

Ephesians

1:1. “holy ones.” The Greek is *hagios* (#40 ἅγιος). It is an adjective, but used as a noun and best translated “holy ones.” Through the ages the word “saints” has acquired a meaning that is not biblical, and thus it can be confusing, especially to new Christians. Every Christian is a “holy one” because each Christian has God’s gift of holy spirit sealed inside him.

“faithful.” The Greek is *pistos* (4103 πιστός). It means “faithful” or “believing.” The translation “faithful” is difficult because Ephesians is not just to the faithful. Lenski goes with “believing,” which is certainly true.

1:3. “Blessed.” The Greek is *eulogetos* (#2128 εὐλογητός), and it means “blessed, or praised.” It is an adjective, and so “blessed” is the better translation here, especially in light of the fact that the word is used three times in the verse.

“Blessed us in Christ.” Christians have been blessed “in Christ.” It is because of our being “in Christ” that we are blessed.

“In the heavenlies” = plural adjective. Similar to the fact that “heaven” is plural in Hebrew. This could be the plural of majesty for “heaven.” Occurs 5 times in Ephesians. They are all adjectives and all plural, and we have translated all of them, “in the heavenlies.”

There are versions that read “blessed us...in the heavenly realms,” and there are versions that read “blessed us...with every blessing in the heavenly realms.” The blessings are with God in heaven, conferred upon us here on earth. It is not that we in the heavenly realms are blessed, because we are on earth. (Although some would argue that Eph. 2:6 says we are in heaven, that is the idiom of the prophetic perfect; see note on “seated” in Eph. 2:6.

1:4. “foundation.” This refers to the foundation of our earth today, even before Adam and Eve were created. It does not seem to make as good sense to translate it “overthrow,” because the destruction of the Genesis 1:1 creation is not so much in mind as the simple fact that in God’s mind, His Church even predates his creation of mankind.

“world.” *kosmos* (#2889 κόσμος).

“to be holy and without blemish.” There is a lot packed into this phrase. To say that we “should be holy...” (KJV, ESV), causes people to miss the point that Christians are holy in God’s sight by virtue of the sacrifice of Christ and the gift of holy spirit that God has given to each Christian, which is why we are said to be saints” (holy) in the opening of the various Church Epistles. The Greek verb “be” is in the infinitive mood, which Robertson (Word Pictures) notes as the infinitive of purpose, in other words, God’s purpose was that we be holy, and He blessed us in Christ, making us holy. This is part of the meaning here, which is repeated in 5:25-27, where Scripture says, “Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy...to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.” However, also packed into the idea of “to be holy” is that we should live holy lives. Each Christian is spiritually holy, but God did not make us that way with the idea that we then would ignore our flesh and fulfill the passions it produces on us (Eph. 2:3). God made us spiritually holy, and He made us to work hard to live a holy life as well.

“without blemish” This is a term that relates to the fact that sacrifices had to be without blemish to be accepted by God. We have blemishes, but He chose us and made

us both “holy” and “without blemish.” Gk. = *amomos* (#299 ἄμωμος) and appears 8x in NT. All of them can be related to the perfection an offering to God had to have, and all can be translated “without blemish.”

“in love” There is a big debate about whether this phrase goes with verse 4 or 5. The commentators are pretty well split. We voted for v. 4 for two major reasons. **1.** God chose us to stand to be “holy,” “without blemish” and “in love.” Love is part of the way we are to stand before Him. Furthermore, v. 5 already says God acted from His “good pleasure” so placing “in love” in v. 5 is an unnecessary duplication. **2.** “It is Paul’s usual, if not constant, habit to place *en agape* **after** the clause it qualifies (Eph. 4:2,15,16; 5:2; Col. 2:2; 1 Thess. 5:13; cp. also, though in association with other terms, 1 Tim. 4:12; 2 Tim. 1:13).” (W. R. Nicoll, *The Expositor’s Greek New Testament*, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, reprinted 1990), Vol. 3, p. 251).

1:5. “marked us out beforehand.” The Greek is *proorizo* (#4309 προορίζω). The literal meaning is “to mark out before” and so that is what we went with. This term gets a lot of theological attention, being translated “foreordained,” “foreknown,” and “predestined.” However, there is no reason to assert that God marks the path for us to walk down in such a way that we have to walk it (predestination). Rather, the evidence of Scripture is that He marks the path He wants us to take, and then we by our free will must decide to take it.

“adoption.” The Greek is *huiiothesia* (#5206 υἱοθεσία), and it only occurs five times in the New Testament, all in the Church Epistles (Rom. 8:15, 23; 9:4; Gal. 4:5; Eph. 1:5). According to Vine it means, “the place and condition of a son given to one to whom it does not naturally belong.” The Greek Lexicon by Louw and Nida says: “to formally and legally declare that someone who is not one’s own child is henceforth to be treated and cared for as one’s own child, including complete rights of inheritance.” *Huiiothesia* literally means, “to place as a son.”

“Adoption” clearly indicates that a Christian is a member of God’s family. In the Roman culture, the adopted son or daughter had four major changes: a change of family, a change of name, a change of home, and a change of responsibilities (Charles Welch, *Just and the Justifier*. The Berean Publishing Trust, London, p. 212, with a fuller explanation on pp. 208-213).

Most importantly, by using the word “adoption,” God emphasizes that salvation is permanent for the Christian, which is why it appears only in the Church Epistles. Some versions translate *huiiothesia* as “sonship,” but we believe that is not as good as “adoption.” While it is true that someone adopted into the family attains sonship (the status of a son), “adoption” is more accurate to the Greek meaning of the word, and it correctly expresses the fact that the adopted child is permanently placed in the family.

Birth seems so much more desirable than adoption that it is fair to ask why God would even use “adoption.” The answer is that the Romans recognized that when a baby was born, “you got what you got,” whether you liked it or not. This would include the sex of the child, birthmarks, etc. Thus, according to Roman law, a naturally born baby could be disowned from the family. However, people *adopting* a child knew exactly what they were getting, and no one adopted a child unless that specific child was wanted as a family member, so according to law an adopted child could not be disowned. He or she was permanently added to the family. Many early believers were Roman citizens, and using the word “adoption” was one of God’s ways to let the Church know that He chose the

children brought into His family, and they could not be taken from it. The Roman historian William M. Ramsay writes:

“The Roman-Syrian Law-Book...where a formerly prevalent Greek law had persisted under the Roman Empire—well illustrates this passage of the Epistle. It actually lays down the principle that a man can never put away an adopted son, and that he cannot put away a real son without good ground. It is remarkable that the adopted son should have a stronger position than the son by birth, yet it was so.” (W. M. Ramsay, *A Historical Commentary on St. Paul’s Epistle to the Galatians*, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI, reprinted 1979; p. 353).

Roman customs and laws differed from those of the Jews, and it is by understanding Jewish laws and customs that we see why “birth” is used in Peter and James, and “adoption” is used in Romans, Galatians, and Ephesians: “Among the Jews, adoption had no importance, and hardly any existence. The perpetuity of the family, when a man died childless, was secured in another way, viz., the levirate. Only sons by blood were esteemed in the Hebrew view” (Ramsay, *Historical Commentary...Galatians*; p. 341). The “levirate” that Ramsay refers to was the law stating that if a man died childless, his wife was to marry the man’s brother, and then her oldest son would be counted as the child of the dead man and carry his name (Deut. 25:5-10; Mark 12:18-27).

