

# Brief Survey of Ephesians

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## Disclaimer

For those new to my little Bible studies, this brief survey of the book of Ephesians is firmly founded on the discovery I made when writing the document “Practical Look at the Law”. Readers will fail to understand the points I draw out in this survey of Ephesians if they have not first availed themselves to the information contained in the Practical Look at the Law.

So, please read the Practical Look at the Law if necessary before proceeding into this study. The study can be downloaded at:

[myLibertyPursuit.com](http://myLibertyPursuit.com).

## Recap Summary

For those readers familiar with the Practical Look at the Law, let’s begin with a brief recap summary of the document.

In the first section we learned that the children of Israel and God fully executed a quid pro quo type of legal contract called a covenant.

This covenant (contract) met the minimum legal requirements including the following:

- God made an offer
- Moses presented (read out loud) the offer to the children of Israel
- Due consideration between the two contractual parties was established
- Mutuality of obligation (Ex. 19:5,6)
- Meeting of the minds
- A voluntary acceptance of the terms and conditions by both parties without coercion

In section two we learned that, “the Gentiles, which have not the law”, NEVER did have the law. In fact, God has NEVER even provided them the opportunity to enter into a “quid pro quo”

agreement similar the one he gave to Israel. God never made them an offer; therefore, they never had the chance to accept nor reject it. We also learned that, according to the apostle Paul, “sin is not imputed when there is no law” and “where no law is, there is no transgression”.

In section 3 we learned,

- The sting of death is sin;
- The strength of sin is the law,
- Where no law is, there is no transgression
- Without the law, sin is dead

## Why is this Important?

The first question I expect the reader to ask themselves, and this author, is: Why is it so important for me to understand the purpose of the law such that I might better understand the book of Ephesian? Good question!

I’m about to shove off into some deep waters so you’ll need a life preserver to get through to the other side. Understanding the purpose of the law will provide the necessary buoyancy to keep you afloat with oxygen flowing through your lungs and the necessary acumen to maintain intellectual coherency. Lest we forget, notice Paul’s strong admonition in II Tim.

2 Tim 4:3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

I believe the time Paul describes in 2 Tim 4:3 has long since arrived and very few Christians are capable of consuming strong meaty doctrine.

However, that’s exactly what I plan to serve up in this little Bible study so let’s push off from the safety of shore and venture out into the deep

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waters of the unknown, or at least the waters of the unrealized.

## The Deep Dive

In the Practical Look at the Law, I make several bold conclusions, not the least of these is the assertion that Gentiles (a.k.a. heathen, Greek, barbarians, the nations, etc.) are NOT transgressors of the law. While all have sinned (Jews and Gentiles alike), the Gentiles could not transgress a law for which they were never responsible to keep. Basically, Gentiles were granted “diplomatic immunity” because they were, “aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world”. I don’t have time nor the appetite to reconstruct that argument in this document. Please review the Practical Look at the Law for a refresher.

### Brief Intermission

I’ve always been taught and understood that the Pauline epistles were written to the NT church. That would include every believer, both Jew and Gentile. I still believe Paul’s epistles are written for the benefit of both Jews AND Gentiles; however, I’ve discovered that much of his epistles were directed specifically to Paul’s brethren according to the flesh. I’ll provide just a few of the most obvious examples below.

Rom 9:2 That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart.

Rom 9:3 For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises.

Rom 3:1 What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision?

Rom 3:2 Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.

You’ve read these passages many times but likely never understood the meaningful ramifications of what Paul clearly states.

The adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises all pertain to Paul’s kinsmen according to the flesh, who are ISRAELITS! By necessity, this precludes all Gentiles. This concept is critical to understand if we are going to get to the true meaning of Paul’s message. Paul is referring to the children of Israel who were born of the bloodline of Abraham (kinsmen according to the FLESH). Jews to whom pertain the law. Read it again. I’m not interpreting anything here.

“my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: Who are Israelites”. There is not a Gentile in the bunch.

Now read Rom 3:1,2 again. See above. Ask yourself, “To whom were the “oracles of God’ committed?” How could the verse be any more obvious and unambiguous? The oracles of God were committed exclusively to the Jews! That which is called the circumcision! This excludes the nations and specifically ALL Gentiles.

Notice that Paul is stating a marked contrast between the Jews and the Gentiles when he asks the question, “What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision?” The oracles of God (i.e. word of God, the Holy Scriptures) have been committed to the Jews. Please note that this is NOT my interpretation and don’t blame me for pointing out this obvious fact! Paul is the one who clearly states that the Bible was committed to the Jews, to those of the circumcision.

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Now we need to briefly consider the idea that the term "circumcision" may refer to the spiritual NT church rather than those of the physical Jewish bloodline. While I have researched this idea extensively, I don't have time to fully develop it in this little Bible study; however, it's on a list for future studies because the topic is admittedly fascinating. I believe we can establish that the word "circumcision" is to the Jews what the word "uncircumcision" is to the Gentiles by looking at just a few verses.

Eph 2:11 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;

In this verse we see that the "Gentiles in the flesh" are called "Uncircumcision" by "that which is called Circumcision in the flesh". The Jews were circumcised in the flesh while the Gentiles were not circumcised in the flesh. That should be easy to understand.

God makes it quite clear in the OT after Moses appears on the scene that He divides all of the world's population into two distinct people groups, namely Jews vs. Gentiles. This means that the Jews (circumcision in the FLESH not SPIRIT) are calling the Gentiles (uncircumcision in the FLESH not SPIRIT) uncircumcision. That is truly the only logical conclusion I can reach regarding this simple scripture. This has nothing to do with a spiritual circumcision because it clearly distinguishes between the Gentiles in the flesh (called Uncircumcision) contrasted by the Circumcision in the flesh (i.e. Jews). Notice that the words Uncircumcision and Circumcision are both capitalized meaning they are proper nouns referring to a specific people not simply the act of circumcision. I'll touch upon the spiritual circumcision referenced by Paul in Colossians chapter 2 later in this study.

Col 3:11 Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.

Once again we have a clearly distinguished contrast between the Greeks (Gentiles) and the Jews, followed by a parallel contrast of circumcision vs. uncircumcision. The opposing contrast continues to include bond vs. free. Paul completes his thought with the idea that Christ is ALL and in ALL. I understand this to mean that the several contrasts he mentions would therefore include ALL people groups without exception. Anyone who is not Jewish (i.e. of the circumcision of the flesh) is by default considered a Gentile (i.e. uncircumcised in the flesh). It's actually quite simple and I'm probably making it far more complicated than necessary but there are some who will adamantly oppose the simplicity of this Bible truth.

The fact that the entire Bible has been written for and committed to the Jews might be a difficult concept to grapple with, but if you consider it closely it truly makes logical sense. Let's look once again at the text we are considering.

Rom 3:1 What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision?

Rom 3:2 Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.

According to the Bible, humanity as we know it existed for 2500 years between Adam and Moses with no written instruction from God. Finally, God provides personal instruction for Moses to write the Pentateuch (Gen. – Deut.). In addition, within those five books, God, through Moses, gives Israel the law.

John 1:17 For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

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We also know that the remaining books of the OT were also committed to the Jews. So then why should we be surprised when Paul boldly announces that the oracles of God (all Holy Scriptures including the NT!) are committed to the Jews?

Don't forget what Jesus said in the book of Matthew,

Mat 15:24 But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Mat 10:5 These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not:

Mat 10:6 But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

This is repeated in the book of John.

John 1:11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

His own would need to be the NATION of Israel because we know that individual Jews DID receive him. Even today many Jews have come to recognize Jesus as their Messiah but corporately the nation of Israel is still awaiting the arrival of their Messiah and King as well as the ultimate fulfillment of ALL the OT promises.

Rom 11:25 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.

Rom 11:26 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:

Rom 11:27 For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.

ALL Israel shall be (future) saved!! This is God's long standing promise to the NATION of Israel and it will happen sometime soon. Ezek. 31, Rev. 19 & 20.

## Now for the Main Course

I was reading Ephesians recently and came upon a troubling passage in ch. 2 that directly contradicted what I now understand to be the relationship between the Gentiles and the Mosaic covenant (i.e. quid pro quo contract) made between God and the children of Israel in Ex. 19 and 20. My previously stated convictions compelled me to conduct a further investigation so I could dispel the conundrum. I've learned in my journey of faith that apparent Biblical contradictions are not contradictions at all but rather doctrinal jewels just waiting to be discovered. What follows is the result of my discovery process.

Here are the specific verses that troubled me.

Eph 2:1 And **you** hath he quickened, **who were dead in trespasses and sins**;

And then this next verse was equally troubling.

Eph 2:5 Even when **we were dead in sins**, hath quickened **us** together with Christ, (by grace **ye** are saved;)

I suspect the more attentive Bible students already have a good idea of where this investigation is leading but let's try to get everyone caught up.

I know this concept is new to most so I'll recap again what we learned about the Gentiles and the law.

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1. God NEVER gave the law to the Gentiles (Rom. 2:14)
2. Gentiles were never expected to obey a law they never received and in fact a law of which they were completely ignorant. (Rom. 2:14) Keep in mind that the term Gentiles is a general term that refers to ALL the people groups around the world who were not specifically elected by God as Israelites (Isa\_45:4 For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me.). Many (most) of the Gentile people groups had never heard of Moses, the law, or the Jewish people. Consider this: If there exists today people groups around the world who have never heard of Jesus Christ, in spite of all modern technology, just imagine how many of the Gentiles around the globe that existed in Paul's day knew nothing about the Jewish faith.
3. Sin is powerless without the law (I Cor. 15:56)
4. Where no law is, there is no transgression, (Rom. 4:15)
5. Without the law, sin is dead (Rom. 7:8)

Based on this understanding, the Gentiles are not, nor ever have been, dead in their trespasses and sins. Instead, Paul describes the plight of the Gentiles quite clearly in Eph. 2:12 as being "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:" I'm not suggesting that the Gentiles were in a better condition than the Jews but their condition was markedly different. In fact, unredeemed Gentiles still exist in the condition described in Eph. 2:12. Nothing regarding the state of the Gentiles has changed since Paul wrote that verse.

Notice this clear description of the state of the Gentiles is quite different than being dead in trespasses and sins, but we'll investigate further the implications of this verse later in this study. For now, I simply want the reader to recognize the contrast and understand that Eph. 2:1,2 could not possibly describe the state of any Gentile, past nor present.

For the sake of discussion, let's assume the book of Ephesians is written to the Gentiles like everyone teaches. We must then ask ourselves how we can reconcile the apparent contradiction that the Gentiles could somehow be dead in trespasses and sins when we know that the law does not apply to them. I'm glad you asked because I was wondering the same thing. We'll need to don our theological thinking caps to successfully navigate these deep troublesome waters. I've donned mine; how about you?

## Eph. Ch. 2 – First Half

One of the first things I noticed about Eph. Ch. 2 is that Paul is inclusive of himself as part of the audience he initially addresses in the first half of the chapter. Notice how he uses the words "us", "our", and "we" in the first 10 verses.

Eph 2:1 And **you** *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

Eph 2:2 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:

**NOTE:** OK, so the first two verses don't follow the pattern exactly but keep reading. I believe it becomes readily apparent, especially when we contrast these verses with vs. 11 and following.

Eph 2:3 Among whom also **we** all had **our** conversation in times past in the lusts of **our** flesh,

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fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

**NOTE:** I suspect the term “even as others” refers to the Gentiles, the nations; you know, THOSE GUYS, but that’s only speculation.

Eph 2:4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved **us**,

**NOTE:** Loved, not loves. Past tense. Remember, For God so loved the world? God loved the Jews and the world at Calvary when he sent his son Jesus Christ to redeem us all. 1Jn\_2:15 **Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.** If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

**NOTE:** God's love is now showered on all believers abundantly through Jesus Christ.

Eph 2:5 Even when **we** were dead in sins, hath quickened **us** together with Christ, (by grace **ye** are saved;)

Eph 2:6 And hath raised **us** up together, and made **us** sit together in heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus:

Eph 2:7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in *his* kindness toward **us** through Christ Jesus.

**NOTE:** Notice that in the ages to come God will use those people he redeemed as a “Glory Story” to reveal “the exceeding riches of his grace in *his* kindness toward **us** through Christ Jesus”. This verse talks about a future age yet to come and I believe it’s referring to the Millennial reign of Jesus Christ on earth.

Eph 2:8 For by grace are **ye** saved through faith; and that not of **yourselves**: *it is* the gift of God:

**NOTE:** Not of yourselves = WORKS; therefore, this relates to the OT Jewish economy of righteousness that came by the law.

Eph 2:9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

**NOTE:** Not of works! Once again, very Jewish!

Eph 2:10 For **we** are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath **before ordained** that **we** should walk in them.

Did you notice how Paul included himself in the redemptive history of his audience? The pronouns we, our, and especially us were used by Paul numerous times in these passages proving that Paul was directly associated with his audience. In other words, they were his kinsmen according to the flesh, the circumcision of the flesh, the children of Israel!.

## Eph. Ch. 2 – Second Half

Now we are about to notice an abrupt shift as Paul begins using the pronoun “ye” in the next 3 verses. Eph. 2:11 makes it intuitively obvious that Paul is now addressing Gentiles and there is absolutely no mistaking this fact. Paul sharply distances himself from the group he’s about to address next. The natural question that comes to mind is, “How could Paul shift from addressing the Israelites exclusively to addressing the Gentiles exclusively without fare warning?” I don’t honestly know, but he does and it’s quite evident if we’re paying close attention. Let’s take a look.

Eph 2:11 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**;

**NOTE:** Paul leaves absolutely no doubt that he was a Jew rather than a Gentile; he was of the circumcision not the uncircumcision.

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Php 3:3 For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

Php 3:4 Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more:

Php 3:5 Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee;

**NOTE:** Yes, Philippians chapter 3 was written to the Jews, but don't get ahead of me. There's a lot more to learn in this Brief Survey of Ephesians.

In the sharp contrast between Eph. 2:1-10 and the rest of Eph. 2 Paul is demarking a distinctly US vs. THEM situation. This will become more obvious to the reader as we continue the Ephesians study. In fact, I'll back up to chapter one later in the study and prove my point far more conclusively but you'll need to keep reading.

Eph 2:12 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:

**NOTE:** Notice the distinct contrast between the Gentiles in the flesh identified in vs. 11 and the commonwealth of Israel mentioned in vs. 12. This distinction is extremely important to recognize and understand. As I identified in The Practical Look at the Law, the Gentiles never received the law AND, therefore, never received the promises God made to the children of Israel. It's a little like being made supervisor at work; with the increased responsibility comes increased remuneration. In like fashion, with the promises came an expectation by God that Israel would obey the law Moses gave them.

Let's enumerate briefly the sharp distinctions between the Jews and Gentiles that Paul

identifies in this one little verse. It's quite remarkable.

1. The Gentiles were without Christ. True, the Gentiles were without Christ. However, keep in mind that Israel was NOT with Christ. Christ was not only promised to the OT Jews, he was also delivered to the Jews through the incarnation. Once again I direct your attention to this sticky wicket of a verse.

**“Mat 15:24** But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. “

2. The Gentiles were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel; therefore, Israel was member (in good standing?) of the commonwealth of Israel.

3. Gentiles were strangers from the covenants of promise. For those doubting Thomases in the crowd, that means the covenants of promise did NOT pertain to the Gentiles but they did indeed pertain directly and exclusively to the Jews.

