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Ephesians

1 Greetings from Paul, an apostle* of Christ Jesus. I am an apostle because that is what God wanted.

To God's holy people* living in Ephesus,* believers in Christ Jesus.

²Grace (*kindness*) and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Spiritual Blessings in Christ

³Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In Christ, God has given us every spiritual blessing in heaven. ⁴In Christ, God chose us before the world was made. God chose us in love to be his holy people*—people with no wrong in us before him. ⁵And before the world was made, God decided to make us his own children through Jesus Christ. That was what God wanted to do. That pleased him. ⁶And this brings praise to God because of his wonderful grace (*kindness*). God gave that grace to us freely. He gave us that grace in [Christ,] the One he loves. ⁷In Christ we are made free by Christ's blood (*death*). We have forgiveness of sins because of God's rich grace. ⁸God gave us that grace fully and freely. God, with full wisdom and understanding, ⁹let us know his secret plan. This was what God wanted. And he planned to do it through Christ. ¹⁰God's goal was to finish his plan when the right time came. God planned that all things in heaven and on earth be joined together with Christ as the head.

¹¹In Christ we were chosen [to be God's people,] God had already planned for us to be his people, because that is what God wanted. And God is the One who makes everything agree with what he decides and wants. ¹²We Jews were the first people who hoped in Christ. And we were chosen so that we would bring praise to God's glory. ¹³It is the same with you people. You heard the true teaching—the Good News* about your salvation. When you heard that Good News, you believed in Christ. And in Christ, God put his special mark on you by giving you the Holy Spirit* that he promised. ¹⁴That Holy Spirit is the guarantee that we will get the things God promised for his people. This will bring full freedom to those people who belong to God. The goal of all this is to bring praise to God's glory.

Paul's Prayer

^{15–16}That is why I always remember you in my prayers and always thank God for you. I have always done this since the time I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people. ¹⁷I always pray to the God of our Lord Jesus Christ—to the glorious Father. I pray that he will give you the Spirit that will show you things about God and help you understand them. Then you will really know God. ¹⁸I pray that God will open your minds to see his truth. Then you will know the hope that God has chosen us to have. You will know that the blessings God has

apostle A person Jesus chose to represent him in a special way.

holy people Literally, "saints" or "holy ones." God's people are called holy because they are made pure through Christ and belong only to God.

in Ephesus Some Greek copies omit the words "in Ephesus."

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

promised his holy people* are rich and glorious. ¹⁹And you will know that God’s power is very great for us who believe. That power is the same as the great strength ²⁰that God used to raise Christ from death. God put Christ at his right side in the heavenly places. ²¹God made Christ more important than all rulers, authorities, powers, and kings. Christ is more important than anything that has power in this world or in the next world. ²²God put everything under Christ’s power. And God gave him to be the head (*ruler*) over everything for the church. ²³The church is Christ’s body. The church is filled with Christ. He makes everything complete in every way.

From Death to Life

2 In the past, your spiritual lives were dead because of your sins and the things you did wrong against God. ²Yes, in the past you lived doing those sins. You lived the way the world lives. You followed the ruler of the evil powers over the earth. That same spirit is now working in those people who refuse to obey God. ³In the past, all of us lived like those people. We lived trying to please our sinful selves. We did all the things our bodies and minds wanted. We were [evil] people. We should have suffered God’s anger because of the way we were. We were the same as all other people.

⁴But God’s mercy is very great, and God loved us very much. ⁵We were [spiritually] dead. We were dead because of the things we did wrong against God. But God gave us new life with Christ. You have been saved by God’s grace (*kindness*). ⁶And God raised us up with Christ and gave us a seat with him in the heavenly places. God did this for us who are in Christ Jesus. ⁷God did this so that for all future time he could show the very great riches of his grace. God shows that grace by being kind to us in Christ Jesus. ⁸I mean that you are saved by grace. And you got that grace by believing. You did not save yourselves. It was a gift from

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God. ⁹No! You are not saved by the things you have done. So no person can boast [that he saved himself]. ¹⁰God has made us what we are. In Christ Jesus, God made us new people so that we would do good things. God had already planned those good things for us. God had planned for us to live our lives doing those good things.