God made salvation permanent for Christians, which was radically different from before the Church started on the Day of Pentecost. He worked very hard to communicate that change to His Church, which is composed of both former Jews and former Gentiles (when a Jew or Gentile believes, he or she does not lose his nationality, but in God’s eyes is now a Christian, a new creation in Christ). Thus, in Scripture that has a distinctively Jewish flavor, such as Peter and James, God speaks of “birth” (*anagennao*, 1 Pet. 1:3, 23; *apokueo*, James 1:18), because birth and genealogy were very important to the Jews. They would immediately understand that a child “born” into God’s family was a permanent member of His family. God also uses a word for “birth” (*paliggenesis*) in Titus 3:5 (It is noteworthy that all three of these Greek words for birth are unique to writings to the Christian Church, another indication of the permanence of Christian salvation).

However, in books such as Romans, Ephesians, and Galatians, which were addressed to people with a Gentile background, He also speaks of “adoption.” The same truth is communicated by both terms: the Christian becomes a permanent member of the family of God, because he is forever sealed in Christ (Eph. 1:13), and has a guaranteed hope (2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5; Eph. 1:14; NIV, ESV). While no verse in the Old Testament even hints that one day God would make salvation permanent, the permanence of salvation for Christians is the hallmark of the Sacred Secret.

This total change to permanent salvation is clearly taught in Galatians 4:1-5. The first three verses of the chapter show that before Jesus came, though the people of God were heirs, they were equal to slaves, being under guardians and enslaved to the basic principles of the world. God’s equating Old Testament believers to minor children equal to slaves is very important, because a slave is not guaranteed a place in the family. Galatians goes on to say that when the fullness of time came, God sent His Son (3:4) so that we might receive “adoption” into His family.

Galatians 4:5 then says: “[God sent His Son] in order that he might redeem those who were under *the* law in order that we might receive the adoption.” The two “in order that” clauses show that for people to be adopted into God’s family, Christ first had to redeem them, and before Christ redeemed them they were under the law. Without Jesus paying the redemption price, no adoption was possible. Thus no Old Testament believer was adopted into God’s family because adoption was not available yet. Adoption was available only after Christ died, and God started bring people into His family by “adopting” and “birth” on the Day of Pentecost, 50 days after Christ died on the cross. Thus, permanent salvation was not available until Christ died, and was first made available when the Church started on the Day of Pentecost. For more on the permanence of Christian salvation, see Graeser, Lynn, Schoenheit, *The Gift of Holy Spirit: The Power to be Like Christ* (Christian Educational Services, Indianapolis, IN, 2006), Appendix A: “The Administration of the Sacred Secret.”

“as sons” does not appear in the Greek text at all. If we are adopted, then we are adopted. The phrase “as sons” was apparently brought into the KJV from the Latin Vulgate.

“to” = *eis* (1519 εἰς) = to. Prepositions are very flexible and have many meanings. Bullinger gives some of the ways that the Greeks used prepositions in a mathematical sense, but that only applied in some cases and in math. It is wrong to think that the Greeks were not as flexible with their prepositions as we are. The word “unto” is archaic and unnecessary. “To” is perfectly acceptable.

“good pleasure” This word is very difficult to translate. It contains the idea of good, of pleasure, and of intent. Thus some translations go with “kindly intent.” We decided to stick with the ASV and let the word “will” carry the fact of intention.

“he” we are going to stick with using lower case “he” for God. The primary reason for doing this is that there are places in the text where who the “he” is, is very unclear, and by capitalizing it now we will be forced later to put a specific meaning on it that the biblical text does not place on it.

1:6. “freely bestowed on us” The root of this phrase is “grace,” and the Greek has a wonderful word-relation: “his grace, in which he graced us.” At this point we have decided to go with the ASV, which carries the meaning of the word and is very clear.

1:7. “redemption.” See commentary on Colossians 1:14.

“trespasses.” This is a hard word. The Greek word is *paraptoma* (#3900 παράπτωμα) which is to “misstep,” “to fall by the wayside.” It is not necessarily intentional, and is much “softer” than the other words for sin in the NT, although its semantic range allows for it to refer to very purposeful sins. Meanings include: “faults,” “deviations from truth,” “lapse,” “error,” “mistake,” “wrongdoing.” We went with “transgressions.”

“riches.” The Greek word is singular, but the plural translation is okay because “riches” is a singular reality. We could have gone with “wealth” but that has too strong a connotation of money.

1:8. “lavished on.” The phrase that is more literal, “made to abound toward us” is awkward for the modern reader and “abound” is not normally considered a verb. We went with “lavished on,” as do a number of the modern versions.

“prudence.” This was the best translation we could think of.

1:9. “making known” is better translated “having made known,” especially in light of the context, which is past.

“unto” = to.

“sacret secret” is *musterion* (#3466 μυστήριον) and is best translated “secret” rather than mystery. The Greek word *musterion* means a “secret” in the religious sphere. A secret can be known if it is revealed, while a mystery denotes something unknowable (Vine, op. cit., *Expository Dictionary*, “Mystery,” p. 769; Bullinger, op. cit. *Lexicon*, “Mystery,” p. 515; Thayer, op. cit., *Lexicon*, “*musterion*,” p. 420;). The *musterion* was reveled. This fact can also be seen within Scripture itself. Ephesians 1:9 says that God “**made known** to us the *musterion* of His will.” God made His “secret” known to us when He revealed it in His Word. By definition making known a mystery would be impossible. Versions of the Bible that translate *musterion* as “secret” include The New English Bible, The International Standard Version, the Complete Jewish Bible by David Stern, The Bible by James Moffatt, J. B. Phillip’s New Testament, The New Testament in the Language of the People by Charles Williams, The Better Version of the New Testament by Chester Estes, Young’s Literal Translation, and The Emphasized Bible by Joseph Rotherham

“in him” this is **not** “himself. It refers to Christ, as does the “in him” in verses 4, 7, 10, 11, and 13. Although there are some versions that go with “in himself,” the middle voice (of “he purposed”) is already reflexive, so saying “in himself” would be redundant and unnecessary.

1:10. The key to understanding this verse is recognizing the administrations and how they work, and also that Christ will “head up” (the literal Greek) the administration in the future.

“in the heavens.” This is the literal Greek, which takes the form of the Hebrew text, in which “heaven” is always plural (prob. a plural of majesty to emphasize the largeness of the heavens).

1:11. “We were assigned a portion.” See Lenski.

“Counsel.” We felt that “counsel” missed the mark. It is not that God had a large counsel meeting and many people were involved. “Plan” is much better.

1:13. “gospel” is “good news.”

“promised holy spirit.” The Greek text read, “the holy spirit of promise.” This is a genitive of relation, and means the holy spirit that was promised, and that promise was first made in the Old Testament. This is a very confusing verse to theologians, because of the doctrine of the Trinity. Once we understand that “holy spirit” in this verse refers to the gift of God that is given to each Christian at the time they are saved, the verse becomes clearer. Furthermore, we have to understand this verse in light of the Administration in which we live, the Administration of the Sacred Secret. We today do not have the same gift of holy spirit that God gave to some Old Testament believers such as Moses or Deborah. Rather, what we have is the firstfruits of the gift of holy spirit that God promised to pour out in the Millennial Kingdom. (For information on the gift of holy spirit we Christians have, see Graeser, Lynn, Schoenheit, *The Gift of Holy Spirit: the Power to be Like Christ*, and Appendix A of that book is on “The Administration of the Sacred Secret”).

