masters as if they were serving Christ. Master were told to do the same to their slaves as the slaves were to do to them. Yep, the masters were to treat their slaves as servant-leaders. Masters would need to heed Jesus words commanding leaders to be “servant to all (Matthew 20:25-28).” They would need to heed Jesus example of washing the disciples feet(John 13:1-17). Masters were also instructed to be aware that they all are under Christ as THE Master in Heaven and that He does not have respect of persons. Privilege on earth does not translate into privilege in Heaven. In God’s eyes all are equal.

The application of these principles to their logical conclusion effectively abolishes these systems of inequality. If everyone seeks first to please Christ and acts in ways that value the brothers and sisters in Christ over selfish ambition - particularly in how the powerful use their authority and privilege, then systems of inequality wither away. While Christianity

did not abolish slavery **immediately** through slave revolts, the propagation of the gospel undermined the institution of slavery and, at the right time historically, became the basis for formal abolition of slavery. We can undermine system of inequality today by admonishing all to follow the laws of love and value others over selfish ambition and love God with everything we have.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Week 7: Spiritual Warfare

Paul concludes his letter with instructions on spiritual warfare. Scripture says much about spiritual warfare¹. Paul focuses primarily on spiritual weapons. Much of this chapter is based on [Chapter 27](#) of [Equipping the Saints](#)

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

–Ephesians 6:10–20 KJV

According to Ephesians 6:10–18, none of the weapons we have are used directly as long range weapons. Four of them are primarily defensive weapons, one of them, the shoes of the gospel of peace, can indirectly used as both an offensive and long range weapons. We have only one weapon that is primarily offensive. The sword of the Spirit is our

offensive weapon. The Greek word for 'sword' here was a reference to a short range Roman long dagger that was used in close range fighting.

Below is a description of our arsenal of weapons and the purpose for them and how they were used:

The Helmet of Salvation

The Helmet protects the head. The protection of the brain– hence the mind – from spiritual death through false doctrines. A Christian puts on this helmet by becoming rooted and grounded in scripturally based thinking. When we immerse ourselves in the Bible and reconstruct our thought patterns, our minds are renewed and think in terms of a Biblical Christian world–view.

*"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. **AND DO NOT BE CONFORMED TO THIS WORLD, BUT BE TRANSFORMED BY THE RENEWING OF YOUR MIND, THAT YOU MAY PROVE WHAT IS THAT GOOD AND ACCEPTABLE AND PERFECT WILL OF GOD**"*

- Romans 12:1-2

*"Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; **BUT HIS DELIGHT IS IN THE LAW OF THE LORD, AND IN HIS LAW HE MEDITATES DAY AND NIGHT.** He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper."*

The Breastplate of Righteousness

The Breastplate protects our chest- particularly our heart. The heart is protected. The heart is symbolically the seat of emotions and affections. The purpose of the Breastplate of righteousness is to protect the wearer from any attack that subvert our emotions and passions toward immorality. We develop righteousness by developing faith and love. The essence of righteousness is faith acting through love.

*“For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, **BUT FAITH WORKING THROUGH LOVE.**”*

- Galatians 5:5-6

The Belt of Truth

The Christian Life is built on Truth. God is absolute truth. The Christian message is presented as infallible truth, and whether someone will be open to the message of Christ or not is based on whether that person loves or hates the truth. Below are just a few passages that show the critical importance of truth in the Christian life.

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

*“He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. **FOR EVERYONE PRACTICING EVIL HATES THE LIGHT AND DOES NOT COME TO THE LIGHT, LEST HIS DEEDS SHOULD BE EXPOSED. BUT HE WHO DOES THE TRUTH COMES TO THE LIGHT, THAT HIS DEEDS MAY BE CLEARLY SEEN, THAT THEY HAVE BEEN DONE IN GOD.**”*

- John 3:16-21

“Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” - John 14:6

“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.” - Romans 1:18-21

The Shield of Faith

The shield of faith protects us from the devil's fiery arrows. These arrows are accusations that the devil hurls at the believers. So as the breastplate protects us from the slander and lies of the devil, so our faith in the goodness of God—that we are children of the King of Kings shall protect us when the devil lies and says that we are nothing.

