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PAUL'S PREACHING IN THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS
AND ITS HOMILETICAL IMPLICATIONS

A Dissertation
Presented to
the Faculty of
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirement for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

by
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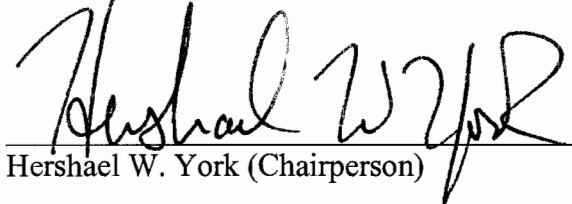
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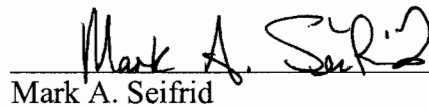
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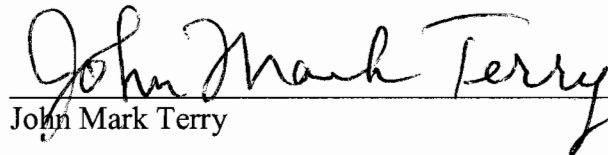
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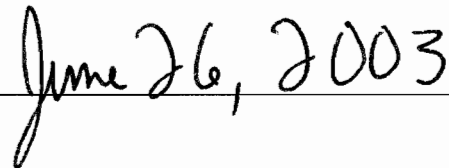
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In memory of my lovely mother, Il-Sun Kwak,
and for my honorable father, Yong-Bok Ryoo,
who showed me the love of Jesus on the earth
and for my precious brothers, Boo-Yul and Hoon-Yul,
who are my joyful songs

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PREFACE

מִי־לִי בְּשָׁמַיִם וְעַמּוּד לֹא־חֲפָצְתִי בָּאָרֶץ:
כָּל־הָ שְׂאֵרֵי וְלִבִּי צוּר־לִבִּי וְחֶלְקִי אֱלֹהִים לְעוֹלָם:

It is a pleasure to acknowledge my debt of gratitude to the many individuals who have provided love and encouragement throughout the journey of my Christian life and the process of my dissertation. First and foremost I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my honorable parents, Yong-Bok Ryoo and Il-Sun Kwak, who sacrificed their entire lives for their son. Our precious God called my lovely mother into His kingdom during my study abroad. My mother's sudden death made me feel like it was the end of the world, but our faithful Lord taught me to praise Him for His goodness in all circumstances. The memory of my mother has been a constant source of my strength. The dearest expressions of gratitude belong to my two younger brothers, Boo-Yul and Hoon-Yul, who always trusted and supported me more than seemed possible. Without their incessant love and sacrifice, the completion of my study could not have been possible.

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Very special sisters and brothers should be mentioned for their contribution to this dissertation and my life. My deep love and gratitude go to Miss Yong-Hee Choi for her unchanging love and prayer, Mr. James E. Stoudamire for his unlimited love of God,

Mr. Jin-Hong Kim, my spiritual fruit and joy in Christ, and Miss Hyun-Joo Kim for her earnest prayer. Brothers Han Chae, Jonathan Beeson, Kar-Yong Lim, and Michael Ayayo enriched my life with their academic insight and unfathomable friendship.

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I wish and pray that my dissertation will be a little spark that ignites a renewed passion for biblical expository preaching in Korea and all around the world. My life thus far has been a symbol of grace; as I have physically lived longer than my Lord Jesus on this earth, my life henceforth is grace upon grace. “My precious Lord Jesus! You alone are my eternal love and my everlasting meaning in this world.”

David Eung-Yul Ryoo

Louisville, Kentucky

June 2003

LIST OF ABBREVIATION

<i>AusBR</i>	<i>Australian Biblical Review</i>
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
<i>CTJ</i>	<i>Calvin Theological Journal</i>
<i>EQ</i>	<i>Evangelical Quarterly</i>
<i>Exp</i>	<i>Expositor</i>
<i>ExpTim</i>	<i>Expository Times</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
<i>NIDNTT</i>	<i>The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology</i>
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
<i>RevExp</i>	<i>Review and Expositor</i>
<i>ST</i>	<i>Studia Theologica</i>
<i>TDNT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i>
<i>TJ</i>	<i>Trinity Journal</i>
<i>TynBul</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
<i>WTJ</i>	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

New Homiletic for the Last Thirty Years

No generation has shown greater interest in the homiletical enterprise than this one. New homiletical theorists of this period contend that conventional preaching styles are neither attractive nor effective for contemporary congregations. Rather than employing traditional attempts to appeal to listeners with the cognitive and propositional ideas of the biblical text, these scholars have focused on the listener's experience and participation in preaching as they draw their own conclusions from the sermon.

Even though one specific definition cannot convey the whole picture of this new paradigm, these movements are called the "New Homiletic."¹ Robert Reid calls this new movement the "paradigm shift" in preaching. He notes, "It represents a radical shift away from the rationalistic and propositional logic of argumentation as the basis of sermon invention and arrangement."² Reid indicates that the New Homiletic shares two features: first, a common conviction that the old rationalist paradigm is no longer

¹The term "New Homiletic" was used by Richard Eslinger in *A New Hearing* to describe the work of recent homileticians who represent a move away from the rationalistic presuppositions that gave rise to the propositional model of preaching. Richard L. Eslinger, *A New Hearing: Living Options in Homiletical Method* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1987), 13-14.

²Robert Stephen Reid, "Postmodernism and the Function of the New Homiletic in Post-Christendom Congregations," *Homiletics* 20 (1995): 7.

effective in preaching; and second, a commitment to the creation of an affective experience for the listener of a sermon.³ In his analysis of the hermeneutical concepts of the New Homiletic, Mark Howell indicates three characteristics of this paradigm: first, the New Homiletic rejects propositional and discursive preaching in favor of a new “non-propositional” approach to the pulpit; second, the New Homiletic prioritizes the creation of an experience for the listener as one of its central tenets; and third, the New Homiletic emphasizes the narrative quality of the Bible as its central theme.⁴ The hermeneutical consensus of the New Homiletic asserts that the traditional propositional approach to sermons was not effective because it failed to create an experience for listeners and to revive the narrative quality of the Bible.

New homiletical theorists have attempted diverse approaches to reaching modern congregations. Wellford Hobbie indicates three major characteristics of the New Homiletic which have replaced conventional preaching: first, an inductive approach to preaching; second, the narrative or story form; and third, a method based on the movement and structure of the biblical text.⁵ Three leading contemporary homileticians represent these movements: first, the inductive approach to preaching was advocated and developed by Fred Craddock; second, narrative preaching by homiletical plot was suggested by Eugene Lowry; and finally, sermonic shape within the structure and

³Ibid., 7.

⁴Mark A. Howell, “Hermeneutical Bridges and Homiletical Methods: A Comparative Analysis of the New Homiletic and Expository Preaching Theory 1970-1995” (Ph.D. diss., The Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1999), 81-99.

⁵F. Wellford Hobbie, “The Play Is the Thing: New Forms for the Sermon,” *Journal for Preachers* 5 (1982): 17-23.

movement of the sermon was pursued by David Buttrick, whose approach is called the phenomenological method.

We will now explore these three major figures of the New Homiletic to grasp its understanding of Christian preaching.⁶ With the publication of *As One without Authority* in 1971, Fred Craddock established the agenda for the New Homiletic.⁷ In this book Craddock challenges the traditional shape of the sermon by criticizing its cognitive

⁶Besides these three New Homiletic theorists, several persons and works need to be mentioned. For example, Charles Rice's homiletics of storytelling in *Interpretation and Imagination: The Preacher and Contemporary Literature* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970); Edmund Steimle, Morris Niedenthal, and Charles Rice, *Preaching the Story* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981); Henry H. Mitchell's transconscious sermon focusing on celebration in preaching, *Black Preaching: The Recovery of Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1970), *The Recovery of Preaching* (San Francisco: Harper and Row Publishers, 1977), and *Celebration and Experience in Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990); Richard Jensen, *Telling the Story: Variety and Imagination of Preaching* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing, 1980); the narrative homiletics of Richard L. Eslinger, *Narrative and Imagination: Preaching the Words that Shape Us* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1995); Lucy Atkinson Rose, *Sharing the Word: Preaching in the Roundtable Church* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1997). Also, many articles in *Intersections: Post-Critical Studies in Preaching*, ed. Richard L. Eslinger (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994) introduce various aspects of the New Homiletic.

⁷Fred B. Craddock, *As One without Authority* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971). Craddock revised this book adding new sermons in 2001 with Chalice Press. The present writer will take his 1971 edition as its text. Eugene Lowry argues that the "revolution" in sermonic shape began with this book: "When Fred Craddock's work *As One without Authority* was published in 1971, a new era in North American homiletics was born. Certainly it was not that he dropped a brand new bombshell on the homiletical world; rather it was that by means of a masterfully executed *gestalt*, he gave birth to a new mentality, beginning what Richard Eslinger has called 'the Copernican Revolution in homiletics'" ("The Revolution of Sermonic Shape," in *Listening to the Word: Studies in Honor of Fred B. Craddock*, ed. Gail R. O'Day and Thomas G. Long [Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993], 93). Even though Lowry described Craddock's proposal as "revolutionary," Craddock was not the first one who challenged the traditional style of the sermon. His book was preceded by at least two books: H. Grady Davis, *Design for Preaching* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1958) and David Randolph, *The Renewal of Preaching* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969). However, it was Craddock's work which popularized the New Homiletic.

and propositional nature which derives from a deductive and authoritarian preaching concept. As an alternative to a propositional understanding of preaching, Craddock develops an inductive method, which emphasizes the experience of the listener. Craddock contends that since “everyone lives inductively, not deductively,” preachers should discard the authority of Scripture and give more emphasis to the role of the listener in the sermon.⁸ According to Craddock, the goal of preaching is not to present propositional truths but to lead the listener to have the same experience of the gospel as the preacher and to allow the listener to draw his or her own conclusion to the sermon. Therefore, “the inductively moving sermon is more descriptive than hortatory, more marked by the affirmative than the imperative.”⁹

Eugene Lowry developed Craddock’s homiletical method further. In *The Homiletical Plot* Lowry maintains that the traditional sermon is based on the common assumption that sermonic organization evolves out of the logic of content, which is characterized by a theme or topic. Having identified this theme, the preacher logically organizes it into propositional points.¹⁰ He argues that the sermon should be seen as a

⁸Craddock, *As One without Authority*, 60. He argues on the inductive nature of life, “No farmer deals with the problem of calthood, only with the calf. The woman in the kitchen is not occupied with the culinary arts in general but with a particular roast or cake. The wood craftsman is hardly able to discuss intelligently the topic of ‘chairness,’ but he is a master with a chair. . . . The minister says ‘all men are mortal’ and meets drowsy agreement; he announces that ‘Mr. Brown’s son is dying’ and the church becomes the church” (ibid.).

⁹Ibid., 57.

¹⁰Eugene L. Lowry, *The Homiletical Plot: The Sermon as Narrative Art Form* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1980). Lowry republished this book as an expanded edition in 2001. His new edition does not show any change in primary content but added an “afterword” and Craddock’s new “foreword.” This dissertation will take his 1980 edition

“narrative art form” or “story,” therefore every sermon should take the form of its narrative homiletical plot.¹¹ Rather than presenting insights derived from a biblical text in a logical outline, Lowry suggests the use of an evolving narrative form, which has a beginning and an end based upon the development of a plot. He states, “Plot! This is the key term for a reshaped image of the sermon. Preaching is storytelling. A sermon is a narrative art form.”¹² According to Lowry, the homiletical bind in the beginning and the resolution at the end are interrelated by predictable stages in its development.¹³

Like Craddock and Lowry, Buttrick begins with a criticism of the conventional preaching of the pulpit which does not attract modern listeners. He contends in *Homiletic: Moves and Structures* that the old, traditional homiletic built on “three points and a poem” is dead.¹⁴ Traditional preaching is a rationalistic, linear approach that

as its text. Lowry argues in another book that the purpose of preaching is not the communication of propositional truths or ideas, but rather the creation of an experience of the listener. See *Doing Time in the Pulpit: The Relationship Between Narrative and Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1985), 11-28.

¹¹Lowry, *Homiletical Plot*, 16; idem, *How to Preach a Parable: Designs for Narrative Sermon* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989), 25.

¹²Lowry, *Homiletical Plot*, 12

¹³Lowry believes that the homiletical plot can enable the discrepancies of our world to interact with the world of the Bible. The key ingredient of a plot is ambiguity, which creates the tension in any sermon. In its presentation, the sermon always begins with the itch and moves to the scratch—from the human predicament to the solution born of the gospel. In *The Homiletical Plot* (28-87) he presents the sermon as a homiletical plot which consists of five basic sequential stages: (1) upsetting the equilibrium—Oops, (2) analyzing the discrepancy—Ugh, (3) the clue to resolution—Aha, (4) experiencing the gospel—Whee, and (5) anticipating the consequences—Yeah. In another work, Lowry explains this sequence: since every sermon is “an event-in-time,” it moves from the opening disequilibrium through the escalation of conflict to a surprising reversal to the closing denouement (*How to Preach a Parable*, 25).

¹⁴David Buttrick, *Homiletic: Moves and Structures* (Philadelphia: Fortress

engages only a person's intellect. Even "biblical preaching" has given us "a past-tense God of past-tense God-events whole past-tense truth ('original meaning') may be *applied* to the world, while God remains hidden within a gilt-edged book."¹⁵ Buttrick asserts that Christian preaching must dare to name God in conjunction with the world of lived experience. The key to preaching for Buttrick is to ascertain how to structure the movement of the sermon's language so that certain patterns of understanding form in the consciousness of the hearers.¹⁶ His approach is called the "phenomenological method," and analyzes how sermons occur in the consciousness of the listeners.

Evaluation of the New Hermeneutic

New homiletical theorists agree that a traditional preaching style is no longer applicable to modern listeners because it is propositional, cognitive and fails to attract their interest. Instead of the conventional sermon form, they advocate narrative, story-telling preaching and emphasize the experience of the listener.¹⁷ The New Homiletic has

Press, 1987). McKim evaluates: "This is the most significant book of the 20th century of the theory of homiletics. . . . [It is] a study of the composition of sermons that is unrivaled in our time for its sophistication and comprehensiveness" (Donald McKim, "Terror and Gladness," review of *Homiletic: Moves and Structures*, by David G. Buttrick, in *Reformed Journal* 38 [1988]: 18).

¹⁵Buttrick, *Homiletic*, 18.

¹⁶"Consciousness" is an important word for a proper understanding of Buttrick's homiletical idea. David M. Greenhaw indicates that by consciousness, Buttrick "does not mean a mental awareness, as in 'I am now conscious of the pain in my foot. . . . Rather Buttrick seeks to understand preaching phenomenologically, the way in which reality is formed by the phenomenon of lived experience.'" David M. Greenhaw's "The Formation of Consciousness," in *Preaching as a Theological Task: World, Gospel, Scripture*, ed. Thomas G. Long and Edward Farley (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1996), 6.

¹⁷Thompson also makes a similar observation about the features of the New

contributed to the development of effective preaching in some respects. Thompson indicates four of its contributions: first, the New Homileticians have reminded us of the primary place of narrative as a mode of revelation; second, the New Homiletic has pointed out the value of movement and anticipation as mediums for our own communication; third, the new homileticians have convinced us that form actually shapes the listener's faith and that the Bible is a source not only for what we preach, but also for how we preach; finally, the New Homiletic ensures that preaching is rooted in scripture with its insistence on the experience of the text.¹⁸

In addition, one more influence can be mentioned. The New Homiletic repeatedly emphasizes the place of the listener in preaching. The preacher should understand the tension between the two worlds: the world of the Bible and the world of his congregation. As long as considering the place of the listener does not sacrifice the meaning of the biblical text, preachers should keep them in mind in the preparation and delivery of the sermon. However, despite its merits, the New Homiletic has fundamental weaknesses and can even threaten the proper form of Christian preaching.

Neglect of the Authority of Scripture and Authorial Intent

Deep in the hermeneutic of the New Homiletic lies a rejection of biblical

Homiletic: first, they emphasize a high attention to the listener. This means that the focus in sermon has moved from the ideas to be communicated to the experience of the hearers. Second, the New Homiletic argues that the new focus is a rediscovery of narrative as the primary mode of biblical revelation. Rather than pursue propositional truths in narrative, New Homileticians acknowledge that revelation occurs within the narrative itself. James W. Thompson, *Preaching Like Paul: Homiletical Wisdom for Today* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 6-7.

¹⁸Ibid., 8.

authority and authorial intent. It was Buttrick who most severely attacked the traditional pursuit of the authority of Scripture.¹⁹ Rather than paying attention to biblical authority or original meaning, Buttrick contends that preachers should be liberated from their pursuit of fixed Bible truth. For Buttrick authority lies in the theological preunderstanding and methodology of the preacher rather than in the text or authorial intent. Meaning is not to be found in biblical texts, but it is to be formed in congregational consciousness during the preaching event. He notes, “Preaching is the Word of God because it functions with God’s liberating purpose and *not* necessarily because it is per se biblical.”²⁰ Therefore, the focus of preaching does not lie in the perennial truth of the biblical text, but in the preaching event.²¹

Buttrick makes a distinction between the Bible and the Word of God when he maintains that the Bible *is* not the Word of God but it *becomes* the Word of God. He notes,

¹⁹Following Bultmann’s hermeneutical methodology, Buttrick argues that demythologizing *is* part of every preacher’s stock in trade. He states: “where is authority? Is authority in texts, in interpretation, in methodology, or in some sort of theological pre-understanding on the part of scholars? To have firm consensus would we not have to have agreement on theological pre-understanding and methodology?” (*Homiletic*, 241-42). His homiletical concept derives from his perspective of the Bible. According to Buttrick, the Bible cannot be accepted as the Word of God. He argues, “The Bible offers meaning—not in every little passage; some Bible passages may be largely irrelevant or even sub-Christian—the Bible offers meaning by handing out a story with a beginning and an end, and in between, a narrative understanding of how God may interface with our sinful humanity” (*A Captive Voice: The Liberation of Preaching* [Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994], 17).

²⁰Buttrick, *A Captive Voice*, 31

²¹Lowry also contends that every sermon is an “event-in-time” rather than a proclamation of the truth of the Word of God. He states that “a sermon is not a logical assemblage; a sermon is an event-in-time which follows the logic born of the communication interaction between preacher and congregation” (*Homiletical Plot*, 8). The present writer does not believe that preaching is an event but it is a faithful proclamation of the Word of God.

“The Bible *can be* God’s Word because it can speak redemptively. Otherwise, the Bible is no more than a distinguished literary compendium. When God speaks, the Word of God is freedom.”²² He even contends that “it is possible to preach the Word of God without so much as mentioning scripture.”²³

Craddock’s approach of inductive preaching also begins with his conviction that the preacher can no longer “presuppose the general recognition of his authority as a clergyman, or the authority of his institution, or the authority of Scripture.”²⁴ Instead of asserting the authority of biblical texts or explaining their intended meaning, Craddock asserts that the preacher should allow the audience to draw their own conclusion from the sermon. His starting point in preaching is not the gospel but rather the experience of the listener. To foster the active participation of listeners, the inductive method should be employed because it is less authoritarian and moves from the particulars of human experience to the gospel. According to Craddock, authority does not lie in Scripture but in the listener of a sermon who will creatively infer the meaning and application of the biblical text.

Can Christian preaching be possible without upholding the authority of Scripture as the inspired Word of God? Can Christian preaching be possible when it ignores the author’s intended meaning? The conviction of this writer answers “no.” It will

²²Buttrick, *Captive Voice*, 31

²³As a concluding remark in *Homiletic*, Buttrick asserts that “we must not say that preaching from scripture is requisite for sermons to be the Word of God. An authority model descending from God to Christ to scripture to sermon could lead to a terrifying arrogance that not only contradicts gospel but destroys preaching” (458).

²⁴Craddock, *As One without Authority*, 14.

be helpful to distinguish New Homiletic theory from expository preaching. Expository preaching starts with a recognition of the authority of Scripture. Without admitting biblical authority, Christian preachers have no ground to preach and no reason to rely on the Bible because “the authority behind preaching resides not in the preacher but in the biblical text.”²⁵ New Homileticians sacrifice the authority of preaching when they abandon the authority of Scripture. David Greenhaw rejects Craddock’s inductive approach when he contends that the gospel cannot be proclaimed without authority. He argues:

It is necessary to articulate claims on our lives boldly and announce what is new because of what God is doing. To do this, the preacher must move beyond the opacity of the particular to the clarity of the universal. It will not do to speak only of particulars, of what is true for me or true for this periscope. To preach, one must speak to transcend a particular setting. Until some universal is approached, the gospel may be an interesting story or an enlightening account of some piece of history, but it lacks the power to transform. Before gospel truth can transform human beings, the particularity of the gospel in one setting must be transferred through a universal to a new particularity. . . . If one is to preach, one has to have something to say and has to say it boldly.²⁶

Christian preachers should deal with the issue of truth seriously. The pursuit of the truth of the biblical text through authorial intent, however, is disappearing in New Homiletical circles. Larsen argues that New Homileticians try to find truth *from* the biblical text, but they do not pursue the truth *of* the biblical text. He indicates, “The quest for eternal truth seems to have vaporized in our times. Interest in truth about the text or

²⁵Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development of Delivery of Expository Messages* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980; reprint, 2001), 24. He goes on to state, “For that reason the expositor deals largely with an explanation of Scripture, so that he focuses the listener’s attention on the Bible.”

²⁶David M. Greenhaw, “As One *with* Authority: Rehabilitating Concepts for Preaching,” in *Intersections: Post-Critical Studies in Preaching*, ed. Richard L. Eslinger (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 105-06.

truth from the text might yet survive in some circles, but what about the truth of the text?”²⁷

Expository preachers should not preach their own ideas from the biblical text to solve life issues, but they should subject themselves to the author’s intended meaning in the text. Authorial intent must be the ground for both the exposition and application of preachers. Hershael York correctly asserts: “We are never welcome to preach a meaning from a text other than the one the author had or that was shown elsewhere in Scripture that referred to that text. We limit ourselves to authorial intent because we believe that words have real meaning.”²⁸ When the New Homiletic ignores the authority of Scripture

²⁷David Larsen, *Telling the Old, Old Story: The Art of Narrative Preaching* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1995), 78.

²⁸Hershael W. York and Bert Decker, *Preaching with Bold Assurance: A Solid and Enduring Approach to Engaging Exposition* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2003), 28. York further states that “every passage in the Bible had an intended meaning when the author wrote it, and that meaning has not changed. Its applicability or the way it works out in life may have changed, but its meaning is the same as the day it was written” (30). For a hermeneutic of an author’s intended meaning, see E. D. Hirsch, Jr., *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967); *The Aims of Interpretation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976). Hirsch attempts to solve the tension between an original authorial meaning and its changeable significance to the modern readers by emphasizing the distinction between “meaning” and “significance”: “Meaning is that which is represented by a text; it is what the author meant by his use of a particular sign sequence; it is what the signs represent. Significance, on the other hand, names a relationship between that meaning and a person, or a conception, or a situation, or indeed anything imaginable” (*Validity in Interpretation*, 8); Walter C. Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology: Biblical Exegesis for Preaching and Teaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981), 24-34; idem, “The Single Intent of Scripture,” in *The Right Doctrine from the Wrong Text?*, ed. G. K. Beale (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 555-69; Robert H. Stein, *A Basic Guide to Interpreting the Bible: Playing by the Rules* (Grand Rapids, 1994), 17-58; idem, “The Benefits of an Author-Oriented Approach to Hermeneutics,” *JETS* 44 (2001): 451-66; Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text?: The Bible, the Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998). All these scholars vindicate the author’s intended meaning in biblical interpretation on the basis of Hirsch’s “meaning-significance” of literary

and denies the intended meaning of the biblical text, it cannot be a legitimate means to revive Christian preaching for contemporary congregations.

