

EPHESIANS

THE LETTER OF PAUL TO THE CHURCH AT EPHESUS

Address and Greetings

1 From Paul, appointed by God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, to the saints^a 1
who are faithful to Christ Jesus: •Grace and peace to you from God our 2
Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

I. THE MYSTERY OF SALVATION AND OF THE CHURCH

God's plan of salvation

Tb 13:1	Blessed be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,	3
Ga 3:14	who has blessed us with all the spiritual blessings of heaven in Christ. ^b	
Ex 15:16	Before the world was made, he chose us, chose us in Christ,	4
Jn 17:24	to be holy and spotless, and to live through love ^c in his prseence,	
1 P 1:20	determining that we should become his adopted sons, ^d through 5	
5:27	Jesus Christ	
1 Co 1:8+	for his own kind purposes,	
1 Jn 3:1	to make us praise the glory of his grace, ^e	6
Jn 1:12	his free gift to us in the Beloved, ^f	
Rm 8:29	in whom, through his blood, we gain our freedom, the forgiveness 7	
	of our sins. ^g	
Rm 3:24+	Such is the richness of the grace	
Col 1:13-14	which he ^h has showered on us	8
Heb 1:3	in all wisdom and insight.	
2:7	He has let us know the mystery of his purpose, ⁱ	9
Rm 16:25+	the hidden plan he so kindly made in Christ from the beginning	
Mk 1:15	to act upon when the times had run their course to the end: ^j	10
Ga 4:4+	that he would bring everything together under Christ, as head,	
Col 1:16,20	everything in the heavens and everything on earth. ^k	
Dt 7:6+	And it is in him ^l that we were claimed as God's own, ^m	11
Col 1:12	chosen from the beginning,	
Is 46:10	under the predetermined plan of the one who guides all things	
Rv 4:11	as he decides by his own will;	
	chosen to be,	12
Ps 66:2	for his greater glory,	
	the people who would put their hopes in Christ before he came.	
	Now you too, ⁿ in him,	13
Ac 1:4	have heard the message of the truth and the good news of your	
Col 1:5;	salvation,	
2:9	and have believed it;	
Heb 6:12	and you too have been stamped with the seal of the Holy Spirit	
	of the Promise, ^o	
4:30		
2 Co 1:22		
Ac 2:33+		
Rm 5:5+		

- 14 the pledge of our inheritance
which brings freedom for those whom God has taken for his own,²
to make his glory praised.

2 Co 1:22+
Rm 3:24+
Ps 66:2

The triumph and the supremacy of Christ

- 15 That will explain why I, having once heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus,
16 and the love that you show^a towards all the saints, •have never failed to remember
17 you in my prayers and to thank God for you. •May the God of our
Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give you a spirit^r of wisdom and perception
18 of what is revealed, to bring you to full knowledge of him. •May he enlighten
the eyes of your mind^s so that you can see what hope his call holds for you, what
19 rich glories he has promised the saints will inherit •and how infinitely great is
the power that he has exercised for us believers. This you can tell from the strength
20 of his power •at work in Christ, when he used it to raise him from the dead and
21 to make him sit at his right hand, in heaven, •far above every Sovereignty,
Authority, Power, or Domination,^t or any other name that can be named, not
22 only in this age but also in the age to come. •*He has put all things under his feet,*
23 and made him, as the ruler of everything, the head of the Church; •which is his
body, the fullness of him who fills the whole creation.^u

||Col 1:3-4,9
Phm 4-5
Ac 9:13+
1 Co 13:13+
3:14,16
Ex 24:16+
1 Jn 5:20
Heb 3:1
Ac 9:13+
3:20
1 P 1:5
Is 52:13
Col 2:12
Ac 2:33+
1 P 3:22
Col 1:16;
2:15
Ph 2:9
Ps 8:6
1 Co 15:24-25
Col 1:18+;
19+

Salvation in Christ a free gift

- 1 2 And you were dead, through the crimes and the sins •in which you used to live
when you were following the way of this world, obeying the ruler who governs
3 the air,^a the spirit who is at work in the rebellious. •We² all were among them

||Col 2:13;
3:7
Heb 6:1+
6:12+
Jn 12:31
2 Co 4:4

1 a. Add. 'who are at Ephesus'. The words 'at Ephesus' were probably not part of the original text. The words 'who are' could be part of a very early addition. Some critics think they are authentic, that they were followed by a blank to be filled in with the name of whichever church was being sent the letter.

b. All the way through the letter, 1:20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12, Paul reverts to this opening reference to heaven. The spiritual blessings listed in the following verses must wait till the end of the world before they can be fully realised in heaven where they have been formulated since all eternity.

c. First blessing: through their union with the glorified Christ the faithful already enjoy, in a hidden sort of way, the eternal happiness to which the chosen are called. 'Love' here is primarily the love God has for us, and that leads him to 'choose' us and to call us to be 'holy', cf. Col 3:12; 1 Th 1:4; 2 Th 2:13; Rm 11:28, but does not exclude our love for God that results from and is a response to his own love for us. cf. Rm 5:5.