During the Old Testament and Gospel periods, God gave the gift of holy spirit in a very limited way: it was upon only certain selected people, and He gave it conditionally

and by measure. However, God promised much better things for Israel's future. He promised that in the Millennial Kingdom He would "pour out" holy spirit in abundance to everyone who believed. Furthermore, what God promised to Israel, He has given grace to the Christian Church, which explains why holy spirit in Christians is called "the promised Holy Spirit [holy spirit]" (Eph. 1:13), and the "firstfruits of the Spirit [spirit]" (Rom. 8:23). Therefore, the things about holy spirit that were foretold for the Millennial Kingdom apply to Christians also, even though holy spirit was not specifically foretold for Christians. Christians even have holy spirit with manifestations that were not promised in the Old Testament, and these are speaking in tongues and the interpretation of tongues. The Church Epistles make the point that the gift of holy spirit that Christians have today is "the **promised** holy spirit" (Acts 2:33, Eph. 1:13).

Jesus spoke to his disciples about the promised holy spirit in Luke 24:49 and Acts 1:4. In the Old Testament God promised to give holy spirit to Israel, not the Church. No one knew there was going to be a Christian Church, because it was part of the Sacred Secret that God hid in Himself. God promised that holy spirit would be poured out in the kingdom of Christ, but because He has given it to Christians, Scripture calls what we have the "firstfruits" of the spirit (Rom. 8:23).

God calls what we have "firstfruits" because we have today what He promised for the believers in the Millennial Kingdom. There are some major differences between the gift of holy spirit that God gave in the Old Testament and the gift of holy spirit God promised to give in the Millennial Kingdom, which we today get by grace.

1) In the Old Testament and Gospels, holy spirit was upon only a few believers, but in the Millennial Kingdom it will be in all believers. Even though there were millions of Israelites who lived during Old Testament times, only a few were blessed to receive the gift of holy spirit. In contrast to that, in the Millennial Kingdom God will pour out the gift of holy spirit on every believer. Verses such as Joel 2:28, 29 and John 7:38 make that very clear. Today, in the Administration of Grace, every believer gets holy spirit just as will happen in the Millennial Kingdom.

2) In the Old Testament and Gospels, God gave holy spirit in a limited way, by measure, but in the Millennial Kingdom it will be poured out in abundance. In contrast to the limited measure of holy spirit God gave in the Old Testament and Gospels, He promised to give holy spirit in abundance in the Millennial Kingdom. We read that Joel said, "...I will pour out my Spirit [spirit] on all people" (Joel 2:28; cp. also Isa. 32:15; 44:3). The words "pour out" are significant, and indicate great abundance. There is no place in the OT or Gospels that God's gift of holy spirit is said to be "poured out," but that is the promise for the Millennial Kingdom. It needs to be noted, however, that even though God promised He would give people an abundance of holy spirit, He did not specifically promise that they would be filled, even though that is clearly implied. In contrast, it is clear in Scripture written to the Church that every Christian is filled with holy spirit.

3) In the Old Testament and Gospels, God gave holy spirit conditionally, and the recipient could lose it. King Saul is an example of a person in the OT who lost the gift of holy spirit because of his disobedience to God (1 Sam. 16:14), and David prayed that God would not take it from him (Ps. 51:11). In the Millennial Kingdom, holy spirit will be given permanently, and by grace we receive it permanently also. It is vital to understand this aspect of the gift of holy spirit. For Christians, it is the presence of holy

spirit inside them that makes them a Christian. When an unbeliever today confesses Christ as Lord, he gets the gift of holy spirit at that instant. The presence of holy spirit inside that person makes him a “holy one” (often translated “saint,” cp. Rom. 1:7, etc.), is the “seed” that is in him (1 Pet. 1:23), is why he is said to be “born again” (1 Pet. 1:23), is why he is called a “new creation” (2 Cor. 5:17), and is why he is said to have a “guarantee” of salvation (2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5; Eph. 1:14). In the Old Testament the gift of holy spirit was said to be “upon” people, but in contrast, God promised that when He gave holy spirit in the Millennial Kingdom, it would be in them (cp. Ezek. 11:19; 36:26, 27; 37:14). Jesus thoroughly knew the Old Testament and its promises, and made sure his followers knew that holy spirit would be “in” people (John 14:17). Throughout the Old Testament and Gospel periods, the gift of holy spirit was upon people conditionally, and God could therefore take it back. In contrast to the way God gave holy spirit in the Old Testament, in the Millennial Kingdom He will give holy spirit permanently to those believers who had been raised from the dead, brought into the kingdom, and settled in the land (Ezek. 37:12, 14; Isa. 59:21). The permanence of the relationship between the Millennial Kingdom believer and God is the basis for many promises of the OT, such as when God said of resurrected Israel believers that He would “no longer” hide His face from them (Ezek. 39:29). He told them he will give them a “new heart,” taking away their heart of stone and giving them a heart of flesh (Ezek. 36:26), and all the people will know Him (Jer. 31:33 and 34).

4) In the Old Testament and Gospels it is never stated that holy spirit would influence a person to live a godly life. However, Scripture promises that in the Millennial Kingdom, holy spirit will influence people toward godliness.

One of the most exciting things about the gift of holy spirit that God promised to give in the Millennial Kingdom was that it would help people live godly lives. There is no evidence in the Old Testament or Gospels that a purpose or characteristic of the gift of holy spirit that they had was that it produced a positive transforming influence, helping them become more godly. Certainly people such as Moses or Elijah, who walked in great spiritual power, were aware of God more acutely and thus would have worked hard to live godly lives, but there is no statement in the Old Testament or Gospels that one of the purposes of the gift of holy spirit that God gave in those times was to help transform people toward godliness. However, the gift of holy spirit in the Millennial Kingdom (and for us today) is that the promised holy spirit is specifically stated to help people live godly lives. Jesus even called it the “helper” on many occasions (cp. John 15:26; sometimes this is translated “comforter,” or “encourager”). In Ezekiel, God promised that when holy spirit is poured out on resurrected people in the Millennial Kingdom, they will be able to talk with Him directly and intimately, and not be hidden from His “face” any more (Ezek 39:29). Having holy spirit does not remove free will or force a person to obey God, and we all know that Old Testament believers who had holy spirit, and Christians (who all have holy spirit) disobey the commandments and sin. Nevertheless, holy spirit, as it is given in the Administration of Grace to Christians, and will be given to believers in the Millennial Kingdom, does have a very powerful influence on the person. Ezekiel 36:27 says the holy spirit will “cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances. Isaiah 44:3-5 also testifies to the godly influence of holy spirit. The Church Epistles testify to the godly influence that holy spirit has in the life of a believer, as it fights with the sin nature that lives in us (Gal. 5:17).

1:14. “deposit guaranteeing.” This is a deposit that guaranteed delivery. The presence of holy spirit in a person guarantees that he will be saved.

1:15. The Greek is *dia touto* (#1223 διὰ #3778 τοῦτο) = Because of this.

1:16. “I do not stop.” Clearly the meaning of the Greek.

“making mention.” We felt like “mention” has come to mean an afterthought, which is not Paul’s point at all. Kittel pointed out that it could be idiomatic. We felt “remembering you” was the heart of the text.

1:18. “his inheritance in the saints.” The commentators disagree completely. Some say that the vocabulary and context clearly indicate that God’s inheritance is distributed to the saints, while others state that the context of Ephesians clearly says that it is the saints who are God’s inheritance. Actually, both meanings clearly have merit. It is true that the saints shall receive an inheritance from God, but it is just as true that we are His inheritance, for the Lord’s portion is His people (Deut. 32:9). In this section of Ephesians the use of *autos* (#846 αὐτός) is generally placed after whatever Paul wants to be of God, and the flow of that pattern indicates that, although the text can be read to mean that we are His inheritance, the more probable meaning is that his inheritance is given to the believers. Translating literally from the Greek text leaves the possibility of both meanings in the text, and given the ambiguity of the passage, we felt that this was the best policy.