Emphasis on the Experience and Role of the Listener

Another distinct characteristic of the New Homiletic is its emphasis on the experience and role of the listener. The New Homiletical theorists have replaced the traditional emphasis on reason with the experience of the listener. Reid, Bullock, and Fleer observe, “This privileging of the individual’s experience of narrative and imagination over rational argument is conceptually the essence of what we believe is the emerging paradigm shift in homiletic theory.”²⁹ The influence of the listener on the homiletical methodologies of Fred Craddock and Eugene Lowry is evident. Craddock contends that inductive preaching must begin with human experience rather than the biblical text. He rejects the traditional authoritarian movement of deduction in favor of the experiential movement of induction.³⁰ Craddock repeatedly emphasizes the experiential purpose of preaching. He contends that the sermon must begin and end with

hermeneutic for author’s intention. Stein’s model is similar to Hirsch’s distinction except that he divided Hirsch’s “meaning” into “meaning” and “implications”: “Meaning: The meaning of a text is that pattern of meaning the author willed to convey by the words (sharable symbols) he used. . . . Implications: Implications are those meanings in a text of which the author was unaware but nevertheless legitimately fall within the pattern of meaning he willed. . . . Significance: Significance refers to how a reader responds to the meaning of a text” (*Basic Guide to Interpreting the Bible*, 38-43). Stein explains that “implications flow out of the paradigm of the author’s meaning. As a result, we as readers do not create them but discover them” (“Benefits of an Author-Oriented Approach to Hermeneutics,” 460).

²⁹Robert Reid, Jeffrey Bullock, and David Fleer, “Preaching As the Creation of an Experience: The Not-So-Rational Revolution of the New Homiletic,” *The Journal of Communication and Religion* 18 (1995): 7.

³⁰Craddock, *As One without Authority*, 54-55.

human experience:

Because the particulars of life provide the place of beginning, there is the necessity of a ground of shared experience. . . . these common experiences, provided they are meaningful in nature and are reflected upon with insight and judgment, are for the inductive method essential to the preaching experience.”³¹

The primary resource of the inductive approach is indirect sermon. Craddock elaborates the need to deliver the gospel in such a way that listeners “overhear” the message of the sermon. This approach enables the gospel to be heard in an indirect way without threatening the listener. Craddock believes that this methodology will overcome the gap between the text and the congregation because this approach shows a great respect for the listener and allows him to draw his own conclusion. He explains, “Participation means the listener overcomes the distance, not because the speaker ‘applied’ everything, but because the listener identified with experiences and thoughts related to the message that were analogous to his own.”³² Craddock’s hermeneutical concern is not to expound the intended meaning of the biblical text, but to create an experience for the congregation through the sermon event. Since the purpose of inductive preaching is to create an experience of the Word of God in listeners, preachers are encouraged to begin with life issues.³³

³¹Ibid., 58.

³²Fred B. Craddock, *Overhearing the Gospel* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1978), 123.

³³Thomas Long argues that Craddock’s inductive approach follows the old problem-solution form (Thomas G. Long, *The Witness of Preaching* [Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1989], 98). Campbell also contends that Craddock’s inductive method takes the old problem-solution form of liberal preaching (Charles L. Campbell, *Preaching Jesus: New Directions for Homiletics in Hans Frei’s Postliberal Theology* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997], 154).

Craddock demonstrates many examples of inductive preaching from Jesus' parables and insists that we have to preach like Jesus. Here preachers have to ponder one important question: Should preachers follow Jesus' preaching style? The answer will be clearly shown when we read the sermons of the apostles and Paul. Peter in Acts did not follow the way of Jesus' preaching, but he preached Jesus the Messiah in a direct, propositional way. Raymond Baily correctly comments, "Paul did not preach *like* Jesus and that is true, but he did *preach* Jesus."³⁴ In his explanation of Jesus' preaching methodology of the parable of the sower in Mark 4, Hershanel York elaborates his conviction against the inductive approach:

Jesus' sovereign purpose was to keep some of his listeners in the dark. . . . So when some preachers defend their inductive method of preaching, letting the listener draw his or her conclusions, I always wonder if they are also so bold as to claim the same purpose of Jesus. Would we say that we preached a sermon with an inductive method so that some people listening would not repent and be forgiven? If we cannot claim his stated purpose as our model, then perhaps neither should we follow his methodology simply because he used it. So while our preaching might indeed have inductive *elements*, we really cannot shy away from the fact that *the preaching of the prophets and apostles was almost exclusively deductive and directly applicational*.³⁵

Charles L. Campbell also criticizes Craddock's inductive approach: "What Craddock's inductive method finally preaches is not the identity of Jesus Christ rendered in the gospel narratives, but rather a liberal theology of human experience."³⁶ According to Campbell, the inductive form of the sermon, which moves from "familiar human

³⁴Raymond Bailey, *Paul the Preacher* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1991), 53. Bailey indicates that Paul's message focuses on the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

³⁵York, *Preaching with Bold Assurance*, 16-17 (emphasis mine).

³⁶Campbell, *Preaching Jesus*, 156.

experience” to general conclusions, embodies a liberal theology.³⁷

Lowry also puts a high emphasis on the experiential aspect of people in preaching. Like Craddock, Lowry’s “homiletical plot” approach pursues a problem-solution format. Thus, he emphasizes the movement of the sermon “from the human predicament to the solution born of the gospel.”³⁸ He contends that the preacher does not begin with Jesus and move to the human condition, but rather vice versa. The analysis of human condition, he contends, “determines the entire shape of the sermon, including the good news proclaimed. . . . The question of the human condition is . . . the most fundamental and consequential question of all.”³⁹ Therefore, for Lowry the purpose or goal of preaching is not the communication of propositional truths, but rather the creation of an experience. In analyzing the human condition, Lowry relies his own personal experience rather than the biblical text.⁴⁰

Depending too much on a personal analysis of the human condition will easily shape the gospel according to the theology of the preacher rather than a prior understanding of the gospel. The experiential focus on human condition can also result in a theological error that not only makes God too dependent on human experience but also shapes the objective Christian faith in the private sphere. The Bible should interpret the

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Lowry, *Homiletical Plot*, 21.

³⁹Ibid., 37. Therefore, according to Lowry, the success of the sermon does not primarily lie in the faithful exposition of Scripture for transformation of people’s lives, but in the precision of analysis of the human condition.

⁴⁰Campbell, *Preaching Jesus*, 164. Lowry does rely on his personal experience to understand human condition. See his *Homiletical Plot*, 40-43.

human condition and the world rather than the other way around. People do not know what they really need until they discover their genuine need in Christ.

It is not illegitimate to stress the significant role of the listeners and their experience in preaching. Preachers should exegete both the biblical text and the congregation. Preachers who do not understand the reality of their listeners' lives will preach irrelevant sermons, while those who do not understand authorial intent will preach ambiguous sermons. The New Homiletic, however, shifts the authority from the biblical text to the listener. Thus, the New Homiletic unavoidably sacrifices biblical truth when it allows the listener to draw his or her own conclusion in sermon. When the conclusion of the sermon is left to the interpretation of the congregation, it implies that there is no exclusive, intended meaning in the biblical text; the readers or listeners determine the meaning.

Advocates of the New Homiletic contend that that preachers should preach like Jesus but they do not preach Jesus. They follow the style of Jesus' preaching, but they do not preach the message of Jesus. Christian preaching should prioritize the authority of the biblical text in the preparation and delivery of a sermon. Sidney Greidanus expresses this conviction:

If preachers wish to preach with divine authority, they must proclaim the message of the inspired Scriptures, for the Scriptures alone are the word of God written; the Scriptures alone have divine authority. If preachers wish to preach with divine authority, they must submit themselves, their thoughts and opinions, to the Scriptures and echo the word of God. Preachers are literally to be *ministers* of the word. Thus, preaching with authority is synonymous with true expository preaching.⁴¹

⁴¹Sidney Greidanus, *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text: Interpreting and Preaching Biblical Literature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988; reprint, 2000), 12-13.

The present writer believes that the New Homiletic has attempted to revive Christian preaching with a revolutionary methodology, but it does not do justice to the message of the biblical text. Christian preachers should glean from the New Homiletic emphasis on the importance of listeners and creatively utilize their methodology for effective communication. However, we must realize that the philosophy behind the New Homiletic cannot be supported by the Word of God because the Bible is to be preached with conviction about its truth. After an analysis of the New Homiletic, Campbell rightly concludes: “The world absorbs the Bible, rather than Scripture absorbing the world.”⁴²

Advocating Paul’s Preaching for a Model of Expository Preaching

Even though the New Homiletic has flourished for the last thirty years with its provocative preaching methodology, the present writer is convinced that something is seriously lacking in the New Homiletic and that more is needed to rescue Christian preaching. This writer believes that Paul was one of the greatest preachers in Christian

⁴²Campbell, *Preaching Jesus*, 165. The author also notes that “contemporary homiletical theory and practice remain dependent on modern, liberal theological presuppositions, which have serious limitations for preaching in the contemporary context” (xiii). Thompson also indicates overall shortcomings of the New Homiletic: first, inductive preaching functions best in a Christian culture in which listeners are well informed of the Christian heritage; second, homileticians have focused on technique to the neglect of a clear understanding of the aims of preaching; third, much of the literature of the new homiletics treats narratives as the primary, if not the only, mode of discourse for preaching, in practice ignoring the revelatory significance of other biblical genres; fourth, listeners shaped only by narrative preaching will have no grasp of the reflective dimensions of faith; fifth, narrative preaching is reluctant to speak with authority or to make concrete demands for change in the listeners’ lives; sixth, the exclusive reliance on inductive preaching will not build and sustain communities of faith; and seventh, preaching as rational persuasion is not an alien intrusion into a mode of communication that was originally narrative in nature (*Preaching Like Paul*, 14-19).

history, and that his example will proffer a good model for preaching.⁴³ Pauline writings contain a reservoir of theology, but they were also sensitive to the congregation's needs. This dissertation will attempt to explore Paul's preaching of significant theological themes in Ephesians in order to understand his hermeneutical and homiletical perspective. This writer believes that analysis of Paul's preaching will reveal a good model of expository preaching.

Paul's Epistles as Preaching

Before we examine Paul's preaching in Ephesians, we need to discuss two questions. First, what makes Ephesians the focus of this study?⁴⁴ Ephesians was selected

⁴³Some scholars indicate that Paul can be a model for preachers. Baily writes his book to be "a study of the preaching of Paul as a model for preachers of all generations. . . . they should approach preaching with the same attitude and philosophy as the great apostle" (Baily, *Paul the Preacher*, 19). Thompson also states, "The time has come to recognize Paul as a legitimate model for our own preaching ministry" (Thompson, *Preaching Like Paul*, 16).

⁴⁴The question of the authorship of Ephesians is beyond the scope of this study. The present writer holds that Ephesians was written by Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus (Eph 1:1; 3:1). For a defense of Pauline authorship, see Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 2-61; Peter O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999], 4-47). We will briefly introduce the reasons against the Paul's authorship and suggest arguments for Paul's authorship.

Five arguments constitutes the grounds for rejecting Pauline authorship: (1) impersonal characteristics of Ephesians; (2) language and style; (3) literary relationships between Ephesians and Colossians; (4) theological distinctions of Ephesians; (5) pseudonymity. First, against the argument of impersonal characteristics of Ephesians, Paul knew the Ephesian church intimately, thus, he did not need to have long personal greetings. Hoehner rightly indicates that "one of the reasons for greetings was to strengthen his credibility" (Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 23). Second, some scholars argue that Ephesians has many unique words (forty-one words are used only in Ephesians). Paul uses distinctive vocabulary and style in each of his epistles, not just in Ephesians. Third, Lincolns contends, "Most decisive against Paul as author of Ephesians is its dependence on Colossians and its use of other Pauline letters, particularly Romans (Andrew T.

for the following reasons. First, Ephesians contains many Old Testament quotations and allusions. As the Old Testament was the only written Scripture for Paul, his preaching in Ephesians shows how Christian preachers should deal with the Word of God. Second, Ephesians shows Paul's understanding and preaching of the triune God, for the Trinity is proclaimed as the major agent to bring about salvation and sustain the Christian life. Third, Ephesians is the clearest example of Paul's rhetoric in preaching: theological proclamation and ethical exhortation. Its study will provide the modern preacher with an effective methodology to establish biblical expository preaching.

Second, how can we establish the legitimacy of understanding Paul's epistles as preaching? Even though written letters are not the exact representation of the spoken word, it is obvious that Paul's epistles reveal strong echoes of his actual preaching. First of all, Paul's epistles represent the apostolic presence. Paul writes, "Let such people understand that what we say by letter when absent, we do when present" (2 Cor 10:11). Paul preferred to be with his readers and preach to them in person rather than in writing. Paul's letters, therefore, partake of his apostolic authority. Sidney Greidanus rightly indicates that "Listening to the letter, then, was like listening to Paul. Hence one can

Lincoln and A. J. M. Wedderburn, *The Theology of the Later Pauline Letters*, ed. James D. G. Dunn [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993], 84; Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, Word Biblical Commentary 42 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1990), xlvii-xlviii. Paul could use the same words in different epistles or choose different vocabulary over some of the same matters. The thrust of Ephesians is different because in Colossians Paul had to deal with heresy. Fourth, significant theological distinctions between Ephesians and the other Paul's epistles are possibly due to differences in circumstances. Fifth, even though pseudonymous literature existed in the ancient world, it is relatively rare and should not therefore be assumed to serve as a model for New Testament epistle (O'Brien, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 44).

characterize the New Testament Epistles as long-distance sermons.”⁴⁵ When the congregation read Paul’s letters, they must have responded as if Paul himself preached before them. Second, Paul intended his letters to be read publicly in the churches: “I solemnly command you by the Lord that this letter be read to all of them” (1 Thess 5:27; cf. 2 Thess 3:14). The oral dimension of Paul’s preaching undoubtedly determined his style in the letter.⁴⁶

William Barclay avows that “Paul’s letters are sermons far more than they are theological treatises. It is with immediate situations that they deal. They are sermons even in the sense that they were spoken rather than written. They were not carefully written out by someone sitting at a desk; they were poured out by someone striding up and down a room as he dictated, seeing all the time in his mind’s eye the people to whom they were to be sent.”⁴⁷ Paul wrote his letters with the listener in mind, which made them sermonistic in nature. Because Paul’s letters contained messages which he wanted to preach in person, they required the response of the hearers. Therefore, the present writer is convinced that we can understand Paul’s letters as his preaching. Thompson rightly writes, “If the letters

⁴⁵Greidanus, *Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text*, 314.

⁴⁶Thompson, *Preaching Like Paul*, 33. Thompson thoroughly examines how Paul’s letters provide a strong echo of his actual preaching (28-35). Achtemeier also notes, “The important point for our purposes, however, is the fact that the oral environment was so pervasive that no writing occurred that was not vocalized” (Paul Achtemeier, “*Omne verbum sonat*: The New Testament and the Oral Environment of Late Western Antiquity,” *JBL* 109 [1990]: 15). Pieter Botha writes that most of Paul’s audience probably never even saw Paul’s letters (Pieter Botha, “The Verbal Art of the Pauline Letters,” in *Rhetoric and the New Testament*, ed. Thomas H. Olbricht and Stanley Porter, *Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series* 90 [Sheffield: JSOT, 1992], 413).

⁴⁷William Barclay, “A Comparison of Paul’s Missionary Preaching and Preaching to the Church,” in *Apostolic History and the Gospel*, ed. W. Ward Gasque and R. P. Martin (Exeter: Paternoster, 1970), 170.

contain what Paul would have said if he had been present, they offer insights into the principles of arrangement, modes of argumentation, and stylistic features of the Pauline sermon.”⁴⁸

Statement of Purpose

This dissertation will explore how Paul preached major theological themes in Ephesians in order to find some homiletical implications for contemporary preachers. This study will analyze Paul’s hermeneutical and homiletical perspective described in Ephesians, highlighting the implications for modern preachers. This dissertation will explore two areas. First, the present writer will demonstrate how Paul preached in Ephesians by focusing on major theological themes found in this epistle with special emphasis on his use of the Old Testament.

The theological themes in Ephesians can be drawn from its main idea: *Paul preached that God has provided the spiritual blessings of unity and reconciliation to humanity by the work of Christ’s death and resurrection through the Holy Spirit, so that believers can live the Christian life worthy of their calling for God’s glory.* With this main idea in mind, the present writer will examine how Paul preached important themes such as God the Father, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the Christian life as the firstfruits of a new creation against an Old Testament backdrop. The Old Testament is so deeply engrained in Ephesians that almost every important theological theme is affected by its theology.

Second, this dissertation will show that Paul preached the Old Testament in

⁴⁸Thompson, *Preaching Like Paul*, 36.

Ephesians through the lens of inaugurated eschatology. Eschatology is the coherent core of Paul's theology.⁴⁹ This dissertation will demonstrate that Christ's death and resurrection is the ground of Paul's eschatological preaching of the Old Testament. Through Christ's redemptive death and His subsequent resurrection from the dead, the end time has been inaugurated in the believer's life. Ephesians emphasizes the realized aspect of eschatology far more than any other part of the Pauline corpus.⁵⁰

History of Research

Historical Overview of Paul's Preaching

Paul's preaching in general offends to the contemporary pulpit. Paul's

⁴⁹Lincoln, *Ephesians*, lxxxix-xc. Lincoln argues that "the coherent core of Paul's thought . . . is his eschatology which centers in Christ, and that this is fundamental for the rest of his thinking, including his thinking about justification." For similar estimation of Paul's eschatology in his letters, see Herman Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*, trans. John Richard De Witt (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 44-57; George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974; reprint, 2001); Peter O'Brien also affirms that "there is undoubtedly a clear, realized eschatological perspective running through Ephesians" (O'Brien, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 30; 595-99). Scobie writes on eschatology in the New Testament: "The NT proclaims that in the Christ event God has acted for the salvation of mankind. In the context of the canon this is seen as a fulfillment of the OT as a whole and especially of the promise. . . . Unlike the traditional systematic scheme which almost always has 'Eschatology' as the last chapter . . . eschatology is woven into the fabric of almost all biblical themes." Charles H. H. Scobie, "The Structure of Biblical Theology," *TynBul* 42 (1991): 184.

⁵⁰Thomas Long indicates that contemporary homiletic thought does not pay much attention to eschatological preaching. Thomas Long, "Preaching God's Future: The Eschatological Context of Christian Proclamation," in *Sharing Heaven's Music: The Heart of Christian Preaching, Essays in Honor of James Earl Massey*, ed. Barry L. Callen (Nashville: Abingdon, 1995), 195. Long points to three basic distortions in contemporary approaches to eschatology. One is the fundamentalist preaching with its charts and calculations and its chronicling of contemporary events in order to watch for the signs of the end. The second is the exclusive focus on the eschatology of the individual. The third is the main-line and liberal embarrassment with eschatological language.

preaching has been largely ignored because of the homiletical philosophy of the New Homiletic. As Thompson observes, Pauline texts do not fit easily with the postmodern fascination with story. “Paul speaks as one with an authority that makes both preacher and congregation uncomfortable. He sometimes communicates in dense theological arguments.”⁵¹ Unlike the New Homiletic Paul preaches directly, offering concrete instructions for his communities.⁵²

Several attempts have been made to examine Paul’s preaching. In his dissertation Charles Chamberlin appraised Paul’s preaching in first and second Corinthians as a model of Christian preaching.⁵³ John Beaudean tackled Paul’s theology of preaching by focusing on why the gospel requires preaching. His exegetical study examines selected Pauline texts in light of historical-critical New Testament scholarship.⁵⁴

Three significant works concerning Paul’s preaching need to be mentioned. First, in his *Preaching Paul* Daniel Patte seeks to discover the dynamics present in Paul’s preaching through a structural exegesis of Paul’s letters. Patte indicates three paradigms

⁵¹Thompson, *Preaching Like Paul*, 15.

⁵²Ibid. Raymond Baily writes, “He [Paul] was not a philosopher concerned with theories, but a pastor-preacher concerned with living at all social levels and in the fullness of the life cycle. Theology for him was a practical matter” (*Paul the Preacher*, 15).

⁵³Charles A. Chamberlin, “The Preaching of the Apostle Paul, Based on a Study of Acts of the Apostles and Paul’s Letters, with Special Reference to the First and Second Corinthians” (Ph.D. diss., Temple University, 1959).

⁵⁴John William Beaudean, Jr., *Paul’s Theology of Preaching*, dissertation series no. 6 (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1988).

for preaching Paul's epistles: charismatic, typological, and eschatological. First, Paul's gospel is charismatic because it taught that the believer could discover manifestations of God through faith. Second, it is typological because Paul perceived the message about Christ as the type and the promise of God's manifestations in the experience of the believer. Third, in spite of this experience, no believer can claim to have the complete and final revelation. It is eschatological because the manifestations and revelations that the believer discovered in their own experiences about God revealed the fulfillment of the promise of God.⁵⁵ Following these three characteristics of Paul's gospel, Patte recommends Paul as a model for preaching the gospel. According to Patte, the central focus of Paul's gospel is fulfilled in the preaching of the promises of God and their fulfillment in the life of the contemporary believer.

Second, Thompson's recent book shows a balanced critique of the contemporary homiletical trends and examines the homiletical wisdom that modern preachers can learn from Paul.⁵⁶ According to Thompson, Paul did not succumb to the prevailing modes of preaching in his day. Rather he employed theological argumentation in support of his specific instructions on how to live the worthy life. Thompson contends that Paul's preaching involves both *kerygma* and *paraklesis*, which shows both his evangelical and pastoral concern respectively. Thompson places a special emphasis on Paul's pastoral preaching. He writes, "With the recent emphasis on narrative preaching, the traditional pastoral aspect of preaching has diminished. Where narrative is the predominant mode of communication, the sermon speaks by indirection rather than

⁵⁵Daniel Patte, *Preaching Paul* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 16-17.

⁵⁶Thompson, *Preaching Like Paul*.

confronting the listeners with the call for changed lives.”⁵⁷ Thompson believes that pastoral preaching is more concerned with God’s community than individual existence. “The ultimate test of the quality of pastoral preaching is the community’s transformation into a holy people.”⁵⁸

Most recently, like Daniel Patte, Nancy Lammers Gross has written *If You Cannot Preach Like Paul* in an attempt to reclaim Paul for the preaching ministry of the church. The author’s thesis is: preachers should do what Paul did, not just say what Paul said. As Paul was a church planter, a missionary, a pastor, and an exegete, we should follow Paul by doing what he did. According to Gross, however, the traditional preaching of the Pauline epistles concentrated on Paul as a systematic theologian, using a Pauline text as a proof text or for preaching a linear, rational, deductive argument.⁵⁹ She insists that preachers should make a paradigm shift from this traditional style of preaching Paul to a new homiletical method. First, rather than making Paul a systematic theologian, preachers should view Paul as a practical theologian who was reflecting the concerns of his day. Second, rather than artificially choosing a fixed starting or ending point, preachers should let the text control the conversation between text and congregant. Third, rather than extracting a kernel of truth using the old paradigm, preachers should employ a new paradigm to explore the dynamic life of the text and enable it to speak to our lives more directly, contextually, and contemporarily. Fourth, rather than preaching

⁵⁷Ibid., 85.

⁵⁸Ibid., 105.

⁵⁹Nancy Lammers Gross, *If You Cannot Preach Like Paul* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 12-17.

exegetically to influence and convince the mind, preachers should always preach a change of heart, not just a change of mind.⁶⁰

Historical Overview of Paul's Use of the Old Testament in Ephesians

Even though the use of the Old Testament in the New Testament has been recognized as one of the most important fields of research, the use of the Old Testament in Ephesians has not attracted the attention of many scholars. The use of individual Old Testament quotations in Ephesians has been studied, but an overall study of the use of the Old Testament in this epistle has been relatively neglected.⁶¹ Markus Barth writes that the author's hermeneutics were influenced by rabbinic, Philonic, Qumranite, apocalyptic, or early Christian methods of interpretation, but he claims that "whichever canon, text, exegetical and homiletical method the author used, he certainly relied upon the help which the OT added to the understanding of his message."⁶²

Not every verse in Ephesians contains Old Testament references, but there are

⁶⁰Ibid., 128-33.

⁶¹Barth observes, "Except the essay by Mauer . . . no recent special discussions on the use of the OT in Ephesians as a whole have come to my attention." Markus Barth, *Ephesians: Introduction, Translation, and Commentary on Chapters 1-3* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1974), 28. Lincoln finds three reasons why more scholars have not dealt with Paul's use of the Old Testament in Ephesians. First, the number of citations from the Old Testament is not very large. Second, in regard to the religious background of the letter, attention has been focused on Gnosticism. Third, there are no differences of any significance between the use of the Old Testament in Ephesians and that in the undisputed Pauline literature. See Andrew T. Lincoln, "The Use of the OT in Ephesians," *JSNT* 14 (1982): 17. Moritz notes that the lack of this study is due to debatable Pauline authorship (Thorsten Moritz, *A Profound Mystery: The Use of the Old Testament in Ephesians* [Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996], 1).