d. Second blessing: Jesus Christ, the only Son, is both the source and the model of the way God has chosen for us to become holy, i.e. by adopting us as his heirs, cf. Rm 8:29.

e. The word 'grace' (*charis*) as it is used here emphasises not so much the interior gift that makes a human being holy, as the gratuitousness of God's favour and the way he manifests his glory, cf. Ex 24:16f. These are the two themes that run through this account of God's blessings: their *source* is God's liberality, and their *purpose* is to make his glory appreciated by creatures. Everything comes from him, and everything should lead to him.

f. Var. (Vulg) 'his beloved Son'.

g. Third blessing: our redemption by an event in time, i.e. the death of Jesus.

h. God the Father.

i. Fourth blessing: the revelation of the 'mystery'. Rm 16:25f.

j. Lit. 'for a dispensation of the times' fullness', cf. Ga 4:4f.

k. The main theme of this letter is how the whole body of creation, having been cut off from the Creator by sin, is decomposing, and how its rebirth is effected by Christ reuniting all its parts into an organism with

himself as the head, so as to reattach it to God. The human (Jew and pagan) and the angelic worlds are brought together again through the fact that they were saved by a single act, cf. 4:10f.

l. Christ.

m. Fifth blessing: the Jews are chosen to be the human share allotted to God, and are to be his witness until the coming of the Messiah. Paul, being a Jew, here uses 'we'.

n. Sixth blessing: the pagans are called to share the salvation that had, till then, been reserved for the Jews; that they will be saved is proved by the fact that they receive the Spirit as was promised.

o. Paul completes his trinitarian account of God's plan with the Spirit, since the giving of the Spirit shows the plan has reached its final stage. Nevertheless, though this gift has already begun, it is only given in a hidden way while the unspiritual world lasts, and will only be given fully when the kingdom of God is complete and Christ comes in glory.

p. Lit. 'the setting free of that (enslaved people) which has been acquired' i.e. by God, and at the cost of the life of his Son. This is one of the occasions when Paul widens an O.T. concept (like 'blessing', 'saint', 'choice' 'adoption', 'redemption', 'share', 'promise') by applying it to the Church as the new Israel and the body of the saved.

q. Om. 'and the love that you show'.

r. This gift is what technically would be called (actual) grace.

s. Lit. 'heart': used in the Bible for the seat of knowledge as well as of love.

t. Names traditional in Jewish literature for angelic hierarchies.

u. Lit. 'fills all in all'. The Church, as the body of Christ 1 Co 12:12f, can be called the fulness (*pleroma*); cf. *infra* 3:19; 4:13) in so far as it includes the whole new creation that shares (since it forms the setting of the human race) in the cosmic rebirth under Christ its ruler and head, cf. Col 1:15-20f. The adverbial phrase 'all in all' is used to suggest something of limitless size, cf. 1 Co 12:6; 15:28; Col 3:11.

2 a. Air is the habitat of demons and of their ruler Satan.

b. Paul writes as a Jew.

Rm 2:3;9;23 too in the past, living sensual lives, ruled entirely by our own physical desires
 5:6 and our own ideas; so that by nature we were as much under God's anger as the
 Rm 1:18; 2:8 rest of the world. •But God loved us with so much love that he was generous 4
 Ex 34:6-+ with his mercy: •when we^c were dead through our sins, he brought us to life 5
 Rm 5:8 ||Col 2:13 with Christ^d—it is through grace that you have been saved—and raised us up 6
 Rm 8:11+ Col 2:12; 3:1-4 with him and gave us a place with him in heaven, in Christ Jesus.^e
 Dt 9:6 This was to show for all ages to come, through his goodness towards us in 7
 Ps 22:30-31 Christ Jesus, how infinitely rich he is in grace. •Because it is by grace that you 8
 Dt 8:17-18 have been saved, through faith; not by anything of your own, but by a gift from
 Rm 1:16+ God; •not by anything that you have done, so that nobody can claim the credit. 9
 2 Co 5:17+ We are God's work of art, created in Christ Jesus to live the good life as from the 10
 beginning he had meant us to live it. 11