1:19. “to us, the believing *ones*.” This is very literal, but makes the point that the **power** of God is manifested in the lives of those who are currently believing, not just in those who at one time confessed Christ as Lord.

“(according to... all things in all).” This is the Figure of speech *Parembolē* (Bullinger, *Figures*), a form of parenthesis. The *Parembolē* starts in 19b and goes through verse 23. It explains and gives great depth of meaning to the phrase “surpassing greatness of his power.” How great is God’s power to us? It raised Christ from the dead, seated him at God’s own right hand in heaven, and raised him far above all other powers in the universe. And it is that power that is “to us” who believe.

Dunamis (#1411 δύναμις) = power; *energeia* (#1753 ἐνέργεια) = energizing; *kratos* (#2904 κράτος) = might; *ischus* (#2479 ἰσχύς) = strength.

1:20. We have gone with “the Christ” because of the presence of the definite article. Christ was raised “from the dead.”

“out from among the dead.” See Romans 4:24. Wuest: “from among the dead.” The word “dead” is a genitive plural adjective, and needs a noun to complete the sense, thus it means “dead people.” The text says that Christ was raised from the dead [people], not, “from the state of his being dead.”

1:21. *arche* (#746 ἀρχή) = rulership.

The age to come = *mello* (#3195 μέλλω) = the one about to be. This is more than simple futurity. The Greek almost certainly expresses an immanence that is very difficult to translate into the English.

1:22. This verse continues the effect of God’s energizing the Christ, which started in verse 20.

This is a good example of the prophetic perfect that something that will absolutely happen in the future is placed in the past (aorist) tense (see note on “seated,” in Ephesians 2:6).

“for the congregation.” There is debate as whether “to the church” or “for the church” (NIV, RSV) is more accurate. The word “appoint” is a translation of *didomi*

(1325 δίδωμι). *Didomi* is used here as equivalent to “appoint.” We have chosen, “for the congregation” as a translation of the dative case. The dative case is generally translated either with the preposition “to” or “for,” e.g. “to the congregation” or “for the congregation.” Since *didomi* is not used to mean “give” but rather “appoint,” we felt “for the congregation” was a better translation of the dative case because Christ is appointed head over “everything” for the sake of the church, which was very much God’s plan. This verse is not saying that Christ is over the head of everything in (“to”) the church, but that he is head over everything, period, for the sake of the church.

2:1. “And you *he made alive*.” The ellipsis anticipates verse 5.

“when you were dead” a legitimate translation of the present participle.

“in your trespasses and sins” There is no word “in,” this is the dative case, however, “in” is warranted in this context because of humanities state of death because of Adam’s sin.

2:2. “you once.” This is a good translation of *pote* (#4218 ποτέ).

“according to the course of this world” = according to the *aion* (#165 αἰών) of the *kosmos* (#2889 κόσμος). To walk in accord with the *aion* of this *kosmos* is to walk in a way that harmonizes with the whole age in its present fallen and corrupt state. “All that floating mass of thoughts, opinions, maxims, speculations, hopes, impulses, aims, aspirations, at any time current in the world, which it may be impossible to cease and accurately define, but which constitutes a most real and effective power, being the moral, or immoral, atmosphere which at every moment of our lives we inhale, again, inevitably to exhale,—all this is included in the *aion*....” (Richard C. Trench, *Synonyms*). Because the work *aion* includes the idea of time and behavior, we felt that in this verse the behavioral aspect was being emphasized because of the verb “walk,” and went with “ways.”

“of the powers of the air” = the authority (genitive singular) of the air. The Devil is the ruler of the “authority” of the “air.” The air can be literal, because the Devil controls and to some extent lives in the air. However, the “air” can legitimately refer to the “atmosphere” of evil that exists in the world, which is part of the understanding of *aion*. This may be an excellent example of the Figure of Speech, *amphibologia*, double meaning. Both meanings are true, can be textually supported by the vocabulary. The “authority” can refer to the authority he has, or that he exercises through demons, and can even include the demons themselves.

“workings” = *energeo* (#1754 ἐνεργέω) = works or energizes. We have used both translations in Ephesians.

“sons” is literal and cultural.

“defiance” = *apeitheia* (#543 ἀπειθεία) = willful disobedience.

2:3. lusts = passions. The Greek word *epithumia* (#1939 ἐπιθυμία) is an over desire. The word “lust” connotes a sexual desire that the Greek text simply does not communicate.

Desires = in the plural, thus “desires”

“carrying out” “Doing” would be more literal but difficult, and in slang colors the meaning. “Pursuing” is more to the point, which is following the whims of the flesh.

“Mind” is more accurately “thoughts” (plural), but it does not make good sense in English to say “the desires of the thoughts” since the thoughts are the desires.

“Wrath” is a good translation, see Bullinger. It has the idea of desire for revenge or justice. It is in the mind, not in the action, so “anger” could be a good translation, but given the scope of the NT, “wrath” is better.

2:5. “when we were” is the participle, but it makes the reading awkward and so we followed other versions, which translate it “when we were.”

“In” can be “in” or “through.” Actually, it is both, but since death is a state, we went with “in.”

paraptoma (#3900 παράπτωμα) = trespasses (see 1:7).

(by grace you have been saved) = have been and continue to be saved.

2:6. “seated.” The verb is in the aorist tense, as if the seating had already occurred, even though actually we have not yet been seated in heaven. This is a figure of speech, in this case an idiom which comes under the category that some scholars refer to as the “prophetic perfect.” In the Hebrew and Aramaic in which the Bible was written, when something was absolutely going to happen in the future, it was often spoken of as if it had already occurred in the past. In this case, we have not yet been seated in heaven, but the fact that we are born again guarantees that we will be, so that fact is expressed by the idiom, and we are said to be “seated” in heaven.

Hebrew scholars are familiar with this idiom and refer to it as “the prophetic perfect,” “the historic sense of prophecy,” the “perfective of confidence,” etc. It is also referred to as “here now, but not yet” or “already—not yet.” E. W. Bullinger recognized that a future event was sometimes referred to in the past tense as if it had already occurred, and noted that it was the figure of speech *heterosis* (“The past for the future;” Bullinger, *Figures*). The average Christian has no knowledge of the idiom because most of the times it occurs in the Bible, the translators have not translated it literally, but instead have changed the tense of the verb. Thus, the “prophetic perfect” is rarely apparent in English Bibles. In fairness to the translators, because the English language seldom uses anything like the prophetic perfect, most Christians would only be confused if the idiom was translated literally into English. For example, the Greek text of Jude 14 says that the Lord “came” with thousands of his saints (cp. NASB). Scholars of the biblical languages recognize that Jude was simply using the prophetic perfect to indicate the certainty of the Lord’s coming in the future with thousands of saints. But if they translated the verse literally, the average Christian would probably become confused and wonder, “When did the Lord come with thousands of his saints? The first and only time he came he had only a small group of apostles and disciples.”

Although the idiom of the prophetic perfect is originally a Semitic concept, it occurs in the New Testament Greek. Often the idioms of the Hebrew language and culture come over into the New Testament text as well. E. W. Bullinger explains that the idioms of the Hebrew language and culture are reflected in the Greek text:

The fact must ever be remembered that, while the language of the New Testament is Greek, the agents and instruments employed by the Holy Spirit were Hebrews. God spake “by the mouth of his holy prophets.” Hence, while the “mouth” and the throat and vocal chords and breath were human, the *words* were Divine. No one is able to understand the phenomenon; or explain how it comes to pass: for Inspiration is a fact to be believed and received, and not a matter to be reasoned about. While therefore, the *words* are Greek, the *thoughts* and *idioms* are Hebrew.