4. Having no hope. The Gentiles, as a people group, had been given means of obtaining God's promises. I know, I know, folks are going to point to exceptions like Ruth, the Moabitess, Naaman the leper, Rahab the harlot, etc. Yes, they were Gentiles but they were also exceptions exactly the same as the woman from Canaan was an exception in Mat. 15:21-28 was an obvious exception. In sharp contrast, the Israelites had great hope based on the covenants and promises God issued to them in the OT.

5. Without God in the world. Another clear distinction. Israel was God the Father's bride while the Gentiles were completely without God.

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Eph 2:13 But now in Christ Jesus **ye who sometimes were far off** are **made nigh by the blood of Christ**.

**NOTE:** Refer below to vs. 17 and notice how Paul once again identifies two distinct people groups. One people group was “far off” and the other people group is identified as “nigh” Could he be referring to the Jew as being nigh and the Gentile far off? I believe the remainder of this chapter will strongly support this supposition. Read on.

Eph 2:14 For he is **our** peace, **who hath made both one**, and **hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us**;

**NOTE:** Paul issues a strong UNIFICATION message beginning in verse 14 that continues throughout the remainder of Ephesians.

Notice Paul says that Christ made BOTH ONE. The obvious question is, “Both what”? We find an important clue in vs. 15 where Paul says that Christ chose to make in himself of twain one new man. Christ took two distinct entities and joined them together into one new man. I’m fully convinced that Christ took two unique people groups and made one new man from the twain (two). Since the Bible only distinguishes two main people groups (Jews and Gentiles a.k.a. Greeks), it only makes sense that this one new man is the amalgamation of the two people groups. See verses below.

Gal 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

Col 3:11 Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.

Let’s look at the next major clue. What was that “middle wall of partition” referenced in vs. 14?

Well, vs. 15 clearly defines the enmity as “the law of commandments contained in ordinances”.

Eph 2:15 **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;

**NOTE:** Peace was only achieved by eliminating the major difference between Jew and Gentile which is clearly identified in this passage as the law of commandments contained in ordinances. The Jews were under the bondage of the law but the Gentiles had not the law. In addition, the Jews are part of the commonwealth of Israel, they have the covenants of promise, they have a hope for a future kingdom ruled by their Messiah. In direct contrast the Gentiles were strangers and aliens from all the covenants of promise and the hope of a future kingdom, they were without Christ and without God in the world. The important concept to realize is that Christ abolished in his flesh the enmity between these two groups and “made in himself of twain (Jews and Gentiles) one new man, or better known as “his body”. Eph. 2:16.

This is such an important concept that I truly can’t overemphasize its significance. In fact, Paul emphasizes constantly the reconciliation and unification of the Jews and Gentiles as we progress through the book of Ephesians.

The children of Israel were heavily guilt ridden under the strenuous burden of the law; however, the Gentiles enjoyed diplomatic immunity from the bondage of the law and were happily ignorant of the statutes and ordinances contained therein. God realized that the only way to create one body from these two distinct people groups was to level the playing field for both. That’s exactly what he did when Christ “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.”



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The children of Israel were chosen, elected by God to be a highly exclusive, unique, separated people group in the OT. Now, in the NT, Christ abolishes in his flesh the contention (enmity) between these two groups when he eliminated the ordinances against the Jews.

Col 2:14 **Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us**, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;

**NOTE:** Yep, Col. 2:14 is another verse that exclusively applies to the Jews but let's not get bogged down with that yet.

Rom 10:12 For **there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek**: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.

Act 15:9 And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.

Eph 2:16 And **that he might reconcile both unto God in one body** by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

**NOTE:** Abolishing the law allowed God to create a new entity called the church which is an amalgamation of both Jews and Gentiles. The church is also referred to as the body of Christ.

Notice what Paul tells to the Galatians in chapter 3. The wording of these verses was confusing to me until I read them over numerous times. Please bare in mind that we can be assured that the ENTIRE book of Galatians is written to the Jews because it deals exclusively with those that "Christ hath redeemed (us) from the curse of the law" (i.e. not Gentiles).

Gal 3:13 **Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law**, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:

Gal 3:14 **That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ**; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Notice how Paul begins vs. 14 with the word "That". Curious! Why would Paul use the word "That" to begin the vs? The subordinate conjunction "that" joins a dependent clause to an independent clause. Unless, of course, it was incumbent upon God to redeem the Jews from the curse of the law *SO THAT* the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ. Now that's a very interesting angle to investigate.

What is the blessing of Abraham?

Gal 3:6 **Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.**

Gal 3:7 **Know ye therefore that they which are of faith**, the same are the children of Abraham.

Gal 3:8 And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.

Gal 3:9 **So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.**

**NOTE:** Now that puzzle piece fits quite nicely with our new understanding of Eph 2:15. Jesus Christ broke down the middle wall of partition between the Jews and Gentiles and abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances *SO THAT* he could make in himself of twain one man AND that the blessings of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ. That really wraps that doctrine in a pretty little bow with frilly all around. It was absolutely necessary.

Historically, there were only two people groups: Jews and Gentiles. However, the Lord Jesus

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Christ adds an amalgamated third people group that didn't exist before the NT. Notice that Paul identifies three distinct people groups in the next verse.

1Co 10:32 Give none offence, neither to the **Jews**, nor to the **Gentiles**, nor to the church of God:

In this next verse Paul proves that Christ body is indeed called the church.

Col 1:18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

Col 1:24 Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church:

The word church has been seriously distorted by men looking to establish religious empires such that it now carries a meaning that God, through the Bible, never intended. The word "church" is certainly NEVER used in the Bible to refer to a building or a hierarchical organization. Christians need to reclaim the word church to clearly and simply be the body of Christ which includes ALL believers.

Christ takes the repentant Jews and the believing Gentiles and transforms the twain into one new man called the church of God which is his body.

Eph 2:17 And came and preached peace to **you which were afar off**, and to **them that were nigh**.

**NOTE:** Jews = nigh / Gentiles = afar off.

Eph 2:18 For through him **we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father**.

**NOTE:** Once again, notice the subtle shift by Paul. "You which were afar off" in vs. 17 contrasted with "We both have access by one Spirit" in vs. 18. Yes, subtle but meaningful.

Both = two people groups. Jews + Gentiles = body of Christ (church).

Eph 2:19 Now therefore **ye are no more strangers and foreigners**, but fellowcitizens **with the saints**, and of the household of God;

**NOTE:** Once again Paul excludes himself (notice the word "ye") as he addresses the strangers and foreigners in this last part of Eph. Ch. 2. Therefore, since Paul is a Jew, this portion of scripture applies to "*those guys*" (non-Jews, or in other words, Gentiles). In addition, Paul's audience for this verse says they are fellowcitizens WITH the saints. That means they are NOT the saints but rather they have become citizens WITH the saints. I will cover this topic in detail when we move into chapter 1.

**Example:** Let's say ACME Machine Mfg. decided to combine the technical writing dept. WITH the engineering dept. The technical writers were not engineers before the integration, and they certainly are not engineers after the merger. The technical writers are still technical writers; they just happen to be "fellowcitizens" with the engineers in the engineering dept. And that's Paul's point. The former strangers and foreigners are now fellowcitizens WITH the saints. This is a minor point, but based on this understanding I conclude that the word "saint" is referring to Messianic Jews who have been redeemed. Once, please have a little patience because Ephesians chapter 1 will provide a better explanation for this topic.

Eph 2:20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner *stone*;

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Eph 2:21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:

Eph 2:22 In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

**NOTE:** These last three verses are supporting Paul's assertion that the Gentiles are now part and parcel of the same holy temple in the Lord and inhabited by God through the Spirit. In vs. 20 Paul asserts that the Gentiles are built upon the same foundation as the Jews and in vs. 21 he describes how the new building is "fitly framed together".

## Ephesians Chapter 1

I believe it's safe to conclude (obvious to me) that Paul is addressing the Jews exclusively in Eph. 2:1-10 before he completely shifts his attention entirely to the Gentiles in Eph. 2:11-13. It is also clear that in Eph. 2:14-22 Paul is describing how Christ has abolished in his flesh the enmity between these two people groups and made in himself one new man, namely the church of God. So how about ch. 1? Good question. Let's take a peek.

Since Ch. 2:1-10 belongs to the Jews, I suggest we can reasonably assume that the entirety of Ch. 1 also pertains to Paul's brethren, the Jews. As evidence to justify my supposition I reference the established fact that the oracles of God were committed to the Jews, the circumcision. (Rom. 3:1,2) That would mean that NT writing are doctrinally directed to the Jews until Paul specifically calls out the Gentiles such as in Eph. 2:11 and Rom. 11:13. Let's see if scripture supports my new understanding. As you continue reading in this little study I will provide ample evidence to support this understanding.

Eph 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus:

**NOTE:** It appears that Paul's salutation addresses two different groups. He identifies the saints which are at Ephesus and the faithful in Christ Jesus; however, we'll need more evidence to support this supposition.

First question: Who are the saints? According to Eph. 2:19, the saints are the opposite of the Gentiles. How do I know that? Paul says, "therefore ye (i.e. Gentiles) are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

Paul distinguishes a clear difference between the saints and the Ye who are no more strangers and foreigners but rather fellowcitizens with the saints. So the Ye didn't begin as fellowcitizens but now are fellowcitizens WITH the other group called saints.

Therefore by process of elimination, we know assuredly that the saints mentioned in vs. 1 must be Jews. It's really quite simple; it's either US or THEM. From Paul's perspective, the Jews are US and Gentiles THEM. Paul would include himself as one of the saints.

Eph 1:2 Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

**NOTE:** "God our Father". Paul begins each of his epistles, other than Galatians and 2 Tim, with this phrase.

Eph 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

Eph 1:4 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:

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**NOTE:** OK, this is where Paul begins to show his hand. First of all, notice Paul includes himself when he uses the big little words, US and WE. Second, the word holy is never associated with the Gentiles, EVER! Finally, and most importantly, the word “chosen” applies specifically and exclusively to the children of Israel. Where do I get that? Let me show you.

Deu 7:6 For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.

This is found in the book of Deuteronomy and it's being delivered (and written!) by Moses the law giver. We know from The Practical Look at the Law that God gave the book of Deuteronomy to Moses exclusively for the children of Israel. Furthermore, we can see from this one verse that the children of Israel are referred to as “chosen” and they are also called “holy”.

IMPORTANT! Have you ever asked yourself why God would define Israel as being holy in Deut. Chapter 7? What have they done up to this point that God should classify them as “holy”?

Let's review Israel's history up to Deut. chapter 7. We see God command the children of Israel to enter the Promised Land so Moses sends 12 spies into the land to survey it. 10 spies came back with a negative report, Israel doubts God's goodness, and they refuse to enter the promise land. This little act costs Israel 40 years of wandering in the desert while every man who was alive at the time dies in that 40 year scenic tour of the Middle East with the exception of Joshua and Caleb.

In Numbers 16, Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and 250 princes of the assembly rose up to rebel against God's chosen leader Moses. This little event caused the first recorded sink hole because the

earth opened up and swallowed alive Korah, Dathan, Abiram, their houses, and all the men that pertained to their little club. Then God used fire to consume the remaining 250 men that were offering incense.

You would think that the people observing this horrifying event would have learned something about fearing the LORD, but not this crowd. The following day the children of Israel rose up and accused Moses of “killing the people of the LORD”. This fiasco angered God so much that he told Aaron and Moses to step aside because He was about to exterminate the entire Jewish race and start over. Fortunately, Moses and Aaron intervened for the children of Israel and the ensuing plague only consumed 14,700 people. These are people God is calling “holy” in Deut. 7.

I could continue on listing one event after another that got Israel in trouble with either God or Moses. One day Moses would ask God to wipe out Israel and God would refuse; then another day God would tell Moses to look out because He was about to eliminate Israel but Moses would intervene. It's a good thing God and Moses never were on the same page on the same day or Israel would have been history.

I found nothing noteworthy that Israel had done that would lead anyone (especially a holy sinless God) to identify Israel as being holy. This leads me to believe that God didn't define Israel as holy because of what they had DONE but rather because of WHO had CALLED them.

Deu 7:6 For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.

Deu 7:7 The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number

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than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people:

Deu 7:8 **But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers**, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

This is a prime example of predestination but I'm getting ahead of myself. We'll cover this in more detail very soon.

You say you want more proof that the word "chosen" applies exclusively to Israel?

1Ch 16:13 O ye seed of Israel his servant, ye children of Jacob, his chosen ones.

Psa 135:4 For the LORD hath chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel for his peculiar treasure.

Isa 41:8 But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend.

Isa 44:1 Yet now hear, O Jacob my servant; and Israel, whom I have chosen:

The Bible is crystal clear that God has chosen Israel (aka Jacob) and I've not found any scripture that would lead me to believe that the Gentiles have usurped that classification in the present church age and are now the "chosen". Remember Rom 11:29 For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.

Next verse.

Eph 1:5 Having **predestinated us** unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

**NOTE:** Paul truly loves that big little word, US. Now we get into the tangle weave I promised and

I can feel many of you shaking in your boots when I broach the idea of predestination. Let me start off by acknowledging that I strongly support the Biblical teaching of predestination. I certainly can't deny the doctrine because it's clearly in the Bible and therefore denying it would be heretical. However, my understanding may surprise some of the readers.

Before we dive into the doctrine of predestination, let's take a quick look at the word "adoption" as it's used in the NT. It appears only a handful of times so I've decided to print them out for your convenience.

Rom\_8:15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of **adoption**, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

Rom\_8:23 And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the **adoption**, to wit, the redemption of our body.

**NOTE:** Romans chapter 8 applies doctrinally to the Jews but I don't have time now to fully explain. I'm working on a study of the book of Roman's but that will take a while. Honestly, it really doesn't matter because the next two verses do a beautiful job of identifying to whom the word adoption applies.

Rom\_9:4 **Who are Israelites**; to **whom pertaineth the adoption**, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises;

**NOTE:** Could it be any plainer than that? You want more? Look at the next verse.

Gal\_4:5 To redeem **them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons**.

**NOTE:** First notice the word "we". Very important! Next, Paul is obviously talking to "them that were

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under the law". This could only be the Jewish people because the Gentiles have never been "under the law". Period.

OK, that was easy. Now comes the hard part. Why? Why does Paul use the word adoption when referring to the Israelites? What does the word adoption even mean and why use it in this context?

Children are adopted after the death of both parents or when the parents abandon the children for one reason or another. Either way, adoption occurs when the parents are no longer available to care for the child.

In Israel's case, the nation of Israel was "born" in the OT when God the Father chose them from among all the people groups of the world.

Rom\_8:29 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.

John ch. 3 and I Pet. 1 reference being "born again".

The OT relationship that God had with Israel has been abolished. It's dead. Paul uses marriage and death in Rom 7 to describe how God the Father relinquishes his claim on his wife, being the OT Israel, such that Israel in the NT can become part of the bride of Christ. He uses the idea of a woman becoming a widow after the death of the husband as a legal means of being married to another.

Rom 7:4 Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

Rom 7:5 For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.

Rom 7:6 But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.

Gal\_4:4 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,

**UNDER CONSTRUCTION:** I'm still developing my thoughts on the idea of adoption. Please continue reading the rest of the study. I dive into the doctrine of predestination next. Fascinating!

Eph\_1:5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

I've heard numerous pastors, teachers, Bible scholars (let us all reverently bow when we mention their Highness!), and common lay people teach on the subject of predestination. John Calvin is by far the most notable Bible scholar to emphasize the doctrine of predestination (a.k.a. sovereign grace) and I've read all 14 pgs. of his explanation found in the Institutes of Religion. In fact, entire books have been written on the subject but I believe Bible scholars have convoluted the doctrine and made it far more difficult to understand than necessary. Suffice it to say, that the doctrine of predestination has historically caused a sharp division within the Christian faith as well as been the impetus for severe religious persecution much like the doctrine of baptism.