One in Christ

¹¹You were born non-Jews. You are the people the Jews call “uncircumcised.*” Those Jews who call you “uncircumcised” call themselves “circumcised.*” (Their circumcision* is only something they themselves do on their bodies.) ¹²Remember that in the past you were without Christ. You were not citizens of Israel.* And you did not have the agreements* with the promise [that God made to his people]. You had no hope, and you did not know God. ¹³Yes, at one time you were far away [from God]. But now in Christ Jesus you are brought near to him. You are brought near [to God] through the blood (*death*) of Christ. ¹⁴Because of Christ we now have peace. Christ made us both (*Jews and non-Jews*) one people. The Jews and the non-Jews were separated like there was a wall between them. They hated each other. But Christ broke down that wall of hate by [giving] his own body. ¹⁵The Jewish law had many commands and rules. But Christ ended that law. Christ’s purpose was to make the two groups of people (*Jews and non-Jews*) become one new people in him. By doing this Christ would make peace. ¹⁶Through the cross Christ ended the hate between the two groups. And after the two groups became one body, Christ wanted to bring them both back to God. Christ did this with his death on the cross. ¹⁷Christ came and preached peace to you people (*non-Jews*) who were far

uncircumcised People not having the mark of circumcision like the Jews have.

circumcised People having the mark of circumcision.

circumcision Cutting off the foreskin. This was done to every Jewish baby boy. It was a mark of the agreement God made with Abraham. Read Gen. 17:9–14.

Israel The Jewish nation (people).

agreements The agreements that God gave to his people in the Old Testament.

away [from God]. And he preached peace to the people (*Jews*) who were near [to God]. ¹⁸Yes, through Christ we all have the right to come to the Father in one Spirit.*

¹⁹So now you [non-Jews] are not visitors or strangers. Now you are citizens together with God's holy people.* You belong to God's family. ²⁰You believers are like a building that God owns. That building was built on the foundation that the apostles* and prophets* prepared. Christ himself is the most important stone* in that building. ²¹That whole building is joined together in Christ. And Christ makes it grow and become a holy temple* in the Lord. ²²And in Christ you people are being built together with the other people (*the Jews*). You are being made into a place where God lives through the Spirit.*

Paul's Work for the Gentiles

3 So I (*Paul*) am a prisoner of Christ Jesus. I am a prisoner for you people who are not Jews. ²Surely you know that God gave me this work through his grace (*kindness*). God gave me this work to help you. ³God let me know his secret plan. He showed it to me. I have already written a little about this. ⁴And if you read these things I wrote, then you can see that I truly understand the secret truth about the Christ. ⁵People who lived in other times were not told that secret truth. But now, through the Spirit,* God has shown that secret truth to his holy apostles* and prophets.* ⁶This is that secret truth: that the non-Jews will get the things God has for his people, the same as the Jews. The non-Jews are together with the Jews in the same body. And they share together in the promise that God made in Christ Jesus.

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

holy people Literally, "saints" or "holy ones." God's people are called holy because they are made pure through Christ and belong only to God.

apostles The men Jesus chose to represent him in a special way.

prophets People that spoke for God.

most important stone Literally, "cornerstone." **The first and most important rock in a building.**

temple God's house—the place where God's people worship him. Here, it means that God lives in his people.