Some, on this account, have condemned the Greek of the New Testament, because it is not classical; while others, in their anxiety to defend it, have endeavored to find parallel usages in classical Greek authors. Both might have spared their pains by recognizing that the New Testament Greek abounds with *Hebraisms*: i.e., expressions conveying Hebrew usages and thoughts in Greek words” (Bullinger, *Figures of Speech*, pp. 819–20).

When the Hebrew idiom of the prophetic perfect is brought into Greek, it is expressed in several different ways, because the Greek tenses are structured differently than the Hebrew tenses. Thus, technically in Greek, under the category of the idiom we call the prophetic perfect, there is the prophetic perfect (perfect tense used to express a future event), and proleptic aorist (aorist tense used to express a future event).

The prophetic perfect and Proleptic aorist are vital idioms for students of the Bible to understand, because of the important meaning it brings to the text. By writing about a future event in the past tense, God is emphasizing that the event will absolutely come to pass. If God simply used the future tense to write about future events, the aspect of absolute certainty that the idiom communicates would be lost. Here in Ephesians 2:6, for example, God could tell us, “we **will** be seated in heaven with Christ.” However, there might then be mitigating factors that would keep us from going to heaven, which is exactly what those people who say that Christians can lose their salvation teach. By saying that Christians are already in heaven is one of the ways God says that our salvation is not in doubt; we Christians will absolutely be with God.

There are many example of the prophetic perfect in the Bible. For instance, God told Noah to build the ark. After telling him how to build it, the Hebrew text reads that God said, “And you **have come** into the ark” (Genesis 6:18). The ark was not even built at that time. Another is when God said to Abraham, “To your descendants I **have given** this land” (Genesis 15:18). This promise was made to Abraham before he even had any descendants to give the land to, but God states His promise in the past tense to emphasize the certainty of the event. Later, when Abraham was bargaining with God to save Sodom, God told Abraham that if fifty righteous people could be found in the city, He would spare it. To make His point clear, God used the prophetic perfect and said, “If I find at Sodom fifty righteous people, I **have spared** the whole place” (Genesis 18:26). Another example occurs when Joseph interpreted Pharaoh’s dream and foretold that there would be seven years of plenty and seven years of famine. When mentioning the years of famine, Joseph used the prophetic perfect for emphasis and said, “And there **have arisen** seven years of famine” (Genesis 41:30). The prophecy of the coming Messiah given by the prophet Balaam is placed in the prophetic perfect for emphasis. Although it would be more than 1,400 years before the Messiah would come, the Hebrew text has, “A star **has come forth** out of Jacob and a scepter **has arisen** out of Israel” (Num. 24:17). Although Isaiah wrote more than 700 years before the birth of Christ, the Hebrew text reads, “To us a child **has been** born, to us a son **has been** given, and the government **has been** on his shoulders, and he **has been** called Wonderful, Counselor...” (Isa. 9:6).

An idiom that is closely related to the prophetic perfect is the prophetic present. It is very similar to the prophetic perfect, which as we have seen, was used when an event was certain to happen. However, the prophetic present also usually indicates that the

event being referred to was close at hand. For information on the prophetic present, see the note on Luke 3:9.

For a more detailed explanation of the Prophetic Perfect with quotations about it from linguists and grammarians, see John Schoenheit, *The Christian's Hope: the Anchor of the Soul*, (Christian Educational Services, Indianapolis, IN, 2004), Appendix E. Grammarians that mention the idiom include: Kautzsch, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*; Davidson, *Hebrew Grammar*; Waltke and O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*; Seow, *A Grammar for Biblical Hebrew*; Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*).

2:7. “that.” *Hina* (#2443 ἵνα) usually has either indicates a purpose “in order that,” or a result, “so that.” Leaving the word “that” in the text gives the reader the flexibility to decide what God means.

En (#1722 ἐν) = “by” in this context.

Have been saved: This is a periphrastic perfect. It uses a form of the verb to be and a perfect passive participle to represent the essence of a perfect tense, i.e., the action is in the past with effects continuing into the present.

so that = *hina* as a result.

2:8. “this.” “This” refers to salvation, because they are both nominative. Thus the verse could be expanded to read, “...you have been saved through faith, and this *salvation* is not of yourselves...” The verse is not saying that the faith does not come from us, because it does. The word saved is in the passive voice, for it is the Lord Jesus who saves us when we have faith. Our part is to have faith, at which point the Lord saves us, we do not save ourselves by our faith.

“faith.” The Greek is *pistis* (#4102 πίστις), a noun. In both ancient secular Greek and in the Bible *pistis* means “confidence, trust, assurance.” When the people of the first century got the letters of Paul, for example, they did not say, “What is *pistis*?”, as if Paul had invented a new word. *Pistis* was in common use in the Greek language, and had been for centuries. It is in the writings of the Greeks, including Aristotle, Plato, Herodotus, etc. The first definition of *pistis* in the *Liddell and Scott Greek Lexicon* is “trust in others.”

When the Greek New Testament was translated into Latin, *fides* was the natural choice as a translation of *pistis*, because *fides* means “trust, confidence, reliance, belief.” As the English language developed, our English word “faith” came from the Latin word *fides*. There should be nothing mysterious about *pistis*, *fides*, or faith. We know what trust is. *Merriam-Webster* defines it as “assured reliance on the character, ability, strength, or truth of someone or something.”

It needs to be clearly understood that the ancient and biblical definition of *pistis* differs completely from the modern definition of “faith.” If both *pistis* and *fides* mean “trust,” how did “faith” come to be defined in our modern culture as “firm belief in something for which there is no proof” (*Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th edition)? The actual historical process is long and tedious, but the concept is simple. The Church asked people to trust doctrines that were neither logical nor clearly backed up by Scripture. For example, the doctrine that the “host” (bread) and wine that are used in Roman Catholic Mass become the body and blood of Christ is not logical, nor is it backed up with solid Scriptural exegesis. Priests know this, and so they ask people to “Take it by faith,” meaning, “Believe this even though there is no proof.” Over time, belief in something for which there is no proof became the accepted definition of “faith.”

This is especially harmful because people then import that made-up definition of “faith” back into the Bible, although that is not what “faith” means when used in the Bible.

There is nothing wrong with “take it by faith (trust)” if there is actually something (such as a promise) to trust. When Jesus told the blind man that if he washed in the Pool of Siloam he would be healed, the blind man had faith in, trusted, Jesus and his promise, washed, and was given sight by a miracle. However, if there is nothing to trust in and nothing “trustworthy” to believe, then to ask people to “take it by faith” is wrong, and contributes to the misunderstanding of God and the Bible. Biblical faith is neither magic, unreasonable, nor illogical. It is simply *trust*.

Ephesians 2:9 and 10 make it clear that “faith” is not “works.” We are saved by grace through faith, not by works. This is God’s definition of terms. Thus, by God’s definition, “faith” is not a work.

2:10. The “his” is emphasized, but it is difficult to do in English. The translation, “His handiwork are we...”

having been created = aorist passive participle.

2:12. Being alienated implies that there once was a relationship, but in fact there never was any such relationship. Hence, “excluded” is a better translation.

Covenants of promise = “The promise” is the collective promises of the OT. Thus covenants is plural when promise is singular.

“without God” the Greek is “godless,” but the English word godless = ungodly, not “without God” which is what the author is trying to communicate and does communicate in the Greek language.