⁶²Barth, *Ephesians*, 27.

many quotations, allusions, and Old Testament images.⁶³ According to Barth's analysis, there are approximately seventeen references to the Pentateuch—mostly to Exodus and Deuteronomy—and thirty to the prophetic books—half of these from Isaiah.⁶⁴ Portions from the Psalms are used eleven times, and portions from the wisdom books, ten times. It is worth noting that Paul used the LXX more than the Hebrew when quoting Old Testament passages in his letters, and Ephesians shows no exception.⁶⁵

In his essay, "The Use of the OT in Ephesians," Andrew Lincoln provides an extensive study of Old Testament quotations in Ephesians, though he does not discuss allusions. Unlike former scholars who argued for Gnostic and Jewish traditions as

⁶³It is not easy to distinguish in an exact fashion between quotations and allusions. According to the definition of Moritz, "quotation" refers to passages in which several words have been taken over directly from the Old Testament with little variation. "Allusions" refer to instances when only one or two words or one short phrase coincides with a specific Old Testament text, but where it can be shown that a direct link between the texts exists. There are further categories. "Concepts" are links between a New Testament text and the Hebrew Scriptures which are neither as direct as quotations or allusions, nor as vague as general influences of style. "Intertextual Echoes" refer to the fine tuning aspects of literary or contextual influences of one text, including its history of interpretation, on another. See Moritz, *Profound Mystery*, 2-3. Hays employs categories of quotation, allusion, and echo. See Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale, 1989). For a thorough analysis of definition of the categories with writers and their works, see Stanley E. Porter, "The Use of the Old Testament in the New Testament: A Brief Comment on Method and Terminology" in *Early Christian Interpretation of the Scriptures of Israel: Investigations and Proposals*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 148 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 80-88. The present writer will divide these categories into three: quotation, allusion, and imagery.

⁶⁴Barth, *Ephesians*, 29. Ellis provides a general analysis of the use of Old Testament in the Paul's letters. See E. Earle Ellis, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament* (Edinburgh: Oliver And Boyd, 1957), 11-20.

⁶⁵Ellis observes that fifty-one of Paul's ninety-three Old Testament citations are in absolute or virtual agreement with the LXX, twenty-two of these at variance with the Hebrew. In four passages Paul follows the Hebrew against the LXX; thirty-eight times he diverges from both. Ellis, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament*, 12.

sources for the book of Ephesians, Lincoln examines the role of the Old Testament in the epistle. Considered in this essay are Psalm 68:18 in Ephesians 4:4-10; Isaiah 57:19 in Ephesians 2:17; Genesis 2:24 in Ephesians 5:31-32; Exodus 20:12 in Ephesians 6:2-3; Psalm 110:1 and 8:6 in Ephesians 1:20, 22; Zechariah 8:16 in Ephesians 4:25; Psalm 4:4 in Ephesians 4:26; Proverbs 23:31 in Ephesians 5:18; Isaiah 11:4-5, 52:7, 59:17 in Ephesians 6:14-17. From his examination of the use of the Old Testament in Ephesians, Lincoln concludes that the author of the epistle employed Old Testament material from the LXX. With regards to the author's hermeneutic, his exegetical techniques have a Christological emphasis whereby the Old Testament texts are read in the light of the new situation which the author believes God has brought about in Christ.⁶⁶ Besides this Christological emphasis, Lincoln takes into consideration ecclesiological and ethical concerns, but maintains that the text does not show a promise and fulfillment usage.

Moritz's study of the use of the Old Testament in Ephesians aims to (1) contribute towards a balanced evaluation of the diversity of traditions employed in Ephesians; (2) to enable a better appraisal of the author's religio-cultural background; (3) to relate the appropriation of Old Testament material to what can be assumed to have been the background of the recipients; and (4) to relate the Old Testament author's hermeneutic to that of Paul.⁶⁷ While most studies have examined Ephesians in light of the Qumran sect, Gnostic traditions, or Stoic teaching, Moritz's work highlights the influence of Old Testament traditions on Ephesians. His study investigates Old Testament references like citations, allusions, concepts, and intertextual echoes in the following

⁶⁶Lincoln, "Use of the OT in Ephesians," 45.

⁶⁷Moritz, *Profound Mystery*, 1.

sections of Ephesians: Ephesians 1:20-23; 2:13-17; 4:8-10; 4:25-30; 5:14, 18, 31; 6:2-3; 6:10, 14-17. Moritz examines how the texts and traditions are appropriated and applied in Ephesians. From the use of the Old Testament in Ephesians, Moritz concludes that the author of Ephesians has based his appropriations of Scripture largely on Septuagintal versions.⁶⁸ Moritz suggests that an ecclesiological hermeneutic is used in the first half of the epistle. In the ethical section of Ephesians, Moritz proposes that scriptural material was employed mainly to explain the ethical continuity between the Old Testament and being 'in Christ.'⁶⁹

Most recently, Mary E. Hinkle wrote about Paul's use of scripture in Ephesians, focusing on her emphasis on the unity between Christ and the church, and the unity between Israel and the Gentiles within the church. Her exegetical analysis of the author's use of the Old Testament in Ephesians was based upon her thesis that "the OT in Ephesians is always read in light of the author's conviction that believers are one in Christ."⁷⁰ According to Hinkle, the author's emphasis on unity plays more significant role in determining the meaning of the Old Testament in Ephesians than any other factor, including the Old Testament context of material cited in Ephesians.⁷¹

Methodology

This dissertation will study Paul's preaching in the Epistle to the Ephesians.

⁶⁸Ibid., 213.

⁶⁹Ibid., 215.

⁷⁰Mary E. Hinkle, "Proclaiming Peace: The Use of Scripture in Ephesians" (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 1997), iv.

⁷¹Ibid.

Rather than exploring Paul's use of the Old Testament fragmentarily only through quotations or allusions, this writer will examine how Paul preached the major theological themes found in Ephesians against the backdrop of the Old Testament. This study, however, will be heavily dependent on Paul's direct and indirect Old Testament quotations and allusions. Our study will inevitably interact with New Testament and Old Testament biblical theology because its survey will be based upon a theological, biblical, and exegetical analysis of Paul's preaching. By focusing our discussion on major themes—God the Father, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the Christian life as a New Creation—I will show how Paul preached several sub-themes against the Old Testament backdrop through the exegetical study of each subject in dialogue with its Old Testament relations. According to Paul, the end time has come through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Therefore, I will show how his preaching of the Old Testament was filtered through the lens of eschatological new creation.

If we successfully explore Paul's preaching of the important theological themes in Ephesians, the result of this theological, biblical, and exegetical investigation will demonstrate that Paul preached these themes in light of the Old Testament eschatologically and will provide some valuable implications for contemporary preachers as they consider how to preach the unchanging Word of God to the ever-changing world.

CHAPTER 2

PAUL'S PREACHING ON THE TRIUNE GOD

Paul's Preaching on God the Father

Introduction

The main message of Paul's preaching in Ephesians can be summarized as follows: *God has provided the spiritual blessings of unity and reconciliation to humanity by the work of Christ's death and resurrection through the Holy Spirit, so that believers can live the Christian life worthy of their calling for God's glory.* Paul's preaching is replete with the activity of the three persons of the Trinity,¹ but God the Father is described as the major subject who acts throughout Ephesians. In the first section of this chapter this writer will explore Paul's preaching on God the Father in Ephesians with particular attention to how Paul understands God against the backdrop of the Old Testament. Paul's understanding of God also shows his eschatological perspective, which holds that the end time has come through the death and resurrection of Jesus. Paul's doctrine of God in Ephesians shall be logically organized under five categories: the being of God, the work of God, the personality of God, the revelation of God, and the glory of God.

¹The activity of the triune God is found in eight passages: Eph 1:4-14, 17; 2:18, 22; 3:4-5, 14-17; 4:4-6; 5:18-20.

The Being of God

God is the Father. There are forty references to God as Father in Paul's epistles, and more references to God as Father in Ephesians than in any other letter.² God the Father plays an important role not only for all who are under His dominion, but also for all believers who are the recipients of His grace. Paul preaches God as both the Father of Jesus Christ and the Father of all believers. God is also called the Father of glory and the Father of all revelation. As the Father, God bestows grace and peace (1:2; 6:23), He receives all blessings and praise from believers. We will examine how Paul preaches God as the Father of Christ and all believers.

First of all, Paul preaches God as the Father of Jesus Christ (1:3, 17; 3:14). The expression, "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" in verse 3, appears frequently in Paul's writings.³ "Father" is rarely used of God in the Old Testament and in Palestinian

²References to God as Father in Ephesians occur in 1:2, 3, 17; 2:18; 3:14-15; 4:6; 5:20; 6: 23. They occur four times each in Romans, Galatians, Colossians, and 1 Thessalonians; three times each in 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Philippians, 2 Thessalonians; twice in 1 Timothy; and once each in Philemon and Titus.

³For a history of interpretation of this verse, see Ernest Best, *Interpreting Christ* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1993), 161-77. The genitives that follow, τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, have been interpreted in two ways. Some think the genitives refer only to "Father" and render it "God, who is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Others think that "God" and "Father" are in apposition and the genitives depend on both and so translate it "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." The second view is preferred for the following reasons. First, the first noun is preceded by an article and the second noun, which is anarthrous, further describes the first noun (Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament with Scripture, Subject, and Greek Word Indexes* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996], 671, 735). Second, in v. 17 Paul explicitly expresses "God of our Lord Jesus Christ," so the genitives in v. 3 surely refer to both "God" and "Father." See Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 164.

Judaism, but in the New Testament it is the predominant way of referring to God.⁴ In the Old Testament God was praised as the God of Israel (1 Kgs 1:48; 2 Chr 2:12; Ps 72:8), the God of Shem (Gen 9:26), God Most High (Gen 14:20), and Lord (Ps 31:21), but He was rarely identified as “Father.”⁵ Paul, however, proclaims that God is “the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Even though this form was used for Christian salutations (cf. 2 Cor 1:3, 1 Pet 1:3), the significance of God’s relationship as the Father of Jesus Christ further is given in 1:17, where He is titled “the Father of glory.” According to Paul, God’s relationship as the Father of Christ is the ground on which believers can approach God as their Father. Paul stresses that it is solely through God’s Son (1:5-6; 2:18) or in the Son’s name (5:20) that believers have gained access to the Father.

Second, God is not only the Father of Christ, but also the Father of all believers (1:2; 5:20; 6:23). God, as the Father of all believers, is the one who bestows the grace that brought salvation and its resulting peace. When Paul refers to God not only as the Father of Jesus Christ, but also the Father of all believers, he is echoing the teaching of Jesus in the Gospels. In the Old Testament the Jews could not dare to call God Father, but Jesus addressed Him with the most endearing term Abba, “my father” (Mark 14:36), and He taught His disciples to address God as “our Father” (Πάτερ ἡμῶν, Matt 6:9). Paul utilizes the same term to indicate that Christians are truly the sons of God their Father. When Paul addresses God not only as Father but as “our Father” (πατὴρ ἡμῶν), this increases

⁴In the Old Testament “Father” is used to name God fifteen times out of 1448 occurrences, and in the New Testament 245 times out of 413 occurrences. See Otfried Hofius, “Father [ἄββᾶ],” in *NIDNTT*, 1:617-18.

⁵Peter O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 94; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 164.

believers' personal relationship with God (1:2).

When believers refer to God as the Father, they imply that every believer is His son (Eph 5:1),⁶ who possesses an inheritance (1:18). Paul describes Gentile believers also as Christ's fellow heirs and fellow participants of the promise together with Israel (3:6). When Gentiles become one body of Christ with Jews, the promise given to Abraham is fulfilled. God promised Abraham that He would bless Abraham and his descendants and that through him all the families of the earth would be blessed (Gen 12:2-3). Now the divine plan has been revealed that all the families of the earth should not only be blessed in Abraham's offspring, but also be reckoned among his children because they share the faith of Abraham, who "is the father of us all" (Rom 4:16). Gentiles are fellow-heirs because they are heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ (Rom 8:17). Paul's description of God as Father for both Jewish believers and Gentile believers shows that the promise given to Abraham has been fulfilled through the life of Jesus, especially in His death on the cross and resurrection, which made Jewish believers and Gentile believers into one, the true children of God

Third, in 4:6 Paul further describes God as the Father of all: "one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all." As for the genitive "of all," two interpretations are possible. It can be interpreted as masculine, so denoting people, or as neuter, referring to "all things," that is, the universe. First, if we read πάντων as neuter, it denotes the whole universe, not referring to all

⁶Paul uses the term τέκνα which connotes a closer relationship to the parent than the word υἱός. See John Massie, "Two New Testament Synonyms, Υἱός and Τέκνον," *Exp* 11 (1880): 140-50. Massie indicates that the word "son" has "the thought of individual freedom, and the dignity or responsibility of personal choice," while "child" describes a close relationship and dependence on the parent (151).

believers.⁷ Second, if we take πάντων as masculine, it denotes “all Christians,” which in the context of Ephesians signifies both Jews and Gentiles, not “all people” indiscriminately.⁸ The immediate context seems to indicate that the latter interpretation is preferred. In 4:4-6 Paul explains the basis of Christian unity by emphasizing the unity of the three persons of the Triune God. As the unity of all believers should be modeled by God’s oneness, Paul is exhorting believers, not all humans, to preserve unity. Bruce comments that the genitive “of all” means specifically “of all—both Jews and Gentiles.”⁹ Hoehner contends that the words, ὁ ἐπὶ πάντων καὶ διὰ πάντων καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν, also argue against the idea of a universal Father of all human beings since God is not only “over all” but “through all and in all.”¹⁰ Hoehner comments: “The NT never envisions that God is in every human being but that he resides only in believers (Rom 8:9).”¹¹

⁷For this interpretation, Markus Barth, *Ephesians: Translation and Commentary on Chapters 4-6*, Anchor Bible 34A (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1974), 471-72; Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 42 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1990), 240; Ernest Best, *Ephesians*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998), 371; O’Brien, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 284.

⁸For this interpretation, F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 337; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 519-20.

⁹Bruce, *Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 337.

¹⁰Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 519. Similarly, Bruce comments, “That he [God] is transcendent over all his children needs no emphasizing. He exists ‘through’ them perhaps in the sense that they are instruments or agents through whom he works.” As for God’s being “in all,” he comments that “it should be related to the statement of Eph. 2:22, that the people of God constitute his ‘dwelling-place in the Spirit’” (Bruce, *Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 337-38).

¹¹Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 519.

However, when we read this verse in the whole context of Ephesians, the former interpretation is more appropriate. Peter O'Brien argues for this reading based on three reasons. First, in Ephesians where the sovereignty of God and Christ are in view, "all" denotes the whole universe (1:10, 11, 22, 23; 3:9; 4:10). Second, in similar formulae within Paul's letters (1 Cor 8:6; Rom 11:36; Col 1:16) where different prepositions are skillfully linked together in order to qualify God's or Christ's relationship to "all," the word normally means "everything," not just persons or even believers. Third, Paul's use of "all" is dependent on Old Testament statements about God, who fills heaven and earth (Jer 23:24), whose glory fills both temple and land, and whose power given to the Messiah is exercised over the whole of creation, not just believers.¹² If this interpretation is correct, Paul preaches that God is transcendent "over all," and He works "through all and in all." Paul speaks of God not only as Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and all believers, but He is Father of all and works through all for His ultimate glory.

God consists of three persons. God consists of three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. In several places Paul preaches the three persons of the Trinity (1:3-14, 17; 2:18, 22; 3:4-5, 14-17; 4:4-6; 5:18-20). We will examine Paul's description of God in four places. First, after the doxology in 1:3, Paul describes the three persons of the Trinity with words of praise ending each section, that is, God the Father in verses 4-6, the Son in verses 7-12, and the Holy Spirit in verses 13-14. Paul's preaching on the Trinity shows the order of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit, and there is also progression from a pronouncement of praise to God (1:3), to a description of God's great

¹²O'Brien, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 285.

plan and action (1:4-12), and finally to its application to the Ephesian believers (1:13-14).¹³ Some debates arise over the background of the language and style of these passages. Karl Kuhn indicates that Ephesians has evidence of Semitic influence from Qumran literature, and the eulogy of 1:3-14 follows the typical Hebrew sentence structure seen in the Qumran texts.¹⁴ Thompson, however, points out that 1:3-10 follows the form of a Jewish *berakah* with a chiastic pattern.¹⁵ Van Room indicates that the characteristics of this eulogy have affinities with the thought-rhyming techniques of Old Testament Hebrew poetry.¹⁶ Therefore, it seems that Paul's expression of praise to God is consistent with the Jewish-Hellenistic style of his day, which has its roots in the Old Testament.¹⁷

¹³Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 159. Hoehner also writes, "God is the One who seals, Christ is the sphere in which the seal is done, and the Holy Spirit is the instrument of the seal" ("Ephesians," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary, New Testament*, ed. John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck [Wheaton, IL: Victor, 1983], 619).

¹⁴Karl Georg Kuhn, "The Epistle to the Ephesians in the Light of the Qumran Texts," in *Paul and Qumran: Studies in New Testament Exegesis*, ed. and trans. Jerome Murphy-O'Connor (Chicago: Priority Press, 1968), 116-20.

¹⁵I. H. Thompson, *Chiasmus in the Pauline Letters* (Sheffield: Academic Press, 1995), 46-83. Introduction (3), A (4), B (5), C (6), D (7a-b), C' (7c-8), B' (9a-b), A' (9c-10). Verses 11-14 are closely joined to the previous verses but are not chiastic in structure.

¹⁶A. van Roon, *The Authenticity of Ephesians* (Leiden: Brill, 1974), 135-45, 182-92. However, he shows that it is in keeping with the environment of the Jewish-Hellenistic style of the first century.

¹⁷Best, *Ephesians*, 104-08. Best indicates, "It is much more probable that the overall form of the eulogy is a combination of normal Greek and Semitic hymnic style, the latter being seen in the words indicating that we have a Berakah. . . . The repetition of similar concepts is Semitic rather than Greek (v. 3a)" (108); see also Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 158.

Second, in his preaching of believers as the temple of God, which is a new creation where God is dwelling, Paul describes the activity of the triune God:

You are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit (Eph 2:19-22).

God the Father is the one who creates the new person into a holy temple.

Christ the Son is the cornerstone of this new temple through His work of reconciliation between God and fallen humanity. The Holy Spirit is the manner by which God dwells in the new structure which He is creating. The Holy Spirit resides in each individual believer, but He resides also in the corporate body of believers called the holy temple, that is, the church in a corporate sense.¹⁸

Third, in preaching the mystery of Christ Paul proclaims that it is God who reveals the mystery of Christ by means of the Holy Spirit:

In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit of God's holy apostles and prophets. This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus. (Eph 3:4-6)

"The mystery of Christ" (3:4) means "the mystery about Christ." Therefore, the revelation of the mystery is focused on Christ, more specifically on the Christ who makes believing Gentiles and believing Jews into one body of Christ. The Holy Spirit is

¹⁸Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 415. In Paul's letters, God's dwelling in the temple is described in two ways. First, in 1 Cor 6:9 Paul speaks of the body of individual Christians as being the temple of the Holy Spirit. Second, in 1 Cor 3:16 he refers to the church as the temple in which the Holy Spirit dwells. Paul here speaks of the concept of the corporate body of believers as a temple where God is dwelling by the Holy Spirit, as in 1 Cor 3:16.

described as the one by whom the mystery is revealed.

Fourth, Paul's preaching on the Triune God is more clearly described in 4:4-6 where Paul shows how the Christian faith and life has to be based on the three persons of the Trinity:

There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were Called—one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

Unity of God and Christian life is stressed by the sevenfold use of “one” (εἷς, μία, ἓν).¹⁹

“The sevenfold list is basically threefold since three of these unities allude to the three persons of the Trinity, while the remaining four refer to believers’ relationship to the Spirit, Son, and Father.”²⁰ It has been argued by some that Paul is citing an early Christian confession or creed.²¹ This is unlikely when we see the order (Spirit, Lord, and God) is quite different from that of the early confession (Father, Son, and Spirit).²²

¹⁹First, there is one body (ἐν σῶμα), which refers to the universal church (1:23; 2:16; 3:5-6). Second, there is the one Spirit (ἐν πνεῦμα) referring to the Holy Spirit, the second person, mentioned in 2:18, 22. Third, there is one hope (μὴ ἐλπίδι). Fourth, there is one Lord (εἷς κύριος), the second person, Christ. Fifth, there is one faith (μία πίστις). Sixth, there is one baptism (ἐν βάπτισμα). Lastly, there is one God (εἷς θεός), who is the first person. See for discussion, Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 514-21.

²⁰O’Brien, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 280.

²¹Bruce, *Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 335; Ernest Best, “The Use of Credal and Liturgical Materials in Ephesians: Essays in Honor of Ralph P. Martin,” in *Worship, Theology and Ministry in the Early Church*, ed. Michael J. Wilkins and Terence Paige (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 65-66.

²²O’Brien, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 280-81. O’Brien explains why the Spirit was mentioned before the Father and the Son on the ground of the immediate context (281). Hoehner comments that “it may have been used as a confession after the Ephesians had received and read the letter.” See Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 514.

Paul preaches that the unity of the Trinity is the basis for the unity of the church, which is a new creation. The oneness of God reminds the believers of the fundamental unity on which the Christian faith and life are based. First, Paul preaches that as there is one body, there is one Spirit (4:4). The one Spirit brings unity to the body by His indwelling and animating activity (4:3). By the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body (1 Cor 12:13), thus believers are members of one body of Christ by the work of the Holy Spirit. Second, Paul preaches that there is one Lord, one faith, and one baptism (4:5). As Bruce comments, it is not difficult to understand why “one faith” and “one baptism” are attached to “one Lord” for Christ is the object of His people’s faith (Eph 3:12) and it is into Him that they have been baptized (Rom 6:3; Gal 3:27).²³ Third, Paul’s threefold acclamation reaches its climax as he praises the one God for all believers. This is in the same line with other parts of Ephesians which mention the unity resulting from the work of the triune God. God’s unity and plurality are revealed through the Father who plans salvation and unity (1:5), and through the Son who is the agent for salvation and unity (1:5), and through the Spirit who secures salvation and unity for the believers (4:30). Based on God’s unity as the Trinity, Paul exhorts believers to walk in unity as a new creation (4:4-6).

We have examined how Paul preached the being of God mainly focusing on God as the Father of both Christ Jesus and believers, and His existence as the triune God. Paul’s preaching of God as Father not only of Jesus but also of all believers was scandalous to Israelites, but it is in keeping with the teaching of Jesus regarding addressing God as Father. God’s relationship as the Father for both the believing

²³Bruce, *Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 336.

individual and the faith community shows a fuller manifestation of God's presence among His people in the New Testament.

The Work of God

The creation of God. The God who created all things (3:9) is preached as the God who “unites all things in heaven and on earth together in Christ” (1:10). This should be understood with the content of the mystery in the preceding verse (1:9). The mystery which God purposed in Christ according to His good pleasure is to sum up and bring together all the fragmented and alienated elements of the universe in Christ. The word ἀνακεφαλαιόω indicates that God's purpose is to unite all things in Christ.²⁴ Most commentators consider the words “the things in heaven and the things on earth” (τὰ ἐπὶ τοῖς οὐρανοῖς καὶ τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς) in 1:10 as referring to God's creation, animate and inanimate, which are going to be united in Christ.²⁵ The location of the “things” is both in

²⁴Many consider that ἀνακεφαλαιόω should be interpreted as “sum up” or “unite” rather than “head” on the ground that ἀνακεφαλαιόω is thought to come from κεφάλαιον rather than κεφαλή. This suggestion seems to fit the only other New Testament use at Rom 13:9, where the commandments of the second table of the Decalogue are summarized in the command to love one's neighbor. See G. W. Dawes, *The Body in Question: Metaphor and Meaning in the Interpretation of Ephesians 5:21-33* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 143; O'Brien, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 111. Hoehner, however, warns not to accept one view exclusively but suggests considering these two views together to gain a balanced perspective. He reads that God's purpose in Christ is to unite all things for Himself under one head. See his discussion and conclusion, *Ephesians*, 219-21.