Reconciliation of the Jews and the pagans with each other and with God

Do not forget, then, that there was a time when you^f who were pagans 11
 physically, termed the Uncircumcised by those who speak of themselves as the
 Circumcision by reason of a physical operation, •do not forget, I say, that 12
 Col 1:21;27 you had no Christ^g and were excluded from membership of Israel, aliens with
 Rm 9:4-5 no part in the covenants with their Promise;^h you were immersed in this world,
 2:17 without hopeⁱ and without God.^j •But now in Christ Jesus, you that used to be 13
 Ps 148:14 so far apart from us have been brought very close, by the blood of Christ.^k 14
 Is 9:5 For he is the peace between us, and has made the two into one and broken 14
 Ga 3:28+ down the barrier which used to keep them apart,^l actually destroying in his
 Col 2:14+ own person the hostility •caused by the rules and decrees of the Law.^m This 15
 was to create one single New Manⁿ in himself out of the two of them and by
 Col 3:14-15 restoring peace •through the cross, to unite them both in a single Body^o and 16
 reconcile them with God. In his own person he killed the hostility. •Later he 17
 Is 57:19 came^p to bring the good news of peace, *peace to you who were far away and peace*
 Zc 9:10 *to those who were near at hand.* •Through him, both of us have in the one Spirit^q 18
 4:4 our way to come to the Father.
 3:12+ So you^r are no longer aliens or foreign visitors: you are citizens like all the 19
 10 13:13+ saints, and part of God's household. •You are part of a building that has the 20
 Ex 12:48+ apostles and prophets^s for its foundations, and Christ Jesus himself for its main
 Ps 122:3-4 cornerstone. •As every^t structure is aligned on him, all grow into one holy temple 21
 Ac 9:13+ in the Lord; •and you too, in him, are being built into a house where God lives, 22
 Is 28:16 4:11-12 in the Spirit.
 Rm 3:10f 1 Co 6:16
 2 Co 6:16 Rv 21:14
 1 Co 3:16+ 1 P 2:5

||Col 1:24-29 Paul, a servant of the mystery

4:1 3 So I, Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you pagans...•You have 1
 Ph 1:13 probably heard how I have been entrusted by God with the grace^a he meant 2
 Col 4:18 for you, •and that it was by a revelation^b that I was given the knowledge of the 3
 2 Tm 2:9 mystery, as I have just described it very shortly. •If you read my words, you will 4
 Rm 16:25+ have some idea of the depths that I see in the mystery of Christ. •This mystery 5
 1 Co 7:40 that has now been revealed through the Spirit to his holy apostles and prophets^c 6
 2 Co 11:5f was unknown to any men in past generations; •it means that pagans now share 6
 Jn 14:26+ 4:11 the same inheritance,^d that they are parts of the same body, and that the same 7
 2:12-19 promise has been made to them, in Christ Jesus, through the gospel. •I have 7
 2 Co 3:6 been made the servant of that gospel by a gift of grace from God who gave it to 8
 Col 1:23 me by his own power. •I, who am less than the least of all the saints, have been 8
 1 Th 2:4 entrusted with this special grace, not only of proclaiming to the pagans the 9
 1 Co 15:8 infinite treasure of Christ •but also of explaining^e how the mystery is to be 9
 Ga 2:8 dispensed. Through all the ages, this has been kept hidden in God, the creator 10
 Ph 4:13 of everything. Why? •So that the Sovereignities and Powers should learn^f 10
 Col 1:29 only now, through the Church, how comprehensive God's wisdom really is, 11
 1 Co 2:7-9+ exactly according to the plan which he had had from all eternity in Christ Jesus 11
 1 P 1:12 our Lord. •This is why we are bold enough to approach God in complete 12

- 13 confidence, through our faith in him; •so, I beg you, never lose confidence just because of the trials that I go through on your account: they are your glory.^g

Col 1:22▲
Hcb 4:16▲
1 P 3:18▲
Col 1:23; 2:7
2 Tm 1:8

Paul's prayer

- 14 This, then, is what I pray, kneeling before the Father,^h •from whom every 1:17
15 family,ⁱ whether spiritual or natural, takes its name:
16 Out of his infinite glory, may he give you the power through his Spirit 2 P 1:3
17 for your hidden self to grow strong, •so that Christ may live in your hearts
18 through faith, and then, planted in love and built on love, •you will with all
19 the saints have strength to grasp the breadth and the length, the height and
20 the depth;^j •until, knowing the love of Christ,^k which is beyond all know-
21 ledge,^l you are filled with the utter fullness of God.^m
20 Glory be to him whose power, working in us, can do infinitely moreⁿ than we
21 can ask or imagine; •glory be to him from generation to generation in the Church
and in Christ Jesus for ever and ever. Amen.

Ac 1:8+
Jn 14:23
Rm 7:22+
Col 1:23; 2:7
Ac 9:13+
Col 2:2
Col 2:9+
1:19f
Ph 2:13

e. 'We' here means both the pagans, cf. vv. 1-2, and the Jews, cf. v. 3. V. 3 is a parenthesis.

d. 'with Christ'; var. 'in Christ'. 'It is through grace'; var. (Vulg) 'through whose grace'.

e. Here as in Col 2:12; 3:1-4 the use of the past tense shows that the resurrection and triumph of Christians in heaven is considered as actually existing, whereas the future tense in Rm 6:3-11; 8:11,17f treats it as something that has still to take place. Treating the eschatological reality as already existing is a characteristic of Paul's letters written from prison.

f. The description of this past that Paul now gives is meant to apply to all pagans in a general way—not specifically to those he is writing to.

g. I.e. you had no Messiah.

h. The successive covenants made by God with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David etc.; cf. Ex 19:1+; Lv 26:42,45; Sl 44-45; Ws 18:22; 2 M 8:15; Rm 9:4.