The non-Jews have all these things because of the Good News.*

⁷By God's special gift of grace (*kindness*), I became a servant to tell that Good News.* God gave me that grace by using his power. ⁸I am the least important of all of God's people. But God gave me this gift—to tell the non-Jewish people the Good News about the riches Christ has. Those riches are too great to understand fully. ⁹And God gave me the work of telling all people about the plan for God's secret truth. That secret truth has been hidden in God since the beginning of time. God is the One who created everything. ¹⁰God's purpose was that all the rulers and powers in the heavenly places will now know the many different ways God shows his wisdom. They will know this because of the church.* ¹¹This agrees with the plan God had since the beginning of time. God did what he planned. He did it through Christ Jesus our Lord. ¹²In Christ we can come before God with freedom and without fear. We can do this through faith in Christ. ¹³So I ask you not to become discouraged [and lose hope] because of the sufferings I am having for you. My sufferings bring honor to you.

The Love of Christ

¹⁴So I bow in prayer before the Father. ¹⁵Every family in heaven and on earth gets its true name from him. ¹⁶I ask the Father with his great glory to give you the power to be strong in your spirits. He will give you that strength through his Spirit.* ¹⁷I pray that Christ will live in your hearts because of your faith. I pray that your life will be strong in love and be built on love. ¹⁸And I pray that you and all God's holy people* will have the power to understand the greatness of Christ's love. I pray that you can understand how wide and how long and how high and how deep that love is. ¹⁹Christ's love is greater than any person can ever know. But I pray that you will be able to know that love. Then you can be filled with the fullness of God.

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.

church God's church—his people in Christ.

²⁰With God’s power working in us, God can do much, much more than anything we can ask or think of. ²¹To him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus for all time, forever and ever. Amen.

The Unity of the Body

4 I am in prison because I belong to the Lord. And God chose you to be his people. I tell you now to live the way God’s people should live. ²Always be humble and gentle. Be patient and accept each other with love. ³You are joined together with peace through the Spirit.* Do all you can to continue together in this way. Let peace hold you together. ⁴There is one body and one Spirit. And God called you to have one hope. ⁵There is one Lord, one faith, and one baptism.* ⁶There is one God and Father of everything. He rules everything. He is everywhere and in everything.

⁷Christ gave each one of us a special gift. Each person received what Christ wanted to give that person. ⁸That is why it says [in the Scriptures*],

“He went up high into the sky;
he took prisoners with him,
and he gave gifts to people.”

Psalm 68:18

⁹When it says, “He went up,” what does it mean? It means that he first came down low to earth. ¹⁰So Jesus came down, and he is the same One who went up. He went up above all the sky. Christ did that to fill everything with himself. ¹¹And that same Christ gave gifts to people—he made some people to be apostles,* some people to be prophets,* some people to go and tell the Good News,* and some people to have the work of caring for and teaching God’s people. ¹²Christ gave those gifts to

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.

baptism A Greek word meaning to be immersed, dipped, or buried briefly under water.

Scripture(s) Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

apostles The men Jesus chose to represent him in a special way.

prophets People that spoke for God.

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.

prepare God’s holy people* for the work of serving. He gave those gifts to make the body of Christ stronger. ¹³[This work must continue, until we are all joined together in the same faith and in the same knowledge about the Son of God. We must become like a mature (*perfect*) person—we must grow until we become like Christ and have all his perfection.

¹⁴Then we will not still be babies. We will not be people who change like a ship that the waves carry one way and then another. We will not be influenced (*changed*) by every new teaching we hear from people who try to fool us. Those people make plans and try any kind of trick to fool people into following the wrong way. ¹⁵No! We will speak the truth with love. We will grow to be like Christ in every way. Christ is the head [and we are the body]. ¹⁶The whole body depends on Christ. And all the parts of the body are joined and held together. Each part of the body does its own work. And this makes the whole body grow and be strong with love.