²⁵Markus Barth, *Ephesians: Introduction, Translation, and Commentary on Chapters 1-3*, Anchor Bible 34 (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1974), 91-92; Bruce, *Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 262; Michael Neary, “The Cosmic Emphasis of Paul,” *Irish Theological Quarterly* 48 (1981): 19-20; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 223. This view is in line with Col 1:20 where Paul preaches the reconciliation of “all things . . . whether things on earth or things in heaven” (τὰ πάντα . . . εἴτε τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς εἴτε τὰ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς). There are some other views: they could refer to the church (Rudolf Schnackenburg, *Ephesians: A Commentary*, trans. Helen

heaven and on earth.²⁶ The “things” in both realms represent creations of God, which is consistent with the Old Testament cosmology that states “God created the heavens and the earth” (Gen 1:1; 14:19, 22; Pss 121:2; 124:8; 146:6). Therefore, God’s activity of gathering all things together under Christ can be understood under the background of God’s creation activity in Genesis. In the third day of creation, God ordered the water under the sky to be gathered to one place (Gen 1:9-10). By God’s gathering activity, the state of chaos is turned into that of order. According to Paul’s understanding, this event is considered as God’s activity of new creation. If the gathering of the first creation brought all things together into order, the new creation in the New Testament brings everything including humanity together under Christ. God’s gathering activity of the new creation can be understood in view of Isaiah 11:9-16.

Isaiah 11:9-16 is unified by the single theme of God’s gathering the scattered exiles of His people (11:11, 15). The theme of “Lord’s hand” reflects an exodus-motif (Exod 3:19-20; 6:1; 13:3; Deut 6:21).²⁷ Motyer comments that “in that day” (בְּיוֹם הַהוּא; LXX: ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ) in verses 10 and 11, indicates the eschatological nature of the

Heron [Edinburg: T & T Clark, 1991], 60-61); John A. Allan, “The ‘In Christ’ Formula in Ephesians,” *NTS* (1958): 58; Maclean, “Ephesians and the Problem of Colossians,” 60-64); the things in heaven are angels and the things on earth are people (Chrys C. Caragounis, *The Ephesian Mysterion: Meaning and Content*, Coniectanea Biblica New Testament Series 8 (Lund: Gleerup, 1977), 144-46; O’Brien, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 112).

²⁶Andrew T. Lincoln, “A Re-Examination of ‘the Heavens’ in Ephesians,” *JSNT* 14 (1982): 479-80. The plural form “heavens” (τοῖς οὐρανοῖς) reflects the Hebrew שָׁמַיִם rather than the number of heavens. In this sense, the biblical terms, of speaking of the whole by referring to “things in heaven” and “things on earth” can be understood rhetorically to refer to God’s creation activity in Genesis 1:1.

²⁷J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 125.

vision. “A second time” (שְׁנִייתָ) in verse 11, indicates that “the first time” was the exodus, but now there is a wider exodus of a worldwide people. Under the Messiah the whole world will be reordered and transformed (6-9), and the world-wide kingdom will be realized (14).²⁸ God’s gathering of His elect from the four corners of the earth which was prophesied in Isaiah 11:11-12 (cf. Mark 13:27) has been started through the life of Christ, especially through His death and resurrection (Eph 1:10). Paul’s preaching shows that the work of the new creation by Messiah has been inaugurated, and the world is ready for one people gathered under Christ. Paul regards God’s activity of gathering all things together under Christ as the new creation, and it has been inaugurated already in the lives of the believers.

Paul’s inaugurated eschatology is progressive in nature and must be understood in terms of stages. Paul’s preaching shows that all things are united in Christ in two states.²⁹ First, the initial stage already began through Christ’s death (1:7; 2:16) and His exaltation (1:20-21; 2:6-7). The spiritual powers controlling human beings were broken by Christ’s death and resurrection (2:1-6), therefore believers can be victorious through God’s power which raised Christ from the dead and enthroned Him in the heavenly realm (1:19-20). Second, Christ’s exaltation over all power is not only in the present age but also in the age to come (1:20-21). Hoehner comments, “This ultimate stage speaks of the time yet future when God is going to unite all of creation under Christ’s headship in the fullness of time, the eschatological age of Messiah’s rule to

²⁸Ibid., 125-26.

²⁹Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 224-25.

which all creation looks forward.”³⁰ Therefore, the summing up of all things together in Christ indicates that the end time has come already and it has been started in Christ, but has not been completed yet. Believers are living in an eschatological tension between these two dimensions.

Election of God. In Ephesians 1:4-6 Paul preaches that in Christ God chose His people:

For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.

God is described as the major subject of the whole action illustrated in these verses. Paul preaches that God initiates election. God is the author of election, and He chose His people without regard to human merit. God’s unconditional election of His people has its precedent in His choice of Israel in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament God chose Abraham to bless him and to bring blessing to all nations through him (Gen 12:1-3). The Lord chose Israel to be His people from among all other peoples. God’s election of Israel was due solely to God’s gracious decision since it had nothing to do with Israel’s righteous behavior (Deut 7:6-8; 14:2). It was only because God loved Israel and kept the oath that He had sworn to her forefathers.³¹ In Ephesians Paul preaches that God chose

³⁰Ibid., 224.

³¹The Hebrew בָּרָא (“to choose,” “to select”) forms part of Old Testament covenant language, and predictably figures more prominently in Deuteronomy and Isaiah. Deut 7:6-11 is the locus for the Old Testament election tradition. See Brevard Childs, *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1993), 426; F. F. Bruce, *New Testament Development of Old Testament Themes* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), 51-67.

His people solely on the basis of His own character. God's choice of His people signifies some important elements of Paul's understanding of election.

First, the fulfillment was experienced in Christ. Election is profoundly Christological. Only in Christ were the people of God chosen. Jesus is the Chosen One of God par excellence.³² As Bruce comments, "He is foundation, origin, and executor: all that is involved in election and its fruits depends on him."³³ Second, when did God choose us? The divine choice in Christ was made in eternity, "before the foundation of the world."³⁴ God's election of the believers in eternity past signifies that God's election ensures not only the believers' future but secures their past. Lincoln rightly indicates that God's election in eternity past implies the preexistence of Christ but not the preexistence of the church. "It is not the Church but the choice of the Church which precedes the foundation of the world."³⁵ Third, the object of God's choice is "us" (ἡμᾶς), who now belong to the people of God. Some argue that this has reference to a collective election because of the plural pronoun ἡμᾶς.³⁶ There is a corporate dimension to God's election

³²Jesus is called ὁ ἐκλεκτός in Luke 9:35; the Messiah is God's ἐκλεκτός in Luke 23:35 and John 1:34.

³³Bruce, *Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 254-56; O'Brien, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 100.

³⁴The same phrase occurs in John 17:24 where Jesus states that God loved Him before the foundation of the world, and in 1 Pet 1:20 where it declares that Christ was foreknown before the foundation of the world. Therefore, God chose the believer before the world was even created.

³⁵Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 24. Some early Christian writings, however, note that this implies the preexistence of the church (2 Clem 14:1).

³⁶William W. Klein, *The New Chosen People: A Corporative View of Election* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 179-80; Carey C. Newman, "Election and

because God's intention found in Ephesians is to create a new people who belong to Jesus Christ. But it is inappropriate to suggest that these passages support the corporate dimension of God's election rather than personal and individual. Hoehner rightly notes that Paul did not use the singular pronoun, for he was not writing to an individual but to the church as a whole.³⁷ As individuals make up a body of believers, Paul proclaims that individuals are the objects of God's election.

Fourth, the purpose for which God chose His people in Christ is to make believers "holy and blameless." "Election does bring privilege, but it also carries with it responsibility."³⁸ In Philippians 1:9-10 and 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13 Paul prays for the same features to portray believers' lives, that is, holiness and blamelessness before God. The word holy (ἅγιος) in the Old Testament refers to impersonal things like a nation (Exod 19:6) or place (Exod 29:31; Lev 6:16); 10:13; Ps 11:4; Isa 57:15; Ezek 42:13), but its predominant use is personal and can denote God's unique character (Isa 1:4; 5:16; 6:3; Jer 50:29; 51:5; Ezek 39:7; Hos 11:9). As God is holy, His nation, the temple, or His people should be holy. The word blameless (ἄμωμος) means "one who is without

Predestination in Ephesians 1:4-6a: An Exegetical-Theological Study of the Historical, Christological Realization of God's Purpose," *RevExp* 93 (1996): 239. Newman contends: "The election of persons must always be viewed in relationship to the formation and commissioning of the Church in God's plan to evangelize the nations." See also Best, *Ephesians*, 120, 124.

³⁷Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 176. The author further notes that Paul is not implying that only those in the Ephesian church were chosen. If this were the case Paul would have used the plural "you" (ὁμοῖς). Paul uses ἡμεῖς to include himself with the Ephesian church.

³⁸O'Brien, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 100. He further observes, "The divine purpose in our election was not simply to repair the damage done by sin but also to fulfill God's original intention for humankind, namely, to create for himself a people perfectly conformed to the likeness of his Son (Rom 8:29-30)."

reproach” or “blameless” either physically or morally.³⁹ In the Old Testament the Israelite had to offer animals for sacrifice that had no blemish (Exod 29:1; Lev 1:3; 4:3) and so in the New Testament Christ is offered as an unblemished sacrifice before God (Heb 8:14; 1 Pet 1:19). Paul applies “holy and blameless” to believers who are redeemed by Christ. “Holy and blameless” speaks of a believer’s whole life in terms of character (what a person is), behavior (what a person does), and status (what legal standing a person has before God).⁴⁰ Since God chose His people in Christ with the ultimate purpose that they would be holy and blameless, believers should reflect God’s character. God’s election does not depend on people’s holiness, but God chose the believers in order that they might be holy and blameless in His presence.

When, then, will the believer be completely holy and blameless? Does this refer to the earthly life of the believer or to the future when they appear before God? The latter is preferred for the following reason. Even though believers have already been called holy on the basis of their election, their sanctification is partial and progressive. Paul repeatedly exhorts believers to be holy. Paul prays, “May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thess 5:23).⁴¹ The tension between positional holiness and practical holiness shows Paul’s eschatological perspective regarding holiness in believers’ lives. Believers are already holy in God’s eyes through

³⁹Friedrich Hauck, “ἄμωμος,” in *TDNT*, 4:830.

⁴⁰Newman, “Election and Predestination in Ephesians 1:4-6a,” 240.

⁴¹The challenge to holiness in the New Testament also appears in Peter: “But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: ‘Be holy, because I am holy’” (1 Pet 1:15, 16).

the cleansing blood of Christ on the cross, but they are exhorted to be holy in their entire lives. Their perfection awaits the return of Christ and their glorified bodies. Bruce rightly comments on this tension between the present status and the future: “The ‘holiness without which no one will see the Lord’ (Heb 12:14) is progressively wrought within the lives of believers on earth by the Spirit, and will be consummated in glory at the parousia, the time of the ‘redemption’ anticipated in Ephesians 1:14; 4:30.”⁴²

The Personality of God

Paul preaches that the personality of God is primarily revealed in His actions. Among the many attributes of God, His goodness and power are emphasized the most in Ephesians.

God’s goodness. God’s goodness is demonstrated in His love, grace, and mercy. First, Paul’s preaching shows that God acts on the basis of love.⁴³ In his discussion of the purpose of Ephesians, Hoehner contends that even though unity is a very prominent theme in Ephesians, true unity is accomplished when people love one another. According to him, the theme of love has a dominant place within Ephesians. The

⁴²Bruce, *Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 255. Newman also comments, “Though our incorporation into Christ by hearing and believing the Gospel commences the process of change, the full transformation awaits the future return of Jesus” (Newman, “Election and Predestination in Ephesians 1:4-6a,” 240).

⁴³The word “love” plays an important role in Ephesians. The noun form (ἀγάπη) is used nineteen times in the LXX, 116 times in the New Testament, seventy-five times in Paul’s letters, and ten times in the epistle to the Ephesians. The verb form (ἀγαπάω) is used 278 times in the LXX, 143 times in the New Testament, thirty-four times by Paul, and ten times in Ephesians. A proper concept of love for both ἀγάπη and ἀγαπάω is based on God’s unceasing love in which He extends it to the undeserving and unloving as seen in His continuing love for the sinner. For a broad analysis of the usages of love, see Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 180-182.

love of God which was shown through Christ should be the basis of Christian love.⁴⁴

Hoehner is right that genuine unity among believers only can find its ground in God's love. We will now examine how Paul preaches God's love in the epistle to the Ephesians.

Paul preaches that God made believers alive with Christ even when they were dead in transgression because of His great love: "But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved" (2:4-5). The love of God even raised believers up with Christ and seated them with Him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus (2:6). The intensity of God's love toward His people is underscored by the adjective "great" (πολλήν) and by the possessive pronoun "his" (αὐτοῦ) to show that it is "His great" love. The relative clause (ἣν ἡγάπησεν ἡμᾶς) signifies that the action of God's love is directed toward believers, which includes both Jews and Gentiles.⁴⁵ The specific action of this great love is further described in 2:5-6. God's love for the believer in Christ is focused on the love of Christ, which led to His self-sacrifice as a fragrant offering to God on behalf of His people (5:2, 25).

Second, Paul preaches that God's mercy is also the basis for making the believer alive, raising them up with Christ, and seating them with Himself in the heavenly places (2:4-6).⁴⁶ In the Old Testament God is frequently characterized in this way. God

⁴⁴Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 97-106.

⁴⁵O'Brien, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 166; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 327.

⁴⁶The term "mercy" (ἐλέος) appears 352 times in the LXX and 238 times in the canonical books translated from seven Hebrew words, but over 200 times it is from מֵסֶלֶם, meaning "steadfast, loyal, or covenantal love." In the New Testament it is used twenty-seven times, ten times in Paul's letters, and only once in this passage in Ephesians. For a

abounds in mercy (Exod 34:6; Ps 103:8; Jonah 4:2); indeed, He delights in mercy (Mic 7:8). Mercy often represents the Hebrew term *חֶסֶד*, which shows God's steadfast covenant loyalty to His people (1 Kgs 8:23; Ps 89:49; Isa 63:7). God shows mercy to people who are in a desperate, helpless situation (Exod 20:5-6; 34:6-7; Num 14:18-19; Deut 7:9-10). This is the divine attribute which motivates the salvation discussed in Ephesians 2.

In the New Testament the term "mercy" does not often occur. It is used twenty-seven times, ten times in Paul's letters, and only once in Ephesians.⁴⁷ In our present context it shows God's compassion on the sinners who are dead through their trespasses. Paul preaches that God demonstrates His abundant mercy toward undeserved sinners. Men and women, therefore, owe their salvation to the mercy and love of God who "demonstrates his own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom 5:8).

Third, Paul preaches that God's grace is the means of the believer's salvation (2:5, 8), and the surpassing wealth of God's grace is displayed in His kindness in Christ

study of the word *חֶסֶד*, see Gordon R. Clark, *The Word Hesed in the Hebrew Bible*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series, ed. David J. A. Clines and Philip R. Davies, no. 157 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993).

⁴⁷It also has the concept of compassion or pity on those who are suffering undeserved misfortune. Mercy demonstrated to another human being is illustrated in the good Samaritan's action (Luke 10:37) and is enjoined upon believers (Matt 9:13; 12:7; Jas 2:13; 3:17). It is also used in greetings (1 Tim 1:2; 2 Tim 1:2; 2 John 3; Jude 2) and a benediction (Gal 6:16). Except for the two Hebrew songs in Luke (1:50, 54, 72, 78), mercy in the New Testament does not refer to a covenant relationship but rather to loving-kindness, pity, or compassion toward those are suffering misfortune. For a study of the word in Greco-Roman times, see Bruce F. Harris, "The Idea of Mercy and Its Graeco-Roman context," in *God Who Is Rich in Mercy: Essays Presented to Dr. D. B. Knox*, ed. Peter T. O'Brien and David G. Peterson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1986), 89-105.

Jesus (2:7).⁴⁸ O'Brien rightly comments, "In raising and exalting Christ God demonstrated 'the *surpassing* greatness of his power' (1:19-20); in raising and exalting us he has also displayed 'the *surpassing* riches of his grace.'"⁴⁹ Grace is also a major theme in Ephesians. In the introductory eulogy (1:3-14) God lavished His grace on believers in Christ Jesus whom God loves (1:6-8). The riches of divine grace are the ultimate cause of our redemption (1:7) and provide the reason for that deliverance. Paul's receiving the gospel, his calling to minister to the Gentiles, and his ability to fulfill his missionary task were due to God's grace (3:2, 7-8). Paul emphatically proclaims that God's grace is the ground of salvation (2:8). Faith is only the means by which God's salvation is appropriated and not a work of merit.

God's power. There is a strong emphasis on the power of God given to Christ in His exaltation in Ephesians.⁵⁰ Paul preaches that the presence of God's power which was exerted in the life of Christ Jesus is now working in believers. On the basis of God's power operating in believers' lives, Paul exhorts believers to engage in spiritual warfare

⁴⁸The word "grace" (χάρις) occurs 164 times in LXX, seventy-nine times in the canonical books, and sixty-one translates ἡ. Grace in the New Testament refers to God's unmerited or undeserved favor in providing salvation for sinners through Christ's sacrificial death (1:7; 2:8). It also empowers believers to live holy lives (4:7, 29). This word is used 155 times in the New Testament. Paul uses it 100 times, and twelve times in Ephesians (1:2, 6, 7; 2:5, 7, 8, 3:2, 7, 8; 4:7, 29; 6:24). For a study of this word, see Hans Conzelmann and Walther Zimmerli, "χάρις," in *TDNT*, 9:372-402. Hans-Lelmut Esser, "Grace, Spiritual Gifts [χάρις]," in *NIDNTT*, 2:115-24.

⁴⁹O'Brien, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 172; cf. Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 338.

⁵⁰Arnold's study in Ephesians offers a thorough analysis of the spiritual milieu of power in Paul's days. See Clinton E. Arnold, *Ephesians: Power and Magic: The Concept of Power in Ephesians in Light of its Historical Setting*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 63, ed. G. N. Stanton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

against the powers of evil in this world. Paul demonstrates God's power in four ways in Ephesians. First, Paul preaches that the power of God raised Christ from the dead and seated Him at God's right hand (1:19-23). God's effective power towards believers (1:19) was the operation of His mighty strength exerted in the resurrection of Christ Jesus (Eph 1:20; Col 2:12; 1 Cor 6:14; Rom 1:4; Phil 3:10). With His power, God placed all things under Christ's feet and appointed Christ to be head over everything for the church (1:22). Paul makes these significant Christological statements for their ecclesiological impact. The church now shares in the resurrection power of Jesus Christ.⁵¹

Paul in this context understands God's power against the background of two different Psalms (110:1; 8:6, 8:7 [MT]), both of which were used in early Christian preaching.⁵² First, to understand the intention of Paul's quotation in these verses, we must go back to the messianic interpretation of Psalm 110:1, which proclaims, "The Lord says to my Lord: 'Sit at my right hand, till I will make your enemies your footstool.'"⁵³ In Acts 2:34-36, Peter quotes this prophecy in which David is alluding to the coming

⁵¹This verse should be understood within the whole context of Paul's prayer in 1:15-23. The goal of the prayer is that the audience will be made aware of and appropriate this unsurpassed power which is now available to them.

⁵²For a discussion of the use of Psalms 8 and 110 together in this context, see A. T. Lincoln, "The Use of the Old Testament in Ephesians," *JSNT* 14 (1982), 40-42; Thorsten Moritz, *A Profound Mystery: The Use of the Old Testament in Ephesians* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 9-22. Moritz thinks that the author of Ephesians has drawn the two Psalm passages together in a creative way, conscious of the Old Testament contexts of each and aware of "the intertextual relationship between Psalm 8 and the biblical creation accounts" (22).

⁵³Not everyone agrees that we can conduct messianic interpretation in Psalm 110:1. Best observes that "while Psalm 110 was probably not taken as messianic prior to Christianity, believers rapidly gave it this sense." Ernest Best, *Ephesians* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998), 172.

Messiah and proclaims that Jesus is the fulfillment of this prophecy and He is exalted as Lord and Christ. Jesus also claimed these words for Himself when He was brought to the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem (Matt 26:64; Mark 12:36; Luke 20:41-44) and depicted Himself seating at the right hand of God (Matt 26:64; Mark 14:62; Luke 22:69). Moritz observes that “the Psalm is eschatological in so far as it looks to the son sitting at the right of the father and this leading to the subjection of the enemies, and beyond.”⁵⁴

In the ancient world, the right side was identified with greatness, strength, and goodness.⁵⁵ To be at someone’s right hand means to be in the position of special honor and privilege (1 Kgs 2:19). In the Old Testament the Lord’s right hand implies the position of favor (Ps 80:18; Jer 22:24), victory (Ps 20:6; 44:3; Isa 41:10), and power (Exod 15:6; Ps 89:13; Isa 48:13). Thus, Christ’s position at God’s right hand indicates His exaltation far “above every ruler and authority and power and dominion” in heaven or on earth (1:20). Many scholars think that these rulers are angelic/demonic in character.⁵⁶ When Christ rules over all authorities, we are reminded of Isaianic prophecy. “In that day (בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא) the Lord will punish the powers in the heavens above and the kings on the earth below” (Isa 24:21). Paul elaborates that this prophecy was to occur

⁵⁴Moritz, *Profound Mystery*, 16.

⁵⁵David M. Hay, *Glory at the Right Hand: Psalm 110 in Early Christianity*, Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series 14 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1973), 23.

⁵⁶Peter O’Brien, “Principalities and Powers: Opponents of the Church,” in *Biblical Interpretation and the Church: Text and Context*, ed. D. A. Carson (Exeter: The Paternoster Press, 1984), 127-28; Walter Wink, *Naming the Powers: The Language of Power in the New Testament*, vol. 1, *The Powers* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 13-26; Arnold, *Ephesians*, 56. Some argue that the powers are not hostile to God or Christ, but this argument cannot be supported when we think of the context of Ephesians. According to Paul, these powers are evil and must be defeated. See the argument of Maclean, “Ephesians and the Problem of Colossians,” 156-59.

when the Messianic age was fulfilled in Christ, especially through His death, resurrection, and ascension. Therefore, Christ's exaltation high above everything indicates that the eschatological end-time has been inaugurated. According to Paul, Christ's rule is also over every name not only in the present age but also in the age to come. The age to come prophesied in the Old Testament has been inaugurated by the first coming of Christ and His death and resurrection, but not yet completely consummated, which shows Ephesians' realized eschatology.⁵⁷ As we have surveyed, Paul's preaching of God's placement of Christ at His right side demonstrates the fulfillment of the messianic prophecy in Psalm 110:1.

Psalm 8 also serves as a resource for Paul's development of the theme of divine power.⁵⁸ In Ephesians 1:22 Paul quotes Psalm 8:6 directly: "You have put all things under his feet." Paul preaches that Christ has not only been given a position of authority, seated at God's right hand, but He also can exercise that authority in the subjection of everything under His feet. Psalm 8 recalls the language of Genesis 1:26-28 when the Psalmist wonders about the honor which God has bestowed on human beings by giving them dominion over the works of His hands. In the New Testament the words of this Psalm are applied to Christ as the last Adam (1 Cor 15:27; Heb 2:6-9). Paul

⁵⁷O'Brien, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 143.

⁵⁸There may be several combinations of Pss 110:1 and 8:6 in Ephesians. Moritz observes some specific features of the use of the two Psalms (110:1; 8:6) in Ephesians. First, the sitting motif is related to a heavenly scene. Second, the subjection motif is connected with the headship of Christ over all things and the church. Third, the "enemies" (110:1) are clearly interpreted as evil powers and principalities (Eph 2:2). Fourth, as in 1 Cor 15:25, Ephesians displays an interest in the time span envisaged in the Psalm. Moritz, *Profound Mystery*, 10. The earliest combination like this occurs in 1 Cor 15:25-27. Other possibilities may be found in Heb 1:13 and 2:6-8; 1 Pet 3:22.

preaches that Christ fulfilled the promise given to Adam completely through His life.

Second, the power of God which raised Christ from dead and enthroned Him at God's right hand also raised the believers up with Christ and seated them with Him in the heavenly realms (2:6).⁵⁹ Paul preaches that believers' resurrection with Christ has already taken place (cf. Col 2:12; 3:1). It is the believers' union with Christ that gives them the right to sit with Christ in the heavenly places.⁶⁰ The certainty of believers' resurrection was emphasized by the two occurrences of the proposition "with": raised *with* Christ and seated *with* Christ. Dying and rising with Christ focuses particularly on being with Christ in the events of redemptive history.⁶¹

We can find Paul's explicit emphasis on realized eschatology here. Paul describes baptism as dying and rising with Christ in Romans 6:3-11 in which spiritual resurrection precedes and anticipates physical resurrection. "If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection"

⁵⁹We find a logical progression here: first, believers are made alive from the dead; second, they are resurrected with Christ; and third, then they are sitting in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus.