i. Hope of a Messiah, which was hitherto confined to Israel, 1:12.

j. The pagans had many gods but not the one true God, 1 Co 8:5f.

k. The crucifixion of Christ that brought together Jews and pagans vv. 14-15, and reconciled both with the Father vv. 16-18.

l. The wall separating the court of the Jews from the court of the pagans in the Temple, cf. Ac 21:28f.

m. The Mosaic Law gave the Jews a privileged status and separated them from pagans. Jesus abolished this Law by fulfilling it once for all on the cross, Col 2:14+.

n. This New Man is the prototype of the new humanity that God recreated (2 Co 5:17+) in the person of Christ, the second Adam (1 Co 15:45), after killing the sinfully corrupt race of the first Adam in the crucifixion (Rm 5:12f; 8:3; 1 Co 15:21). This New Adam has been created in 'the goodness and holiness of the truth' 4:24, and he is unique because in him the boundaries between any one group and the rest of the human race all disappear, Col 3:10f; Ga 3:27f.

o. This 'single Body' is both the physical body of Jesus that was executed by crucifixion, Col 1:22+, and the Church or 'mystical' body of Christ in which, once they are reconciled, all the parts function in their own place, 1 Co 12:12+.

p. Through the apostles who in his name preached the Good News of salvation and peace.

q. The one Spirit that gives life to the single body (of Christ who is one with his Church) is the Holy Spirit who has changed the form of the body now it has risen, and by doing so has come down on each of the parts of which it is made up. The trinitarian structure of this section is repeated in v. 22.

r. Paul inserts vv. 14-18 (how Christ has united pagans and Jews) between his contrasting descriptions of pagans before (vv. 11-13) and after (19-22) conversion.

s. The N.T. prophets, cf. 3:5; 4:11; Ac 11:27+, together with the apostles, are the witnesses to whom the divine plan was first revealed and who were the first

to preach the Good News, cf. Lk 11:49; Mt 23:34; 10:41. This is why the Church as well as being founded on Christ, 1 Co 3:10f, is also said to be founded on them.

t. 'every'; var. 'the entire'.

3 a. V. 1 (continued in v. 15) break off abruptly, the parenthetical development of vv. 2-14 being suggested by the mention of pagans in v. 1. On the grace of being the apostle of the pagans, cf. 3:7f; Rm 1:5; 15:15f; 1 Co 3:10; Ga 2:9.

b. Cf. 2 Co 12:1-7. The immediate reference is to what was revealed to Paul on the way to Damascus, cf. Ga 1:16; Ac 9:15; 22:21; 26:16-18.

c. The N.T. prophets, cf. 2:20+. The O.T. prophets had only an obscure and imperfect knowledge of the mystery of the Messiah, cf. 1 P 1:10-12; Mt 13:17.

d. I.e. as the Judaeo-Christians, cf. 2:19.

e. Var. (Vulg) 'showing clearly to all'.

f. The evil spirits were unaware of God's plan for salvation and so they persuaded human beings to crucify Christ, 1 Co 2:8; and it is only the existence of the Church that makes them aware of it now, cf. 1 P 1:12.

g. Var. 'our glory'.

h. Add. (Vulg) 'of our Lord Jesus Christ'.

i. A play on the Greek words for 'father' and 'family' (*pater*; *patria*): *patria* is used for any social group descended from a common ancestor and the one ancestor common to human beings and angels is God, the supreme Father.

j. Stoics used this expression to mean the totality of the cosmos. Paul uses it to suggest the cosmic function of Christ in the rebirth of the world. It could be referred to the size of the mystery of salvation, or preferably to Christ's universal love on which (next verse) the mystery depends. Cf. 1:17-19,23; 2:7; 3:8; Col 2:2f.

k. This love for us that Christ proved by accepting death, 5:2,25; Ga 2:20, is identical with the love the Father has, 2:4,7; 2 Co 5:14,18-19; Rm 8:35,37,39. Cf. 1 Co 13:1+.

l. The love of God cannot be 'grasped' (v. 18, using a philosophical term technical in Greek) but can be 'known' by a mystic's awareness of it through love, cf. 1:17f; 3:3f; Ho 2:22+; Jn 10:14+. This awareness is something deeper than scientific knowledge, cf. 1 Co 13, and is more like knowing that one is loved by the other than knowing the other that one loves, cf. Ga 4:9; even awareness of this sort however can never 'grasp' this sort of love.

m. Lit. 'in order that you may be filled to all the fullness (*pleroma*) of God'. (Var. 'in order that all the fullness of God may be filled'.) Christ who is filled with the divine life fills Christians with it, Col 2:9, and in this way a Christian enters both the Church and the new cosmos which he helps to build and which is the fullness of the total Christ, 1:23; 2:22; 4:12-13; Col 2:10+.

n. Var. (Vulg) 'can do all'.