My final conclusion? You really should see this coming by now. Please remember that we've previously established that Paul is talking to "the chosen" in Eph. Ch. 1, which are identified as saints (ch. 2:19), and in fact are indeed the Jews,

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(a.k.a. circumcision). So my conclusion is rudimentary, simple, easy peasy! The Jews are predestinated! I know, that's a bold statement and now it's time to back it up with Bible evidence. We've already seen a prime example in Duet. 7:6-8 but I have more proof.

This is maybe the deepest part of our dive so take a deep breath of air because I'm about to list just a few of the MANY, MANY, promises that God the Father gave to Israel his chosen and Jacob his servant. Keep in mind that these promises are in no way applicable to all the nations (i.e. Gentiles).

**Predestination Defined:** This is a very rudimentary definition of what the term "predestination" means. I'm going to boil down to a few sentences what authors have wasted enormous quantities of ink and paper to try to describe. Predestination is nothing more than the promisee (person to whom a promise is made) having a future appointment with destiny due to a promise made by the promiser (in this case God). For instance, if God somehow conveyed a message to me that I would someday be elected President of the united States, that would make me "predestined" to fulfill that promise or prophecy. I would then be considered predestinated to become president. How does that apply to the Bible? Quite simply, all the OT promises regarding the children of Israel make the children of Israel predestinated to fulfill these promises. Why? Because God cannot lie!! That's why. Short, simple, sweet. I didn't need a book, nor even 14 pages, to explain that simple doctrine. However, I now need to prove that the Bible supports this understanding. Are you ready?

I quoted from Duet. 7 before so here are some of the succeeding verses. The reader can look back at Deut. 6:3,4 if they have any doubt that chapter 7 was written exclusively to Israel. That would be for those skeptics in the audience.

Deu 7:6 For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.

Here we prove that the audience is a chose people.

Deu 7:7 The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people:

Deu 7:8 But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

**NOTE:** Notice he swore this oath to their fathers. Which fathers? That would be Moses and the elders of Israel. If you still have any doubt, please go back and read the book of Deuteronomy and my Practical Look at the Law. Let's move on to the promises.

Deu 7:9 Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations;

Deu 7:10 And repayeth them that hate him to their face, to destroy them: he will not be slack to him that hateth him, he will repay him to his face.

Deu 7:11 Thou shalt therefore keep the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which I command thee this day, to do them.

**NOTE:** Remember the quid pro quo contract (covenant)? This is Israel's part of the bargain.

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Now we are about to see God's promised reward for Israel's obedience.

Deu 7:12 Wherefore it shall come to pass, if ye hearken to these judgments, **and keep, and do them**, that the LORD thy God shall keep unto thee the covenant and the mercy which he sware unto thy fathers:

Deu 7:13 And he will love thee, and bless thee, and multiply thee: he will also bless the fruit of thy womb, and the fruit of thy land, thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep, in the land which he sware unto thy fathers to give thee.

Deu 7:14 Thou shalt be blessed above all people: there shall not be male or female barren among you, or among your cattle.

Deu 7:15 And the LORD will take away from thee all sickness, and will put none of the evil diseases of Egypt, which thou knowest, upon thee; but will lay them upon all them that hate thee.

Deu 7:16 And thou shalt consume all the people which the LORD thy God shall deliver thee; thine eye shall have no pity upon them: neither shalt thou serve their gods; for that will be a snare unto thee.

**NOTE:** Israel was offered the quid pro quo contract and they gladly accepted the offer. Now God lays out the stipulation for contract fulfillment. If they (Israel) keep his commandments, then I (God) will keep all my promises. These promises mean that Israel (the promisee) has a future appointment with destiny to fulfill all the promises because God must be faithful to his word.

Please remember that the Gentiles were never offered this covenant (contract) and therefore they are exempt from any contractual agreement terms, both good (blessings or promises) and bad

(curses). I'm thinking specifically about Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim.

Deu 11:29 And it shall come to pass, when the LORD thy God hath brought thee in unto the land whither thou goest to possess it, that thou shalt put the blessing upon mount Gerizim, and the curse upon mount Ebal.

Let's see another one.

Jer 31:31 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:

Jer 31:32 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD:

God clearly distinguishes between the Mosaic covenant and the something he labels the "new covenant".

## Informational Interlude

**IMPORTANT CONCEPT!** Very few people realize this so I need to take a moment and explain something crucial. The New COVENANT is not the New TESTAMENT and the New Testament is NOT the new covenant, even though some Bibles confuse the two different entities. The new testament was in Christ's blood and his death activated it. Let's prove this with scripture references.

Mat 26:28 For this is **my blood of the new testament**, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

Here's something to consider. Did you know that the New Testament **DID NOT** begin until **AFTER** Christ shed his blood and died on the cross? In fact, according to the Bible the NT does not begin



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in Matthew chapter 1, it begins in Mat. 27:50, Mark 15:37, Luke 23:46, and John 19:30. This concept may be new to you so now you'll need some proof. The book of Hebrews explains it in detail.

Heb 9:14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

Heb 9:15 And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

**NOTE:** Heb. 9:15 contains the words "first testament", "called", "for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament," "receive the promise". Jewish, Jewish, Jewish! The Jews received the first testament (the LAW!), they are the called, they are the chosen ones to whom God made the promise.

Gal 4:4 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,

Gal 4:5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

**NOTE:** Remember Rom 15:8 Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers:

Jesus was the minister of the circumcision (Jews) for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the Jewish fathers. God sent his Son to redeem them that were (past tense!) under the law (Jews!).

Heb 9:16 For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.

**NOTE:** Please don't miss this next important point.

Heb 9:17 For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.

**NOTE:** According to Heb. 9, the New Testament in Christ's blood was absolutely POWERLESS and USELESS before the death of Christ just like your "last will and testament" is unenforceable until AFTER your death. The testator needs to die in order to activate (of force) the new (or last) testament. In fact, it was required that Christ shed his blood to enact the new testament because the new testament was in his blood. That's also why Jesus said unto Mary in Jn. 20:17, "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father:

Jesus needed to offer his precious blood on the true mercy seat in heaven before he could allow Mary, Thomas or anyone else handle him. I actually believe the NT didn't begin until the blood was offered on the mercy seat in heaven. Regardless, Heb. 9:16, 17 assures us that the New Testament could not have begun until AFTER Christ's death. Jesus Christ lived under the OT law, fulfilled the OT law, and then shed his blood and died to usher in the NT.

Armed with that knowledge, let's look at the new covenant a little closer so you can better understand the differences between it and the NT.

The New Testament was enforced upon Christ's death. The new covenant is not yet enforced but it will be sometime in the future when "all Israel is saved".

How do I know this? Keep reading.

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Jer 31:31 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:

Jer 31:32 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD:

Jer 31:33 But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Jer 31:34 And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

**NOTE:** Has all of this prophecy happened yet? Has God put his laws in Israel's inward parts and has he written his laws in Israel's heart? Have we reached a time when Christians are no longer sharing the good news of the gospel because EVERYONE on the planet knows the Lord? Not hardly, but I believe in my heart that this prophecy will be entirely fulfilled when Jesus Christ is ruling in his earthly kingdom from Jerusalem.

The entire population of the earth will know who the Lord is because he will be the true one world ruler / king promised to the OT Jews. Satan sends a counterfeit ruler (the Anti-christ) prior the Lord's return but God will set all things right when Christ returns to rule his kingdom (thy kingdom come, thy will be done!).

As a matter of fact, God hasn't even written his law in MY heart yet even though I'm a redeemed child of God, an integral part of Christ's body, and a member of the Church of God. This new

covenant only appears in two books of the Bible; Jeremiah and Hebrews. Let's see how close the book of Hebrews aligns with what we just read from Jeremiah.

Heb 8:8 For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah:

Heb 8:9 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.

Heb 8:10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:

Heb 8:11 And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.

Heb 8:12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.

**NOTE:** It's quite obvious that Paul, in the book of Hebrews, was quoting directly from the book of Jeremiah. I know this doctrine is getting quite deep for the average reader but try to stay with me just a little longer. I don't have time to fully develop this next thought, but it shouldn't be surprising that a book call "Hebrews" was written specifically for the Jews. That's another study in the making. So much to do; so little time.

Have you ever wondered what the Apostle John was trying to convey in the book of I Jn. Chapter 3? I've seen a lot of pastors and Bible teachers do

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theological back flips trying to make these next passages apply to the dispensation of the grace of God and I've found it rather humorous. Let's take a closer look at what John REALLY says.

1Jn 3:5 And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.

1Jn 3:6 Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.

**NOTE:** Sinneth not???? I'm failing miserably! Does that mean I don't know him?

1Jn 3:7 Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.

**NOTE:** I have the righteousness of Christ; not because I do righteousness but because HE did all the righteousness.

1Jn 3:8 He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

1Jn 3:9 Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: **and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.**

And he CANNOT SIN because he is born of God?? CANNOT SIN?? How's that sinlessness working out for you? I can tell you right now, I'm not faring so well.

Read it again. John clearly says, "He that committeth sin is of the devil". What exactly does that mean about you and I (assuming of course that you are still living in a sinful body like me)?

That's heavy duty doctrine!

John also says, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin". Well, that's certainly not me! I

haven't got that sin issue licked yet, nor does any honest person I know.

BUT, what if God wrote his laws in someone's heart? What if obeying God's laws became involuntary, or nearly involuntary? Would that make a difference? Me thinks so. According to Jeremiah 31 and Hebrews chapters 8 and 12, I honestly believe there's coming a day when "all Israel will be saved" (Rom. 11:26) corporately as a nation, not individually like today. And at that time God will finally fulfill the promise he made to Israel regarding the new covenant. I believe that the Jews will be sinless at that time because God's laws will be written in their hearts. I know, that's a wild thought but it allows me to believe the Bible just as it's written without doing any theological acrobatics. I'm getting too old for acrobatics.

Always remember; please never forget; sin is NEVER imputed to the Gentiles because they have not the law. However, that in no way suggests that Gentiles are not sinners. The fact that ALL Gentiles die proves that ALL Gentiles are sinners.

1 Cor. 15:56a The sting of death is sin". However, the verse continues to say, "and the strength of sin is the law". Sin is powerless without the law because.....

Rom 4:15 Because the law worketh wrath: for **where no law is, there is no transgression.**

1Jn 3:4 Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: **for sin is the transgression of the law.**

Without the law there is NO transgression. Why? Because the Bible clearly says "sin is the transgression of the law". It's right there for all the world to see and it truly couldn't be any more plain. However, our religious programming and indoctrination precludes most people from believing what they read. How about you?

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BTW, the promise of the “new covenant: is another GREAT example of why the Jews are predestinated. God’s promise provides an unavoidable clash with destiny for Israel, God’s chosen, as well as Jacob, God’s servant.

Jer 31:34 And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

**NOTE:** We really need to see one more clear example of why the Bible labels Israel as “predestined” to cement this concept.

Jer 33:14 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel and to the house of Judah.

**NOTE:** This is pure unadulterated predestination! God fulfilling the OT promises made to Israel means, by definition, that Israel is predestined. Let’s continue.

Jer 33:15 In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land.

**NOTE:** I understand the Branch of David to be the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jer 33:16 In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, The LORD our righteousness.

**NOTE:** Talk about an awesome promise!! Is Judah saved today? Is Jerusalem dwelling in safety? Hmm? Is Jerusalem known by the name, “The LORD our righteousness”? The answer to all these questions is an emphatic, “NO!” However,

these promises must be fulfilled someday in the future or God becomes a liar and that’s simply not in his nature.

Jer 33:17 For thus saith the LORD; David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel;

**NOTE:** Is there a direct descendent of David sitting on Israel’s thron today? Does Israel have a monarchical government today? If you can honestly answer “No” to any of these questions, then.....Israel is predestined! That’s right, Israel is predestined to fulfill ALL of the promises God made to them. Why? Because God cannot lie!! It’s that simple. God said it, He meant it, and therefore his promises are sure to happen. This is what predestination is all about.

Rom 11:25 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.

**NOTE:** Paul says Israel is blind today UNTIL the fullness of the Gentiles be come in (i.e. arrive, occur).

Rom 11:26 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:

**NOTE:** Notice that Paul is not suggesting that these promises to Israel had already been fulfilled when he was writing the book of Romans. Instead, Paul attributes the salvation of Israel to some future date that occurs AFTER the fullness of the Gentiles. Once again, we encounter pure unadulterated predestination. God, who cannot lie, must fulfill his promises.

Rom 11:27 For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.

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**NOTE:** That dovetails nicely with Jer. 31:34b; “for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

Rom 11:28 As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes.

Rom 11:29 **For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.**

**NOTE:** Very important verse Paul provides for us. The gifts (promises, etc.) *AND CALLING* of God are without repentance. It's an interesting study to look up all the times the words “repent, repented, repentance” appear in the OT and learn how often the Bible records God repenting of something. **HOWEVER**, he absolutely will not repent of his gifts or calling.

We saw earlier in this study that the Jews were identified as “the called” in the old testament and therefore they are still the called today. Why? Put simply, because the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. God's refusal to repent of his gifts and calling is exactly why Israel is predestinated. I hope I've made that concept clear to the reader. If not, please turn back and read through the information once again. It may take some serious contemplation and ruminating on the scripture verses I've quoted before the years of religious indoctrination and programming can be dispelled.

## Finally, Back to our Study of Ephesians!

Eph 1:6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made **us** accepted in the beloved.

Eph 1:7 In whom **we** have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

Eph 1:8 Wherein he hath abounded toward **us** in all wisdom and prudence;

Eph 1:9 Having made known unto **us** the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

Eph 1:10 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:

Eph 1:11 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:

**NOTE:** I trust the reader recognizes by now that the children of Israel are the predestinated ones because of the OT promises God made exclusively to them. In this verse we learn that Israel obtained an inheritance in Christ because of their predestination. Notice the important lesson Paul provides in Rom. 15:8.

Rom 15:8 Now I say **that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made** unto the fathers:

**NOTE:** Who was Jesus a minister unto? According to Paul, Jesus was a minister unto the circumcision (i.e. Jews). Why? For the truth of God. What was the underlying purpose of Jesus ministering to the circumcision at his first coming? To confirm the promises made unto the patriarchal Israeli fathers (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob). What does all this mean? This verse describes the bedrock upon which the doctrine of predestination is established. Jesus ministered unto the circumcision for the truth of God in order to confirm the promises because God cannot lie. Ultimately, this means that all the OT promises made to the children of Israel **MUST BE** fulfill exactly as God spoke them.

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Notice also in Eph 1:11 that Paul writes, “being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:” That dovetails nicely with Rom. 15:8 when Paul writes, “for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers” According to the purpose of him....to confirm the promises made unto the fathers.

Now look at the verses that immediately follow Rom. 15:8.

Rom 15:9 And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name.

Rom 15:10 And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people.

Rom 15:11 And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people.

Rom 15:12 And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust.

**NOTE:** Once again Paul uses the US / THEM theme so common in his epistles to distinguish between the Jews and Gentiles. While it is true that Jesus came to minister to the circumcision during his first advent, Paul makes it clear in vss. 9-12 that the inclusion of the Gentiles into the grace based body of Christ was foretold in the OT.