⁶⁰Mussner points out parallels in Qumran literature where community members thought they had already been cleansed from sin and had entered into the company of the eternal host (Franz Mussner, "Contributions Made by Qumran to the Understanding of the Epistle to the Ephesians," in *Paul and Qumran: Studies in New Testament Exegesis*, ed. and trans. Jerome Murphy-O'Connor [Chicago: Priory Press, 1968]), 166-67. Against this argument, Hoehner contends that even though there appear some similarities, the central thrust in the present context is that believers are in the heavenlies solely because of their relationship to Christ (Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 335; cf. Lincoln, "Re-Examination of 'the Heavenlies' in Ephesians," 473).

⁶¹O'Brien, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 171. He comments, "For men and women to have died and been raised with him means to be transferred from the old dominion to the new. The same point is made in Ephesians 2:6 with its focus on God's having raised believers in Christ Jesus." The language of believers' dying and rising with Christ Jesus appears in Rom 6:3-11 and Col 2:11-12, 20; 3:1, 3.

(Rom 6:5). But the purpose and effect of union with the risen Christ is that here and now: “we too may live as new life” (Rom 6:4). In Ephesians 2:6, however, Paul preaches that “God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus.” God has not only raised believers up with Christ in the sense of raising them from death to life, He has also raised them to His throne and seated them there with Christ. Bruce claims that “this might express a totally realized eschatology.”⁶² As the power of God which raised Jesus Christ and believers from the dead is now available to the Ephesian believers as they live in this world (cf. 2:10; 4:1, 17, 5:2, 8, 15), they have a position of superiority and authority over the evil power, but they are still exhorted to participate in a spiritual warfare. They must take their stand against the devil’s schemes (6:11), and struggle against the rulers of this dark world and the spiritual forces in the heavenly realms (6:12). Peter O’Brien notes the tension of the “already” and the “not-yet”:

The fact that believers conduct their lives in the world and have not yet experienced salvation in all its fullness but look forward to God’s lavishing the full abundance of his grace upon them in the coming age (2:7) shows that the eschatology of Ephesians is not wholly realized but has a future dimension to it as well.⁶³

Third, the power of God which raised Christ from the dead was also the power which conveys grace to the apostle: “I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God’s grace given me through the working of his power” (3:7). Paul confesses that through the working of God’s power, he became a minister of the gospel. The apostle does not simply focus on God’s powerful working to commission him as a missionary for

⁶²Bruce, *Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 287.

⁶³O’Brien, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 172.

the Gentiles, but also on God's provision of the Spirit to equip the believer for ministry.

Paul can experience the operation of God's power in the fulfillment of God's call.⁶⁴

Therefore, Paul's apostolic mission is not only initiated by God's enabling power but it is also the result of God's ongoing power.

Fourth, God's power is associated with strengthening the believer (3:16, 20).

In 3:16 Paul prays that God may strengthen the believers with power inwardly through His Spirit. God's mighty activity is stressed by two words of power: first by means of "strengthen" (κραταιόω), and then by the addition of the word "power" (δύναμις). God's mighty activity is further underscored by the following prepositional phrase διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος αὐτοῦ, the same Spirit who imparts wisdom and revelation for the believers to know God better in 1:17.⁶⁵ In the doxology to God, Paul praises God "who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us (3:20-21)." The same power of God who raised Christ from the dead, enthroned Him in the heavenlies, and then raised and enthroned believers with Him, is now at work within believers.

We have discussed how Paul preached God's personality, focusing on His goodness and power. God's goodness was manifested through His love, mercy, and

⁶⁴Bruce, *Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 317; O'Brien, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 239. God's subsequent enabling power also appears in the parallel passage: "To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me" (Col 1:29), and elsewhere in Paul's writings, especially 1 Cor 15:10: "But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me."

⁶⁵The agency of the Spirit in dispensing divine power is in line with other New Testament teaching where the Spirit and power are intimately connected (Luke 4:14; 24:49; Acts 1:8; Rom 1:4; 15:13, 19; 1 Cor 2:4; 1 Thess 1:5).

grace, which worked to bring salvation and unity among believers. God's power which raised Christ and enthroned Him in the heavenlies is the same power that raised and enthroned believers. Paul's preaching on God's power examined against the Old Testament background reveals how realized eschatology has been inaugurated in the believer's life.

Revelation of God

Paul preaches that God reveals Himself. Human knowledge of God is dependent upon the revelation of God. In 1:17 Paul prays that God may give believers the spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that they may know Him better.⁶⁶ The "revelation" word-group in the Synoptic gospels and Paul's epistles always describes a disclosure given by God, Christ, or the Holy Spirit. In this context it is likely referring to the revelatory work of the Holy Spirit.⁶⁷ Paul elsewhere preaches that the revelation was granted to him on his encounter with the risen Lord Jesus Christ on the Damascus road.⁶⁸

⁶⁶A similar petition also appears on behalf of the Colossians in Paul's prayer that "God may fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding" (1:9).

⁶⁷O'Brien, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 132. For example, Matt 11:25, 27; 16:17; Rom 2:5; 8:19; 1 Cor 1:7; 2:10; Gal 1:12, 16; Eph 3:5. Bruce notes that "the goal of this gift of wisdom and revelation is the personal knowledge of God" (Bruce, *Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 269).

⁶⁸Paul received the personal knowledge of God by revelation from Jesus Christ (Gal 1:12), and it was God who was pleased to reveal His Son to him (Gal 1:15-16). Caird, however, contends that "by revelation" does not refer to the Damascus road Christophany but to a "later experience of prophetic inspiration . . . particularly through the inspired reinterpretation of the Old Testament scriptures" (G. B. Caird, *Paul's Letters from Prison [Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon] in the Revised Standard Version*, New Clarendon Bible, ed. H. F. D. Sparks [London: Oxford University Press, 1976], 63-64). The present writer does not agree with Caird's suggestion of a "later

In Ephesians God's revelation was made known to believers mainly through the revelation of God's mystery.⁶⁹ As Herman Ridderbos notes, the revelation of the mystery is the real content of Paul's gospel, the object of the ministry which was entrusted to him.⁷⁰

Mystery as the revelation of God. Although some scholars see Paul's use of *μυστήριον* as influenced by Hellenistic mystery religions, most commentators find its background in the Old Testament concept of God's unfolding His secrets to men. George Eldon Ladd claims that the background of the mystery "is not that of the Hellenistic mystery religions of esoteric rites or teachings disclosed only to initiates of the cult by which the initiates became perfect (*teleios*) or spiritual (*pneumatikos*). The background is found in the Old Testament concept of God disclosing his secrets to human beings—a

experience of prophetic inspiration," but it is presumed that Paul would have naturally turned to the Old Testament and meditated upon those texts which spoke of God's mystery in a redemptive-historical perspective. Hoehner conjectures that it is possible that Paul received the revelation of the mystery at different stages (*Ephesians*, 427). Contra Caird, Seyoon Kim claims that Paul's revelation was granted to him at the Damascus experience in his encounter with the risen Christ where Paul was told to go to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15-16; 26:17-18; Gal 1:16). See Seyoon Kim, *The Origin of Paul's Gospel* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1981), 22-25; idem, *Paul and the New Perspective: Second Thoughts on the Origin of Paul's Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 239-57. For a position similar to Kim's argument, see G. Bornkamm, "The Revelation of Christ to Paul on the Damascus Road and Paul's Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation," in *Reconciliation and Hope*, ed. R. J. Banks (Grand Rapids: 1974), 90-103.

⁶⁹The noun ἀποκάλυψις ('revelation' in 3:3), the cognate verb ἀποκαλύπτω ('reveal' in 3:5), and the synonymous γνωρίζω ('make known' in 1:9; 3:3, 5, 10; 6:19) are also used in connection with various aspects of the mystery in Ephesians.

⁷⁰Herman Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*, trans. John Richard De Witt (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 47. He further states that "as the realized redemptive plan of God, this mystery is consequently the object of Paul's proclamation and of the revelation of God to his saints, and so forth."

concept that was further developed in Jewish literature.”⁷¹ In the LXX μυστήριον occurs in Daniel 2:18, 19, 27, 28, 29, 30, 47; 4:9.⁷² The term occurs in the context of Daniel’s interpretation of King Nebuchadnezzar’s dream. God unfolded the dream and its meaning to Daniel, and Daniel interpreted it to the king. The divine truths relating to the unfolding of world history was hidden. The revelation of the μυστήριον hidden in the king’s dream was that, in the end times, God would destroy the kingdom of evil and establish His own eternal kingdom. The same word also appears in the Qumran writings.⁷³ Besides referring to “mysteries of divine providence” (1QS 3:20; 4:18; 1AH 9:23-24; 1QM 14:14; 17:8-9; 1QpHab 2:1-2; 7:8, 13-14), cosmic (1QH 1:11-12, 21) and evil mysteries (1QS 5:6) also refer to the sect’s interpretation of the Hebrew Scriptures. Köstenberger indicates that the only similarity between Qumran and Daniel lies in the reference to knowledge of divine truth that had previously been hidden but is now revealed.⁷⁴

Of the twenty-seven times μυστήριον appears in the New Testament, twenty-one times it is used by Paul. Μυστήριον was used in a variety of ways, but Paul normally

⁷¹George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974; reprint, 2001), 421. Ladd thoroughly analyzes the term “mystery” used in the New Testament, especially “mystery” related with the kingdom of God in *The Gospel of the Kingdom: Scriptural Studies in the Kingdom of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959; reprint, 2003), 52-65. See also Raymond E. Brown, *The Semitic Background of the Term ‘Mystery’ in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1968); Andreas J. Köstenberger, “The Mystery of Christ and the Church: Head and Body, ‘One Flesh,’” *TJ* 12 (1991): 79-94.

⁷²Μυστήριον is used in both the θ’ version and the Old Greek. Daniel 4:9 is not extant in Old Greek, and this reading comes from θ’.

⁷³E. Vogt, “‘Mysteria,’ in textibus Qumran,” *Biblica* 37 (1956): 247-57; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 430.

⁷⁴Köstenberger, “Mystery of Christ and the Church,” 81.

employs the term with reference to the revelation of what was previously hidden but has now been disclosed by God (Eph 3:3, 5; Rom 16:25-26; 1 Cor 2:10; Col 1:26-27). The “mystery of God” in Paul’s letters focuses on salvation through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It cannot be understood through human knowledge but can be known only when God reveals it by His Spirit (3:5).⁷⁵ Even though there are different aspects of one mystery unfolded within Ephesians, the key motif of the mystery refers to God’s revelation that all things in heaven and on earth will be brought together in Christ.⁷⁶ Christ’s death and resurrection by which all barriers were broken down plays a basic role in unifying all things. Therefore, Christ is the key to the right understanding of the mystery in Ephesians.⁷⁷

In Ephesians Paul employs the term “mystery” six times (1:9, 3:3, 4, 9; 5:32; 6:19). First, in 1:9 Paul writes of making known the mystery of God’s will according to His pleasure which He purposed in Christ that in all things in heaven and on earth will be

⁷⁵In Rom 16:25 there is a correlation between the revelation of the mystery and Paul’s gospel and his proclamation of Jesus Christ. In Colossians μυστήριον refers to Christ, who is the heart of Paul’s message and has to do with the fulfillment of God’s plan of salvation in Christ here and now (1:26-27). The concept in Colossians of the mystery being the eschatological fulfillment of God’s plan of salvation in Christ also occurs in Ephesians (1:9, 3:3, 4, 9; 5:32; 6:19).

⁷⁶Caragounis, *Ephesian Mysterion*, especially 117-18.

⁷⁷Similarly, Snodgrass argues that the phrase “in Christ” is the key for understanding the mystery, for this phrase indicates a double union—union with Christ and union of Jews and Gentiles in Christ (*Ephesians*, 160). John Stott also argues that “in Christ” encapsulates the message of Ephesians. He writes, “To sum up, we may say that the ‘mystery of Christ’ is the complete union of Jews and Gentiles with each through the union of both with Christ. It is this double union, with Christ and with each other, which was the substance of the ‘mystery’” (John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Ephesians: God’s New Society*, The Bible Speaks Today, ed. J. A. Motyer and John R. W. Stott [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1979],).

brought together under Christ. Paul describes God's activity as a "bringing together" of all things in Christ.⁷⁸ God's summation of all things together shows that the new creation has been inaugurated in the life of the believers.

Second, in chapter three (3:3-9) the concept of mystery is most clearly developed.⁷⁹ In 3:3 Paul preaches that the mystery was made known to him by revelation and that he had written about it briefly before.⁸⁰ Where Paul wrote about this mystery before is an important question for understanding the mystery here. We might think of the previous context that speaks of both Jews and Gentiles as being members of the same body of Christ described in 2:11-22, which signifies God's work of new creation through His reconciliation in Christ.⁸¹

⁷⁸Caragounis comments, "The mysterion of Eph 1, therefore, is concerned with the final restoration of order in the universe when all revolting elements, together with those which maintained their allegiance, shall be reconstituted under Christ though with a different relation to Him" (*Ephesian Mysterion*, 117). Markus Bockmuehl thinks that the mystery of God's intention is to gather up everything in the fullness of the times in Christ. See Markus N. A. Bockmuehl, *Revelation and Mystery in Ancient Judaism and Pauline Christianity*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament, ed. Martin Hengel and Hofius, vol. 36 (Tübingen: Mohr, 1990), 199.

⁷⁹The term μυστήριον has been thoroughly discussed among New Testament scholars. Bornkamm, "μυστήριον," in *TDNT*, 4:802-28; Brown, *Semitic Background of the Term "Mystery" in the New Testament*; A. E. Harvey, "The Use of Mystery Language in the Bible," *JTS* 31 (1980): 320-36; Bockmuehl, *Revelation and Mystery in Ancient Judaism and Pauline Christianity*; 199-205, 223-30; Köstenberger, "Mystery of Christ and the Church: Head and Body, 79-94.

⁸⁰Bockmuehl thoroughly analyzes the relationship between revelation and mystery in Paul's epistles. See *Revelation and Mystery*, especially 228-30.

⁸¹Davies claims that Paul is referring to the few words about the mystery in Romans 16:25-27 (Llynfi Davies, "'I wrote afore in few words' [Eph. iii. 3]," *ExpTim* 46 [1936]: 568). But this is improbable because the Ephesian church would not have had a copy of Romans, and it is to the believers in Ephesus that Paul was writing this epistle. Bruce conjectures that Paul is referring to Col 1:25-27 where Paul's stewardship involves the unfolding to the Gentiles of the contents of that rich mystery, and the statement of Col

God's work of reconciliation in Ephesians 2:11-22 can be understood against the background of Isaiah 57:19, "Peace, peace to those far and near, says the Lord," as God promises healing and restoration to His people. Isaiah predicts that "peace" will be given to both "those far away" (τοῖς μακράν) and "those near" (τοῖς ἐγγύς).⁸² In this context those who are "near" refers to Jews at home and those who are "far" refers to Jews in the diaspora.⁸³ The original context indicates that this is a prophecy of the restoration of the whole of Israel, but Paul applies the former to Jews and the latter to the Gentiles in Ephesians 2:17. Here Paul "understands the Old Testament text to have reached a new level of fulfillment: Christ brings his messianic 'peace' to *Gentile* readers

1:25-27 is indeed "in brief" compared with the fuller long statement of Eph 3:2-13 (Bruce, *Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 312), but this is not persuasive because we do not know whether these readers had access to the epistle to the Colossians. Several commentaries accept that Paul is referring to 1:9-10 or to 2:11-22 (Barth, *Ephesians*, 329; Klyne Snodgrass, *Ephesians*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 160; O'Brien, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 229). This suggestion is more likely because Paul is referring to the mystery previously mentioned in the present letter, but in 1:9-10 Paul is referring to the mystery of God's will in a general sense rather than discussing specifically the mystery of the unity of Jews and Gentiles as members of God's household. Therefore, Paul is most likely alluding to 2:11-22, where he refers to Jews and Gentiles being created into one body of Christ. For this suggestion, see Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 175; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 428.

⁸²The repetition "peace, peace" in this prophecy of God is the Hebrew idiom to express what is superlative in kind and total in extent, the truest peace and peace to the fullest (Motyer, *Prophecy of Isaiah*, 477). On repetition as an idiom, see Isa 6:3, where "holy, holy, holy" means God's utmost holiness; Gen 14:10, where "pits, pits" is rendered "full of pits"; Deut 16:20, where "righteousness, righteousness" is rendered "the exactest righteousness"; 2 Kings 25:15, where "gold, gold" is rendered "pure gold."

⁸³Some comment that those that are near refer to Jews who belong to the covenant whereas those who are far refer to the Gentiles. See Edward Young, *The Book of Isaiah*, vol. 3, *Chapters 40-66* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965; reprint, 1996), 413; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 147.

and to Jews.”⁸⁴ Paul describes the mystery which was revealed to him in 3:6: “This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together of one body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus” (3:6). The gentiles are not being incorporated into Israel; they become part of a new people of God. “It refers to the acceptance of the Gentiles on the same basis as the Jews.”⁸⁵ Therefore, when Paul speaks of the mystery, it is that believing Jews and Gentiles are now one in the body of Christ.

When was this mystery of God completely revealed? Paul writes that “you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God’s holy apostles and prophets” (3:4-5). Does Paul mean that he preaches a brand new message unknown and unrevealed in the Old Testament? Harold Mare claims that Paul does not mean that the basic facts of this truth were not included in the Old Testament.⁸⁶ This mystery was written in kernel form in the Old Testament, but it was not fully comprehended until the times of the New Testament.⁸⁷ Therefore, Paul’s gospel that “the

⁸⁴O’Brien, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 207. For a discussion of the use of Isa 57:19 in Eph 2:17, see Lincoln, “Use of the OT in Ephesians,” 22-30; idem, *Ephesians*, 146-48; Moritz, *Profound Mystery*, 42-55.

⁸⁵Caragounis, *Ephesian Mystery*, 118.

⁸⁶Mare provides two reasons: first, there are indications in both Testaments that the Gentiles were to be partakers of the same salvation in which the covenant people of God of the Old Testament participated. Second, Paul in using μυστήριον of the Gentiles in Eph 3 does not mean to deny the fact of the inclusion of this truth in the writings of the Old Testament. W. Harold Mare, “Paul’s Mystery in Ephesians 3,” *Bulletin of the Evangelical Theological Society* 8 (1965): 81-82.

⁸⁷Ibid., 83. Mare interprets this as redemptive-historical perspective: “We thank God for the progressive revelation of His Word, for His plan of redemption conceived by Him in ages past and made known in and through the Scriptures” (84).

Gentiles become heirs together with Israel” (3:6) is not an innovation because the Old Testament already looked forward to the saving purpose of God in which Gentiles along with Israelites would be embraced.

In what sense, then, could it be said that this mystery was a new revelation? It is because both Jews and Gentiles are incorporated into the church by faith.⁸⁸ Since the old distinction between Jews and Gentiles is removed, the Gentiles are accepted to be the body of Christ on the same basis as the Jews.⁸⁹ Even though the Gentile’s incorporation into the true Israel is not totally unrevealed in the Old Testament, the fulfillment of this mystery in the New Testament is unexpected. Hoehner rightly comments:

In the OT Gentiles could be a part of the company of God, but they had to become Jews in order to belong to it. In the NT Gentiles do not become Jews nor do Jews become Gentiles. Rather, both believing Jews and Gentiles become one new entity, Christians (Eph 2:15-16). This is the mystery.⁹⁰

Incorporation of the believing Gentiles into the true Israel, the one body of Christ, shows Paul’s eschatological understanding of Old Testament prophecy. Isaiah 2:2-4 (cf. Micah 4:1-4) predicts that the Gentiles will be finally gathered into God’s kingdom, and that it will occur “in the last days” (בְּאַחֲרֵית הַיָּמִים). “In the last days” is

Markus Bockmuehl also indicates that God’s revelation should be read as “a salvation historical orientation of the mystery” (*Revelation and Mystery in Ancient Judaism and Pauline Christianity*, 199).

⁸⁸O’Brien notes, “The *manner* in which that purpose would come to fruition—by incorporation of both Jews and Gentiles into the body of Christ—was not made known” (*Letter to the Ephesians*, 232).

⁸⁹Caragounis, *Ephesian Mysterion*, 118.

⁹⁰Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 434. Markus Barth also notes that the message was not to the Gentiles at the Jews’ expense nor to the Jews at the Gentiles’ expense, but that Christ’s sacrifice was for both sides, and they are both joined together in Christ (Markus Barth, “Conversion and Conversation.” *Interpretation* 17 [1963], 11-12).

known as “the day of the Lord” bringing both judgment (2:12-21), victory leading to peace (9:1-7), and the consummation and enjoyment of God’s rule (Hos 3:5).⁹¹ Paul preaches that through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled. Ridderbos comments that “the eschatological nature of the content of [Paul’s] preaching is apparent . . . For this mystery has reference to the purpose of God with a view to the fullness of the times (Eph 1:9, 10).”⁹² Raymond Brown observes that the disclosure of truth was itself a proleptic experience of the age to come.⁹³

Third, in 6:19 Paul asks believers to pray for his ministry of “making known the mystery of the gospel.” Earlier in Ephesians Paul explained the content of this mystery which has been revealed to him (1:9, 17-23; 3:3-10). The central message of this mystery is the reconciliation and unity of Jews and Gentiles in the one body of Christ (2:11-22). Paul asks believers to pray for him to preach this mystery of the gospel fearlessly.

Finally, after quoting Genesis 2:24 in 5:31, Paul describes: “This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church” (5:32 NASB).⁹⁴ What is the mystery in this context? There are three possible interpretations. First, it could refer to the “sacrament” of marriage. Second, it could be the union of Christ and the church itself.

⁹¹Motyer, *Prophecy of Isaiah*, 54.

⁹²Ridderbos, *Paul*, 47.

⁹³Brown, *Semitic Background of the Term “Mystery” in the New Testament*.

⁹⁴It is better to regard μέγα as a predicate adjective in this context and translate it “this mystery is great” (ASV, NASB), with the τοῦτο modifying μυστήριον, than as an attributive adjective and translate it, “this is great mystery” (AV, RSV, NIV, NRSV). The former stresses the magnitude, importance, or profundity of the mystery, while the latter stresses the difficulty in understanding the mystery (Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 775).

Third, it could refer to the typological relationship between marriage and the union of Christ and the church. The first interpretation takes “mystery” in Ephesians 5:32 as a reference to the marriage relationship. Roman Catholic theologians have regarded it as speaking of human marriage on the basis of their sacramental theology. The Vulgate rendered μυστήριον as “sacramentum,” and interprets the institution of marriage as a sacrament of the church that conveys grace. Therefore, the Roman Catholic sacrament of marriage views the marriage of a Christian man and woman as a reenactment of the marriage of Christ and the church. Markus Barth notes, “The Christians who support the equation of marriage with a sacrament intend to say that marriage is a means of grace by which man and woman participate in the mystery of creation, incarnation, redemption, reconciliation, perfection.”⁹⁵ According to this view, Ephesians 5:22-33 teaches the mystical nature of marriage. This view cannot be supported because there is nothing in marriage itself as an institution that mystically dispenses divine grace.

The second interpretation takes this “mystery” as a direct reference to the union of Christ and his church.⁹⁶ This interpretation is more consistent with regard to the content of the term μυστήριον within Ephesians. This interpretation, however, fails to consider the correspondence between marriage and the Christ-church relationship

⁹⁵Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, 747. Barth criticizes the “sacramental view” of marriage with three inaccuracies. See also Köstenberger, “Mystery of Christ and the Church,” 86-87; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 776-77.

⁹⁶J. Paul Sampley, *‘And the Two Shall Become One Flesh’: A Study of Traditions in Ephesians 5:21-33* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971) contends that “this mystery” points to a certain aspect of the marital union, that is, “the two shall become one flesh,” which ties in with the Christ-church relationship (86). Many commentators take this approach. Caragounis, *Ephesian Mysterion*, 30; Lincoln, “Use of the OT in Ephesians,” 30-36; Best, *Ephesians*, 557; Köstenberger, “Mystery of Christ and the Church,” 79-94.

throughout the paragraph.⁹⁷ Peter O'Brien rightly comments, "The mystery refers to the relationship between *Christ and the church as a typology of marriage*."⁹⁸ Genesis 2:24 affirms that marriage makes husband and wife one body, and it explains the union between Christ and the church. Lincoln observes that "Christ had already been seen in Adamic terms in Eph 1:22 . . . and so a text that refers to Adam's bodily union can now be claimed for Christ's union with the Church."⁹⁹ The parallels between the two can be best understood in terms of typology. Therefore, Christ and the church in a loving relationship is the paradigm of understanding the loving relationship between the Christian husband and wife. When Paul proclaims, "This mystery is great," he does not point to a deeper meaning of Genesis 2:24, but to Christ and the church in a loving relationship previously unknown but now revealed in the New Covenant.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷O'Brien, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 432.