II. EXHORTATION

A call to unity^a

||Co 3:12-14 **4** I, the prisoner in the Lord, implore you therefore to lead a life worthy of your
 1 Co 13:13+ vocation. •Bear with one another charitably, in complete selflessness,
 Ph 1:27 gentleness and patience. •Do all you can to preserve the unity of the Spirit by the
 Col 3:14-15 peace that binds you together. •There is one Body, one Spirit, just as you were all
 Rm 12:5 called into one and the same hope when you were called. •There is one Lord, one
 1 Co 10:17; faith, one baptism, •and one God who is Father of all, over all, through all and
 12:12+ within all.^b
 1 Co 1:13;
 8:6; 12:4-6
 2 Co 13:13+

Rm 12:6 Each one of us, however, has been given his own share of grace,^c given as
 Christ allotted it. •It was said that he would:

Ps 68:18
 Ac 2:33

*When he ascended to the height, he captured prisoners,
 he gave gifts to men.^d*

1 P 3:19+ When it says, 'he ascended', what can it mean if not that he descended^e right
 down to the lower regions of the earth?^f •The one who rose higher than all the
 heavens to fill all things^g is none other than the one who descended. •And to
 1 Co 12:28+ some, his gift was that they should be apostles; to some, prophets; to some,
 Tt 1:5+ evangelists; to some pastors and teachers;^h •so that the saints togetherⁱ make
 2:21; 4:16 a unity in the work of service, building up the body of Christ. •In this way we
 Col 1:23+ are all to come to unity in our faith and in our knowledge of the Son of God, until
 3:11 we become the perfect Man,^j fully mature with the fulness of Christ himself.
 1:23+

1 Co 14:20 Then we shall not be children any longer, or tossed one way and another and
 carried along by every wind of doctrine, at the mercy of all the tricks men play
 and their cleverness in practising deceit. •If we live by the truth and in love, we
 Col 2:4,8 shall grow in all ways into Christ, who is the head •by whom the whole body
 Tb 4:6 is fitted and joined together, every joint^k adding its own strength, for each
 ||Col 2:19 separate part to work according to its function. So the body grows until it has
 built itself up, in love.

The new life in Christ

Rm 1:18-32 In particular, I want to urge you in the name of the Lord, not to go on living
 Col 1:21 the aimless kind of life that pagans live. •Intellectually they are in the dark,
 1 P 1:18; 4:3 and they are estranged from the life of God, without knowledge because they
 have shut their hearts to it. •Their sense of right and wrong once dulled,^l they
 have abandoned themselves to sexuality and eagerly pursue a career of indecency
 of every kind.^m •Now that is hardly the way you have learnt from Christ, •unless
 ||Col 3:9-10 you failed to hear him properly when you were taught what the truth is in Jesus.
 Col 3:5 You must give up your old way of life; you must put aside your old self, which
 gets corrupted by following illusory desires. •Your mind must be renewed by a
 2:15+ spiritual revolution •so that you can put on the new self that has been created in
 Col 3:10+ God's way, in the goodness and holiness of the truth.ⁿ

Zc 8:16 So from now on, there must be no more lies: *You must speak the truth to one*
 Col 3:9 *another*, since we are all parts of one another. •*Even if you are angry, you must not*
 1 Co 12:12+ *sin*: never let the sun set on your anger •or else you will give the devil a foothold.
 Ps 4:4 LXX
 Mt 5:22
 2 Co 2:11
 Ac 18:3+ Anyone who was a thief must stop stealing; he should try to find some useful
 20:34-35 manual work instead, and be able to do some good^o by helping others^p that are
 1 Th 4:11 in need. •Guard against foul talk; let your words be for the improvement of
 Mt 15:11 others, as occasion offers, and do good to your listeners, •otherwise you will
 Jm 3:10-12 only be grieving the Holy Spirit of God who has marked you with his seal for
 Is 63:10 you to be set free when the day comes.^q •Never have grudges against others, or
 Rm 1:29+ lose your temper, or raise your voice to anybody, or call each other names,
 Col 3:8 or allow any sort of spitefulness. •Be friends with one another, and kind,
 Mt 6:12, 14-15p
 Col 3:13 forgiving each other as readily as God forgave you^r in Christ.

- ¹ ² **5** Try, then, to imitate God, as children of his that he loves, •and follow Christ by loving as he loved you, giving himself up in our place *as a fragrant offering* and *a sacrifice to God*. •Among you there must be not even a mention of fornication or impurity in any of its forms, or promiscuity: this would hardly become the saints! •There must be no coarseness, or salacious talk and jokes—all this is wrong for you; raise your voices in thanksgiving instead. •For you can be quite certain that nobody who actually indulges in fornication or impurity or promiscuity—which is worshipping a false god^a—can inherit anything of the kingdom of God. •Do not let anyone deceive you with empty arguments: it is for this loose living that God's anger comes down on those who rebel against him. •Make sure that you are not included with them. •You were darkness once, but now you are light in the Lord; be like children of light, •for the effects of the light are seen in complete goodness and right living and truth.
- ¹⁰ ¹¹ Try to discover what the Lord wants of you, •having nothing to do with the futile works of darkness but exposing them by contrast. •The things which are done in secret are things that people are ashamed even to speak of; •but anything exposed by the light will be illuminated •and anything illuminated turns into light.^b That is why it is said:^c