Whew, that was some deep theological waters we just traversed. I know I’ve just unloaded a boat-load of scripture verses trying to explain why, because of unfulfilled OT promises, I believe the Jews represent the people group identified in the Bible as “predestinated”. I also understand that the information I’ve presented can appear rather confusing when trying to understand the reasoning after availing yourself to the material for

only the first time. Please don’t feel intimidated, but rather know that I’ve been studying this doctrine for several years and I’ve become intimately familiar with the subject. It’s often difficult to explain an unfamiliar concept to someone else when the author is too familiar with the topic, but I’m doing my best to put the information at “shoe top level”. I recommend reading the material several times and give your mind a chance to ruminate on it for digestion.

Let’s get back on track where we took that detour in Ephesians chapter 1.

Eph 1:12 That **we** should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

**NOTE:** An observation regarding vss. 10-12. Notice first that it’s one sentence; therefore, one contiguous thought. Paul begins vs. 10 with introducing the “dispensation of the fullness of times”, then he announces to the Jews that they have an inheritance in Christ based on their “predestination according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will”, and then he describes the purpose as, “that we (Jews!) should be to the praise of his glory”.

I find an interesting message proclaimed by the way these pithy thoughts are organized and connected. To recap briefly, we’ve already established the fact that the Jews are predestinated because of the promises God gave the children of Israel in the OT and predestination is simply the ultimate fulfillment of said promises in the NT. Now let’s see how the Jewish predestination might be associated with the dispensation Paul mentions; namely, the dispensation of the fullness of times.

**News Flash:** The word “dispensation” is actually a Biblical term. I’m sure many people are shocked to realize that the word truly exists in the Bible. In

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fact, it appears four times; once in I Cor. 9:17, twice in Eph (1:10, 3:2) and once in Col. 1:25. The root word of “dispensation” would of course be “dispense”. A close study of the Bible proves that God has chosen to dispense his favor (grace, mercy, affection, etc.) in different ways throughout history. We saw in the Practical Look at the Law that Israel NEEDED to obey God’s law in the OT in order for God to fulfill his part of the quid pro quo covenant (contract) he made with the OT children of Israel.

Now, in the New Testament, we see God issue a contract amendment for the children of Israel in that Christ, “Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;”

This is a HUGE departure from the OT where keeping the law was mandatory for the children of Israel to maintain right standing with their God.

Rom 3:20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

Rom 3:28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

## Now, Back to our Study

So let’s move back to our text now that we’ve proven that the Jews are predestinated.

Eph 1:13 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,

**NOTE:** Paul’s use of “ye” in this verse is understandable because he is referring to a very personal event; namely an individual’s salvation. The nation of Israel will be saved corporately one day ( all Israel shall be saved) but the Jews Paul

addresses in this part of Ephesians are saved as unique individuals, just like a Gentile today. However, the word “promises” is rather interesting since the promises belong to the Jews.

Rom 9:4 Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises;

Eph 1:14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

**NOTE:** Notice how Paul uses the big little word “our” to describe the inheritance. He includes himself because, of course, he is a Jew.

Eph 1:15 Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints,

**NOTE:** We’ve previously established that the Gentiles are NOT the saints but rather redeemed Jews are saints.

Eph 1:16 Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;

Eph 1:17 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:

Eph 1:18 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,

**NOTE:** We simply can’t get past Rom. 9:3,4.

Rom 9:3 For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:

Rom 9:4 Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants,

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and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises;

Rom 9:4 is clear; the glory pertains to Paul's *brethren ACCORDING TO FLESH*, namely, Israelites! Have you ever wondered why? I believe it's because they are predestinated to fulfill ALL the OT promises God made to them and this fulfillment *REVEALS* the glory of God and Israel. It's a public revelation of God's faithfulness and prophetic power. In fact, God calls Israel "my glory".

Isa 46:13 I bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry: and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory.

Eph 1:19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,

Eph 1:20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,

Eph 1:21 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:

Eph 1:22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,

Eph 1:23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

**NOTE:** Eph 1:22, 23 is one more expression that defines the church as his body.

The symmetric property of equality states that "If  $a=b$ , then  $b=a$ ". On the surface, that concept appears rather simple, correct? Let's apply the symmetric property of equality to Eph. 1:22, 23. If the church is Christ's body, then that means that

Christ's body is the church. Once again, simple concept. However, the word "church" has been besmirched by empire building psychopaths within Christendom who dress themselves in sheep's clothing and control the sheeple through fear. While the Bible clearly defines the church as the body of Christ, man has redefined the word to mean a building many of which are enormous opulent edifices, an organizational hierarchy, a movement,

## Ephesians Chapter 3

Now that we've discovered some rich truths in chapters 1 and 2, it's time to move into chapter 3.

Eph 3:1 For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,

**NOTE:** This verse sets the stage for who Paul addresses in chapter 3. First we see that Paul is addressing "YOU Gentiles". This is another clear example of how Paul unmistakably identifies the Gentiles when he's addressing them and it also supports his consistent exclusion of himself from THEM (i.e. Gentiles). This verse is just a continuation of what we saw earlier.

Eph 3:2 If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:

**NOTE:** Okay, here we must secure the hatch on this Bible study submarine because we are about to dive deep again with the mention of the word "dispensation". Let's first compare what Paul says to the Jews in Eph. chapter 1.

Eph 1:10 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:



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Interesting phrase, “fullness of times”. Let’s see that same phrase used in another passage of scripture.

Gal 4:5 To **redeem them that were under the law**, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

Gal 4:4 But when the **fulness of the time** was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,

We need to identify Paul’s audience first. Paul is directing these verses (and the entire book of Galatians!) to “them that were under the law” (Jews). From this, I understand that a current or future dispensation exists which God considers the fullness of times for the Jews. The Gentiles also have a fullness mentioned by Paul.

Rom 11:25 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.

Allow me to reiterate what Paul just explained in Rom. 11:25. Blindness in part is happened to Israel and this blindness will end when the fullness of the Gentiles is come in. This means that God WILL ASSUREDLY direct his attention to the children of Israel AFTER the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. When that happens, ALL Israel will be saved corporately, or in another word, NATIONALLY. Israel truly is predestined by God to fulfill his promises to them.

Now, let’s look at the dispensation Paul ascribes to the Gentiles in Eph. Ch. 3. Paul refers to it as the “dispensation of the grace of God which was given by God to Paul so he could preach it unto the Gentiles.

Notice that the descriptive name of this dispensation is quite simple with no mention of fulfilled promises (fulness of times) like Paul

mentioned in chapter 1 when he was addressing the Jews. It’s simply called, “the dispensation of the grace of God”. That’s because the Gentiles have no long reaching historical relationship with the Father, nor do they have an integral part in setting up the future 1000 year kingdom that Jesus Christ will establish in Jerusalem. See Rev. 20:1-7. This is the very same kingdom that was promised in the OT to the children of Israel and therefore God the Father will deliver his promise to the praise of his glory and without repentance.

Isa 9:6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Isa 9:7 Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

**NOTE:** This kingdom was also promised in the NT.

Luk 1:31 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.

Luk 1:32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:

Luk 1:33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

This kingdom was promised to the OT Jews and is why God gave Israel the SIGN of the Sabbath. The Sabbath was a weekly reminder given to the children of Israel that God would one day fulfill the rest he promised. The fact that this kingdom has not come to fruition is plain to see when anyone

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considers the constant turmoil of Israel and the Middle East. But there is coming a day when the Lord shall descend from heaven just as described in Rev. ch. 19. Thy kingdom come; thy will be done. It's all about the kingdom!

Rev 19:14 And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

Rev 19:15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

Rev 19:16 And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

**NOTE:** This is when Jesus Christ FINALLY becomes the promised king and establishes the promised kingdom.

Rev 20:1 And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

Rev 20:2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,

Rev 20:3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

**NOTE:** One important reason that Jesus Christ simply cannot be ruling an earthly kingdom today is because even the kings of this world still remain subject to the god of this world. Satan remains the god of this world until he is utterly defeated by Jesus Christ in Rev. 19 when Christ descends

from heaven on a white horse with MANY crowns as the KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

Rev 19:16 And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

(You should here Handel's Hallelujah Chorus playing in the back of your mind right now!)

2Cor 4:3 But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:

2Cor 4:4 In whom **the god of this world** hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

Jesus Christ cannot assume his earthly kingship until the god of this world (Satan) has been completely subdued, his kingdom utterly destroyed, and Satan is securely bound in the lake of fire as described in Rev. 19.

Rom 16:20 And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

**IMPORTANT:** This next point is imperative to acknowledge right now. I need to assure the reader that there is absolutely no difference between the redeemed Jew and the redeemed Gentile in this dispensation (fullness of times for the Jews; grace of God for the Gentiles) and at this time in history.

Rom 10:11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

Rom 10:12 For **there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.**

Rom 10:13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

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The two different dispensation names simply distinguish two different perspectives; one Jewish, one Gentile. However, the two dispensations occur synonymously in time, right now during the church age. Two different names, two different people groups with significantly different historical relationships with God, but the same unlimited grace is offered to ALL! RIGHT NOW!

Eph 3:3 How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words,

Eph 3:4 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)

Eph 3:5 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;

**NOTE:** Paul confirms that history consists of multiple ages and that the mystery he's now revealing was previously hid to the sons of men. This makes perfect sense since the information in the NT is certainly NOT contained in the OT. Otherwise, why would God have written the NT? Furthermore, the last book in the Bible is called, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ". Revelation has the root word, REVEAL!!

This also negates the idea that people have always been saved in exactly the same manner, whether OT or NT. How could someone in the OT have understood the mysteries Paul is revealing if they were hid from the sons of men? That thought is irrational as well as illogical. While faith has ALWAYS been an integral element regarding the eternal destiny of mankind, the OBJECT of that faith has changed throughout the ages.

The OT Jews knew only what the Father revealed in the law through Moses and whatever the prophet of the day declared. We find hints of the suffering Messiah in numerous OT books but keep in mind that the nation of Israel certainly

never understood these subtle (and sometimes not so subtle) hints for what they were and they STILL cannot recognize their suffering Messiah even 2000 yrs. after his resurrection. The object of faith has shifted from a self-centered, self-righteous works based religion to a beautiful relationship void of all works and the self-made righteousness which failed due to the weakness of the flesh.

Rom 8:3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

Rom 8:4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

OT Israel was ignorant of God's righteousness so they were trying to establish their own righteousness through the works of the flesh and the law.

Rom 10:1 Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God **for Israel** is, that they might be saved.

Rom 10:2 For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.

Rom 10:3 For they being ignorant of **God's righteousness,** and going about to **establish their own righteousness,** have **not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.**

Rom 10:4 For **Christ is the end of the law for righteousness** **to every one that believeth.**

Let's see if I understand these verses correctly. If Christ is the END of the law for righteousness, then there must have been a time BEFOE Christ when the law was still quite necessary for a person to achieve a sort of righteousness before God. Consider this sharp contrast; the members of Christ's body (i.e. church) during the

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dispensation of the grace of God have the righteousness of Christ. That righteousness would have been impossible for those living BEFORE Christ to have received. Therefore, the two righteousness's are diametrically opposed.

Rom 11:6 And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.

Like oil and water, grace and work does not mix.

Back to Rom. 10:4. If something ends, that means that whatever existed before the end was different than what existed AFTER the end. This understanding appears to be both logical and rational.

During the Prohibition period between 1920 and 1933, it was illegal in the US to produce and consume drinking alcohol. When Prohibition ENDED, the restrictions on alcohol were rescinded and life in the US was henceforth drastically altered. The sale and use of hard liquor existed before, during, and after Prohibition so that's not what changed. What changed is the legality of the sale and use of hard liquor, as well as the general availability. I don't believe anyone would argue that life in US was exactly the same AFTER prohibition ended as it was BEFORE prohibition ended.

So it is with Christ. The OT Jews were required to obey Gods laws, statutes, commandment, and ceremonial laws in order to remain in Gods favor. But God!! But Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth and the NT in Christ's blood changed everything. God now imputes the righteousness of Christ to all who believe!! Jew and Gentile alike; no difference!

Eph 3:6 That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:

**NOTE:** This is a fascinating verse. Paul continues his US / THEM theme by calling out the Gentiles specifically; therefore, this passage does NOT apply to the Jews. He then explains the relationship between Jews and Gentiles in the body of Christ. Notice that he calls the Gentiles "fellowheirs". We need to better understand how Paul uses that phrase in this situation.

The law dictionary defines fellowheirs as: "A co-heir; partner of the same inheritance". So now we need to ask ourselves, with whom are the Gentiles co-heirs or partners? Well, that's an easy one; the Jews! The Jews are long time heirs based on the OT promises.

Paul continues to support this understanding when he further describes this new relational development as, "of the same body". This dovetails nicely with Eph. 2.

Eph 2:14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;

Eph 2:15 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;

Eph 2:16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

Now Paul makes a bold statement that would have caused virulent hatred and derision from the Jewish community. Don't misunderstand me; Paul's entire message is reprehensible and unconscionable to all "law abiding Jews" and they had good reason for trying to kill Paul. However, most people within the Jewish community, especially the religious leaders, would have considered this next statement to be the coup d'etat of Paul's ministry to the Gentiles. What is it you ask?

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“and **partakers of his promise** **in Christ by the gospel**

Paul is saying that in Christ, through the gospel, the Gentiles are now partakers of the same promise made to the Jews in the OT. The Jewish nation just toiled under the Mosaic law for 1500 years and now these filthy low life Gentile dogs are said to be fellowheirs in the same body and partakers of the same promise as God's elect, His chosen people? How DARE God do something so grossly unfair?? Let that sink in for just a moment.

Hmmm, a parable comes to mind right now. Remember the day laborers in Mat. 20? The householder hires laborers in the morning for a penny and then hires more laborers at the third hour, the sixth hour, and finally the eleventh hour. At the end of the day he gives each laborer their wages.

Mat 20:10 But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny.

Mat 20:11 And when they had received it, they murmured against the goodman of the house,

Mat 20:12 Saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day.

Mat 20:13 But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny?

Mat 20:14 Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee.

Mat 20:15 Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?

**NOTE:** I believe it's important that Gentiles never forget the underlying purpose God has for us when he dispenses the same rich blessings to us previously afforded exclusively to the OT children of Israel.

Rom 10:19 But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to **jealousy** by **them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you.**

Rom 11:11 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.**

Yep, that's it folks. God's purpose in saving the Gentiles during this dispensation of the grace of God is an extremely humble one. According to Rom. 11:11, salvation has come unto the Gentiles for to provoke Israel to jealousy.

Joh 1:10 He (*Jesus*) was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

Joh 1:11 He came unto his own, **and his own received him not.**

Mat 10:5 These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not:

Mat 10:6 **But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.**

Mat 15:24 But he answered and said, **I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.**

As mentioned in The Practical Look at the Law, the purpose of Jesus first advent was specifically to redeem the children of Israel from the burdensome law based quid pro covenant that God had negotiated with the OT Jews. In addition,

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God the Father, through his son Jesus Christ, issued a contract amendment whereby Jesus lived a sinless life and completely fulfilled the Jews contractual obligation once, and for all! This fulfillment of the obligation allowed God to entirely eliminate any further requirements for the children of Israel to obey the Mosaic law. Paul wrote the book of Galatians exclusively to the Jews to convince the nation of Israel that they are no longer under the curse of the law.

God owed Abraham a debt because of the way Abraham sacrificed his only begotten son Isaac.

Jas 2:21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?

Jas 2:22 Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?

Please read Rom. 15:8 very carefully (shown below).