The Way You Should Live

¹⁷For the Lord I tell you this. I warn you: Don’t continue living like those people who don’t believe. Their thoughts are worth nothing. ¹⁸Those people don’t understand. They know nothing, because they refuse to listen. So they cannot have the life that God gives. ¹⁹They have lost their feeling of shame. And they use their lives doing things that are morally wrong. More and more they want to do all kinds of evil. ²⁰But the things you learned in Christ were not like those bad things. ²¹I know that you heard about him. And you are in him, so you were taught the truth. Yes, the truth is in Jesus. ²²You were taught to leave your old self. This means that you must stop living the evil way you lived before. That old self becomes worse and worse, because people are fooled by the evil things they want to do. ²³You must be made new in your hearts and in your thinking. ²⁴You must become a new person, made to be like God—made to be truly good and holy.*

holy people Literally, “saints” or “holy ones.” God’s people are called holy because they are made pure through Christ and belong only to God.

holy A holy person is pure and belongs only to God.

²⁵So you must stop telling lies. You must always speak the truth to each other, because we all belong to each other in the same body. ²⁶When you become angry, don't let that anger make you sin. And don't continue to be angry all day. ²⁷Don't give the devil a way to defeat you. ²⁸If a person is stealing, he must stop stealing. That person must start working. He must use his hands for doing something good. Then he will have something to share with those people who are poor.

²⁹When you talk, don't say any bad things. But say things that people need—things that will help other people become stronger. Then the things you say will help the people who listen to you. ³⁰And don't make the Holy Spirit* sad. The Spirit is God's proof that you belong to God. God gave you that Spirit to show that God will make you free at the right time. ³¹Never be bitter or angry or mad. Never shout angrily or say things to hurt other people. Never do anything evil. ³²Be kind and loving to each other. Forgive each other the same as God forgave you in Christ.

5 You are God's children that he loves. So try to be like God. ²Live a life of love. Love other people the same as Christ loved us. Christ gave himself for us—he was a sweet-smelling offering and sacrifice* to God.

³But there must be no sexual sin among you. There must not be any kind of evil or selfishly wanting more and more. Why? Because those things are not right for God's holy people.*

⁴Also, there must be no evil talk among you. You must not speak foolishly or tell evil jokes. These things are not right for you. But you should be giving thanks to God. ⁵You can be sure of this: No person will have a place in the kingdom of Christ and of God if that person does sexual sins, or does evil things, or is a person who always wants more and more for himself. A greedy person like that is serving a false god.

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sacrifice An offering or gift to God.

holy people Literally, "saints" or "holy ones." God's people are called holy because they are made pure through Christ and belong only to God.

⁶Don't let any person fool you by telling you things that are not true. Those evil things make God angry with the people who don't obey. ⁷So don't do those things with them. ⁸In the past you were [full of] darkness (*sin*), but now you are [full of] light (*goodness*) in the Lord. So live like children who belong to the light. ⁹Light brings every kind of goodness, right living, and truth. ¹⁰Try to learn what pleases the Lord. ¹¹Don't do the things that people in darkness do. Doing those things brings nothing good. But [do the good things to] show that those things in darkness are wrong. ¹²It is really very shameful to even talk about the things those people in darkness do in secret. ¹³But when we show that those things are wrong, the light makes all those things easy to see. ¹⁴And everything that is made easy to see can become light. This is why we say:

“Wake up, you sleeping person!
Rise from death,
and Christ will shine on you.”

¹⁵So be very careful how you live. Don't live like people who are not wise. But live wisely. ¹⁶I mean that you should use every chance you have for doing good, because these are evil times. ¹⁷So don't be foolish with your lives. But learn what the Lord wants you to do. ¹⁸Don't be drunk with wine. That will ruin (*destroy*) you spiritually. But be filled with the Spirit.* ¹⁹Communicate to each other with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your hearts to the Lord. ²⁰Always give thanks to God the Father for everything. Give him thanks in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Wives and Husbands

²¹Be willing to serve each other. Do this because you respect Christ.

²²Wives, be willing to serve your husbands, the same as the Lord. ²³The husband is the head of the wife, the same as Christ is the head of the church. The church is Christ's body—Christ is the Savior of the body. ²⁴The church is under the authority of Christ. So it is the same with you wives. You should be under the authority of your husbands in everything.