Wake up from your sleep,
rise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you.^d

- ¹⁵ So be very careful about the sort of lives you lead, like intelligent and not like senseless people. •This may be a wicked age, but your lives should redeem it.
- ¹⁷ And do not be thoughtless but recognise what is the will of the Lord. •Do not drug yourselves with wine, this is simply dissipation; be filled with the Spirit.
- ¹⁹ Sing the words and tunes of the psalms and hymns when you are together, and go on singing and chanting to the Lord in your hearts, •so that always and everywhere you are giving thanks to God who is our Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁴ a. Paul lists three different threats to the Church's unity: arguments between Christians vv. 1-3, diversity of service in the Church vv. 7-11, unorthodox teaching vv. 14-15. These threats are all averted by applying the principle of unity in Christ, vv. 4-6, 12-13, 18.

b. Var. (Vulg) 'within all of us'.

c. Charisms or special graces given to individuals for the benefit of the whole community, cf. 1 Co 12:1+.

d. Following rabbinic practice Paul quotes this text for the sake of two phrases: 'he ascended' vv. 9-10, and 'he gave gifts' v. 11, which he interprets as the ascension of Jesus and the descent of the Spirit.

e. Add. (Vulg) 'first of all'.

f. Lit. 'into the lower parts of the earth'. The most appropriate interpretation is that 'the earth' is itself the 'lower region' to which Christ descended to give 'the gifts' to mankind, and Paul's argument is that 'these gifts can only be from the one who ascended'. But the phrase can be taken to mean the subterranean kingdom of the dead, Nb 16:33f, to which Christ descended before the resurrection, 1 P 3:19f.

g. By ascending through all the cosmic spheres and taking possession of them all one after another, Christ becomes the head of the whole *pleroma* or total cosmos, 1:10+, and makes the entire universe acknowledge him as 'Lord', cf. 1:20-23; Col 1:19; Ph 2:8-11.

h. Paul limits his list to charisms that relate to teaching and which are the only ones that apply in this context, vv. 13-15.

i. The particular 'saints' Paul mentions here seem to be missionaries and other teachers, cf. 3:5, but may include all the faithful in so far as they all help to build up the Church, cf. Ac 9:13+.

j. This does not refer primarily to the individual Christian. The sense is collective. It can be taken as referring to Christ himself, the New Man, the archetype

of all who are reborn 2:15+, or else (and this sense is to be preferred) as referring to the total Christ, i.e. the whole body, 1 Co 12:12+, made of head v. 15; 1:22; Col 1:18, and the rest of the body v. 16; 5:30.

k. Var. (Vulg) 'each member'.

l. Var. (Vulg) 'Being devoid of hope'.

m. Or 'sexuality and every kind of indecency and greed'.

n. Each human being should 'put on the New Man', Ep 2:15+ (here, as in v. 22, translated 'self'), so as to be re-created in him, cf. Ga 3:27; Rm 13:14. In some places Paul talks in the same way about the 'new creature', 2 Co 5:17+.

o. Lit. 'working the good thing with his own hand'. 'Good' and 'own' hand' are omitted or interchanged in various readings: the original text may have been ambiguous.

p. Var. (Vulg) 'for building up the faith'.

q. The one Holy Spirit that keeps the one body of Christ united, 4:4; 1 Co 12:13, is 'grieved', cf. 4:30; Is 63:10, by anything that harms the unity of the body.

r. 'you'; var. 'us'. The same in 5:2.

5 a. 'promiscuity'; lit. 'greed', apparently sexual greed in this context. Uncontrolled greed treats all creatures with the worship due to God and so turns them into idols.

b. The wrong sort of way to talk about sexual immorality is the way that leaves the subject in a dangerous obscurity, v. 3. To talk about it in such a way, however, that it is recognised for what it is will lead to its being corrected; this sort of light is the light of Christ that puts an end to darkness.

c. This (like 1 Tm 3:16) seems to be an extract from an early Christian hymn. On baptism as an enlightening, cf. Heb 6:4; 10:32 (cf. Rm 6:4+).

d. Var. 'and you will touch Christ'.