Rom 15:8 Now I say that **Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers:**

This verse supports my understanding that God owed a debt to Abraham. We see that Jesus earthly ministry at his first coming was specifically to the Jews. We've covered that fact rather extensively in the balance of this study. However, the purpose of his ministry was "for the truth of God" and "to confirm the promises made unto the fathers". Jesus came to fulfill (confirm) the promises which in essence is paying a debt owed. When God makes a promise He is committed to fulfilling it to the letter. God made several very involved promises to Abraham and "his seed" that should follow him. Based on the "debt" of God's promises, God needed to sufficiently fulfill those promises BEFORE he could offer the contract amendment we find in the New Testament. This amendment included Christ fulfilling the

contractual obligations of the OT Jews so the New Testament in Jesus blood could be offered.

Back to the verses in James ch. 2. While it's true that Abraham's faith was counted for "RIGHTEOUSNESS", it is equally true that Abraham was "JUSTIFIED" by works.

The idea that someone could have faith without being justified is an extremely foreign concept to most, in fact almost ALL, disciples of Jesus Christ but that's exactly what happened to father Abraham.

It's crucial that we constantly keep at the forefront of our biblical understanding that God's ultimate goal is to establish the earthly kingdom he promised throughout the OT and it's imperative that he fulfill ALL of his promises to Israel. Satan's only chance for victory is a default win in the event that God fails to fulfill even one of his promises. The reason it's so important for us to understand this concept is so we can better understand why God chose to use the Gentiles to provoke Israel to jealousy. God MUST establish the Davidic kingdom at all cost, God must ensure that all Israel is saved at all cost, God must fulfill ALL of his promises. Otherwise, Satan wins.

Jer 31:35 Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The LORD of hosts is his name:

Jer 31:36 If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the LORD, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever.

Jer 31:37 Thus saith the LORD; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the LORD.

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Satan wants to destroy the seed of Abraham because his only hope for victory is that the seed of Israel is not available for God to fulfill his promises. Why is man constantly searching the heavens and the earth's foundations? The Bible has an answer.

Paul warns the Gentiles in Rom 11 to remain humble lest they boast against the Jews.

Rom 11:17 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;

Rom 11:18 Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.

The Gentiles, being the wild olive tree, were grafted in among them (the Jews). That certainly supports our understanding that the Gentiles are fellowcitizens with the saints (ch. 2:19), fellowheirs, of the same body, and partakers of the same promise.

Eph 2:15 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;

Eph 2:16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

**NOTE:** Wow. I'll bet you never knew that Eph. 3:6 supported so much important doctrine. Neither did I, but alas it's time to move forward.

Eph 3:7 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.

**NOTE:** Paul attributes his ministry to the gift of the grace of God which just happens to be the name

of the dispensation he introduces to the Gentiles (vs. 2).

Eph 3:8 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;

**NOTE:** Notice here that Paul considers himself a saint, albeit the least of all saints, but still he calls himself a saint. We've already established that Paul considers the Jews saints and the Gentiles "fellowcitizens WITH the saints"(ch. 2:19).

Notice also that Paul continues his US / THEM theme by identifying the Gentiles exclusively.

Eph 3:9 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:

**NOTE:** Paul continues to remind his audience (Gentiles) about the MYSTERY. In fact, Paul uses the word "mystery" 17 times in 17 different verses throughout his epistles. In this verse, Paul wants ALL men (Jews and Gentiles) to understand the "fellowship of the mystery". This is a continuation of the common thread of unification of Jews and Gentiles into one body (Christ's) that Paul strongly advocates beginning in ch. 2:11 and continues through the remainder of this book.

One final thought regarding this "mystery". Please note that the mystery "from the beginning of the world hath been HID (i.e. hidden, clandestine, concealed, invisible, unseen, unknown) in God. According to Paul's epistle, it was impossible for people in the OT to be "saved looking forward to the cross" as some Bible teachers claim because the mystery of the cross and the NT was hid in God. I know the OT points to the cross, but the OT saints were not expecting what transpired by life of Christ. Even John the Baptist, whose spirit was the spirit of Elijah, and according to Christ,

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“Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist”, even John was confused by the developing storyline of Christ’s life. This truly was a mystery hid in God.

Eph 3:10 To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,

Eph 3:11 According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:

Eph 3:12 In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.

**NOTE:** Verses 9-12 appear to be a general statement about all men, Jews and Gentiles.

Eph 3:13 Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.

**NOTE:** Verse 13 appears to be directed back to the Gentiles as Paul uses ye and you. I find it an interesting correlation between Paul considering his tribulations for the Gentiles as the glory of the Gentiles while God attributes his glory to his fulfilling the promises to Israel.

Eph 3:14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

**NOTE:** Paul uses the word “our” to describe the Lord Jesus Christ; therefore, we Gentiles can rest assured that Jesus Christ is Lord for ALL the redeemed, both Jew and Gentile, in the dispensation of grace.

Eph 3:15 Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,

**NOTE:** Paul uses the phrase, “whole family in heaven and earth”; I take that to be Jew and Gentile. In other words, we all bear the same family name. Praise the Lord!!

Eph 3:16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;

**NOTE:** Paul uses the word “you”; I take that to mean Gentile.

Eph 3:17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts **by faith**; that ye, **being rooted and grounded in love**,

Eph 3:18 May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;

**NOTE:** Notice the US / THEM theme once again as Paul uses the term “with all saints”. See ch. 2:19. In addition, Christ dwells in our hearts by faith, not works. And we are rooted and grounded in love. Love God! Love others! By faith! Discipleship of Christ clearly defined in three simple points.

I’ve always wondered about the four dimensional aspect of this verse. “breadth, and length, and depth, and height”. It seems like the words breadth and depth describe the same dimension, but that’s not typical of the Bible. Anomalies like this usually hold an important lesson, so I’m curious.

Eph 3:19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

Eph 3:20 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,

Eph 3:21 Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

**NOTE:** I like the way Paul finally uses the words “we” and “us” when addressing the Gentiles



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because vs. 20 applies to all believers who are part of the church.

## Ephesians Chapter 4

### Unity in the Body of Christ

Paul continues the same “unification of the body of Christ” message here in chapter 4. Many of these verses, especially those that appear at the beginning of the chapter, make far more sense to me now that I recognize the underlying intent behind Paul’s message. Let’s dive in!

Eph 4:1 I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

**NOTE:** Paul repeats himself here from the opening verse of chapter 3. Notice the words “you” and “ye”. Also notice that Paul says the Gentiles are “called”.

Eph 3:1 For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,

**NOTE:** Paul calls himself a “prisoner of Jesus Christ” in several places but he only associates his bondage with the Gentiles, never the Jews. While Paul never lost his earnest desire for his fellow kinsmen the Israelites (Rom 9), he was called by God as the apostle to the Gentiles and therefore his bondage was exclusively to them.

Eph 4:2 With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;

Eph 4:3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

**NOTE:** When Paul says “forbearing one another in love”, I believe Paul is admonishing the Gentiles toward unification with the redeemed Jews since verse 3 specifically identifies “the unity of the Spirit”. The next few verses will emphasize

unification much stronger. I honestly can’t fully describe the understanding break-through I experienced when I studied carefully the next several verses. I pray the reader will experience the same excitement I did when I finally recognized the simple truth.

Eph 4:4 There is **one body**, and **one Spirit**, even as ye are called in **one hope** of your calling;

**NOTE:** Once again Paul delivers a strong unification message in vs. 4. The “one body” theme is truly an emphasis in Paul’s writings and Paul again confirms the “calling” of the Gentiles. Let’s look a little closer at the “one body” and “one spirit” themes in another one of Paul’s epistles.

1 Cor.12:12 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that **one body**, being many, are **one body**: so also is Christ.

1 Cor.12:13 For **by one Spirit** are we all **baptized into one body**, **whether we be Jews or Gentiles**, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into **one Spirit**.

**NOTE:** These two verses are rich with a strong Jew / Gentile unification in ONE BODY by ONE SPIRIT message. Paul’s message here in 1 Cor. 12 is completely congruent with Eph. 4:4. We have the same “one Spirit” baptizing both Jews and Gentiles into “ONE BODY” (the church!). His message couldn’t be spelled out any more clearly.

Eph 2:15 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;

Eph 2:16 And **that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross**, having slain the enmity thereby:

I know this is redundant, but I suspect that some of the readers are still grappling with the concept

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of US vs. THEM, Jew vs. Gentile, and Jesus Christ making of twain (two) one body. However, that's exactly what the scriptures are describing here. Jesus Christ has taken two disparate people groups (Jews with the law and Gentiles who have not the law) and reconciled both unto God in one body (the church) by the cross.

How did he do it? First he needed to abolish the long historical enmity (Enmity Defined: positive, active, and typically mutual hatred or ill will) between these two groups. The Bible identifies the source of this enmity as the law of commandments contained in ordinances. Or, more clearly, the Mosaic covenant of the law, given exclusively to the Jews, needed to be abolished.

We learned in the Practical Look at the Law that the Gentiles were never responsible to keep the Jewish law nor were they ever offered the beautiful promises associated with the quid pro quo covenant contained in the Mosaic law; therefore, the ENORMOUS disparity between these groups was that the Jews were under the guilt laden law but the Gentiles 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". Eph. 2:12.

Please consider the GIGANTIC superiority complex the Jews suffered because of what God told them in the OT. Here's a smattering of the boasting God did regarding Israel.

Deu\_7:6 For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.

Deu\_7:14 Thou shalt be blessed above all people:

Deu\_10:15 Only the LORD had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he chose their seed

after them, even you above all people, as it is this day.

Deu\_14:2 For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God, and the LORD hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth.

Deu\_26:19 And to make thee high above all nations which he hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honour; and that thou mayest be an holy people unto the LORD thy God, as he hath spoken.

**(NOTE: It's instructive to recognize that while the Gentiles were called, the Jews were CHOSEN! )**

Even Peter struggled long after the resurrection with the ramifications resulting from this Jewish superiority complex. Do you recall Paul rebuking Peter sharply because he refused to eat with Gentiles?

Gal 2:11 But when Peter was come to Antioch, I (*Paul*) withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.

Gal 2:12 For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. (*Jews*)

Gal 2:13 And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.

Gal 2:14 But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?

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This provides a small taste of the enmity between the Jews and the Gentiles. The Jews had all these laws and statutes they were mandated to follow but the Gentiles had no obligation to obey any of them. It's natural to harbor resentment toward someone with more liberty than we enjoy and specifically those people who are NOT compelled to obey all the rules that we feel obligated to keep. The fact that the libertarians feel no guilt or condemnation for doing what we cannot is maddening to those under the obligation.

**Example:** I held an official church office at one time that mandated I follow all the spoken and *implied* rules promoted by the pastor. This meant I was required to participate in virtually every event sponsored by the church. There was Sunday school along with the regular church service Sunday morning, church service Sunday night, midweek service Wednesday night, soul winning Saturday morning from time to time, movie nights, marriage conferences, Bible conferences, mission conferences, week long special meetings for church anniversaries, and the list could continue but you get the idea. If it was happening, my family and I were attending. BTW, almost all events were shirt, tie, and suit coat required. Ya gotta look good for your master the pastor!

My mandatory participation bred some palpable envy toward others who could choose discriminately which events they wanted to attend and which they decided to forego. I secretly resented the liberty they enjoyed and did my best to convince them to adopt the bondage I suffered under. After all, misery loves company!

However, my position in the church also afforded me a status enjoyed by few others. I regularly attended a weekly one on one meeting with the pastor, I was welcomed into the inner sanctum with a select group of men that made long term decisions for the congregation, I taught adult Bible studies, children's Sunday school, and was

respected as one of the church leaders. Rank had its privileges!

Human nature is such that people in prominent positions tend to look down their noses at the "underlings", and the underlings typically harbor a certain level of resentment toward their authorities, even if it's ever so slight. Here's my point; True harmony only exists where there is total and absolute parity within a group of disparate people. That unmitigated parity is exactly what Jesus Christ provided by one Spirit for the ONE BODY when God the father nailed to Christ's cross the profuse and burdensome laws, rules, statutes, and ordinances that were against the Jews. Jesus Christ eliminated the disparity and resulting enmity between the Jews and Gentiles for the purpose of creating complete harmony and coexistence between the two distinct people groups gathered together by one spirit into the one body of Christ by simple faith. That's a mouth full.

Eph 4:5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

**NOTE:** This verse and the next strongly promote the one body unity between Jew and Gentile. ONE Lord, ONE faith, ONE baptism. ONE, ONE, ONE! We are ONE in the body of Christ!

Eph 2:16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

One Lord is a simple concept to understand but a difficult concept for the superiority complex laden Jewish community to accept, much less embrace in unity. This concept would also be extremely difficult for a poly theistic people group like the Gentiles to embrace. The teaching of unification is absolutely revolutionary to both people groups.

Allow me to use today's Muslim population to make a modern day comparison. Consider the futility and lack of success experienced by

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Christian missionaries who have tried to evangelized the Muslim population. Many have been persecuted, imprisoned, and some even killed because of their evangelical efforts. In many ways that describes the type of environment in which Paul lived while evangelizing the children of Israel, his brethren according to the flesh. In fact, the Jewish population today is still extremely resistant to the gospel of Christ.

I know I keep repeating myself but some of the readers are still struggling to fully embrace many of these simple truths contained in Paul's epistles. The Gentiles were NEVER invited into the commonwealth of Israel (Eph 2:12 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:); therefore, the idea that God would now not only invite but compel the Gentiles to embrace the promises of Israel is a huge paradigm shift.

And from the other side, the Jews were led by God to believe that they were, "an holy people unto the LORD thy God, and the LORD hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth." Talk about some serious "Exclusivity"! These people became religious prima donnas and for good reason. How dare God open the flood gates to allow those filthy vile uncircumcised Gentiles (be sure to spit after you pronounce that word!) into their exclusive religious club.

One Lord? NEVER! WE WON'T HAVE IT!

I hope you can understand my hyperbole. I simply want the reader to pause for a moment and consider the shock and amazement a statement like this produces for both people groups. This is also a good time to remind the reader that God's sole purpose in opening the flood gate to the Gentiles is to provoke Israel to jealousy.

Rom 10:19 But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you.

Rom 11:11 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.

How about the phrase, One faith? Once again Paul is establishing complete parity between these two people groups. The faith exercised by the Gentiles is the very same faith exercised by the Jews; there is no difference.

Rom 10:12 For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.

Rom 10:13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

I'm getting ahead of myself here because I am developing a Survey of the Romans, but I can tell you that all of Romans chapter 10 was written for the sake of the Jews. In fact, Paul doesn't address the Gentiles until Rom. 11:13 but let's get back on task in Eph. 4.

Now, what about the phrase, One baptism? I was afraid you were going to ask that! We are about to hit a significant speed bump that is bound to upset just about everyone.

I can't think of a more treacherous religious doctrine that has been used for malicious purposes than the doctrine of baptism, except for possibly the doctrine of the Eucharist and the medieval Catholics. The Lutherans teach that a person is "born again in baptism" when the pastor sprinkles a little water on an infant and says some magical words; others teach that baptism (infant or adult) has replaced the covenant of circumcision that God made exclusively with the

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MALE children of Israel (interesting concept because OT females were not circumcised), the Cambellites believe a person needs to “believe AND be baptized (WATER) for the remission of sins”, the Baptist believe that a person’s WATER baptism is an outward showing of any inward belief (can’t locate that in scripture), and the Mormons believe that a person can be WATER baptized for the dead (really, the DEAD!). The truly crazy fact is that each group has their proof texts for what their doctrinal beliefs. In spite of their pet scriptures, it’s obvious that not ALL of them can be correct.

Believing Christians who refused infant baptism during the time of the reformation were persecuted in numerous ways by the Protestants and Catholics alike. Some were banished from the city and their material possessions confiscated, while others were bound by ropes and “baptized” to their death in a body of water. Yes, baptism has a rich history with many victims. In fact, I have an entire study on the doctrine of baptism which I need to complete some time, but I digress.