⁹⁸*Ibid.*

⁹⁹Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 382. Lincoln elsewhere notes, "Through his citation and interpretation of Gen. 2:23 in 5:31, 32 the writer stresses both the union of Christ and the Church and marital unity" (A. T. Lincoln and A. J. M. Wedderburn, *The Theology of the Later Pauline Letters* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993], 123). Ortlund also observes, "The first Adam's love for his wife as *one flesh* with himself and the last Adam's love for his own bride, his body, are . . . the typology [that] serves Paul's pastoral purpose of providing a model for Christian marriage which is grounded in primeval human origins and reflective of ultimate divine reality" (Raymond C. Ortlund, *Whoredom: God's Unfaithful Wife in Biblical Theology* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996], 156).

¹⁰⁰Bruce follows a deeper meaning of this Scripture: "So here, Gen. 2:24, which on the surface explains why a man will leave his parents' home and live with his wife, is taken to convey a deeper, hidden meaning, a 'mystery,' which could not be understood until Christ" (*Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 394). Markus Bockmuehl also suggests that "we are here dealing with an *exegetical* mystery: a deeper (in this case either allegorical or prophetic) meaning of a Scriptural text which has been elicited by means of some form of inspired exegesis" (*Revelation and*

“Both the OT passage and the marriage relationship of which it speaks are connected with the mystery, but their connection is that they point to the secret that has now been revealed, that of the relationship between Christ and the church.”¹⁰¹ Paul’s perspective of the Christian marriage as the union of Christ and the church is grounded in the Old Testament, where marriage was used typologically of the relationship between God and His covenant people, Israel (Isa 54:5-8; Jer 2:1-3; 31:31-32; Ezek 23; Hos 1-3). Paul’s understanding of the mystery of the union of Christ and the church reflected in a Christian marriage shows his “salvation-historical perspective moving from creation to new creation and a focus on the gospel mystery of Christ and the church.”¹⁰²

In this section we have examined how Paul preached God’s revelation mainly focusing on God’s revelation of the mystery. To understand the content of the mystery revealed to Paul and all believers in the New Testament we have surveyed its Old Testament backgrounds in four different passages. Our study shows how different aspects of the mystery are used to disclose the revelation of God. We also have examined how the mysteries in four different passages show Paul’s eschatological understanding. In his discussion of various mysteries of Ephesians, Sampley notes, “God’s ultimate purpose is

Mystery in Ancient Judaism and Pauline Christianity, 204). See for the similar arguments, Barth, *Ephesians*, 643-45; G. Bornkamm, ‘μυστήριον,’ TDNT 4 (1967): 823; Raymond E. Brown, *The Semitic Background of the Term ‘Mystery’* 65. Brown admits that we cannot find any “perfect parallel” for this sense in the New Testament (66). G. W. Dawes rightly claims that μυστήριον here does not signify a “hidden meaning of a scriptural passage.” He goes so far as to say that although Gen 2:24 is alluded to, there is no indication that the author wants to draw attention to its scriptural origin (*Body in Question*, 179-80).

¹⁰¹Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 381.

¹⁰²O’Brien, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 434.

an eschatological and cosmic one.”¹⁰³ God united all things in Christ, things in heaven and on earth (1:10), and the bringing of the Gentiles into a place of being “heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus” (3:6) is the first sign of the final fulfillment and unification. The complete fulfillment of God’s unification will occur: “in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus” (2:6). “Mystery” in 5:32 also contains a consistent meaning with the other use of “mystery” in Ephesians. Caragounis rightly comments that there are not many mysteries within Ephesians, but one and the same supreme mystery with a number of applications, which is God’s mysterion in Christ.¹⁰⁴ Mystery in Ephesians is not only “the real content of Paul’s gospel” but it shows “the fulfillment of the eschatological promise of redemption.”¹⁰⁵

The Glory of God

The glory of God in Ephesians. In Ephesians God works everything ultimately to manifest His own glory.¹⁰⁶ “Glory” translates the Old Testament כְּבוֹד,

¹⁰³Sampley, *‘And The Two Shall Become One Flesh,’* 93.

¹⁰⁴Caragounis, *Ephesian Mysterion*, 143.

¹⁰⁵Ridderbos, *Paul*, 47.

¹⁰⁶In the LXX δόξα (“glory”) was used 448 times, in the canonical books 276 times, mostly translated from the Hebrew word, כְּבוֹד. This word was used to signify God’s great name (Pss 66:2 [LXX 65:2]; 79:9 [LXX 78:9]) or to refer to the greatness of God’s deity (Pss 29:1-3 [LXX 28:1-3]; 96:7-8 [LXX 95:7-8]; 115:1 [LXX 113:9]; Isa 42:12; Jer 13:16) (Gerhard von Rad, “δόξα.” *TDNT*, 2:241). In the New Testament this word is used 166 times, seventy-seven times by Paul, and eight times in the epistle to the Ephesians. In the New Testament it is predominantly used to refer to God’s glory.

which signifies the honor, majesty, and sovereignty of God, or more specifically, the radiance of God's presence in the cloud of His appearance. The three similar references to the goal of God's decision and work "to the praise of His glory" occur in Ephesians 1:6, 12, 14. Paul indicates that God chose believers to the praise of His glory (1:6, 12). The praise of God's glory is the object not only of the Jewish Christians but also of Gentile believers (1:14). Markus Barth indicates that all theological themes in Ephesians are employed to manifest God's glory.¹⁰⁷ According to Paul, the Christian's reason for being is to praise the glory of God for what He has done for humanity through the work of Jesus Christ. The praise of God's glory which is the ultimate goal of God's decision and work has its antecedents in the Old Testament. God works for the glory of His name (Isa 43:6, 7, 21; 48:9-11; 49:3; Jer 14:7; Ps 79:9; Ezek 16:59-63).

In 1:14 Paul also expresses that the praise of God's glory is the ultimate object for Gentile believers who are sealed with the Holy Spirit, just as those who first placed their hope in Christ (1:12). For both Gentile believers and Jewish believers, the glory of God is the final aim of the whole economy of salvation. Bruce observes that there is perhaps an echo of Old Testament language, especially of Isaiah 43:20-21, where God speaks of "the people I formed for myself that they may proclaim my praise."¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷Barth, *Ephesians*, 42. He further comments: "It appears that this epistle explicitly supports the Calvinistic *solī Deo Gloria*. In the recognized Pauline letters the elements of prayer, praise, and joy are not completely absent, but the equation of theology with doxology is unique to Ephesians."

¹⁰⁸Bruce, *Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 267. Markus Barth suggests three tenuous parallels to this statement: Isaiah 62:7 proclaims, "He [the Lord] establishes Jerusalem and makes it a praise in the earth"; Deuteronomy 26:19 asserts, "[The Lord] will set you high above all nations that he has made, in praise and in fame and in honor"; Jeremiah 13:11 affirms the expectation "that they might be for

Paul's description of God's glory signifies important characteristics of God.

First of all, Paul preaches that God Himself is glory (1:17). Since God is the source of all true glory, He may well be called "the Father of glory," "the Lord of glory" (Num 24:11; 1 Cor 2:8), "the king of glory" (Ps 24:7-10 [LXX 23:7-10]), or He can be called "the God of glory" (Ps 29:3; Acts 7:2). Since glory has the idea of reflection of the essence of God's being, we think of God's reputation in terms of splendor and power.¹⁰⁹ As God's essential being is glory, Paul exhorts the believer who represents God's image to glorify God, reflecting God's essential being.¹¹⁰

Second, as God is glory, believers who are redeemed by His grace and mercy are also glorious (1:18).¹¹¹ Some commentators suggest that the reference in this verse is to the inheritance which God will provide for believers.¹¹² This is unlikely, however, because, as the possessive pronoun αὐτοῦ shows, it is God's inheritance. Therefore, it is better to understand that this inheritance belongs to God, that is, God's redeemed people

me a people, a name, a praise and a glory" (Barth, *Ephesians*, 114).

¹⁰⁹The New Testament follows the LXX in the sense of "reputation" and "power" and further it also signifies the "divine mode of being" referring to divine honor, splendor, power, and radiance (Gerhard Kittle, "δόξα," in *TDNT* 2:247-48). For a thorough discussion, see Carey C. Newman, *Paul's Glory-Christology: Tradition and Rhetoric*, Supplements to Novum Testamentum, vol. 69, ed. C. K. Barrett et al. (Leiden: Brill, 1992).

¹¹⁰Paul elsewhere declares that eating and drinking and all other human actions, including abstention, are to praise the glory of God (1 Cor 10:31; Rom 15:6).

¹¹¹Paul prays, "I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints."

¹¹²Schnackenburg, *Ephesians*, 75; Stott, *Message of Ephesians*, 56-57. In addition, some Bibles read that the preposition ἐν is translated "among" (NEB, JB, NRSV), signifying that believers have an inheritance of their portion in heaven in the future.

rather than God's inheritance that He bestows.¹¹³ Thus, the people God chose, redeemed, and adopted are God's inheritance, God's own possession. F. F. Bruce rightly comments, "That God should set such high value on a community of sinners, rescued from perdition and still bearing too many traces of their former state, might well seem incredible were it not made clear that he sees them in Christ, as from the beginning he chose them in Christ."¹¹⁴ This is a glory in which all believers will participate, both now (1:18) and fully on the last day (2:7; Col. 1:27; 3:4; 2 Thess 2:14).¹¹⁵

Glory of God in light of eschatological new creation. How can the glory of God be interpreted in light of the eschatological new creation? The glory of God can be

¹¹³Caragounis, *Ephesian Mystery*, 66; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 59-60; O'Brien, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 135. Bruce comments, "'In glorious wealth of his inheritance in the saints' has been alluded to in v. 11, according to which believers have been 'claimed by God as his portion' in Christ, and v. 14, where God will redeem his possession on the day of consummation" (*Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 270). In the Old Testament God's inheritance is often a synonym for His people, Israel (Deut 4:20; 9:26, 29; 2 Sam 21:3; 1 Kgs 8:51, 53; Ps 28:9; 33:12; 78:62, 71; 106:5, 40; Isa 19:25; 47:6; 63:17; Jer 10:16; 51:19).

¹¹⁴Bruce, *Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 270. Bruce goes on to indicate, as this is true of all believers who are in Christ, they are exhorted to accomplish God's eternal purpose through their lives "as the first fruits of the reconciled universe of the future, in order that their lives may be in keeping with this high calling and that they may accept in grateful humility the grace and glory thus lavished on them" (271).

¹¹⁵To believers, even suffering is also glory (3:13). In Ephesians suffering is the prelude to glory as is well shown in Christ's suffering before His being resurrected and exalted. The fact that suffering becomes glory can be understood in the latter-day new creation of God (Greg K. Beale, "The Eschatological Concept of New Testament," in *The Reader Must Understand: Eschatology in Bible and Theology*, ed. K. E. Brower and M. W. Elliott [Leicester: Apollos, 1997], 42-43). Suffering is rooted in the prophecy of Dan 7, where the Son of Man, representing true Israel, must suffer persecution and Paul links the church's suffering as the body of Christ with her identification with Christ's affliction (cf. Col 1:24). Christian suffering as a result of persecution is an essential feature of the inaugurated end-time tribulation.

traced against the backdrop of the Old Testament. At the outset of creation God placed the cherubim and the fire in the Garden of Eden to display His glory among men (Gen 3:24). God manifested Himself to Noah, and His glory was continuously manifested to the patriarchs (Gen 6:8; 15:1-18; 32:24-32; 50:24-25). At Sinai and for more than a thousand years thereafter, the glory of God dwelt in the moving tabernacle among the children of Israel (Exod 40:34-38). Once the people came into the Promised Land, the glory of the Lord continued to abide in the tabernacle until the temple was erected. Christiaan Beker observes that glory “refers most prominently to the quality of the messianic age.”¹¹⁶ Isaiah emphasizes its eschatological character as the glorious manifestation of God’s presence: “Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. And the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it” (Isa 40:4-5).

In the New Testament the glory of God was clearly revealed through the life of Jesus Christ. When the time had fully come (Gal 4:4), the glory of God made permanent dwelling in the flesh and appeared on the earth among people (John 1:14; Col 1:15; Col 2:9). Through the coming of Christ, culminating in His death and resurrection, the full glory of God was revealed to people. Then, in the person of the Spirit, the Son of God manifested His glory in a new community of believers called “the church,” which is a new creation (Eph 2:11-22). The Bible witnesses that God’s glory was demonstrated from the beginning of the creation in the Old Testament, but God’s glorious presence will be with His people in a greater way than ever before at the very end of history in the new

¹¹⁶J. Christiaan Beker, *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 282.

creation. The inaugurated new creation in Christ allowed believers to experience the intimate presence of God, but His full glory will be fully experienced only in the consummated new creation (Rev 21:3; 22:4). Believers are, therefore, living between the times, characterized by the “already” of a full revelation of God’s glory, but the “not-yet” of its completed revelation in the second coming of Christ.

In this section we have examined how Paul preached the glory of God. God works everything for His ultimate glory; His election, predestination, and redemption work for His glory so that believers praise His glory. God’s unifying work in Christ, especially His reconciliation between Jews and Gentiles, is to praise His grace and power. According to Paul, God’s people are also glorious because God Himself is glory. The glory of God has been manifested everywhere in the Scriptures, and it was revealed more fully by the life of Jesus Christ, the incarnated presence of God. Believers, however, are waiting to have such intimate relationship that they can see God’s glory face to face in the completion of this age.

Paul’s Preaching on Jesus Christ

Introduction

The central message of Paul’s preaching in Ephesians is that God has provided the spiritual blessings of unity and reconciliation to humanity *by the work of Christ’s death and resurrection* through the Holy Spirit, so that believers can live the Christian life worthy of their calling for God’s glory. According to Paul, Christ is described as the major agent by whom God has accomplished His work. Through Christ’s life, especially His death and resurrection, God has fulfilled His prophecies promised in the Old Testament. Herman Ridderbos correctly states that “the center of Paul’s gospel may

rightly be sought in Christ's death and resurrection," and this can be confirmed in his own pronouncements.¹¹⁷ It is true when we read 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 where Paul preaches the essence of the gospel: "For I delivered to you as of first importance that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures."

Paul demonstrates in Ephesians what Jesus Christ has done through His death and resurrection. Not only Christ's cross and His subsequent resurrection and all spiritual blessings following His redemptive work, but rich and unique portraits of Jesus Christ are offered in Ephesians. As the resurrected one, Jesus is alive, sitting in the heavenly realms (2:6); He is the instrument through which God bestows "incomparable riches of his grace in kindness" (2:7) to the redeemed; He is the agent and locus of reconciliation for separated groups of humanity (2:11-22); He is the provider of gifts for works of God's ministry (4:12); He is the mediator in whom God forgave our sins (1:17; 4:32); He is the mediator through whom believers pray to the Father (2:18; 5:20). Christ is not only the cosmic head of all things but also head of the church. Redemption from sin, reconciliation to God and to each other, and access to the Father are accomplished through Christ Jesus. The focus of this chapter will be to examine Paul's preaching of Jesus Christ by specially analyzing his use of the Old Testament. Our discussion will focus on two facts: first, Paul's preaching regarding the identity of Jesus Christ; second, Paul's preaching of the work of Jesus Christ.

¹¹⁷Ridderbos, *Paul*, 54. The author also writes, "The whole content of this [Paul's] preaching can be summarized as the proclamation and explication of the eschatological time of salvation inaugurated with Christ's advent, death, and resurrection" (44).

Person of Jesus Christ

Christ Jesus as the Son of God. Ephesians 1:13 and 17 state that God is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, demonstrating that, while they are one, Christ is distinct from God the Father and also affirming Christ as the Son of God. In 4:13 Paul specifically describes Christ Jesus as the Son of God. According to Paul, the final goal of believers is to attain to “the unity of the faith, of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.” The particular object of knowledge which believers are to reach is the Son of God. The genitive (τοῦ Θεοῦ) is a possessive genitive which signifies that Christ belongs to the Father. Although the phrase “Son of God” is manifested in many New Testament passages (Matt 3:17; 17:5; 22:41-45; Mark 1:11; 9:7; 12:35-37; Luke 3:22; 9:35; 20:41-44; Acts 2:34-35; Heb 1:13; 10:12-13), this is the only place in Ephesians where Christ is called the Son of God.

This name may be understood against the background of the Old Testament. Hosea 11:1 states, “When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.” This statement is a reference to the exodus of Israel from Egypt (Exod 4:22-23).¹¹⁸ Matthew quotes it typologically to indicate that the prophecy was pointing toward Jesus and fulfilled in Jesus (Matt 2:16). This is a demonstration that Christ, as the Son of God, is the true Israel, and in Him the promises given to Israel are beginning to be fulfilled. Therefore, those who belong to Christ are identified with true Israel, and can claim an inheritance in the promise to Israel.

Daniel 7:13 also depicts the “Son of Man” (υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου) as a divine figure

¹¹⁸“Then say to Pharaoh, ‘This is what the Lord says: Israel is my firstborn son, and I told you, ‘Let my son go, so he may worship me’” (Exod 4:22-23).

because of His coming “with the clouds,” which imagery was used elsewhere in the Old Testament of God.¹¹⁹ With the phrase “Son of Man,” Jesus intended to reveal Himself as the divine figure of Daniel 7, who was the inclusive representative of God’s eschatological people.¹²⁰ Paul saw the man Jesus as the exalted One and described Him as Son of God. Through His death and resurrection, Christ was exalted high above everything and seated at the right hand of God in the heavenly realms (Eph 1:20-21).

Christ Jesus as the Lord. According to Paul’s preaching, Christ is called the

¹¹⁹Dan 7:13-14 shows that this prophecy is messianic: “In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.” Moritz observes that Dan 7 may be the earliest interpretation of Ps 110, which suggests that the Psalm was understood as referring to heaven long before Christianity arrived. The author indicates that Ps 110 and Dan 7:9-27 are the only texts to combine the following elements: thrones are placed in the heavenly court, with God sitting on one of them; The son is invited and brought before God and receives authority, glory, and judgment is passed on the kingdoms of the nations; the enemies are being destroyed; the resulting kingdom lasts eternally. See Moritz, *Profound Mystery*, 16.

¹²⁰Jesus used the term “Son of Man” as a self-designation, which emphasizes His understanding of Himself as representative of humanity, which is expressed as a “second Adam” in Paul’s language (Rom 5; 1 Cor 15). One of the earliest instances of Jesus’ use of this phrase is in Matt 9:6 [=Mark 2:10], where Jesus proclaims “The Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins.” Jesus’ self-designation of “Son of Man” as the one who has divine prerogatives appears in Mark 2:28 [Matt 12:8; Luke 6:5]: “The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.” The ultimate roots of “Son of Man” are under debate, but some scholars find its roots from Daniel. Ned Stonehouse claims, “For some fifty years there has been a remarkable consensus of opinion supporting the judgment that the message concerning the Son of Man, and to a slightly lesser extent the kingdom associated with his coming, is derived from, or finds its ultimate Biblical background, in the Book of Daniel” (Ned B. Stonehouse, *The Witness of Matthew and Mark to Christ* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979], 251). For more recent discussion, see C. C. Caragounis, *The Son of Man* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1986); Seyoon Kim, *The Son of Man as the Son of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983).

Lord. This title is the most frequently used in Ephesians (1:2, 3, 15, 17; 2:21; 3:11; 4:1, 5, 17; 5:8, 10, 17, 19, 20, 22; 6:1, 4, 7, 8, 10, 21, 23, 24). Κύριος is used around 8400 times in the LXX and translates אֲדֹנָי, אֲדֹנֵי, or יְהוָה.¹²¹ It occurs 717 times in the New Testament, 274 times in Paul's epistles and twenty-six times in Ephesians. Twenty-six times κύριος refers to Jesus, and twice it refers to masters of slaves (6:5, 9).¹²² Κύριος, which translated the name Yahweh in the Old Testament, was Paul's designation of Jesus Christ.¹²³ In Ephesians Paul preaches Jesus Christ as Lord who bestows every spiritual blessing (1:3), in whom God's new creation, the holy temple, is growing (2:21). God's eternal purpose has been accomplished in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Jesus is the Lord who fills the whole universe with His sovereign rule (1:23; 4:10), and who has been given to the church as head of all believers (1:23; 4:15, 16). This name can be best understood in

¹²¹Gottfried Quell and Werner Foerster, "κύριος," in *TDNT* 3:1058-59. Κύριος cannot be restricted to the one function of being a terminology for God. Sometimes it is also used of men as well as God, like the אֲדֹנָי, in the respectful term of address of אֲדֹנֵי (Gen 19:2) (ibid., 1058).

¹²²There are three ways of its usage in the New Testament. First, it reflects the secular usage as the "lord or "owner" of a vineyard (Matt 21:40 = Mark 12:9 = Luke 20:13), master over slaves (Matt 10:24-25; John 13:16; 15:20; Eph 6:5, 9; Col 3:22; 4:1), or a political leader (Acts 25:26). Second, it refers to God. This usage is seen particularly in the numerous New Testament quotations from the Old Testament where κύριος signifies Yahweh (Rom 4:8 = Ps 32:2; Rom 9:28-29 = Isa 10:22-23; Rom 10:16 = Isa 53:1). Third, it is used of Jesus as κύριος. This is the case in Paul's letters. Jesus is κύριος whom God raised from the dead and seated at God's right hand in the heavenly places (Eph 1:20) and called Lord in Eph 1:17.

¹²³Although κύριος was used to refer to God in Paul's letters, this name was used even before Jesus' ascension. When Thomas saw the risen Christ he exclaimed, "My Lord and my God" (Ὁ κύριός μου καὶ ὁ θεός μου, John 20:28). Peter also called this name in his sermon, "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36).

light of Psalm 110:1.¹²⁴ David calls the coming Messiah “my Lord (אֲדֹנָי),” and Acts quotes this to indicate that Jesus is the fulfillment of this Messianic prophecy. Preaching on David’s prophecy, Peter proclaims:

Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said, “The Lord said to my Lord: ‘Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet’” . . . God has made this Jesus . . . both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:33-36).

Through Christ’s death and resurrection, God exalted Jesus as Lord and Christ. Paul shares with other Christians the conviction that Jesus Christ is Lord on the basis of His resurrection and exaltation to the place of highest honor.¹²⁵ Paul expresses intensely personal relationship when he speaks of the risen Jesus as “our Lord Jesus Christ” (1:3; 17; 3:11; 5:20; 6:24).¹²⁶

¹²⁴Ps 110:1 is the most frequently cited Old Testament verse in the New Testament. For example, Matt 22:44; Mark 12:36; Luke 20:42; Acts 2:34. Part of the verse is also quoted in Heb 1:13 and 1 Cor 15:25. For its use in Ephesians, see Moritz, *Profound Mystery*, 9-22.

¹²⁵O’Brien, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 283. “Lord” is sometimes used of the earthly life of Jesus (1 Cor 2:9; Gal 1:19), but normally the title refers to the heavenly, ascended Lord (Eph 6:9; Col 4:1) who died (Gal 6:14; 1 Cor 11:26), was raised from the dead (1 Cor 6:14; 2 Cor 4:14), and will come again (1 Thess 4:15, 16; 1 Cor 4:5). For further details, see L. W. Hurtado, “Lord,” in *Dictionary of Paul’s Letters*, ed., Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 560-69. Paul’s conviction of that Jesus is Lord appears elsewhere in 1 Cor 8:6; 12:3; Rom 10:9; 14:8, 9; Phil 2:9-11.