Mt 5:48
2 Th 3:7+
Ga 2:20
1 Jn 3:16
Ex 29:18
Ps 40:6
Ga 5:19+
Ac 9:13+

Mt 6:24
1 Co 6:9-10
Col 3:5
Heb 13:4-5
Col 2:4,8
|| Col 3:6

4:18
Jb 24:13
Jn 8:12+
2 Co 4:6;
6:14
Col 1:12-13
1 Th 5:4-8

Jn 3:20-21

Is 26:19;
60:1
Heb 6:4;
10:32

Col 4:5

Col 1:9

Pr 23:31

LXX
|| Col 3:16-17

1 Th 5:18

The morals of the home

Ps 87:5 Give way to one another in obedience to Christ. •Wives should regard their ²¹
 ||Col 3:18 husbands as they regard the Lord, •since^c as Christ is head of the Church and ²²
 1 P 3:1-7 saves the whole body, so is a husband the head of his wife; •and as the Church ²⁴
 1 Co 11:3 submits to Christ, so should wives to their husbands, in everything. •Husbands ²⁵
 1:22-23 should love their wives just as Christ loved the Church and sacrificed himself ²⁶
 1 P 3:7 for her •to make her holy. He made her clean by washing her in water with a form ²⁷
 Rm 6:4+ of words, •so that when he took her to himself she would be glorious, with no ²⁸
 Tt 3:5-2 speck or wrinkle or anything like that, but holy and faultless.^f •In the same way, ²⁹
 2 Co 11:2 husbands must love their wives as they love their own bodies; for a man to love ³⁰
 Col 1:22 his wife is for him to love himself. •A man never hates his own body, but he feeds ³¹
 Rv 19:7-8; 21:2,9-11 it and looks after it; and that is the way Christ treats the Church, •because it is ³²
 1 Co 12:12+ his body—and we are its living parts.^g •For this reason, a man must leave his father ³³
 Gn 2:24 and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one body. •This ³⁴
 Mt 19:5p mystery has many implications; but I am saying it applies to Christ and the ³⁵
 Rm 16:25+ Church.^h •To sum up; you too, each one of you, must love his wife as he loves ³⁶
 himself; and let every wife respect her husband.

Pr 6:20 **6** Children, be obedient to your parents in the Lord^a—that is your duty. •The ¹
 Sj 3:1-6 first commandment that has a promise attached to it is: *Honour your father* ²
 ||Col 3:20-21 and mother, •and the promise is: *and you will prosper and have a long life in the land.* ³
 Ex 20:12 And parents, never drive your children to resentment but in bringing them up ⁴
 Pr 13:24+ correct them and guide them as the Lord does.

||Col 3:22- Slaves, be obedient to the men who are called your masters in this world, ⁵
 4:1 with deep respect^b and sincere loyalty, as you are obedient to Christ: •not only ⁶
 Tt 2:9-10 you are under their eye, as if you had only to please men, but because you ⁷
 Rm 6:15+ are slaves of Christ and wholeheartedly do the will of God. •Work hard and ⁸
 1 P 2:18 willingly, but do it for the sake of the Lord and not for the sake of men. •You ⁹
 Jb 31:15 can be sure that everyone, whether a slave or a free man, will be properly rewarded ¹⁰
 Dt 10:17+ by the Lord for whatever work he has done well. •And those of you who are ¹¹
 employers, treat your slaves in the same spirit; do without threats, remembering ¹²
 that they and you have the same Master in heaven and he is not impressed by one ¹³
 person more than by another.

The spiritual war

Rm 13:12 Finally, grow strong in the Lord, with the strength of his power. •Put God's ¹⁰
 2 Co 6:7; armour on^c so as to be able to resist the devil's tactics. •For it is not against human ¹¹
 10:4 enemies that we have^d to struggle, but against the Sovereignities and the Powers ¹²
 Jm 4:7 who originate the darkness in this world, the spiritual army of evil in the heavens.^e ¹³
 Mt 16:17+ That is why you must rely on God's armour, or you will not be able to put up any ¹⁴
 1 P 5:8-9 resistance when the worst happens, or have enough resources to hold your ¹⁵
 ground.

Is 11:5; So stand your ground, with *truth buckled round your waist*, and *integrity* ¹⁶
 59:17 *for a breastplate*, •wearing for shoes on your feet *the eagerness to spread the* ¹⁷
 Ws 5:18 *gospel of peace* •and always carrying the shield of faith so that you can use it to ¹⁸
 1 Th 5:8 put out the burning arrows of the evil one. •And then you must accept *salvation* ¹⁹
 Is 40:3,9; *from God to be your helmet* and receive the word of God from the Spirit to use ²⁰
 52:7 as a sword.

Lk 18:1+ Pray all the time, asking for what you need, praying in the Spirit on every ²¹
 ||Col 4:2-4 possible occasion. Never get tired of staying awake to pray for all the saints; ²²
 Rm 15:30+ and pray for me to be given an opportunity to open my mouth^f and speak ²³
 Rm 16:25+ without fear and give out the mystery of the gospel^g •of which I am an ambassador ²⁴
 20 in chains; pray that in proclaiming it I may speak as boldly as I ought to.