“Hear my voice, O God, in my meditation; Preserve my life from fear of the enemy. Hide me from the secret plots of the wicked, From the rebellion of the workers of iniquity, WHO SHARPEN THEIR TONGUE LIKE A SWORD, AND BEND THEIR BOWS TO SHOOT THEIR ARROWS—BITTER WORDS, That they may shoot in secret at the blameless; Suddenly they shoot at him and do not fear. ”

- Psalm 64:1-4

The Shoes of the Gospel of Peace

Shoes protect the feet and aid in foot travel. Our feet are our point of contact with a solid foundation. Knowing we are built on a strong foundation from which we can move gives us peace when things seem hopeless.

“For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: ‘At first my people went down to Egypt to live; lately, Assyria has oppressed them. And now what do I have here?’ declares the LORD. For my people have been taken away for nothing, and those who rule them mock,’ declares the LORD. ‘And all day long my name is constantly blasphemed. Therefore my people will know my name; therefore in that day they will know that it is I who foretold it. Yes, it is I.’

“HOW BEAUTIFUL ON THE MOUNTAINS ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GOOD NEWS, WHO PROCLAIM PEACE, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, ‘Your God reigns!’ Listen! Your watchmen lift up their voices; together they shout for joy. When the LORD returns to Zion, they will see it with their own eyes. Burst into songs of joy together, you ruins of Jerusalem, for the LORD has comforted his people, he has redeemed Jerusalem. The LORD will lay bare his holy arm in the sight of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God.”

- Isaiah 52:4-10

The Sword of the Spirit

The sword of the Spirit is the Word of God. The Greek word used here is Rhema which means “utterance”. The Spirit of God will provide to the believer that particular utterance from the Logos or counsel of God that is pertinent. You can receive the Holy Ghost “sound- byte” that defeats the devil’s spin every time.

“By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, And all the host of them by the breath of His mouth. He gathers the waters of the sea together as a heap; He lays up the deep in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the LORD; Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast. ”

- Psalm 33:6-9

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind” – John 1:1–4

“The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven”

– Hebrews 1:3

“Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath. God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope set before us may be greatly encouraged.”

– Hebrews 6:17–18

Pray without Ceasing

Praying without ceasing is essential in warfare. Satan and his minions war 24/7 and so must we. While no individual can pray 24/7, the church can do this as a community. In Revelation 4–5, we see a vision of four living creatures and 24 elders worshipping 24/7. In Revelation 5:8–10, these are identified as believers redeemed by Christ’s blood. This is confirmed in Ephesians 2:4–7. The vision of the elders is a figure of our current position on Christ. We are, as a community, to pray 24/7 as part of our spiritual warfare.

“Now when He had taken the scroll, THE FOUR LIVING CREATURES AND THE TWENTY-FOUR ELDERS FELL down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying: ‘You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, AND HAVE REDEEMED US TO GOD BY YOUR BLOOD Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth.’ ”

-Revelation 5:8-10

“But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), AND RAISED US UP TOGETHER, AND MADE US SIT TOGETHER IN THE HEAVENLY PLACES IN CHRIST JESUS, 7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”

- Ephesians 2:4-7

Scripture References

Ephesians 6:10-18; Romans 12:1-2; Psalm 1:1-3;

Galations 5:5-6; John 3:16-21; 14:6;

Romans 1:18-21; Psalm 64:1-4; Isaiah 52:4-10;

Psalm 33:6-9; John 1:1-4; Hebrews 1:3

Hebrews 6:17–18; Revelation 4–5 (esp Revelation 5:8–10); Ephesians 2:4–7

[Return to Table of Contents](#)