2:15. As to the punctuation of 14 and 15 and as to the fact that it is the middle wall of partition that is the mutual enemy (“enmity”), see Expositor’s NT, and Robertson’s NT Word Pictures, and Word Studies in the NT by Vincent. The phrase “in his flesh” can modify either “broken down the middle wall” v. 14 or with “abolished the Law” in verse 15. The commentators are divided, and with good reason. It was by his flesh that he did both. We felt that since verse 16 pointed out that he slew the enmity, i.e., the middle wall, on the cross, the context favored the placement of “in his flesh” with breaking down the middle wall.

Law of commandments = genitive of apposition; the Law, that is to say, the commandments in decrees.

“decrees.” The Greek is *dogma* (#1378 δόγμα), see note on Acts 16:4.

2:16. by it having slain the enmity. Ironically, Christ used the cross, which was used to slay him, to slay the enmity. For the “it” or “him” autos, referring to the cross see Robertson.

2:19. “foreigners.” Indicates someone who is in the land but is not a citizen.

2:20. “cornerstone.” There is no actual word for “chief” as the KJV has. The Greek text has *akrogoniaios* (#204 ἀκρογωνιαίος), which is the “far corner” or “extreme corner,” thus being the “cornerstone.”

2:21. “being fitted together.” The Greek word has more to it than just the concept of “joined” together. It has overtones of the pieces being chosen so that they “fit” together, after which, of course, they are joined together. Especially in the context of a Temple, which was constructed of stone, “fitting” the pieces together was of utmost importance. The stones in the foundation wall at the Temple in Jerusalem, although thousands of

years old and weighing many tons, are “fitted” so well that a knife blade will not go between them.

“Temple.” The Greek word is *naos* (#3485 ναός), which means the inner sanctuary, and then, occasionally, by association, the temple building that houses the inner sanctuary. Then, by metonymy, the Greek word *naos* is used of the body (Bullinger, Vine). In contrast, the Greek word *hieron* (#2411 ἱερόν), means the temple building along with its porches, outer courts, and all associated out buildings. Interestingly, the *hieron* is never used figuratively in the Bible, it is always literal. In Jerusalem, Herod’s *hieron* (ἱερόν) was a massive complex inclosing some 37 acres. The 35 page article, “Temple, Jerusalem,” in *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible* has drawings and diagrams of Solomon’s Temple (*hieron*) as well as that of Ezekiel and Herod. The need for the distinction between the *naos* and the *hieron* was necessitated by God’s Old Testament regulations concerning the Tabernacle, and then the Temple. God placed an important distinction between the outer courts, where all the priests could minister, and the inner sanctuary, i.e., the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place (KJV, “Holy of Holies). This distinction became to be supported by vocabulary, and the inner rooms came to be called the *naos* (and, as was stated earlier, eventually by association the Temple building proper that contained it), while the *naos* along with the outer courts came to be referred to as the *hieron*.

We use the word “temple” to translate the word *naos*, and the words “temple complex” to translate the word *hieron*.

3:2. “since.” In the indicative mood, “if” does not always have the conditional meaning, if the condition is taken as fulfilled. The translation “if” confuses the English reader who does not see from the Greek that the condition has been fulfilled. To avoid confusion and carry the sense we translated this as “since.” See Dana and Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* p. 289. A good example of this is John 7:4. Jesus’ brothers knew he was doing miracles, so the verse should read (and does in versions such as the NIV), “since you are doing these things....” Lenski calls this “the condition of reality” (cp. his note on 1 Thess. 4:14). In this case, there was no doubt about the Ephesians having heard of the Administration of the Sacred Secret. Paul had been there for more than two years teaching (Acts 19:10). Other good examples of this grammatical construction are 1 Corinthians 15:12; 15:44; 1Thess. 4:14. If the context of the verse makes it clear that the “if” is meant as a “since,” we may leave the translation as “since” in the REV. However, if the context may confuse the reader, as here in Ephesians 3:2, we translate it “since” for understanding.

We have chosen “administration” as the translation of *oikonomia* (#3622 οἰκονομία). For a more complete understanding of the Administration of the Sacred Secret, and an explanation of administrations in the Bible, see Graeser, Lynn, Schoenheit, *The Gift of Holy Spirit: The Power to be like Christ*, Appendix A “The Administration of the Sacred Secret.”

3:4. The Greek word *noeo* (#3539 νοέω) has as its first definition in Louw and Nida: “to comprehend something on the basis of careful thought and consideration....” It is the action that occurs in the *nous* (#3563 νοῦς), the mind. It is more than a simple perception, but not necessarily a full comprehension. We felt “understand” was an appropriate translation, as the NASB.

The Greek word *sunesis* (#3539 νοέω), often translated “understand” is often the result of understanding. Louw and Nida say: “that which is understood or comprehended.” Zodhiates says: “the word denotes the ability to understand concepts and see relationships between them.” We have gone with the English word “insight” (again, as the NASB) because when a person sees the relationship between the facts and concepts in the world around him we say he has “insight.”

3:9. “the administration of the sacred secret.” This is a literal rendering of the Greek text, understanding the word *oikonomia* as “administration.” For more on the Administration of the Sacred Secret, see the commentary note on Ephesians 3:2.

“administration.” There are some Greek texts that read “fellowship” of the Sacred Secret instead of “administration” of the Sacred Secret. However, the evidence shows that reading to be a later change to the Greek text. Metzger (Textual Commentary) writes: “The Textus Receptus, in company with a scattering of late minuscules, replaces οἰκονομία [administration] with the interpretative gloss κοινωνία (hence AV “fellowship”). The true reading is supported by p⁴⁶, all known uncials, almost all minuscules, all known versions and patristic quotations.” It can be easily understood that as the understanding of the administrations in scripture declined, that “administration” was replaced in some texts with the more easily understood, “fellowship.”

3:10. “many sided.” The Greek reads, *polupoikilos* (#4182 πολυποίκιλος). “Pertaining to that which is different in a number of ways—‘many and diverse, manifold, many-sided’ (Louw-Nida). “This is the only occurrence in the NT and it has the idea of ‘most varied,’ or ‘(very) many sided.’ It alludes to the variegated facets of God’s wisdom...” (Hoehner, *Ephesians*, p. 461). “God’s wisdom is one, yet it can be termed ‘multifarious’ because it weaves a thousand apparently tangled threads into one glorious pattern. So out of the most diverse elements, where the strongest opposites clashed, where men saw only impossibilities, God, coming with means which looked hopelessly inadequate to men, worked out results which no man would have dreamed, and no angel could have foreseen” (Lenski, p. 483).

4:3. “unity of the spirit.” This is the genitive of production, meaning *the unity produced by the spirit* (Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, p. 105). This is picked up in Kistemaker’s translation: “unity imparted by the Spirit.” The genitive of production is very similar to the genitive of origin, except the word in the genitive (in this case “spirit”) is more active in a genitive of production; rather than simply being the source of the unity, the spirit is both the source and producer of that unity (Ibid). It is of note that we are called only to “maintain” this unity, not to produce it, which is the natural result of holy spirit being inside each believer, making us all brothers and fellow-members of the same body.

4:8. Quoted from Ps. 68:18.

4:11. “for the equipping.” The Greek phrase is *pros ton katartismos* (πρὸς τὸν καταρτισμὸν), which is literally, “for the equipping.” The Greek word *katartismos* (#2677 καταρτισμός) means “a process of adjustment that results in a complete preparedness” (Friberg Lexicon), and can be translated as “equipping, preparing, training, perfecting.” There are some versions that read, “to equip” instead of “for the equipping,” however, in this case, “for the equipping” is better, because it is more literal to the Greek text and because it more clearly implies that the process of equipping is an ongoing one. The work that the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers do in the Body of Christ is an

ongoing one, both in the individual lives of the believers, and in the entire Body as new believers are saved while others fall asleep in the Lord.