Personal news and final salutation

I should like you to know, as well, what is happening to me and what I am ²⁵
 ||Col 4:7 doing; my dear brother Tychicus, my loyal helper in the Lord, will tell you ²⁶

- 22 everything. •I am sending him to you precisely for this purpose, to give you news about us and reassure you.
- 23 May God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ grant peace, love and faith to
- 24 all the brothers. •May grace and eternal life be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ.^a

e. By drawing a parallel between a human marriage and the marriage of Christ to his Church, vv. 23-32, these two concepts are made to illumine each other. Christ is the husband of the Church because he is her head and because he loves the Church as much as a man loves his own body when he loves his wife. Having established this, the comparison naturally suggests an ideal for human marriage. The symbol of Israel as the wife of Yahweh is common in the O.T., Ho 1:2+.

f. It was customary in the Middle East, at the time this letter was written, for the 'sons of the wedding' to escort the bride to her husband after she had bathed and dressed. As applied mystically to the Church, Christ washes his bride himself in the bath of baptism, and makes her immaculate (note the mention of a baptismal formula) and introduces her to himself.

g. Add. (Vulg) 'made from his flesh and blood'.

h. Paul makes this Gn text a prophecy of the marriage of Christ and the Church: a mystery, like that of the salvation of the pagans, that has been hidden but is now revealed, cf. 1:9f; 3:3f.

6 a. Om. 'in the Lord'.

b. Lit. 'fear and trembling', cf. 1 Co 2:3+.

c. God in the O.T. arms himself against his enemies,

cf. Is 11:4-5; 59:16-18; Ws 5:17-23. These are the arms of Yahweh with which, Paul says, the Christian is to arm himself.

d. Var. 'you have'.

e. These are the spirits who were thought to move the stars and, consequently, the universe. They lived in 'the heavens', 1:20f; 3:10; Ph 2:10, or in 'the air', 2:2, i.e. the space between the surface of the earth and the heaven where God lives. Some of them are among the 'elemental principles of the world', Ga 4:3. They disobeyed God and want to enslave the human race to themselves in sin 2:2. We used to be their slaves but Christ came to free us, 1:21; Col 1:13; 2:15,20, and if Christians are armed with the power of Christ, they will be able to fight them.

f. Lit. 'that I may be given speech in opening of my mouth', Hebraism, cf. Ezk 3:27; 29:21; Ps 51:15; cf. Col 4:3.

g. Om. 'of the gospel'.

h. Or 'May grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in eternal life'. Add. (Vulg.) 'Amen', cf. Ph 4:23.

PHILIPPIANS

THE LETTER OF PAUL TO THE CHURCH AT PHILIPPI

Address

Ac 16:1+
Rm 1:1+
Ac 9:13+
1 From Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ 1
Jesus, together with their presiding elders and deacons.^a •We wish you the 2
grace and peace of God our Father and of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thanksgiving and prayer

1 Th 1:2
1:18,25;
2:2,29+
3:1+ 4:1.
4:10
1 Th 5:16
1:10; 2:16
1 Co 1:8+
1:30
Ep 3:2
Rm 1:9
Col 1:9-10
Phm 6
1:6
Heb 5:14
3:9+
Jn 15:1
Heb 12:11
Jm 3:18
I thank my God whenever I think of you; and •every time I pray for all of you, I 3
pray with joy,^b •remembering how you have helped to spread the Good News^c 5
from the day you first heard it^d right up to the present. •I am quite certain that 6
the One who began this good work in you will see that it is finished when the Day 7
of Christ Jesus comes. •It is only natural that I should feel like this towards 7
you all, since you have shared the privileges which have been mine: both my 8
chains and my work defending and establishing the gospel. You have a permanent 8
place in my heart, •and God knows how much I miss you all, loving you as Christ 8
Jesus loves you. •My prayer is that your love for each other may increase more 9
and more and never stop improving your knowledge and deepening your 9
perception •so that you can always recognise what is best.^e This will help you to 10
become pure and blameless, and prepare you for the Day of Christ, •when you 11
will reach the perfect goodness which Jesus Christ produces in us for the glory
and praise of God.

Paul's own circumstances

I am glad to tell you, brothers, that the things that happened to me^f have 12
actually been a help to the Good News.

Ep 3:1
2 Tm 2:9
2:20-21
1:4+
Jb 13:16
LXX
Ac 16:7
2 Tm 4:17
1 Co 6:20
2 Co 1:5
Ga 2:20
Col 3:3f
My chains, in Christ, have become famous not only all over the Praetorium^g but 13
everywhere, •and most of the brothers have taken courage in the Lord from these 14
chains of mine and are getting more and more daring in announcing the Message^h
without any fear. •It is true that some of them are doing it just out of rivalry 15
and competition, but the rest preach Christ with the right intention, •out of 16
nothing but love, as they know that this is my invariable way of defending the
gospel. •The others, who proclaim Christ for jealous or selfish motives, do not 17
mind if they make my chains heavier to bear. •But does it matter? Whether 18
from dishonset motives or in sincerity, Christ is proclaimed; and that makes me
happy; •and I shall continue being happy, because I know *this will help to save* 19
me, thanks to your prayers and to the help which will be given to me by the
Spirit of Jesus. •My one hope and trust is that I shall never have to admit defeat, 20
but that now as always I shall have the courage for Christ to be glorified in my
body,ⁱ whether by my life or by my death. •Life to me, of course, is Christ, but 21
then death would bring me something more; •but then again, if living in this 22
body means doing work which is having good results—I do not know what