With this as a backdrop, we need to investigate Paul’s statement about ONE baptism. The short answer is actually quite simple; Paul is merely remaining congruent with the balance of his writing in the book of Ephesians by once again promoting the theme of Jew / Gentile unity. The baptism for the Jew is the very same baptism for the Gentile.

Honestly, this rudimentary understanding was a shock and awe “Ah Ha” realization for me even though it is so incredibly simple. I recognized, after a more careful consideration, that my amazement was a result of reading far more into the verse than necessary while trying desperately to make the verse align with my preconceived religious programming. Ultimately, it was all rooted in my emotional attachment to group think.

I recognize now that I was trying to fit my square religious (conservative Baptist) peg into a round Bible doctrine hole. I needed every scripture to align perfectly with what I had learned from my pastors and religious teachers or else I would become emotionally insecure and troubled.

People find great security and confidence in the concept of group think because it provides the illusion of invulnerability in their emotionally held doctrinal beliefs. More than ever before, our society has been programmed to think corporately in codependent groups. The common sheeple feels spiritually invincible when entirely surrounded by likeminded people and it’s truly a sad state of affairs. Sheeple will attend weekly church service (two or three times), travel to week long Bible conferences, listen to radio pastors, pay a Bible school or university to indoctrinate their children, and read a library full of Bible related books by famous authors, but the one thing they are afraid of is independent Bible study. They are deathly afraid that they might learn something that contradicts what their pastor and / or religious group believes and teaches. People are brave enough to be different in a group but they are petrified to be different ALONE!

**EXAMPLE:** I was told recently by someone who has attended formal Bible instruction that, “Everything we know and believe about the Bible has originated from someone else.” This person embraces reformed theology but it could just as easily be said of the conservative Baptist system of doctrinal beliefs, Catholics, Lutherans, or charismatic. The group-think philosophy so prevalent throughout today’s society precludes most people from entertaining true independent thought. This is certainly true within religious circles where everyone is afraid to embrace an independent doctrinal belief because everything within their spiritual enclave needs to carefully align with the long established and denominationally approved theology.

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Just to be clear, I suffered the same group think peer pressure for many years similar to my reformed friend. As a younger Christian, I was always afraid to embrace a theological doctrine that wasn't approved and promoted by the Bible teachers I admired. As the reader can easily see, I've overcome the fear of being religiously ostracized. About 20 years ago I decided to follow the Bible wherever it leads me regardless of the outcome. You are enjoying (I hope) the results of my firmly held conviction.

Now that we've got the easy part out of the way, we need to tackle the much more difficult task of identifying from scripture which baptism is the ONE baptism. Do you still have your theological thinking caps on? I hope so because we need to press into deep waters once again.

I don't have time to fully develop the doctrine of baptism but I can quickly identify for the reader at least 5 distinctly different baptisms. Yes, five *DISTINCTLY DIFFERENT* baptisms. That should get everyone stirred up, even my friends the Baptist. Are you ready? Let's go.

Here's our first example. In fact, these first several verses actually provide not one but three distinct baptisms, and only one of them has anything to do with water.

Mat 3:9 And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

Mat 3:10 And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

Mat 3:11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to

bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:

**NOTE:** Did you catch the three dissimilar baptisms John the Baptist identifies here in Matthew chapter 3. He goes on to briefly explain two of the baptisms in the next verse. I've color coordinated them for ease of identifying.

Mat 3:12 Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

This is one of my favorite passages in scripture to prove that all baptisms are NOT created equal. John compares his WATER baptism with two clearly different baptisms that the Lord Jesus will perform. One baptism is the baptism of the Holy Spirit (obviously a spiritual baptism void of water!) performed on all true believers. We'll cover this one in more depth shortly.

The second baptism performed by Jesus Christ is performed on all those who reject the Saviour. This is a baptism of fire and it occurs in the LAKE of fire.

Rev 20:14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

Rev 20:15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

That's three distinct baptisms described in only a few verses. Please note that John relegates his WATER baptism as insignificant compared to the other two baptisms and I believe the reasons are obvious. Do you recall that John said to Jesus, "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" I believe that John was referring to the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

Three distinct baptisms down; two more to go. Did you know that Jesus Christ was baptized twice?

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He was, honest! Everyone remembers his first baptism in WATER performed by John the Baptist. In fact, Matthew describes it immediately following the verses mentioned above. But how many of you have ever considered that Jesus was baptized a second time? Let's see what the Bible says in Lk. 12 and Mk. 10.

Luk\_12:50 **But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!**

Mar\_10:38 **But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?**

Mar\_10:39 **And they said unto him, We can. And Jesus said unto them, Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized:**

These verses happen long after Jesus was WATER baptized by John the Baptist. He was facing another baptism and was obviously troubled (straightened) until it be accomplished. Scripture doesn't go into any more detail, but I suggest this was Jesus own personal baptism of suffering. One thing is certain; Jesus is NOT referring to John's water baptism.

Okay, so that was the fourth baptism. There are actually many more baptismal variations but I simply don't have time to fully develop the doctrine in this little (brief??) survey of Ephesians.

Now let's look at the baptism that interests me the most and the one that (I believe) Paul references in Eph. 4:5.

We know that John the Baptist baptized with WATER, Peter (Acts 2) baptized with water, Paul baptized (very few) with water; however, Jesus Christ baptizes with the Holy Spirit. What did John

the Baptist tell Jesus when Jesus appeared before John for baptism?

Mat 3:13 **Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him.**

Mat 3:14 **But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee,** and comest thou to me?

John forbad Jesus saying, I HAVE NEED TO BE BAPTIZED OF THEE! Now that's interesting! John is saying his WATER baptism is inferior to the one performed by the Lord Jesus Christ. The natural question would be, "Which ONE baptism could Paul be referencing here in Eph. 4:5?" Well, that's easy! Paul is describing the baptism John the Baptist longed for and required; the baptism of the Holy (one) Spirit!!

Let's see how that understanding fits with Eph. 4 verses 4 and 5.

Eph 4:4 **There is one body, and one Spirit,** even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;

Eph 4:5 **One Lord,** one faith, **one baptism,**

There now, that fits rather tidy doesn't it? We have one Spirit, one Lord, one faith, and of course one baptism by the one Lord through one Spirit.

I believe that's sufficient proof but I expect we still have some doubting Thomas's in the audience so let's provide some additional evidence to seal the deal.

Rom 6:3 **Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?**

Rom 6:4 **Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death:** that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

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Hmmm, do you remember the second baptism that was “straightening” Jesus?

Mar 10:38 But Jesus said unto them, **Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?**

Mar 10:39 And they said unto him, We can. And Jesus said unto them, **Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized:**

According to Rom 6, believers are baptized into Jesus death! Could Jesus death be considered a “baptism” of sorts? Could this describe the baptism about which Jesus was so straitened till it be accomplished?

Luk\_12:50 **But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!**

Now that provides a worthy explanation and fits rather nicely.

Let’s look at another time Paul refers to baptism.

1Co 12:12 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.

**NOTE:** Paul certainly is on a unification kick. One body, one body, one body.

1Co 12:13 For **by one Spirit** are **we all baptized into one body**, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and **have been all made to drink into one Spirit**.

That truly seals the deal for me regarding Eph. 4 verses 4 and 5. Paul is referring to a spiritual baptism of the (one) Holy Spirit that only the (one) Lord Jesus Christ performs on every believer the very moment he / she believes, Jew and Gentile

alike. Comparing scripture with scripture, I don’t see how it could be any more plain that that folks. The Bible is an easy book to understand; however, believing what’s written, often times in direct opposition to our religious programming and preconceived notions, that’s where the proverbial rub appears.

Suffice it to say that I’ve spent a lot of time studying the doctrine of baptism and I’ve come to the conclusion that the only (ONE!) baptism that has any meaning for believers in the dispensation of the grace of God is the spiritual baptism into Christ’s death (Rom 6) and Christ’s body (I Cor. 12, Eph 4). You’ll need to wait until I complete my little study on baptism to get, as Paul Harvey so eloquently put it, “The Rest of the Story”.

Eph 4:6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

**NOTE:** Unification, unification, unification! One God and Father of ALL, Jews and Gentiles alike! Notice Paul uses the word “all” four times in this short verse of 17 words. He is stressing the theme of unification. He wants the Gentiles to realize that the superiority of the Jewish race was completely eliminated through the cross of Christ. The ground was truly leveled and the enmity between Jew and Gentile (LAW!) was completely eradicated at the foot of the cross. This should be SHOUTIN’ GROUND for us Gentiles!! Hallelujah for the cross!!

Eph 4:7 But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

**NOTE:** “But unto every one of us”. Notice how Paul includes himself, along with his Jewish brethren, when he writes “every one of us”. Paul is affirming that the grace is given (dispensed) to the Jews and Gentiles alike “according to the measure of the gift of Christ”; however, I’m not sure why Paul phrases that last statement the



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way he does. I'm speculating now, but it very well might be that the measure of grace the Lord Jesus Christ gives to the Jew is somehow different than the measure given to the Gentiles due to the disparate relationship the two groups had to the OT law before Christ's appearance. Remember, the Jews transgressed the law, killed the prophets, and forsook God the Father many times in the 1500 year history of the quid pro quo covenant God made with them. In contrast, the Gentiles did not transgress the law that they never had, nor did they forsake the God they never knew. While mere speculation on my part, the next verse might shed some additional light on the passage.

Eph 4:8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

**NOTE:** The word "wherefore" confirms that this verse is inextricably tied to the preceding verse. Paul is obviously quoting Ps. 68:18 except for one important difference. Ps 68:18 says, "thou hast received gifts for men" contrasted with Eph. 4:8 which says, "and gave gifts unto men". This is an interesting modification and I surmise that the gifts received in Ps. 68:18 have now been dispensed by the time Paul writes Eph. Chapter 4. So, what "gifts" could Paul be referencing in this verse?

The Bible does not say for certain, but here's my best guess. What I'm about to explain now is way outside the typical understanding purported by religious teachers but it's firmly grounded in my conviction that the people in the OT who were not members of the "the circumcision" (i.e. children of Israel) were not summarily chucked into hell because they knew not God nor kept a law they didn't have.

There are a lot of non-Jews (Gentiles) who lived and died in the 4000 yrs. of history before Christ. For 2500 of those 4000 years, EVERYONE on

earth knows very little about God. The people had no statutes and no written record of the Bible as we know it today. The Pentateuch (Gen. thru Deut.) was written by the law giver, Moses some 1500 years before Christ and 2500 years after Adam was created. In addition, the dispersion of the world's population in that age, the fact that the distribution of information was limited to word of mouth stories and fables retold by traveling salesmen, makes it clearly understandable that most of mankind had never learned about God or His interaction with man. They had no idea that God would send his only begotten son to earth as the perfectly sinless Son of God / Son of Man to fulfill the law God gave to the children of Israel. In fact, these people knew little or nothing about God and they certainly knew nothing about a law they had never seen. Between Adam and Moses (2500 years) there was NO LAW (none, didn't exist), and between Moses and Jesus everyone throughout the world who was not a Jew (i.e. uncircumcised Gentiles) "*had not the law*".

Rom\_2:14 For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves:

These people were not only ignorant, they were diplomatically immune to the results of keeping the law, good and bad!

Rom 5:13 (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.)

Rom\_4:15 Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression.

1Jn\_3:4 Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.

**IMPORTANT!** I'm a firm believer in biblical typology. We understand that Abraham offering up his son Isaac as a sacrifice is a direct parallel action (i.e. type) of God the Father offering up His

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son Jesus Christ as a sacrifice. We understand the reported death of Joseph and his subsequent “resurrection” followed by his virtual reign of Egypt (type of the world) as a type of Jesus Christ who suffered, died, was resurrected, and will one day rule the world (Rev. 19, 20). Typologies are OT events that were recorded to foretell of future NT events. So, I wonder if we can find a typology of the NT church in the OT.

Rom 15:4 For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

Let’s dive a little deeper into the OT and see what we can find. Please bear in mind that I said the Gentiles were *immune* (innocent) not *sinless* even though they clearly broke ALL of God’s commandments, his statutes, his ordinances, etc. The question is, “Can we find an OT character that meets these criteria?” It would need to be someone who broke God’s law but was held guiltless. What I’m about to explain is a fascinating topic to me and I hope you enjoy it as much as I do. I trust you’ll don your thinking caps once again because we are about to plunge into some deep theological waters.

Have you ever considered the story of Adam and Eve and the first time God’s law was broken? BTW, who does God hold accountable as being the very first sinner? Every child that receives Christian training knows that Adam was the first sinner.

Rom 5:12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

Rom 5:13 (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

Rom 5:14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not

sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.

Rom 5:15 But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.

Job 31:33 If I covered my transgressions as Adam, by hiding mine iniquity in my bosom:

Okay, so the Bible is clear; sin entered into world, and death by sin, through the first created man, Adam. Next question, “What was Adam’s transgression?” Once again we can turn to any grade schooler who has received at least a modicum of religious instruction and they will boldly attest that Adam ate of the forbidden fruit. BTW, why does the apple get the bad rap as the forbidden fruit? Why not the “pure blood of the grape”?

Gen 49:11 Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes:

Deu 32:14 Butter of kine, and milk of sheep, with fat of lambs, and rams of the breed of Bashan, and goats, with the fat of kidneys of wheat; and thou didst drink the pure blood of the grape.

Mat 26:28 **For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.**

SQUIRREL!! Sorry, I squirreled for a moment. That was just a stray thought that could easily be developed, but let’s get back to our study.

So far we’ve proven conclusively that God, through the testimony of the scriptures, blames the entire sin problem on Adam for eating the

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forbidden fruit when God distinctly instructed him not to do it. It's quite obvious that ADAM IS TO BLAME!

Last question, "Who ate the forbidden fruit first?" Well, of course it was the first sinner, Adam. How could it be anyone else since the responsibility for breaking God's initial commandment is laid at Adam's feet? Ahhhh, but this is where the story takes an interesting twist. We'll let the Bible speak for itself.

Gen 3:6 And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

Be honest; how many of you are surprised to learn that Eve ate of the forbidden fruit BEFORE Adam? I see some hands raised out there. However, the evidence is incontestable. The Bible clearly states that Eve ate the forbidden fruit BEFORE her husband Adam. So I'm sure you're wondering, "Why does God, through the scriptures, clearly blame Adam for this whole sin and death issue when Eve was the first to eat the fruit?" That's a highly engaging question with an absolutely fascinating answer and I'm so glad you asked!

Please note that Eve recognizes the fruit is good for food, she then partakes of the fruit (i.e. she eats it), and then she finally gives the fruit to Adam for him to eat it. Notice what happens immediately after Adam (not Eve!) eats the fruit.

Gen 3:7 And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

Adam had obviously instructed Eve that she was not to eat of the fruit because she even repeated to the serpent God's warning regarding the

forbidden fruit. See Gen 3:2,3 in the next paragraph.

Gen 3:2 And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:

Gen 3:3 But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

It's time to pay close attention now because this is where the Bible comes to life and becomes captivating.

So why were her eyes not opened immediately after SHE ate the fruit? Why does Adam take all the blame for being the first person to break God's commandment rather than Eve even though she was the *first* to eat the forbidden fruit? Just like we learned in my first Bible study, The Practical Look at the Law, we need to ask ourselves, "To whom did God give the commandment not to eat of the forbidden fruit?" This is what I call an "East / West" question. When I drive south on I-15 out of Helena, MT I will shortly arrive at the junction of I-90 in Butte. At that point I need to make a decision whether I'm heading east toward Wisconsin or west toward Seattle. It seems like a small decision to make but the ramifications of making the wrong turn are HUGE!