Ephesians 4:11 mentions five specific ministries in the Church that are especially given by the Lord Jesus to prepare and equip Christians for service to God. Scripture does not refer to these ministries collectively by a particular name, so different Christian groups have referred to them in different ways. Some call these five ministries (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers) “gift ministries,” but that is misleading because each Christian has a gift ministry, that is, a ministry he or she is to carry out in the Body of Christ. “Ministry” simply means “service,” and every Christian has been specifically enabled and empowered to serve. These five ministries have also been called “ascension gift ministries,” but again, after his ascension Jesus gave each Christian a ministry (Eph. 4:8). The Word of God says that the purpose for these five ministries is “for the equipping” of the believers (Eph. 4:12; NASB), and many other versions recognize that “equip” or “equipping” is an excellent translation in this verse. It is good practice for Christians to use the vocabulary of the Bible whenever possible to describe spiritual realities, and thus a good way to refer to the five ministries in Ephesians 4:11 is to call them, “equipping ministries.”

4:14. “trickery.” The Greek is *kubeia* (#2940 κυβεία). Literally it means “dice playing,” but because the people who played dice often cheated, just as they do today, the word became used for the deceptions brought about by men, or trickery.

4:17. “implore.” This verb, *martureo* (#3140 μαρτυρέω), almost always means “to testify, bear witness,” however, here it has the meaning of “urging or insisting upon something” (BDAG).

4:24. “true righteousness and holiness.” Figure of speech, *Antimeria* (cp. Bullinger, *Figures*). The Greek uses the phrase “holiness of truth,” using true as a noun instead of an adjective to put the emphasis on “true.” We have been born again and taken on the divine nature of God (2 Pet. 1:4). We literally are “new” and now have to put that new man on, which we do by living by the spirit. Because we have been created in TRUE righteousness and holiness, we now must speak truth (v. 25), and live righteously and holy lives, and the next verses direct us in holy living.

4:25. Quoted from Zech. 8:16.

4:26. “angry.” *Orge* is more of a long term, burning anger often associated with revenge, while *thumos* (another Greek word often translated “anger”) is the “boiling agitation of the feelings.” *Thumos* is more passionate but temporary compared with *orge* (Trench, *Synonyms*).

4:29. “Let no corrupting talk proceed out of your mouth.” The verb, “let proceed,” is imperative present, and ties this phrase into the one that begins verse 30, “grieve” which is also imperative present. Verses 29-32 are closely tied together, having a lot to do with communication. We are not to let proceed any corrupting communication come from our mouths, as this would grieve God, the Holy Spirit. Instead, we are to put away those things that are the source (root) of corrupt communication, bitterness, anger, wrath, etc.

“corrupting.” The Greek is *sapros* (#4550 σαπρός), and it means to be rotten or putrefied, like rotten fruit. In this context it means “unwholesome to the extent of being harmful, bad, evil, unwholesome,” (BDAG).

4:30. “grieve.” How do we grieve God? The context tells us. We allow bitterness, anger, wrath, to live in us (verse 32), and these produce the fruit of communication that corrupts (verse 29).

“the Holy Spirit of God.” This refers to God. The Greek reads, “the Spirit the Holy of God.” This is the genitive of apposition, and could be translated “the Holy Spirit, namely, God.” It was “the Spirit of God” that hovered over the waters in Genesis 1:2 for example. But why refer to God as “the Holy Spirit” in this verse? The context is the key. We have been created in true holiness (v. 24), and God wants us to reflect His holy nature. When we do not take advantage of the holy nature which has been created in us and live in an unholy manner, we grieve the “Holy” Spirit, namely God.

5:2. “gave himself for us.” Much more strongly supported than “gave himself up for you.” (Metzger, *Textual Commentary*)

“sweet-smelling fragrance” is literally a genitive, “fragrance of a sweet smell,” but this may be an instance of an adjectival genitive, see Lenski.

5:16. “making the best use of.” The Greek is *exagorazo* (#1805 ἐξαγοράζω), and it means, 1) to redeem by payment of a price to recover from the power of another, to ransom, buy off; 2) metaphorically, of Christ freeing the elect from the dominion of the Mosaic Law at the price of his vicarious death 3) to buy up, to buy up for one’s self, for one’s use 4) to make wise and sacred use of every opportunity for doing good. Thus definition 4 fits here and in Colossians 4:5, the concept is that God asks us to “buy back” the time we have from day to day and use it for His purposes.

5:21. “Submit.” Robertson says, “The construction here is rather loose, coordinate with the preceding participles of praise and prayer. It is possible to start a new paragraph here and regard *hupotassomenoi* as an independent participle like an imperative.”

5:31. Quoted from Gen. 2:24, occurs again in Matthew 19:5 and Mark 10:7.

“be glued to.” The Greek word is *proskollao* (#4347 προσκολλάω), and Thayer’s Lexicon says, “properly, *to glue, glue to, glue together, cement, fasten together*; hence universally, *to join or fasten firmly together*; in the N. T. only the passive is found....”

5:27. “without blemish.” See note on Ephesians 1:4.

6:2, 3. Quoted from Deut. 5:16.

6:5. “sincerity.” The Greek is *haplotes* (#572 ἀπλότης), and BDAG says, “In our lit. esp. of personal integrity expressed in word or action...simplicity, sincerity, uprightness, frankness... Of simple goodness, which gives itself without reserve, ‘without strings attached’, ‘without hidden agendas.’”

6:6. “to win their approval when their eye is on you.” The Greek is *ophthalmodouleia* (#3787 ὀφθαλμοδουλεία), which is “service that is performed only to make an impression in the owner’s presence” (BDAG). Occasionally it happens that the only way to make a Greek word clear is by translating it as a phrase, and that is the case here. The word “eye-service” does not communicate the meaning of the Greek.

6:10. “be empowerd.” The Greek verb is *endunamoo* (#1743 ἐνδυναμώω), and it is a imperative present 2nd person plural. The voice of the verb can be either passive or middle, but the passive voice fits better here. Donald Hagner correctly notes, “The power does not come from the believer, but from an external source,” which would be God or the Lord Jesus (Hagner, *Ephesians*, p. 820). The believer is commanded to do what it takes to be filled with the power of God.

“that is.” The Greek word *kai* can be conjunctive, as “and,” or it can be “and in addition,” as “also,” or it can be explanatory as “even.” In this case, a more literal, but less easily understood way to translate the phrase would be, “be strong in the Lord, even in his mighty strength.” The *kai* here is not conjunctive or “in addition” as if being strong in the Lord and in his strength were two separate things. We are to be strong in the Lord, by being strong in his mighty strength.

“in the might of his strength.” This is an attributed genitive: “mighty strength.” It could also be genitive of origin: “might that originates from his strength”; or genitive of production: “might produced by his strength.” To allow for multiple understandings we left the “of” formulation intact in the translation, rather than translate the genitive to its primary meaning. The Greek reads, “in the might [*kratos*] of his strength [*ischus*].” This one verse places an amazing amount of emphasis on the power that we have in Christ, and the power that we need if we are going to stand for God throughout our lives. This verse contains the word “power” (*dunamis*), which refers to inherent power or ability. It also has “might” (*kratos*), the ability to express or exhibit resident strength, (usually spoken of as the resident strength of a nation, for example); and also the exercising of that strength. Thus we speak of “mighty nations” as those that have a lot of strength they can bring to bear on a situation militarily, economically, or politically. It also has “strength” (*ischus*), which is translated well as “strength.” It is the capability or capacity to exert force or power.