¹²⁶The genitival prepositional phrase “of our Lord Jesus Christ” denotes four things: (1) His personal relationship to the believer (“our Lord”); (2) his name (“Jesus”); (3) his Lordship (“Jesus is Lord” was an early confession of the church); (4) his title (“Christ”), which is more than just a name, it denotes that He is the promised Messiah who would bring salvation (Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 164). Ladd indicates that this relationship is not only personal and individualistic, it is also a relationship enjoyed by the church as a whole (Ladd, *Theology of the New Testament*, 456). This reality is seen by its frequent use in the New Testament. For example, “our Lord Jesus Christ” occurs

Christ Jesus as the last Adam. Paul preaches Christ as the last Adam in Ephesians, especially in 1:19-23. We can consider Christ Jesus as the last Adam in two aspects. First, Paul preaches that Jesus is “to fill everything in every way” (1:23) and “to fill the whole universe” (4:10). This mission reflects God’s command to Adam “to be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth” (Gen 1:28). Adam was commissioned to fill the earth, but he failed. This mandate was given again to Noah and his sons (Gen 9:1) and to Abraham (Gen 12:2; 15:4; 4-6). Finally, this commission was given to Jesus, and He accomplished God’s mandate through His death and resurrection. According to Paul, Jesus is described as the second Adam in that He fulfilled the command Adam disobeyed.¹²⁷

Second, God’s subjection of all things under Christ’s feet, and establishment of Christ as head over all things to the church in 1:19-23 (cf. 1 Cor 15:20-28) show that Christ is the last Adam who accomplished the mandate given to Adam (Gen 1:28). Paul’s preaching Christ as the last Adam through His death and resurrection is explicitly based on two passages in the Old Testament. First, Paul’s description of Christ as the new Adam alludes to Psalm 110:1. Psalm is normally associated with David. The Psalm, however, focuses on the subjection of all things to God’s Messiah. This was Adam’s mandate, which was partially fulfilled in the reign of David, who finally subdued Canaanite opposition. The Psalm may allude to Genesis 3:15, when it says, “I make your

twenty eight times, “our Lord Jesus” nine times, and “Jesus Christ our Lord” three times.

¹²⁷ Christ as the New Adam also appears in 5:22-33, where Christ’s relationship to the church is understood in relationship to the marriage between a husband and a wife. Scholars have detected the Adam-Christ typology in many passages in Paul’s writings. See C. Marvin Pate, *The Glory of Adam and the Afflictions of the Righteous: Pauline Suffering in Context* (Lewiston, NY: Mellen Biblical Press, 1993).

enemies a footstool for your feet” (Ps 110:1). These words recall God’s promise to the serpent that the woman’s seed will crush the serpent’s head.

Through the mouth of King David, Psalm 110:1 proclaims that the Lord will be seated at the right side of God. Peter in his Pentecostal sermon in Acts quotes this prophecy and applies it to Jesus Christ whom God made both Lord and Christ (2:34-36) through His death and resurrection (2:31-33). Sitting at the right hand of God refers to Christ’s exaltation to God’s right hand in the heavenly places, where He received the Holy Spirit, so that He could pour it out on believers (Acts 2:36).

Jesus also claimed these words for Himself when He was brought before the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem (Matt 26:64; Mark 12:36; Luke 20:41-44). God’s raising of Christ and seating Him at His right hand in the heavenly realms far above all the powers proclaim that He is the supreme ruler. This alludes to the commission given to Adam.¹²⁸ God created Adam according to His image (Gen 1:27-28). An aspect of God’s image granted to Adam was dominion over everything (Gen 1:28). God’s rule of earth was accomplished through the agency of man’s vicegerency in the original order of creation.¹²⁹ Adam was commissioned to “rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the

¹²⁸Beale, “Eschatological Conception of New Testament,” in, 25-26. Beale contends, “The *doctrine of Christ as the Last Adam, the image of God and God’s son and Messiah* are to be understood as references to Christ re-establishing a new creation as God’s new, reigning vicegerent, since the first creation was commenced with a human also called Adam, who was in the image of God and called God’s son” (25, emphasis his).

¹²⁹For the biblical theology of Christ’s restoration of vicegerency, see Dan G. McCartney, “Ecce Homo: The Coming of the Kingdom as the Restoration of Human Vicegerency,” *WTJ* 56 (1994): 1-21. McCartney claims that Jesus’ beginning to establish the kingdom in the Gospels and the remainder of the New Testament is to be primarily

air and over every living creature that moves on the ground' (Gen 1:28), but when Adam fell into sin and spoiled his vicegerency, the earth was no longer under his dominion; he failed to keep the mandate. Noah was also commissioned to subdue the earth, but he could not fulfill the mandate given to him.

God created a corporate Adam, Israel, who was commissioned to reveal God's plan in the Promised Land, which the Old Testament refers to as the land "like the garden of Eden." Israel, the children of God, had to enter the Promised Land and subdue the rest of the earth to follow God's mandate, but they also failed to fulfill the mandate and fell into sin. In the Davidic theocracy, a typological and imperfect human vicegerency was reinstalled as a partial fulfillment of the promise given to Abraham. As Israel's kings could not accomplish God's mandate, "it remained God's people of the proper eschatological state of affairs, and it pointed toward a future when David's greater Son would rule a perfect kingdom as God's vicegerent."¹³⁰

At last God raised up another individual Adamic figure, Jesus Christ, who finally does what Adam could not do and inherits what the first Adam could not, including the glory reflected in God's image. Greg Beale notes, "the notions of Christ as Son of Man, Son of God and Messiah are crucial in understanding Jesus' role as the reinstarter of God's vicegerency originally designed for Adam."¹³¹ Christ inaugurates a new creation which will not be corrupted but find its culmination in a new heavens and

understood as "the reinstatement of the originally intended divine order for earth, with man properly situated as God's vicegerent" (2).

¹³⁰Ibid., 3. McCartney claims that Christ restored human vicegerency by suggesting several Old Testament passages prophesying the notion of human vicegerence which is applied to Jesus in the New Testament (3-8).

¹³¹Beale, "Eschatological Conception of New Testament," 30.

earth.¹³² His titles of “Son of Man” and “Son of God” also allude to Him, not only the Last Adam, but also as true Israel.¹³³ Ridderbos notes, “The expression ‘the last Adam’ is again highly typical of the eschatological character of Paul’s preaching: Christ is thereby designated as the Inaugurator of the new humanity. And it is once more his resurrection from the dead that has made him this last Adam.”¹³⁴

Christ as second Adam and last Adam signifies that through His resurrection the new life of creation has already come to light and become a reality since Adam represented all humanity, he can be called the type of the one “who was to come” (Rom 5:14). “Christ and Adam stand over against one another as the great representatives of the two aeons, that of life and that of death.”¹³⁵ Just as Adam brought sin into the world as the proto-father, so Christ has made life to dawn for the new humanity by His obedience, especially by His death and resurrection.

Second, Psalm 8:6-8 lies in the mind of Paul when he describes Christ as the last Adam. Psalm 8:6-8 states that the authority to rule everything was given to Adam. The Lord made him ruler over the works of His hands and put everything under His feet (Ps 8:6). Psalm 8:6 describes the functional aspects of man’s *imago Dei* along the lines of Genesis 1:26.¹³⁶ The prototype of the king was Adam, God’s vice-regent, which the

¹³²Ibid., 26.

¹³³Ibid.

¹³⁴Cf. 1 Cor 15:21, 22, 45ff. Ridderbos, *Paul*, 56.

¹³⁵Ibid., 57.

¹³⁶Moritz observes that “the author of Ephesians appears to have been aware even of the intertextual relationship between Ps 8 and the Biblical creation accounts. This

creation account refers to (Gen 1:26-28). Hebrews quotes this and proclaims, “In putting everything under him, God left nothing that is not subject to him. Yet at present we do not see everything subject to him” (2:8). The command given to Adam failed and it was fulfilled in Christ. The author of Hebrews proclaims again, “But we see Jesus . . . now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death” (2:9). Through Christ’s death and resurrection, God crowned Him with glory and honor. Like the author of Hebrews, Paul also acknowledges that now Christ rules everything including the cosmic powers and principalities (Eph 1:20-22; 4:8-10). By quoting Psalm 8, Paul understands Christ to be the representative man, through whom Psalm 8 is already fulfilled.¹³⁷ Therefore, Paul describes Christ as the last Adam who fulfilled the command that the first Adam could not.

Work of Christ.

Death and resurrection. The central message of Paul in Ephesians is the death and the resurrection of Christ Jesus. The significance of Christ’s resurrection is determined by that of His death and vice versa. Christ’s death is the necessary condition for salvation of fallen humanity. Likewise, His resurrection is the necessary condition to bring all things together and seat all believers in the heavenly places. Just as Christ’s resurrection from the dead was evidence of the surpassing greatness of God’s power (1:19), so the resurrection of believers with Christ demonstrates the surpassing riches of God’s grace. In His death Christ takes our penalty and declares that we are not guilty.

relationship is exploited typologically in Ephesians” (Moritz, *Profound Mystery*, 21-22).

¹³⁷McCartney, “Ecce Homo,” 16.

Although Christ's death and resurrection is a major tenet in Paul's preaching throughout Ephesians, there are four places where Paul specifically mentions Christ's death on the cross and its effect (1:7-8; 2:13-22; 5:2, 25). First of all, Paul preaches that the believer's redemption was accomplished through Christ's sacrificial death on the cross: "In him [Christ] we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance of the riches of God's grace" (1:7). It is in Christ that the believer has deliverance, for God made Christ to be our redemption (1 Cor 1:30). The blood of Christ, His sacrificial death, is the means by which the believer's redemption has been accomplished.¹³⁸

Paul's concept of redemption can be understood against the background of the Old Testament, where it depicts the release of slaves (Exod 21:8; Lev 25:48) and God's deliverance of His people from the bondage of Egypt (Deut 7:8; 9:26; 13:5; 1 Chr 17:21). Leon Morris observes that the terminology of redemption invariably conveys the idea of release on payment of a price or ransom. He claims, "When the New Testament speaks of redemption . . . it means that Christ has paid the price of our redemption."¹³⁹

¹³⁸The mention of redemption and forgiveness is paralleled in Col 1:14, and Rom 3:25 has a similar phrase: "God has presented him [Christ] as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood." Here Christ's blood is more closely attached to "atonement" than to redemption."

¹³⁹Leon Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross* (London: Tyndale, 1965), 58. However, D. Hill argues that linguistically this cannot be supported (*Greek Words and Hebrew Meanings: Studies in the Semantics of Soteriological Terms* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967], 73-74). I. H. Marshall states that Christ's death is the price paid for believers' redemption ("The Development of the Concept of Redemption in the New Testament," in *Reconciliation and Hope: New Testament Essays on Atonement and Eschatology, Presented to L. L. Morris on His 60th Birthday*, ed. R. J. Banks [Exeter: Paternoster, 1974], 153-54). The New Testament usage of ἀπολύτρωσις refers to one set free on the basis of a ransom paid to God by Christ's

Specifically, Paul proclaims that redemption is obtained through Christ's blood (διὰ τοῦ αἵματος αὐτοῦ). The διὰ shows more precisely how redemption was procured. It was not only in believers' connection with Christ Jesus, but it was by Christ's death on the cross. Christ's death is more than the general sense of man's death because the blood manifests Christ's sacrificial death.¹⁴⁰ As a result of Christ's sacrificial death for God's people, believers now have free access to the heavenly Father. "Redemption, forgiveness, and Christ's sacrifice are occasionally linked in the New Testament, forming an early Christian triad that may have been used for liturgical and catechetical purposes."¹⁴¹

Second, Paul proclaims that reconciliation between Jews and Gentiles has been accomplished "through the blood of Christ" (2:13) and "through the cross" (2:17). Paul proclaims Gentiles' new status in Christ in the following terms: "But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ" (2:13). Gentile believers have been brought near to God "by the blood of Christ" (ἐν τῷ αἵματι τοῦ Χριστοῦ). The proposition ἐν shows the way that Gentiles were brought near.¹⁴² The

death. The main import of this word is release or setting free, but it does not exclude the concept of payment (Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 206).

¹⁴⁰Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 207. In the background of the Old Testament, blood-shedding was necessarily involved in sacrifice. Sacrificial animals were killed by shedding blood (Lev 17:11; Eph 2:13; 1 Pet 1:19) for without blood there is no forgiveness of sins (Heb 9:22). Paul preaches that God has restored His relationship with fallen humanity through Christ's sacrificial blood. In the New Testament there are several references to Christ's blood as a ransom price for our sins (Acts 20:28; 1 Cor 6:20; 7:23; 1 Pet 1:18-19; Rev 1:5; 5:9).

¹⁴¹O'Brien, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 106. For example, Rom 3:24; Titus 2:14; Rev 1:5.

¹⁴²Smith contends that the "blood of Christ" denotes the circumcision of Christ because of the mention of circumcision which is performed in the flesh by hands in 2:11. Derwood Cooper Smith, "The Ephesians Heresy and the Origin of the Epistle to the

significance of the “blood of Christ” refers to the sacrificial death of Christ as was described in 1:7. The blood of Christ is now the means of humanity’s reconciliation to God (cf. Col 1:20-22; Rom 5:10).¹⁴³

Third, for Paul Christ’s love and His sacrificial death for believers is the ground to exhort Ephesian believers to be imitators of God (5:1-2). Paul preaches that believers should love each other “just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God” (5:2). The aorist tense of these two verbs (ἡγάπησεν, παρέδωκεν) points to the particular action of Christ Jesus on the cross. The verb παρέδωκεν implies “to hand over, give over” and the reflexive pronoun ἑαυτὸν indicates that Christ took the initiative in handing Himself over (4:19; 5:25).¹⁴⁴ Some passages in Paul’s epistles describe God handing Jesus over (Rom 4:25; 8:32), but here it is Christ, rather than God, who is the agent.¹⁴⁵ This stress on Christ’s voluntary action is consistent with other passages in Ephesians (2:14-18; 5:25). Christ’s death for us demonstrates how much Christ loved us. In other letters Paul manifests his personal appreciation of this love when he preaches, “the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me” (Gal 2:20). Bruce correctly comments, “It is open to every believer to

Ephesians,” *Ohio Journal of Religious Studies* 5 (1977): 86-90. This contention cannot be supported because Paul speaks of Christ’s death and blood (13, 16) which brought the reconciliation.

¹⁴³Bruce, *Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 295. Heb 10:19-22 shows a parallel, where believers are encouraged to “have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus” to draw near to God in full assurance of faith.

¹⁴⁴The formula “Christ dies for us” appears from his earliest to his latest epistles (Gal 1:4; 2:20; Eph 5:25; 1 Tim 2:6; Titus 2:14). This may show that Paul meditated on the Servant Song of Isa 52:13-53:12.

¹⁴⁵Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 648.

use the same language: Christ loved each one of them individually and gave himself up for them, just as he loved the whole church collectively and gave himself up for it (Eph 5:25).”¹⁴⁶ The prepositional phrase ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν indicates the object for which Christ laid down His life; He laid down His only life for us.

Fourth, Paul exhorts husbands to love their wives, “just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her” (Eph 5:25). The sacrificial love of Christ for the church is set forth as the model and ground for the husband’s love for his wife. In 5:2 Paul said that “Christ loved us and gave himself up for us” and now Paul reiterates this statement, except that Paul used “the church” instead of “us.” The character of Christ’s love for the church is stressed in the next clause, “he gave himself up for her.” Just as in 5:2, the verb “gave over,” together with the reflective pronoun “himself,” amplifies the fact Christ laid Himself down voluntarily for the church.¹⁴⁷ Hoehner correctly comments,

¹⁴⁶Bruce, *Epistle to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 368. Paul’s depicting Christ’s death for the ungodly echoes Jesus’ own words when He states that He is the good shepherd and He will lay down His life for the sheep (John 10:11, 15, 17). Christ’s death is not a forced one, but it was by His own volition to follow God’s will, which clearly appears in His saying, “Not my will, but thine, be done” (Mark 14:36).

¹⁴⁷Käsemann contends that the concept of Christ’s love for the church is not Pauline and the author of Ephesians is addressing issues from a perspective of the early Catholic era with Christology becoming a function of ecclesiology (Ernst Käsemann, “The Theological Problem Presented by the Motif of the Body of Christ,” in *Perspectives on Paul*, trans. Margaret Kohl, The New Testament Library, ed. Alan Richardson, C. F. D. Moule, C. F. Evans, Floyd V. Filson [London: SCM, 1971], 120-21). Käsemann argues that the effectiveness of the world-wide mission necessitated a total ecclesiastical consciousness, thus, the unity of the church needed to be stressed and shielded by a thorough redefinition of the church. For him, Christology lost its decisive significance and ecclesiology assumed paramount importance. Although ecclesiology is emphasized in Ephesians, it is not at the expense of Christology, for the church did not come into existence by itself, but on the basis of what God has done in Christ. For discussion, see Arnold, *Ephesians*, 163-64; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 749.

“Whereas in 5:2 Christ’s death was characterized as on behalf of individual believers, here it is represented as on behalf of the church, the body of believers.”¹⁴⁸

We have examined Paul’s specific mention of Christ’s death and its subsequent work. Christ’s death is the ground for God’s redemption of believers and His reconciliation with humanity. It also reconciled Gentiles and Jews. Christ’s death is also the ground of Paul’s exhortation to believers to love each other and for husbands to love their wives. Christ’s death is not only the basis of Paul’s doctrine of God’s redemptive work, but also the basis of the believer’s life.

Just as he preached the death of Christ, Paul also proclaimed His resurrection. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is central to the message of the New Testament, to apostolic preaching and to Christian faith.¹⁴⁹ If Christ’s death on the cross is the manifestation of God’s abundant grace upon the ungodly, Christ’s resurrection from the dead is the obvious manifestation of God’s power. If Christ’s death proclaims the termination of our sins, His resurrection declares our new life. In Ephesians 1:19-23 Paul speaks of the greatness of God’s power (1:19) and its specific manifestation (1:20-23). God exercised His mighty power by raising Christ from the dead, seating Him at His right hand, subjecting everything under His feet, and giving Him to the church as head. By resurrection from the dead, Christ is seated in God’s right hand. However, as Lincoln

¹⁴⁸Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 750. Similarly, Lincoln observes, “The exhortation to sacrifice one’s own interests for the welfare of others, which is so necessary for the harmony of the community, now finds a more specific application in the husband’s role in contributing to marital harmony” (Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 374).

¹⁴⁹P. S. Johnston, “Death and Resurrection,” in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander et al. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 443. Paul affirms that “our Savior, Christ Jesus . . . has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (2 Tim 1:10).

points out, we must not equate the status of “at the right hand” and “in the heavenlies.”¹⁵⁰

Believers are seated in the heavenly places, but the place at the right hand of God is reserved only for the risen Christ. It displays not only Christ’s sovereignty at the present time but also indicates His authority over the world and the church.¹⁵¹

For Paul Christ’s resurrection was the starting point of new creation. In his experience on the Damascus road, Paul met the risen Jesus. To Paul the Damascus Christophany was an eschatological event in which he experienced “the latter days.” Paul’s preaching of Christ’s resurrection can be understood against the background of Daniel 12:2-13. These verses talk about the end time and explicitly predict a bodily resurrection. Ezekiel 37:1-14 is also a prophecy of resurrection and restoration of the land. Primarily it is metaphorical for the restoration of Israel; yet it is suggestive of God’s ability to resurrect the dead. Paul alludes to these passages to explain the resurrection of Christ. When Christ died, the old creation began to die with Him. When Christ resurrected, the new creation was born. Therefore, Christ’s death and resurrection inaugurates the new creation. “The latter days” predicted by the Old Testament began with Christ’s first coming and are consummated at His second coming.

Paul does not separate the significance of Christ’s death and resurrection, which are the center of his proclamation. The eschatological significance of Christ’s

¹⁵⁰Lincoln, “Re-Examination of ‘the Heavenlies’ in Ephesians,” 472. The location of Christ at God’s right hand which is unique to Ephesians is used five times (1:3, 20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12) and implies God’s dwelling place.

¹⁵¹Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 275.

resurrection for Paul is determined by the special character of His death.¹⁵² For Paul Christ's death is determined always by its connection with the power of sin. With Christ's death, the power of sin was abolished, and believers are no longer under the power of sin (Rom 8:1-2). Christ's death in this sense determines the significance of His resurrection and the subsequent new life. Therefore, "the resurrection of Christ in fact means the breakthrough of the new aeon in the real, redemptive-historical sense of the word."¹⁵³ Concerning the significance of Christ's resurrection in Paul's theology, Richard Gaffin asserts:

Everywhere Paul speaks of the believer's justification, adoption, sanctification, glorification (or any of the other benefits connected with these) there the more basic, underlying consideration is resurrection with Christ, that is (existential) union with Christ as resurrected. Whenever he deals with the application of redemption to the individual believer, there the controlling factor is (experiential) involvement in Christ's resurrection and fellowship with the exalted Christ.¹⁵⁴

Reconciliation. Christ's death and resurrection brought forth reconciliation (2:11-22). God through Christ reconciles all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross. As humanity was separated from God since Adam, man should be reconciled with God. Paul describes, "We were by nature objects of wrath" (2:3). The alienation from God caused separation between humanity and God, and between humans themselves. Individual sinners are saved by the grace of God and become children of God. Ever since individual sinners have been saved, they belong to a

¹⁵²Ridderbos, *Paul*, 55.

¹⁵³*Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴Richard Gaffin, *The Centrality of the Resurrection: A Study in Paul's Soteriology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1978), 129.

corporate people of God. In 2:11-22 Paul speaks of this unity and reconciliation of redeemed Jews and Gentiles in the church, which is the body of Christ. Paul preaches:

Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called “uncircumcised” by those who call themselves “the circumcision” (that done in the body by the hands of men)—remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. (Eph 2:11-17)

Paul contrasts the Gentile’s former estrangement from Israel and Israel’s God with their present state as coheirs with Israel as a new creation in Christ. Paul begins by implicating both Gentiles and Jews in a former way of life which the author describes as death (2:3), and he continues his reflection on the contrast of this state by contrasting phrases starting each with “formerly” (ποτέ) and “now” (νῦν).¹⁵⁵ Verses 11-12 emphasize the deprivation and alienation of the former life. Paul uses ἐν σαρκί (“in the flesh”) to refer to “the frailty of humanity apart from God.”¹⁵⁶ Paul wants the recipients of this letter to remember that they were Gentiles who were labeled “the uncircumcision.” The label “the circumcision” and “the uncircumcision” were common Jewish ways of

¹⁵⁵This is the second of the explicit “formerly-now” contrasts that constitute one of the main subjects of Ephesians. Ephesians has five explicit “formerly-now” contrasts, which distinguish a life of sin and alienation before Christ from a life of faith in Christ. For other contrasts, see 2:1-10; 4:17-24; 5:8; also expressing the same idea in 3:5 and 4:28. Cf. also Rom 8:9-15.

¹⁵⁶Snodgrass, *Ephesians*, 126. Sinful nature is not the intended meaning in 2:11 for either Gentiles or Jews. The word refers to a real physical difference, which is the merely human realm in which people live in contrast to life in the Spirit or in Christ.

referring to Jews and Gentiles respectively.¹⁵⁷

Verse 12 indicates that the Gentiles were deprived, disconnected, and distant from all advantages of God's people.¹⁵⁸ A dramatic change occurs in verse 13. Through the sacrificial blood of Christ Jesus, the Gentiles have now been brought near. The Gentiles do not become members of the commonwealth of Israel, but they become members of a newly created community which transcends Israel and its privileges. They are in Christ Jesus and members together of His one body.

In Ephesians 2:14-18 Paul preaches that through Christ believers have peace with God and His people. Through Christ's sacrificial death on the cross, believers have access to the Father by one Spirit. If 2:11-13 shows how deep the division was between Jews and Gentiles before Christ's coming, these passages show what Christ has done to bring these two entities into one new humanity. Paul explicitly underscores the work of

¹⁵⁷For example, Acts 10:45; Rom 2:26-27; 3:30; Gal 2:7-9, 12; Col 4:11; Titus 1:10. Circumcision was the sign of belonging to the covenant people for the Jews.

¹⁵⁸Paul lists five conditions of the Gentiles, and all of them have to do with their being outside God's people, Israel, and His saving purposes. The first of the disadvantages is that "at that time you [Gentiles] were separated from Christ." The Gentiles had no relation to Christ, but now they have position in Christ. Second, they were "excluded from citizenship in Israel," by which Paul means the general exclusion of the Gentiles from God's people. Third, they were "foreigners to the covenants of the promise." This phrase emphasizes the same distance and disconnection as "excluded." We may assume that the covenants with Abraham (Gen 12:1-4; 13:14-18; 15:1-21; 17:1-21) and David (2 Sam 7) are included, and likely also the promise of the new covenant in Jer 31:31-34 (cf. 32:38-40; Ezek 36:23-36). For Paul, there is no doubt that the "covenant of promise" focused primarily on the Messiah and the Holy Spirit, the means by which the covenants with Abraham, David, and Jeremiah were fulfilled (cf. 2 Cor 3:3-18; Gal 3:14). Fourth, before they were converted, Gentiles had been "without hope." They had no hope of escaping the human plight and could not anticipate any relief from messianic salvation or resurrection (cf. 1 Thess 4:5, 13). Fifth, they were "without God." This does not mean that they were atheists, but that they did not have any relationship with the true God because these Gentiles were "in the world."