²⁵Husbands, love your wives the same as Christ loved the church. Christ died for the church. ²⁶He died to make the church holy.* Christ used the telling of the Good News* to make the church clean by washing it with water. ²⁷Christ died so that he could give the church to himself [like a bride] full of glory (*beauty*). He died so that the church could be pure and without fault, with no evil or sin or any other thing wrong in the church. ²⁸And husbands should love their wives like that. They should love their wives like they love their own bodies. The man who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹Why? Because no person ever hates his own body. Every person feeds and takes care of his body. And that is what Christ does for the church, ³⁰because we are parts of his body. ³¹[The Scriptures* say,] “So a man will leave his father and mother and join his wife. And the two people will become one.”* ³²That secret truth is very important—I am talking about Christ and the church. ³³But each one of you must love his wife like he loves himself. And a wife must respect her husband.

Children and Parents

6 Children, obey your parents the way the Lord wants. That is the right thing to do. ²The command says, “You must honor (*respect*) your father and mother.”* That is the first command that has a promise with it. ³That promise is: “Then everything will be fine with you. And you will have a long life on the earth.”*

⁴Fathers, don’t make your children angry. But raise your children with the training and teaching of the Lord.

Slaves and Masters

⁵Slaves, obey your masters here on earth. Obey with fear and respect. And do that with a heart that is true, the same as you obey Christ.

holy God’s people are called holy because they are made pure through Christ and belong only to God.

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.

Scripture(s) Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

“So a man ... one” Quote from Gen. 2:24.

“You must ... mother” Quote from Ex. 20:12; Deut. 5:16.

“Then ... earth” Quote from Ex. 20:12; Deut. 5:16.

⁶You must do more than just obey your masters to please them while they are watching you. You must obey them like you are obeying Christ. With all your heart you must do what God wants. ⁷Do your work, and be happy to do it. Work like you are serving the Lord, not like you are serving only men. ⁸Remember that the Lord will give every person a reward for doing good. Every person, slave or free, will get a reward for the good things he does.

⁹Masters, in the same way, be good to your slaves. Don’t say things to scare them. You know that the One who is your Master and their Master is in heaven. And that Master (*God*) judges every person the same.

Wear the Full Armor of God

¹⁰To end my letter I tell you, be strong in the Lord and in his great power. ¹¹Wear the full armor (*protection*) of God. Wear God’s armor so that you can fight against the devil’s evil tricks. ¹²Our fight is not against people on earth. We are fighting against the rulers and authorities and the powers of this world’s darkness. We are fighting against the spiritual powers of evil in the heavenly places. ¹³That is why you need to get God’s full armor. Then on the day of evil you will be able to stand strong. And when you have finished the whole fight, you will still be standing. ¹⁴So stand strong, with the belt of truth tied around your waist. And on your chest wear the protection of right living. ¹⁵And on your feet wear the Good News* of peace to help you stand strong. ¹⁶And also use the shield of faith. With that you can stop all the burning arrows of the Evil One (*the devil*). ¹⁷Accept God’s salvation to be your helmet. And take the sword of the Spirit*—that sword is the teaching of God. ¹⁸Pray in the Spirit at all times. Pray with all kinds of prayers, and ask for everything you need. To do this you must always be ready. Never give up. Always pray for all God’s people.

¹⁹Also pray for me. Pray that when I speak, God will give me words so that I can tell the

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secret truth about the Good News* without fear. ²⁰I have the work of speaking for that Good News. I am doing that now, here in prison. Pray that when I tell people that Good News I will speak without fear like I should.

Final Greetings

²¹I am sending to you Tychicus, our brother that we love. He is a faithful servant of the

Lord's work. He will tell you everything that is happening with me. Then you will know how I am and what I am doing. ²²That is why I am sending him. I want you to know how we are. I am sending him to encourage you.

²³Peace and love with faith to you from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴God's grace (*kindness*) to all of you who love our Lord Jesus Christ with love that never ends.