6:12. “wrestle.” The Greek is *pale* (#3823 πάλη), The primary meaning of the Greek word is “to wrestle.” The word “wrestle” is a very good translation, even in this context of a soldier’s armor. While it is true that over time the usage of *pale* broadened to include various struggles, which is why quite a few versions say “struggle” instead of “wrestle,” *pale* always retained its undertone of the wrestling contest. Furthermore, hand-to-hand combat was common enough among professional soldiers that being a good wrestler helped a lot on the battlefield (cp. Harold Hoehner, *Ephesians*; Baker Academic, Grand Rapids, MI, 2002, p. 825).

6:14. “having belted around your waist with truth” is the way the text reads literally. This can be an awkward sentence, so a couple versions have, “having fastened the belt of truth around your waist.” The force of the aorist participle, “having fastened,” is important. It could be less literally translated, stand...after you have belted around your waist with truth. Also, “having belted” is in the middle voice, as is “having put on” of the breastplate and the shoes, emphasizing the fact that we have to put these things on. They are not “automatic armor” that comes with the New Birth.

“breastplate of righteousness.” The Roman soldier wore a breastplate that covered his vital organs. The Christian is to put on the breastplate of righteousness. To fully understand the breastplate of righteousness, we must remember that “righteousness” has two meanings in the Administration of Grace in which we live (John Schoenheit, *Righteousness—Every Christian’s Gift From God*, Christian Educational Services, 2002). Righteousness is the God-given righteousness, or right standing, that we have before God because Jesus died for our sins, and it is also the right standing we have before God because of right living before God. When Romans 5:17 mentions the free gift of righteousness that Christians have, that is our righteousness due to the work of Christ. When 1 Timothy 6:11 instructs us to follow after righteousness, or 2 Timothy 3:16 says that the Bible provides instruction in righteousness, that is “right living” before God.

The “breastplate of righteousness” in Ephesians 6:14 includes both meanings. First, no matter how hard we try to live obediently before God, we will sin. If we do not understand that our sins are forgiven, and that due to the work of Christ we stand righteous before God, the weight of that sin on our conscience can be unbearable. Many people have been made ineffective in their lives and ministries, and some have abandoned the Christian faith altogether, due to the guilt that they feel from not being able to obey God. They have not put on the breastplate of righteousness, and guilt and shame have penetrated their vital organs. The knowledgeable Christian is aware that his sins are forgiven in Christ, and does not hold on to the guilt produced by his mistakes. Freed from that weight, he can stand effectively for the Lord.

The breastplate of righteousness is also the breastplate of our righteous life. Living righteously before God protects the Christian in many ways. There is physical protection, such as from the ravages of alcohol, drugs, sexually transmitted disease, and so forth. Also, the mind is protected from the consequences of willful sin, such as shame and guilt. The Bible says that those who practice sin become slaves to sin, and that is true. The savvy Christian puts on the breastplate of righteousness by living righteously from day to day so he can readily stand against the wiles of the Devil.

6:15. In this case, the footwear of God is the readiness, or preparation, one has for the evil day that is given by the Good News of peace. The reference to the gospel of peace in this context is not referring to evangelism, that is not the context here. Rather it is referring to the peace that Christians must have in their mind and heart to stand firm day after day under the onslaughts of the Adversary. The Christian who has not prepared himself to be peaceful will have a difficult life, for every day brings new challenges to worry about. In contrast, people who love the Law of God and follow it have great peace, and can stand in the battle of life.

6:16. “the shield of faith.” The “shield of faith” is a genitive of apposition, and means, “the shield, that is to say, our faith.” In other words, the shield is our faith. “Faith,” which is “trust” in God, does not keep the blows of the Adversary from coming, and having a shield does not mean we will not feel the blows. But our trust in God keeps us from being “killed” by the Adversary; we withstand attack after attack with our love for God and commitment to Him intact.

“arrows.” The Greek word is generic, and can refer to any thrown projectile such as an arrow or spear. However, since it was the arrows that were generally set on fire, “fiery arrows” makes more sense from a customs point of view. Today’s dart would not generally be of much danger.

6:17. The “helmet of salvation” of Ephesians 6:17 is more accurately called the helmet of “the hope of salvation” in 1 Thessalonians 5:8. The word “salvation” is used in its general sense in this verse, and is not restricted to only Christian salvation to everlasting life, although that is included. Neither the world nor the Christian are saved at this time. The Bible refers to us as “saved,” and we refer to ourselves that way, due to an idiom in the original languages of the Bible known as the “prophetic perfect” (see note on “seated,” in Ephesians 2:6). The essence of the prophetic perfect idiom is that if something is absolutely guaranteed to happen in the future, it is often spoken of as if it had already occurred. Because our salvation is guaranteed, we speak as if we have it now, and the salvation of the world from its present distress is guaranteed also.

The entire creation is in bondage and is groaning in pain (Rom. 8:21, 22), and Christians are groaning in pain also (Rom. 8:23) and everything in creation needs to be “saved,” “rescued” from the power of sin. Nothing any of us can do will change that now, but God will rescue His creation in the future. The Lord Jesus will descend from heaven and conquer the earth, and the earth will once again become a paradise. God promises that in the future we will live on a beautiful earth in new, energetic, bodies, and our lives will be free of sickness, hunger, war, and injustice. God has given us that wonderful Hope for the future, and it can sustain us through our lives, especially in hard times. No matter how difficult our lives get on earth, our hope for a wonderful future shines through the darkness and points to better things to come. Because of this the Bible refers to the Hope as “the anchor of our soul” (Heb. 6:19). As the anchor of our soul, it is fitting that our hope of salvation for ourselves and creation is referred to as our helmet. Life can be so difficult and discouraging that it is hard to think straight. Each year vast numbers of people get caught up in the difficulties of life and make unwise decisions. Many people completely lose sight of any value or purpose in their life and commit suicide. The hope of salvation says, “Hang in there, your troubles will not last long, and then things will be better.” The hope of salvation helps protect our minds, and helps keep us calm and rational in troubled times, allowing us to keep standing for God. When properly understood, the hope of salvation is a very effective helmet, protecting the thoughts of the Christian and helping him to stand for the Lord year after year.

“the sword of the spirit.” The sword of the Spirit is the Word of God, and is the only offensive weapon the believer has as he wrestles with evil. It is important to remember that the sword is the “sword of the Spirit.” The genitive in this verse is probably the figure of speech *Amphibologia*, encompassing two meanings at once. Thus the genitive has both the force of a genitive of possession, i.e., that it is ‘the Spirit’s sword’ not our sword, and also the force of a genitive of origin, “the sword given to us by the Spirit,” to use in our earthly lives.

In the Greek text, the verb telling us to take the helmet and sword is in the imperative mood. That means that God is not just stating that we should take these pieces of armor, or asking us if we would like to, He is commanding us to take them and put them on. If we do not put on the helmet and take up and use the sword, we are in effect telling God that we are quite content to not enter into His service in our fullest capacity. One important reason why God would command us to take the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, is that if we do not really understand it, we can unknowing be used by the Devil against the purposes of God to hurt other people. That has happened many times in history. The Christians that tortured other Christians during the Inquisition, for example, thought they were doing Christ’s work. Although that is an extreme example, the same kind of thing, people working against God when they think they are working for him, happens on a much smaller scale every day. Christians are called to stand for God, and the sword of the spirit is an essential part of our armor if we are going to be successful at doing that throughout our lifetime.