In the first study, we learned that the Gentiles were never given the law and therefore "sin is not imputed when there is no law". We now find a very similar parallel situation with Adam and Eve. As we are about to see from scripture, Eve was never accountable nor expected to obey the commandment not to eat the forbidden fruit. Like I said early, this is where the Bible becomes a living testimony of God's benevolence. Let's see what we can learn by backing up just a bit and reading the Biblical account of God creating Adam and Eve.

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Gen 2:7 And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

Gen 2:15 And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.

Gen 2:16 And **the LORD God commanded the man**, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:

Gen 2:17 **But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.**

After God gives Adam the commandment, God creates all the animals with the idea of giving man a “help meet”.

Gen 2:18 And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.

Gen 2:19 And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.

Adam then gives names to all of God’s creation.

**Gen 2:20** And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.

All of this occurs BEFORE God creates Eve. I have no idea how much time transpired between God creating Adam and then finally creating Eve but I assume it took a while for Adam to name all those critters.

Regardless of how long it took, we can be absolutely certain that Eve did not exist when God

commands Adam to not eat the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The Bible couldn’t be any plainer regarding that subject.

It’s beginning to be a little clearer why the first sin is attributed to Adam and not Eve but we’ll need some more evidence to seal the deal.

Rom 5:14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that **had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression**, who is the figure of him that was to come.

Rom 5:19 For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

1Cor 15:22 For **as in Adam all die**, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

I’ve build a huge porch and now it’s time to make my point. Eve was not held accountable for being the first to eat the fruit because God never gave the commandment to her. She was *innocent* because she had “diplomatic immunity”; however, she was not *sinless*! The reason Eve’s eyes were not opened when she ate of the fruit is because the commandment didn’t belong to her. The commandment was given exclusively to Adam BEFORE Eve was even created. Therefore, Eve was exonerated from any ramifications of eating the forbidden fruit.

We’ve just been locked into to roller coaster seat and the fun is about to begin so hang on.

Why then was Eve’s eyes opened when Adam ate of the fruit? (**Gen 3:7** And the eyes of them both were opened,). And, why did Eve suffer the same sinful fate (i.e. death came upon ALL) as Adam when she enjoyed diplomatic immunity from breaking the commandment?

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Have you ever wondered why God caused a deep sleep to come upon Adam as he removed a rib to create Eve? That's always been a real stumper for me. God created everything from the dust of the ground including Adam but he robs a rib from Adam to create Eve. Why?? Hmm? Think about that for a moment. I'll venture a guess that God has a special lesson to learn regarding this blatant anomaly.

Adam called Eve "woman" because she is from man. Gen. 2:23b she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.

Okay, let's get back to the rib conundrum. We still haven't identified why God used a rib to create Eve and what part that anomaly plays in the incident of the forbidden fruit.

Based upon approximately 6000 years of history, we can conclude that Adam and Eve both became sinners on that fateful day. Proof? One out one people dies; therefore, we know for certain that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God".

It must be that the rib that Eve received from Adam was enough to pass sin along to her and cause her to die even though she had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression.

In this specific situation, Adam is a type of the children of Israel who received the law / statutes / commandments from God through Moses. In contrast, Eve represents all the people that lived from the time of Adam until the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ who have never been presented with the law. The truth is that Eve could have eaten the fruit her entire life and never been guilty of transgressing the commandment God gave to Adam because it didn't belong to her. That said, Eve may have been innocent but she was certainly not sinless. This will be developed further on in this study.

Rom 5:13 (For until the law sin was in the world: **but sin is not imputed when there is no law.**)

Rom\_4:15 Because the law worketh wrath: **for where no law is, there is no transgression.**

**Parallels: First Man Adam vs. Last Adam:** The Bible identifies two distinctly different Adams and both are clearly identified in scripture as "the son of God". We'll start with Luke chapter 2 which provides a detail account of Jesus genealogy which goes all the way back to great great great grandpa Adam.

Luk 3:38 Which was *the son* of Enos, which was *the son* of Seth, which was *the son* of Adam, which was *the son* of God.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son,

The first man Adam appears in Gen. 2 and the last Adam is of course Jesus Christ.

1Co 15:45 And so it is written, **The first man Adam** was made a living soul; **the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.**

**(Observation:** The first *man* Adam is contrasted with the last Adam in that the last Adam is not called "man". Jesus is the *son* of man. Also, Jesus Christ is the *only begotten* Son of God. This, of course, is an important distinction.)

It's quite interesting that God provides a bride for Adam and Adam calls her Eve because "she is the mother of all living". We also find that God provides a bride for his only begotten Son Jesus Christ, namely the church.

Let's take a closer look to see if we can identify some similarities between these two brides.

**Eve:** God causes a deep sleep to come over the first man Adam before God removes one of

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Adam's ribs and uses it to form the woman who became Adam's bride. Eve was the very first woman and she was neither Jew nor Gentile just like everyone who lived before Abraham. This is because, as you'll recall, Abraham was the *first* Jew and by definition it's impossible to have a Gentile without a Jew since the word Gentile simply implies "non-Jew". I trust that's clear to the reader. Abraham received the sign of circumcision which is the distinguishing characteristic between Jew and Gentile. That's why Paul uses the terms "circumcision" to refer to the children of Israel and "uncircumcision" to refer to the Gentiles. Before Abraham, there was neither Jew nor Gentiles.

Another distinguishing characteristic of Eve is that she was sinful but innocent. We just learned that Eve ate of the fruit before Adam but her eyes were not opened until after Adam ate of the fruit. Eve's innocence was due to the fact that God never gave the commandment to Eve but only commanded Adam not to eat the fruit; therefore, "sin is not imputed when there is no law". Repetitious I know, but most people today have a difficult time staying focused; far too much internet and TV.

Another notable quality of Eve is that she was formed from the body of Adam. Adam involuntarily sacrifices his body (rib) in order for God to form his bride. As I read the account in Gen. 2, I get the sense that Adam had no say in the matter because "God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam" before performing the surgery. Notice that God "took one of his ribs", Adam didn't offer it up.

Gen 2:21 And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof;

Gen 2:22 And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.

Gen 2:23 And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.

Now let's compare the first Adam's bride to the last Adam's bride (a.k.a. the bride of Christ). You are truly going to love the similarities.

Jesus bride is called the church, and the church makes up the members of Christ's body which is quite similar to Adam's rib.

Eph 5:28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.

Eph 5:29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:

Eph 5:30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

**NOTE:** Compare this with Gen 2:23 And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh:

Eph 5:31 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.

**NOTE:** Compare this with Gen 2:24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

Don't miss this next point!!

Eph 5:32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

The relationship between a husband and wife is an exact parallel of the relationship between Christ and the church. Paul identifies the congruency between these two relationships as a mystery, and not just any mystery but a great

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mystery. I have spent many hours considering the similarities between these two relationships and have found it to be uncanny. I'll touch on those similarities briefly in this section.

Let's take a closer look at all the similarities between the first man Adam and the last Adam (i.e. Jesus Christ).

**Involuntary Sacrifice:** The first point I'll make is that the Lord Jesus Christ was reluctant to offer his body an offering for sin. He begged the Father to let the cup pass from him.

Mat 26:39 And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, **O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.**

Mat 26:42 He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, **O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.**

However, our Lord was completely obedient to the Father's will in spite of his personal apprehensions.

**Death / Burial / Resurrection:** Like Adam, God caused a deep sleep to come over Christ in order to form his bride. This occurred when Christ was crucified and spent 3 days and 3 nights in the heart of the earth.

Adam lost a rib, Christ lost his life. Adam's rib grew back again; Christ was gloriously resurrected on the third day.

The first man Adam sacrificed a rib for his bride; the last Adam sacrificed his blood for his bride, the church.

1Jn\_1:7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and

the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

I'm about to share something that about knocked over when I realized the association. Does anyone know what part of our body produces our blood? According to doctors and scientists, red blood cells, most white blood cells, and platelets are produced in the bone marrow, the soft fatty tissue inside bone cavities. In adults, active marrow is found inside the spine, hip and shoulder bones, **ribs**, breastbone, and skull. Bone marrow is contained within bones and all blood cells are produced in the bone marrow.

Isn't the Bible amazing! We get our blood from our bones, and more specifically, the rib bones (among others). So, let me ask the question I posed earlier; why did God use a rib bone to create Eve? Because she got her blood from Adam!! Let that sink in for a moment. Eve had Adams blood coursing through her veins.

Gen 5:2 Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created.

And now I better understand why the first man Adam needed to sacrifice his rib bone in order for God to form his bride. That's also why God called THEIR name Adam; they both came from the same blood. These comparisons are pregnant with typology.

Allow me to develop the typology a little further. Eve, the bride for the first man Adam, receives her blood from her husband. Adam fails to keep the only commandment God gave exclusively to Adam and therefore Adam becomes the world's first human sinner. However, Adam isn't the only person affected because of the blood transfusion God gave to Eve. Can anyone see where this is going with the last Adam?? Exciting!!

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Similarly, the last Adam (Jesus Christ) accomplishes the task that the first man Adam failed to do. Jesus “was in all points tempted like as *we are, yet* without sin”; therefore, his sinless life purchased redemption for all.

Rom 5:14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.

Rom 5:15 But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.

Rom 5:16 And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification.

Rom 5:17 For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)

Rom 5:18 Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.

Rom 5:19 For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

Jesus lives a sinless life by keeping the entire law, and the resulting righteousness he earns creates a bride that is miraculously transmuted into a sinless body. In fact, the last Adam's bride is called “his body”. That has a familiar ring to it. And because his bride is his body, she gets her blood from her husband!!

Eph\_1:7 In whom **we have redemption through his blood**, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; (This verse describes the redemption of the Jews. Review Eph. 1 and 2 if necessary.)

Eph\_2:13 But now in Christ Jesus **ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.** (This verse describes the redemption of the Gentiles)

Eve became a sinner because she received her blood from the world's first sinner, the first man Adam. In contrast, the church, Christ's body and bride, becomes absolutely sinless when her husband's blood is applied to her previously sinful body.

One more crucial parallel between Eve and the Church is that both brides enjoy diplomatic immunity and are / were exonerated from obeying the commandment (law). God gave the first commandment exclusively to the first man Adam not his bride Eve. Once again, in contrast God expunged the law from the human race through the last Adam.

Col 2:14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, **nauling it to his cross;**

Eph 2:13 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

Eph 2:14 For he is our peace, who hath made both (*Jew and Gentile*) one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;

Eph 2:15 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;



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**This ends my little bunny trail; back to the study.**

I need to rescue this Bible study from my constant wondering and bring it back on task. Just in case you've lost track of where I left off, I was attempting to explain Eph. 4:8-10.

Eph 4:8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

Eph 4:9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?)

Eph 4:10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)

In particular, I'm trying to explain what Paul meant when he quotes Ps 68 in Eph. 4:8. Let's do a quick comparison between Paul quoting the verse and the way the Holy Spirit recorded it in the OT.

Psa 68:18 Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell among them.

There were a host of people who lived during the time between Adam and Jesus that God couldn't judge by the law because they either never had the law (e.g. everyone who lived before the law giver Moses) or never entered into a quid pro quo covenant that the LORD enacted specifically through Moses with the children of Israel. What happened to these people? Even the Abrahamic Jewish bloodline didn't have any formal God given instruction until Moses shows up on the scene and provides the covenant of the law. Since we've already established that sin is dead and powerless without the law, AND that sin is not imputed where there is no law, we need to ask ourselves what exactly happened to all the people

who lived between Adam and Moses, as well as this contingency of the Abrahamic bloodline that pre-existed Moses and "had not the law"?

We know, without a doubt, that the Mosaic covenant was made exclusively with the children of Israel in about 1500 BC and that the Gentile nations around the world remained clueless about God's plan for the ages. Therefore, at Christ's first coming the Gentiles had been living and dying for approximately 4000 yrs. with no formal instruction from God. In fact, they were "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world" according to Eph. 2.

So we need to ask ourselves, could the God represented in the Bible indiscriminately and summarily chuck those folks into hell because he (God) had failed to reveal his expectations to all those people. My study of the Bible leads me to believe that God is far more just and righteous than that. Let's consider I Tim 3:16 and trust that the Holy Spirit provides an accurate historical record of the events that transpired during Christ's first visit.

1Ti 3:16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

The events described in this verse are all written in the past tense; that means they have already happened by the time Paul is writing them. Please note that according to I Tim 3:16, God was preached unto the Gentiles and believed on in the world before he was received up into glory. Based on this verse, as well as Eph. 4:8-10, I strongly suspect those Gentiles which died before Christ's birth were held captive somewhere until Christ could preach unto them AFTER he descended (Eph. 4:10). This massive and global evangelistic

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outreach would have occurred sometime after his death but before his resurrection. In addition, I also suspect that the place these souls occupied was called Abraham's bosom (Lk. 16:22). Now it's time to provide Biblical proof for my suspicions. This is going to take some serious concentration so get ready to take our Bible transport deep once again.

I've often wondered why the paradise Christ mentions in Lk 16 is called "*Abraham's bosom*"? Why not Moses bosom, or Adam's bosom? Why specifically Abraham? After some serious contemplation, I've arrived at a theory that I believe is heavily supported by scripture. Take a deep breath because here we go.

The paradise mentioned by Christ in Luke 16:22 is called *Abraham's bosom* because the Bible identifies Abraham as the father of us all; Jews and Gentiles alike. Why would the Bible call Abraham the father of us all? Let's take a closer look at Abraham's role in Biblical history so we can better understand what he represents historically as well as his role in the future fulfillment of prophecy.

Rom 4:16 Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all,

Rom 4:17 (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.

The first noteworthy point I'd like to make is that Paul carefully distinguishes between our two main people groups once again in the 4<sup>th</sup> chapter of the book of Romans, and I might add that this message is completely congruent with what we

are learning in the book of Ephesians. In Rom. 4:16 Paul first mentions ALL the seed (Jews and Gentiles) and then he defines who is included in the term "all the seed".

The next phrase, "not to that only which is of the law" clarifies that the term "ALL the seed" includes the people group to whom the law pertains", or in other words the children of Israel.

However, the careful student will recognize that the ALL the seed must ALSO contain another people group. Notice Paul uses the phrase "not ONLY" when referring to the seed; therefore, there must be an additional people group Paul includes in the phrase "ALL the seed". And, as fate would have it, Paul identifies another people group as, "that also which is of the faith of Abraham". This second people group is in sharp contrast to the first. I trust the distinction Paul is making is clear to the reader.

So, here we have it. Paul associates Abraham with, "ALL the seed; not that ONLY which is of the law, but to that ALSO which is of the faith of Abraham". It's certainly appears to me that Paul is distinguishing between faith and works (i.e. law). Ah, don't get ahead of me now!

Notice that Vs 17 boldly proclaims that Abraham is the father of MANY nations. Since the Jews are only one nation, this can only mean, as is stated in vs. 16, Abraham truly is the father of us ALL (i.e. the Jewish nation and all the other Gentile nations). Hmm...let's follow that thought for a moment.

First we'll look back just a little earlier in Rom. Chapter 4.

Rom 4:8 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

Rom 4:9 Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also?

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for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness.

Rom 4:10 How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? **Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.**

Rom 4:11 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet **being uncircumcised**: that he might be the father of all them that believe, **though they be not circumcised**: that righteousness might be imputed unto them also:

Rom 4:12 And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised.

