

# The Letter to the Saints at Ephesus—Part 3

## Southside church of Christ, Huntsville

Reading Assignment—Ephesians 4-6

### Introduction

The last three chapters of the letter to the Ephesians parallel closely the last half of Colossians. I encourage you to refresh your memory of Colossians chapters 3 and 4. In Ephesians chapter 4 Paul discusses the resurrection and ascension of Christ. Just like Colossians chapter 3, we can rise again with Christ by putting off the old man. When we put off the old man, we become dead to all the sinful works of the flesh. We put on the new man, the new body, and live a life imitating Christ. Throughout this discussion Paul weaves the concept of unity. Unity is important because no body is dis-unified. If the parts of a body do not work together, then illness is the result.

Christ's unified body is made up of people who have put on a new man, or new body. Christ already raised his physical body; someday he will raise his spiritual body as well. All men seek after eternal life, but most are looking in the wrong places. Anyone who desires to be saved must become a member of the church. Those who have become members of the body of Christ have access to eternal life.

Beside unity, chapter 4 describes some very practical ways to live. Once again, we should put off the sins of the old man. So there is no question what is sin, many of those sins are enumerated. Of utmost importance, however, is that we must treat each other with truth and forgiveness (4:25, 32). The members of our physical body have nothing to hide from each other. Likewise, all members will instinctively act to protect another member. No member of your body should be willing that another should hurt or come to harm. So it is with the church.

Chapter 5 continues the idea of putting off the old man, but introduces the idea of light and darkness. Christians are not to live in darkness any longer. Paul uses a discussion of the husband and wife relationship to make an illustration about the church. He equates the church to an earthly wife. Wives are to respect their husbands. Husbands are to love their wives. Because he has already developed the concept of the body, he illustrates the closeness of the marital relationship by comparing it also to a body. If we have a proper concept of the church, then we can understand how to behave in marriage. Likewise the opposite is true.

Chapter 6 continues the discussion of the interpersonal relationships. Just like in Colossians, he instructs children to fully obey their parents. Likewise, parents have a responsibility toward their children. All servants have a responsibility to serve their masters to the best of their ability. Likewise, masters must remember to be gentle. Masters are reminded that they may have authority here on earth, but they do not have ultimate authority. Everyone's Master is in heaven; our Master in heaven does not respect earthly rank.

The last part of chapter 6 is a description of the tools of warfare God has given to us. He has provided all we need to overcome the wiles of the devil. We can overcome the devil if we stay strong in the Lord and rely on the power of his might. Ephesians 6:12 describes the seriousness of this battle. We are arrayed against some very powerful forces. Still, God has perfectly equipped us for victory. Our tools are not physical, but are spiritual because we war not against flesh and blood.

Many Christians today forget to be circumspect (5:15). Imagine a soldier on the battlefield who has become apathetic. That soldier will not be able to defend either himself or his fellows at a moment's notice. Instead, he will be caught off guard. So today, many Christians are comfortable and seem to be sitting back with their eyes closed. Being a soldier of God means more than just defending against the obvious attacks. The true soldier of God is constantly looking for the ways the devil conspires to make him stumble. This can include looking for things that may not have been noticed before. We all have ways we can improve and be more vigilant against the subtleties of the devil.

### **Instructions**

While reading the chapters 4-6, be sure to identify the major and minor themes as well as the major arguments used to support the themes.

#### **Chapter 4**

Major Theme:

Major Argument:

Minor Themes:

#### **Chapter 5**

Major Theme:

Major Argument:

Minor Themes:

#### **Chapter 6**

Major Theme:

Major Argument:

Minor Themes:

## Questions

1. Define the word 'vocation' in Ephesians 4:1.
2. What kind of words can deceive us? Why is the wrath of God directed at the children of disobedience? (Ep. 5:6)
3. What two things did Jesus accomplish when he ascended? (Ep. 4:8)
4. Look at Colossians 4:1 and Ephesians 6:9. Describe the attitude of the Christian boss/employer/master.
5. How should we pray for the saints? (Ep. 6:18)
6. Paul uses the relationship of husband and wife to teach a lesson about what other relationship?
7. List some words Paul uses to refer to the church.

8. List the things from chapter 5 which should not even once be named among Christians.

**True or False**—Be sure to provide scripture for your answer.

T or F—Christ sanctifies the church with the washing of water.

T or F—The new man is created in righteousness and true holiness.

T or F—The Holy Spirit will attest for us on the day of redemption.

T or F—Unity comes through faith and knowledge of the Son of God.

T or F—Paul encouraged the Ephesians to get good rest.

### **Thought Questions**

1. What does it mean to prove what is acceptable unto the Lord? (Ep. 5:10)

2. In what things should a wife obey her husband? Does the command to obey mean the wife is of lesser value to God? Hint: Is an employee of less value than his boss? (Ep. 5:22-24, 33)

3. In your own words, describe the wiles of the devil? (Ep. 6:11)