**NOTE:** Did you catch that? Abraham believed God *before* he was circumcised and his **faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness**. Abraham was uncircumcised when his faith was counted for righteousness; therefore his faith for righteousness predates his Jewishness because it occurred before God gave Abraham the sign of physical circumcision and subsequently made Abraham the father of the Jewish people.

I suspect this is a difficult concept to grasp for many; therefore, let's take a look back at the book of Genesis so we can better understand the historical importance of father Abraham. The covenant of circumcision is given to Abraham **AND HIS SEED** in Gen. 17. Please note the word "seed"; very important.

Gen 17:5 Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee.

Gen 17:6 And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee.

**NOTE:** God has promised to make Abraham a father of many nations but the word "seed" has not yet appeared. Neither has the word, "covenant" appeared. Let's keep reading.

Gen 17:7 And **I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant**, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.

Gen 17:8 And **I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger**, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.

Gen 17:9 And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, **thou, and thy seed after thee** in their generations.

Gen 17:10 This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised.

**NOTE:** Please notice God promises Abraham that he will be a "father of many nations" BEFORE God gives Abraham the promises regarding "his seed". It should be quite obvious that the seed God refers to multiple times became the children of Israel. How do I know that? Because God promises Abraham that he would give the land to Abraham AND his SEED for an everlasting covenant. Remember Rom 9:4 Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises;

The covenants and promises all belong to the Abrahamic seed found in the children of Israel. Simple, correct?

Okay, that was quite a little bunny trail but it's important that we set a firm foundation of knowledge if we are to understand why God calls the Lk. 16 paradise, "Abraham's bosom". Of all

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the people recorded in the Bible, few have a more prominent role to play than that of father Abraham.

Back to Rom 4:16

Rom 4:16 Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all,

I trust that by now the reader can fully embrace the fact that “the seed which is of the law” is Israel and “those of the faith of Abraham” represent the Gentiles. Paul is careful to explain that the promise of faith belongs to both the Jews and Gentiles. This verse is actually a continuation of the message in Rom 4:9-13.

Rom 4:8 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

Rom 4:9 Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness.

Rom 4:10 How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.

Rom 4:11 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also:

**NOTE:** Paul is clearly referring to the Gentiles when he mentions the “uncircumcision” as well as the phrase, “though they be not circumcised” and again in vs. 12 below Paul refers to them as, “who are not of the circumcision”. All three phrases refer to the non-Jewish people group (i.e. Gentiles).

His concluding statement in vs. 11 is also instructive, “that righteousness might be imputed unto THEM also”. Once again Paul uses the US (Jews) vs. THEM (Gentiles) concept so prevalent in the book of Ephesians and he carries this forward in vs. 12 when he uses the phrase “our father Abraham”. Abraham is the physical father (patriarch) of the nation of Israel. Please note that this use of “our father Abraham” in no way contradicts Rom. 4:16 when Paul identifies Abraham as the “spiritual” father of us all through faith. It should be noted that Paul uses the term, “our father Abraham” several times when his primary audience is Jewish.

Rom 4:12 And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised.

Rom 4:13 For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.

**NOTE:** The book of James also affirms that Abraham’s faith “was imputed unto him for righteousness”.

Jas 2:23 And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness; and he was called the Friend of God.

And, that’s why Abraham is the father of all who have come to faith in Jesus Christ; circumcised and uncircumcised!! Jew and non-Jew.

Here is the dichotomy Paul is describing in Rom. 4:16,17. The law represents Abraham’s justification by works which is sharply contrasted by the faith Abraham exercised in Gen 15 and which is accounted for his righteousness.

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Gen 15:6 And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

Notice in the next several verses from Jas 2 that Abraham's faith is accounted for righteousness but James is emphatic that Abraham was JUSTIFIED by WORKS. I know, I know. Many of my readers will struggle greatly with this vital information because their religious indoctrination veils them from the simple truth clearly proclaimed in the Bible, but that's exactly what James says.

FACT! The Bible makes a strong distinction between Abraham's faith that resulted in his righteousness and his works which resulted in his justification. You can do all the theological backflips you want, but you can't get around this simple fact.

**Informational Interlude:** He's a little factoid to consider. I've heard it preached many times from many different Bible expositors that God tempts no one and here's the proof text they use to make this claim and it's found in the same book of James.

Jas 1:13 Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:

Jas 1:14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

These two verses make it crystal clear that, according to James, God tempts no man. Clear Bible teaching and I believe it.

However (don't ya just love Bible howevers?), did you know that God tempted Abraham? Hmmm? According to the Bible, He did. Proof text? Let's take a look see.

Gen 22:1 And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am.

How do you reconcile such a plain Bible contradiction? Both verses CAN'T be correct because the two statements are diametrically opposed one with the other. Surely, something must be awry. Could it be a contradiction in the Bible? Before you head to the Greek and Hebrew to re-interpret what's plainly written, consider the following. Is it possible that both verses are correct and it's simply our preconceived ideas that are skewed?

Let's consider the two texts a little closer. We've already determined that Abraham is a very special Bible character. In fact, he's the only person that God specifically calls "the Friend of God".

Isa 41:8 But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend.

Jas\_2:23 And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.

It's important to remember that Abraham lived approximately 2000 years before James wrote his book. Is it possible that God tempted Abraham for a special reason and by the time the Holy Spirit prompts James to write Jas. 2:23 God is no longer tempting man for any reason? Now there's thought that escapes the average Bible reader.

So what's my point? Let it be known that I fully believe that God never changes (Mal 3:6 For I am the LORD, I change not;); however, the way God interacts with mankind HAS indeed changed throughout the ages. The OT Jews were compelled to keep the Mosaic laws and statutes in order to remain in good standing with God. This included all the feasts, the ceremonial ordinances, etc. and so forth. In distinct contrast, Christ fulfilled ALL the requirements of the law and completely released the Jews from the burden of

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the law “Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances”.

The only reason I make this point is to help the reader embrace the clear Bible teaching that Abraham's faith was counted for righteousness BUT his works are what justified him. This two part salvation plan for Abraham is what allows him to represent both the circumcision (Jews under the law) and the uncircumcision (Gentiles which have not the law) in salvific faith. Now let's get back to the study.

Gen 22:2 And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.

Jas 2:21 Was not **Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?**

Jas 2:22 Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?

Jas 2:23 And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, **Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness:** and he was called the Friend of God.

Abraham is a totally unique individual in history in that he represents both FAITH and WORKS as well as both Jewish and non-Jewish people groups. Abraham's faith was counted for righteousness BEFORE his name was changed and BEFORE he was given the sign of circumcision. This means he was righteous in the eyes of God BEFORE he was sanctified (set apart by means of circumcision) by God.

Abraham's life began as a non-Jew (technically a Gentile before there were any Gentiles) and ended as the father of the Jewish nation. So while

Abraham's faith was counted for righteousness when he remained uncircumcised and his name was still Abram, Abraham was JUSTIFIED by his works AFTER he was circumcised when God tempted Abraham to offer up Isaac.

I apologize for the lengthy deviation in our study but it's important for the reader to understand why Paul calls Abraham the father of us all. Suffice it to say that in this dispensation of the grace of God people are saved by faith alone without the works of the law. As Rom 4:16 says, we are “of the faith of Abraham”.

Paul also confirms this in the book of Galatians.

Gal 3:6 Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.

Gal 3:7 Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.

Gal 3:8 And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.

Gal 3:9 So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.

**NOTE:** Notice the phrase, “God would justify the heathen through faith”. Once again Paul uses another US vs. THEM phrase. The heathen is obviously the non-Jews.

This next little tid bit of information is a side note so readers don't think I'm teaching that a person is justified by works. In direct contrast to what James claims about Abraham, Paul clearly teaches that a man is justified by faith alone without the deeds of the law.

Rom 3:20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin.

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Rom\_3:28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

Gal\_2:16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

Gal\_3:11 But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.

Could Paul have made it any more plain? Paul claims in numerous verses that people are justified by faith without the deeds (i.e. works) of the law. I needed to set the record straight.

So now that we understand why Abraham is considered the father of us all, we still need to explain what is happening in Eph. 4:8-10. I'm going to reference several rather obscure passages from scripture to help support my theory.

1Pe 4:6 For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.

Notice that Peter claims "the gospel was preached also to them that are dead that they might be judged according to men in the flesh". This passage wouldn't make any sense if we assumed the dead men were simply dead spiritually, as some teach, because he clearly contrasts these dead men with men in the flesh. There are many people living today who are dead spiritually but still alive in the flesh. Therefore, we know conclusively that the dead men Peter references did not have flesh. I suggest that Peter is talking about preaching the gospel to people who were physically dead. This explanation is completely congruent with our text in Eph. 4:9-11.

1Pe 3:18 For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:

1Pe 3:19 By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison;

1Pe 3:20 Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

Ah...we can now confirm that Christ preached unto the spirits (no flesh / no body) in prison (led captivity captive?) which are described as the people who lived and died in the approximately 1700 yrs. between Adam and Noah. Fascinating!!

I suggest that the Gentiles who lived between Noah and Jesus also had the gospel preached to them at the first coming of Christ and I think that's what 1Pe 4:6 is referencing.

I believe that Christ preached unto them that were held in the lower parts of the earth (Abraham's Bosom) prior to ascending up on high. See vss. 9 and 10. Now that's my best guess; otherwise, I don't have a good explanation for the inclusion of these next three verses.

Eph 4:9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?)

Eph 4:10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)

Eph 4:11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

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Eph 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

**NOTE:** I know my postulation runs contrary to virtually all religious doctrine and extant Bible teaching but it's the only explanation that allows me to believe the numerous scriptures as they are preserved for us in the Bible without trying to "re-interpret" them and "wrest them to my own destruction".

2Pe\_3:16 As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.

**NOTE:** "For the perfecting of the saints". We've already established that the word "saints" refers specifically to the Jews and the perfecting of a saint is when the Jewish person recognizes Jesus as their Messiah.

"For the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ"; both terms apply to Jew and Gentile alike.

Eph 4:13 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:

**NOTE:** "Till we all come in the unity of the faith"; once again Paul continues the unification theme for Jews and Gentiles. We see that Paul uses that big little word "we" in this verse. That's because the faith is common now that God has opened the door through the blood of Christ for the Gentiles to finally enjoy a personal relationship with himself. Keep in mind that this is a 180 degree departure from the exclusivity of the OT economy.

"And of the knowledge of the son of God"; the aforementioned unity of the faith is completely predicated upon the knowledge of the Son of God and this knowledge was heretofore unknown to the Gentiles.

"unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ"; Hmmm, interesting phraseology. Paul uses the word "perfect" many times in his epistles.

Heb\_7:19 For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God.

Heb\_9:9 Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience;

According to the book of Hebrews, we know that the law, the sacrifices, as well as tithes and offerings could NEVER perfect a man's conscience.

Paul explains in the book of Galatians that the flesh can certainly not bring about perfections.

Gal 3:2 This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

Gal\_3:3 Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?

So we can now be assured that the perfection Paul mentions in Eph 4:13 is not a result of the law nor keeping any part of the law, it is not achieved by giving tithes and offerings (gifts), and in fact there is nothing done in the flesh that could work perfection in a believer.

As an aside, I read a very good book titled, "The Civil War as a Theological Crisis" by Mark Noll. The civil war is an enigma to me and this book



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helped me understand the importance religious theology played in causing so many young men to anxiously volunteer to fight and die in that senseless and bloody war. One of the “take aways” I received from the book was the fact that a large faction of soldiers, both officers and enlisted from the north and the south, were convinced that the side which best kept the Sabbath would certainly win the war. Somehow, their pastors and religious teachers missed the message of these easy to understand verses. Unfortunately, there are still many Christians who never got the simple message and are convinced they can somehow win favor with God through fleshly works based activity.

Ok, so we have a better idea of what Paul *is not* talking about but we still haven’t identified what he means by this interesting phrase. The word “fullness” is also instructive. The Bible mentions the fullness of the Gentiles, the fullness of God, the fullness of Christ, the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.

I suspect Rom 11:25 provides an important clue as to how we should understand Paul’s meaning here in Eph. 3.

Rom 11:25 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.

Rom 11:26 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:

We see first that Paul identifies this doctrine as a mystery to the Jews. Paul then goes on to explain the mystery as a blindness that has happened to Israel UNTIL the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. Don’t miss that word UNTIL!! The next verse

explains that AFTER the fullness of the Gentiles is come ALL Israel shall be saved. That means a national salvation awaits the nation of Israel and this national salvation is a precursor to the ultimate kingdom that Jesus Christ sets up in Jerusalem. (Rev. 19 and 20).

I suspect Paul is using the word fullness in a similar way in Eph. 4:13. He begins with the unity of faith, then the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, followed by the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. I believe Paul is delineating the spiritual progression of how the body of Christ achieves its fullest potential and the very next verse identifies the vehicle believers use to realize this potential.

Eph 4:14 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;

**NOTE:** This verse is self-explanatory. Religion, more than any other earthly profession, has attracted the greatest number of egregiously deceitful charlatans and hirelings known to man. Another good book I read was titled, “A Piece of Blue Sky” by Jon Atack. I decided to read the book after watching, no, voraciously consuming the Leah Remini TV series titled, “Scientology and the Aftermath”. I found it absolutely uncanny how the devastating machinations of control perpetrated by Scientology leaders onto their constituents closely resembled the same control methods used by Christian pastors and leaders on their flocks. Human nature is the same the world over no matter which group you join; the methods of control are simply manifested in different ways.

The most important lesson I learned from studying Scientology was how easy it is for people in groups to be programmed into not only believing

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but fully embracing the lie that wrong is right and evil is good when the instruction emanates from a charismatic religious leader. Directly tied to this first lesson was the shocking realization of how most people have an intrinsic desire to be indoctrinated and controlled by a larger entity which explains why religions thrive. Please refer to the Milgram and Zimbardo experiments as proof of the inherent dangers rooted in authoritarianism.

Eph 4:15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

**NOTE:** “But speaking the truth in love”; If you haven’t figured it out yet, I have a real bad attitude regarding the way religious leaders control Christian believers (many of them clueless sheeple). Here, Paul admonishes us (all of us, *especially* leaders!) to speak the truth in love.

Love and religious domination are diametrically opposites. “By speaking the truth in love we will grow up into him in all things which is the head, even Christ”. I take that to mean that a true disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ will choose to speak truth in love rather than dominate others through manipulation and coercion. I’ll bet you’re wondering where I came up with all that; well, so am I. Bottom line; love God and love others.

One last note; Christ is the head, we are his body. He is the capstone and a body only needs *one* head, not two! Would to God religious leaders would shed their innate desire to be worshipped by the flock.

Eph 4:16 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.

Eph 4:17 This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,

**NOTE:** Paul once again moves into his US vs. THEM routine when uses the word “ye”. Then he confirms this understanding by using the phrase, “walk not as other Gentiles walk”. He’s obviously addressing one group of Gentiles telling them not to walk like THAT OTHER group of Gentiles.

Eph 4:18 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:

**NOTE:** This other group of Gentiles has obviously not come to faith in Christ because they are still alienated from the life of God due to ignorance and blindness.

## To Be Continued

This study on Ephesians is a Work in Progress but I wanted to get the first several chapters posted online so people could begin the study. The remainder of the book of Ephesians provides some very practical instruction for Gentile disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ to follow in order to live peaceably among all men.

My next study will address the many misunderstandings regarding the difficult doctrine of baptisms. I touch on the variations briefly in this little study of Ephesian but I will dive much deeper into the numerous variations described in the pages of scripture.

My studies can be found at:

[MyLibertyPursuit.com](http://MyLibertyPursuit.com)

It’s simply a landing page where I can upload the pdf versions of my studies.

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