Christ rather than that of God as the major actor in the work of reconciliation. Christ is the subject of the three participles, “made” (2:14), “destroyed” (2:14), and “abolished” (2:15). These participles lead on to two purpose clauses “to create” (2:15) and “to reconcile” (2:16).¹⁵⁹ In verses 17-18 Paul speaks of Christ’s proclamation of peace to both Gentiles and Jews on the ground of Christ’s sacrificial work on the cross.

The reconciliation of Jews and Gentiles in one body of Christ (2:16) is parallel to Christ’s creation of “one new man” (2:15). The reconciliation of both Gentiles and Jews with God signifies that not only Gentiles but also Israel was alienated from God because of sin, and that both of them needed reconciliation with God. Ephesians shows a double reconciliation, that is, between God and humanity and that between Jews and Gentiles.

First, on the horizontal level, Christ has made peace between the two old enemies, that is, Jews and Gentiles, and reconciled them in the one body of the church. The Gentiles were formerly separated from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers to the covenants of promise, and far off (2:11-22). The dividing wall of the barrier which separated Jews from Gentiles is the “commandments and regulations” (2:15). These commandments and regulations were set in the Old Testament civil law, which separated ethnic Israel from the Gentiles. These laws were abolished by the coming of Christ who was the fulfillment of the law (Matt 5:17) and the end of the law (Rom 10:4). For those who are identified with Christ, in His death and resurrection, they

¹⁵⁹The New Testament shows that God is always the one who initiates reconciliation. Paul’s emphasis on Christ as the major actor of reconciliation shows a different focus. Generally the ground of reconciliation consists in God’s gracious initiating activity. (Cf. Rom 5:8, where God’s love is the basis; Col 1:20, where God’s divine good pleasure is the basis.)

are one in Christ regardless of their ethnic difference. Through Christ's death on the cross, the two have been created into one new man (2:15).

Second, on the vertical level, Christ has reconciled both groups to God through His death on the cross. The Ephesian believers were also dead in their "transgressions and sins" (2:1-5), but God made them alive, raising them up with Christ (2:5-6). Through Christ's death on the cross, both Jews and Gentiles were reconciled in one body of Christ (2:16). Christ's sacrificial death was the ground of bringing about cosmic reconciliation. Romans 5:10-11 focuses on reconciliation between God and sinners. In 2 Corinthians 5:18-21 God reconciles believers and the world to Himself and gives them the ministry of reconciliation. In Colossians 1:20-21 God reconciles to Himself all things on earth and in heaven. Once people are reconciled with God, they should be reconciled with each other regardless of any differences.¹⁶⁰

The result of reconciliation is to have access, the privilege of entering into God's presence by the help of one Spirit. Therefore, believers are "no longer foreigners and aliens," but "fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household" with "Christ Jesus as the chief cornerstone" (19-20). Redeemed people become "a holy temple in the Lord" and "a dwelling place in which God lives by his Spirit" (21-22).

Christ's death terminated the old order dominated by the law and introduced a new creation, a new humanity with Christ as its head. Therefore, "the nature of Christ's accomplishment is described as a creation and its product as something new. In its

¹⁶⁰Beale correctly asserts, "To emphasize in the church ethnic diversity or to emphasize theologies which depend on unique aspects of ethnic diversity more than emphasizing theological unity in Christ is to resist the forward moving redemptive-historical direction toward reconciliation and unity in the new creation" (Greg Beale, *Eschatological Conception of New Testament Theology*," 36.

newness it is not merely an amalgam of the old in which Gentiles have been combined with the best of Judaism.”¹⁶¹ Lincoln describes this new creation as “the third race.”¹⁶² Our passages of reconciliation (especially, 2:13-17) can be understood against the Old Testament background of the restoration promise of Isaiah 57:19, 52:7, and 11:6-12.

There are two direct connections between Ephesians 2:13-17 and Isaiah. First, Paul proclaims that Jesus came and preached peace to “those who were far away” and peace to “those who were near” (2:17). Paul here quotes the phraseology “peace” “far away” and “near” from Isaiah 57:19. In the original context “those far away” refers to the restoration of the Israelite exiles in captivity and “those near” to the people still living in the land who would be reconciled with the returning exiles. The former are now identified as believing Gentiles and the latter as ethnic Israelite believers in general. In Paul the church is understood to be the fulfillment of Isaiah’s restoration promises. This reconciliation of Jew and Gentile is also referred to as “creating in Jesus one new man out of the two (2:15).” Then the believers become “His workmanship created in Christ Jesus” (2:10).

Second, Ephesians 2:17 (also 6:15) proclaims that reconciliation came by Christ’s preaching “peace” to “those far and near.” “The gospel of peace” (Isa. 57:19) is

¹⁶¹ Andrew T. Lincoln, “The Church and Israel in Ephesians 2,” *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 49 (1987): 612.

¹⁶² Ibid. Therefore, Markus Barth’s contention that the church has been incorporated into historical Israel is not correct. Barth claims that because faith is not mentioned in Eph 2, all Jews and Gentiles are united in Christ. There is no need to preach the message of salvation to Jews. See Markus Barth, *The People of God* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1983), 45-72; idem, *The Broken Wall: A Study of the Epistle to the Ephesians* (Chicago: Judson, 1959), 122-28. His assertion does not do justice to our passages because it is redeemed Jews and believing Gentiles that make up this new entity, the one body of God.

also understood against the background of Isaiah 52:7. Its context suggests that Israel suffered in the Babylonian captivity. Salvation has here a definite future aspect (Isa 52:3). In Isaiah 52:7, the messenger expresses the hope of proclaiming “peace.” “Peace” means the end of oppression under Babylon, but it means ultimately the end of God’s wrath; for Israel’s exile was caused by their sins against God. Therefore, it must be understood eschatologically and messianically because Christ’s death is the end of God’s wrath and the beginning of God’s peace with humanity.

Isaiah 11:6-11 and 65:17, 25 prophesy that when the new creation comes, there will be peace, not only between God and humanity but also between humans. These two passages of Isaiah show that hostile animals will dwell in harmony, which points to the peace among traditionally hostile people groups, like Jew and Gentile. Paul proclaims that Christ’s death and resurrection destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility and created one new man out of two, thus making peace (Eph 2:14-16). Therefore, reconciliation can be understood as a result of new creation.

Summary to This Section

We have examined Paul’s preaching of Christ Jesus focusing on the person of Christ and the work of Christ. Christ’s death and resurrection is the central message. Christ’s death signals the termination of the old age while His resurrection represents an inauguration of the new age. C. H. Dodd writes on the eschatological concept of Christ’s death and resurrection: “His death . . . had marked the end of the old order, and His resurrection and exaltation had definitely inaugurated the new age, characterized, as the prophets had foretold, by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the people of God.”¹⁶³

¹⁶³C. H. Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and Its Development with an*

Paul's preaching on Christ and His work shows his redemptive-historical understanding of God's work. Herman Ridderbos' view of Paul's preaching well summarizes our study of Paul's preaching of Christ Jesus:

Paul's kerygma of the great time of salvation that has dawned in Christ is above all determined by Christ's death and resurrection. It is in them that the present aeon has lost its power and hold on the children of Adam and that the new things have come. For this reason, too, the entire unfolding of the salvation that has dawned with Christ again and again harks back to his death and resurrection, because all the facets in which this salvation appears and all the names by which it is described are ultimately nothing other than the unfolding of what this all-important breakthrough of life in death, of the kingdom of God in this present world, contains within itself.¹⁶⁴

This chapter also showed that Paul's preaching consistently demonstrates that the end-time has come through the death and resurrection of Christ and believers are living in the latter days already. Greg Beale claims that "Christ's redemptive work inaugurated the latter days," and he indicated that "the eschatological period would be consummated at some point in the future."¹⁶⁵ Ridderbos finds the core of Paul's redemptive-historical preaching in Christ's death and resurrection. He states,

Here all lines come together, and from hence the whole Pauline proclamation of redemption can be described in its unity and coherence. Paul's preaching, so we have seen, is "eschatology," because it is preaching of the fulfilling redemptive work of God in Christ. We might be able to delimit this further, to a certain extent schematically, by speaking of Paul's "resurrection-eschatology." For it is in Christ's death and subsequent resurrection that the mystery of the redemptive plan of God has manifested itself in its true character and that the new creation has come to light.¹⁶⁶

Appendix on Eschatology and History (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1936; reprint, 1980).

¹⁶⁴Ridderbos, *Paul*, 57.

¹⁶⁵Beale, "Eschatological Conception of the New Testament Theology," 20.

¹⁶⁶Ridderbos, *Paul*, 57.

Paul's Preaching on the Holy Spirit

Introduction

In Ephesians God takes the initiative to grant all spiritual blessings upon believers, Christ Jesus grounded these by His redemptive work, especially by His death and resurrection, and the Holy Spirit worked as an instrument of accomplishing all God's plan. The Old Testament uses the term "Holy Spirit" (רוּחַ קָדֹשׁ) only three times (Ps 51:11; Isa 63:10, 11).¹⁶⁷ In the New Testament there are some ninety instances of this usage, fourteen of them in Ephesians. Of these fourteen times only twice does it refer to a human spirit (2:2; 4:23).¹⁶⁸ In Ephesians, the Spirit is described as a life-giver to those who are dead, a transformer for those who are in Christ, and a producer of the fruit of the new creation. In this chapter we will examine Paul's preaching of the Holy Spirit by particularly dealing with the Holy Spirit as an indicator of end-times against the background of the Old Testament.

¹⁶⁷Divine Spirit is more usually denoted by such expressions as "Spirit of God/the Lord," "my/his Spirit." The word רוּחַ carries a variety of senses, including wind, breath (Gen 6:17; Job 12:10; Isa 42:5, etc), human vitality (1 Sam 30:12), mood/emotion, inclination, or character (Gen 26:35), mind or inner being (Isa 40:13; Ezek 11:5; 20:32). God's רוּחַ is represented as God's power in the creation of the cosmos (Gen 1:2; Ps 33:6), God's sustaining power immanent in all life (Gen 6:17; 7:15; Job 33:4; Ps 104:29-30), the invisible activity of God in power through and among His covenant people, whether in dramatic irruptions or more sustained endowments, and His presence in many types of revelation, charismatic wisdom and invasive speech. See Max Turner, "Holy Spirit," in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander et al. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 551.

¹⁶⁸Other uses of the Spirit referring to the Spirit of God in Ephesians include 1:13, 17; 2:18, 22, 3:5, 16; 4:3, 4, 30; 5:18; 6:17, 18. On the letter's identification of Christ with the Spirit, see Walker Hall Harris, III, *The Descent of Christ: Ephesians 4:7-11 and Traditional Hebrew Imagery*, Arbeiten zur Geshichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums, ed., Martin Hengel et al., 32 (Leiden: Brill, 1996).

The Holy Spirit as an Indicator of End-Times

First of all, we will discuss Paul's preaching of the Holy Spirit in an eschatological perspective. For Paul the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon believers is an obvious sign of the inauguration of the new creation. The fact that Paul perceived the Spirit to be an eschatological phenomenon has gained a consensus among scholars today.¹⁶⁹ Herman Ridderbos observes, "It is precisely the Spirit who is the great Inaugurator and the gift of the new aeon that has appeared with Christ."¹⁷⁰ The author also notes, "For throughout the whole of the Old Testament the Spirit is spoken of as the creating and renewing power of God, the gift of the New Covenant, the possession of the coming Messiah, and the life principle of the congregation of the future. It is consequently in harmony with this that Paul links the Spirit with the advent and the person of Christ, and gives expression to the gift of the new life conferred in Christ not only in the categories of redemptive history (death and resurrection with Christ), but also in those of the *Pneuma*."¹⁷¹ George Ladd notes, "Life in the Spirit means eschatological existence—life in the new age. This is established by the fact that the presence of the Holy Spirit in the church is itself an eschatological event."¹⁷²

¹⁶⁹C. Marvin Pate, *The End of the Age Has Come: The Theology of Paul* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 149.

¹⁷⁰Ridderbos, *Paul*, 215.

¹⁷¹*Ibid.*

¹⁷²Ladd, *Theology of the New Testament*, 526. The author also claims, "It is against this background of the eschatological gift of the Holy Spirit that Paul interprets the present impartation of the Spirit. . . . Here the indwelling of the Spirit, like the resurrection of Jesus, is the initial enjoyment of the eschatological event whose fullness

The notion that the Spirit is fully poured out upon believers can be understood against the background of the Old Testament. The Old Testament viewed the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon all flesh as an eschatological event that would attend the coming of the Day of the Lord and the messianic judgment and salvation.¹⁷³ Joel prophesied that the Holy Spirit would be given as a gift at the end of the world. “It shall come to pass after this, I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh” (Joel 2:28). Peter in his first sermon in Acts 2 quoted the prophecy of Joel and proclaimed that this was fulfilled through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Peter also identified the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost with the new epoch predicted by Isaiah (2:2; cf. Micah 4:1). Filled with the Holy Spirit who was given to tell the apostle what is to come (John 16: 13), he transformed Joel’s “after this” (אַחֲרֵי־כֵן) into “in the last days” (ἐν ταῖς ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις) in Acts 2:17, which signified that the eschatological end-time has come by the pouring of the promised Holy Spirit. Ridderbos notes, “The Spirit as the Spirit of Christ is the Spirit of the new aeon, and all that he renews, re-creates, changes, is new and different because it pertains to this eschatological ‘newness.’”¹⁷⁴

The Spirit in the Old Testament was mainly given to the three offices: kings, prophets, and priests. The prophecy in Joel that tells us the Spirit will be “poured on all people” was fulfilled through the death and resurrection of the Christ. The distribution of

yet lies in the future” (409). Similarly, French Arrington observes that the Spirit was the sign to the early church that the end of time had arrived (*Paul’s Aeon Theology in 1 Corinthians* [Washington, DC: University Press of America, 1978], 132-35). Christiaan Beker holds that the Spirit is proof that the age to come has dawned, though it is not yet fully completed (*Paul the Apostle*, 281-82).

¹⁷³Ladd, *Theology of the New Testament*, 408.

¹⁷⁴Ridderbos, *Paul*, 205.

the Spirit to all people even to the Gentiles is an explicit sign of the inaugurated eschatological age. The Old Testament talks about the Spirit as the eschatological equipment of Messiah (Isa 11:2ff; 42:1; 59:21; 61:1ff), as the eschatological transformer of Israel (Isa 32:15-17; 44:3; Ezek 37:1-14), and as the producer of fruit in the new creation (Isa 4:2-5; 11:12; 27:5-6; 32:15-17; 44:1-5; 45:8-13; 61:3, 11: 65:9, 17, 22). Paul understands the full experience of the life of the Holy Spirit as a future eschatological event associated with the resurrection.¹⁷⁵ Therefore, the Spirit is a sign that the new creation has broken into this age and we are living in the latter days.

The Person of the Holy Spirit

The Spirit is described as a person who grieves when God's people continue the sins that divide and destroy the unity of the body (4:29-32). As a new creation, Christians should "not grieve the Holy Spirit of God," because they "were sealed for the day of redemption" (4:30). The coordinating conjunction καὶ links this exhortation to the negative imperative of 4:29, so that it reads: "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouth . . . and do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God." Both imperatives are in the present tense which implies that the action is an ongoing process.¹⁷⁶ Paul writes that the Holy Spirit, who is the agent of reconciliation and unity in the body of Christ (2:18, 22; 4:3-4), is grieved when believers utter unwholesome speech, which will divide and destroy the unity of the body.

Paul here uses the full title, the Holy Spirit of God (τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον τοῦ

¹⁷⁵Ladd, *Theology of the New Testament*, 408.

¹⁷⁶Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basic*, 716-17.

θεοῦ) for the first time.¹⁷⁷ When Paul wants to emphasize the relationship of the Spirit to God, he refers to “the Spirit of God,” and when he wants to underscore the aspect of God’s holiness he uses the full name, “the Holy Spirit.” “Here the full ascription is not just a form of solemn speech, calling special attention to the role of the Spirit in ethical life, but also an emphatic declaration that the *Holy* Spirit is none other than the Spirit of *God*.”¹⁷⁸ If the Holy Spirit can be grieved, it must mean that He is a person. Paul explains that the one who is grieved is the Holy Spirit of God who is characterized by holiness and who is God Himself at work in salvation and life for believers.

Paul’s exhortation can be best understood against the background of Isaiah 63:10: “Yet they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit.” Paul changes from the indicative in Isaiah 63:10 (“they grieved the Holy Spirit”) to the imperative in Ephesians 4:30 (“do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God”). Paul’s use of this verse is closer to the Hebrew Scripture than to the LXX.¹⁷⁹ Paul proclaims, μὴ λυπεῖτε τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον τοῦ θεοῦ. In the Hebrew of Isaiah 63:10: “וַיַּחֲזִקְהוּ מַרְוֵי וְעִצְבוּ אֶת־רוּחַ יְהוָה קָדְשׁוֹ,” the LXX translates עִצְבוּ as παρώξυναν. The Hebrew can mean either to grieve or to irritate, and in the LXX it is twice translated by λυπέω (Gen 45:5 and 2 Sam 13:21) and only here (Isa 63:10) translated by παροξύνω. After depicting the messianic judgment and the victory of the anointed conqueror (Isa 63:1-6), in 63:8 Isaiah recalls Exodus 33:12-14. Isaiah 63:9 states

¹⁷⁷Similarly, 1 Thess 4:8 uses “God . . . who gives you his Holy Spirit” (τὸ πνεῦμα αὐτοῦ τὸ ἅγιον).

¹⁷⁸Gordon D. Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 714.

¹⁷⁹J. Paul Sampley, “Scripture and Tradition,” *ST* 26 (1972): 104 n. 13; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 306; Moritz, *Profound Mystery*, 92.

that God saved His people in His presence. Israel, however, rebelled and grieved “his Holy Spirit” (63:10). Even though God redeemed His people from Egypt, Israel, the covenant people rebelled against their Lord and “grieved his Holy Spirit.” Paul picks up the Isaianic text which highlights the work of God’s Spirit in relation to the major salvation-historical event of the Old Testament, that is, the exodus.¹⁸⁰ O’Brien notes that Paul “reads the Old Testament text with an understanding of its immediate context, its place in the flow of salvation history . . . within a pattern of new Exodus typology.”¹⁸¹ In Ephesians Paul addresses the new covenant community, “the one new man” (2:15) comprising Jews and Gentiles who have been redeemed (1:7) that they should not “grieve the Holy Spirit (4:30)” as the people of the new creation. Using the language of Isaiah 63:10, Paul issues a warning to this new body of Christ not to grieve the Holy Spirit of God as Israel had done.

It is true that God has solved the basic question of sin and forgiveness through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, but believers must pursue a new creation life worthy of their calling. Paul interprets the Isaianic passage and applies it to the new covenant community upon whom the end of the ages has come. Practically, if the Spirit is within us, then we should grieve along with Him when we commit sin. It is because the Holy Spirit wants believers to be perfectly righteous as the new creation. Therefore, we can state that the Holy Spirit has come into our hearts to begin to work end-time righteousness in believers.

Believers’ sinful utterances grieve the Spirit of God because they have been

¹⁸⁰O’Brien, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 348.

¹⁸¹Ibid.

sealed with the Holy Spirit for the day of redemption. “The day of redemption” refers to the final day of salvation and judgment, that is, the goal of human history.¹⁸² As in 1:14 the preposition *ἐἰς* may denote purpose, but a temporal sense is more likely, that is, “we were sealed until the day of redemption.”¹⁸³ This shows Paul’s eschatological understanding. Believers have already experienced God’s redemption through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, but they are still anticipating the consummation of redemption which will occur on the final day, and it is guaranteed by the sealing of the Holy Spirit. Paul’s mention of a future redemption is consistent with other references to the future in Ephesians (1:10, 14; 2:7; 5:5, 27; 6:8, 13), and shows that “Paul did not envisage salvation as being fully or completely realized. There is a fulfillment yet to come, and believers eagerly await it.”¹⁸⁴

The Holy Spirit plays a prominent role in Ephesians because He is the agent through whom God applies His redemptive work to believers. In Ephesians the Holy Spirit reveals the person and character of God (1:17) and also the means of the revelation

¹⁸²Lincoln observes that the phrase “the day of redemption” is unique to Ephesians and agrees that it refers to the last day and its accompanying consummation of salvation and judgment (Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 307). In Paul’s other letters, it is called “the day of the Lord” (1 Thess 5:2; 2 Thess 2:2; 1 Cor 1:8; 5:5; 2 Cor 1:14) or “the day of Christ” (Phil 1:6, 10; 2:16).

¹⁸³Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 632. Hoehner correctly observes, “These two concepts are closely related, for if believers were sealed for the purpose of the day of redemption which is still future, then they are sealed until that day” (ibid.). He goes on to note that “there are two phases in redemption: the first is the one that sets believers free from sin and its obligation; and the second is the one that occurs in the eschatological future when Christ comes for the saints, setting believers free from the presence of sin” (ibid., 633).

¹⁸⁴O’Brien, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 349. He further notes, “They [believers] are to live out the future in the here and now until that ‘day’ of redemption arrives, and this reminder that the Holy Spirit is God’s own seal should be an incentive to holy living and speaking.”

of the mystery to His holy apostles and prophets (3:5). The Holy Spirit is also related to God's spoken word transforming it into a powerful weapon against the wicked hosts of the devil (6:17). Believers are empowered by the Holy Spirit and instructed to pray to the Father through Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit (2:18; 6:18). Among the many roles of the Holy Spirit described in Ephesians, two significant tasks related with God's redemptive work need special attention. First, believers are sealed with the Holy Spirit until the day of redemption (1:13; 4:30). Second, believers are filled with the fullness of God and Christ by the work of the Holy Spirit (5:18). We will now examine these two major roles of the Holy Spirit.

The Sealing of the Holy Spirit

Paul preaches that God's redemptive plan for fallen humanity was accomplished through the work of Jesus Christ and made a reality in them by the ministry of the Holy Spirit. According to Paul, God does not only initiate all redemptive work for believers, He also guarantees their redemption by the sealing of the Holy Spirit.¹⁸⁵ In praising God's redemptive work for Ephesian believers, Paul proclaims:

And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory (1:13-14).

Paul proclaims that the Ephesian believers were sealed with the Holy Spirit when they believed "the word of truth." "The word of truth" is described as "the gospel

¹⁸⁵Being sealed with the Holy Spirit occurs three times in the New Testament: Eph 1:13-14, 4:30, and 2 Cor 1:22.

of your salvation” implying that the apostolic gospel brings or reveals salvation.¹⁸⁶ “The word of truth” designates the message of God’s salvation provided through Jesus Christ, the only means of salvation from eternal damnation.¹⁸⁷ This language takes up the natural terminology of the early Christian mission employed by Paul and the evangelists in regard to “hearing the word” (cf. Rom 10:14-17; Acts 2:37; 13:7, 44; 19:10).¹⁸⁸ Paul designates the message of God’s salvation as “the word of truth,” which continues Paul’s emphasis on his apostolic gospel as truth (Gal 2:5, 14; 5:7; 2 Cor 4:2; 6:7; Col 1:5). In Paul the gospel is also called “word of the Lord” (1 Thess 1:8; 2 Thess 3:1), “word of God” (1 Thess 2:13; 1 Cor 14:36), “word of Christ” (Col 3:16), “word of life” (Phil 2:16), or “word of reconciliation” (2 Cor 5:19).¹⁸⁹ “The word of truth” focuses on the apostolic

¹⁸⁶One of the difficulties in understanding Ephesians is the way Paul changes from “we” and “our” to “you” and “your.” Some scholars observe that “we” in 1:11 and “our” in 1:14 refer to all Christians, and “you” in 1:13 describes Gentile believers. For this interpretation, Bruce, *Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 264; Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 669; Snodgrass, *Ephesians*, 54; O’Brien, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 118. Some scholars, however, contend that Paul does not develop this contrast between Jewish and Gentile believers until in 2:11. They suggest that since ὑμεῖς specifically address the Ephesian Christians, his statements are applicable to all Christians. For this interpretation, Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 38; Eldon Woodcock, “The Seal of the Holy Spirit,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 155 (1998): 157. Hoehner notes that “it is improbable that this is a change from ‘we’ Jews (ἡμεῖς) to ‘you’ Gentiles (ὑμεῖς) for it seems highly unlikely that Paul is talking about ‘we’ Jews in verse 12, ‘you’ Gentiles in verse 13, then back to ‘we’ Jews in verse 14.” He suggests that it is simply “a distinction between those who are with Paul as opposed to the believers at Ephesus” (Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 235).

¹⁸⁷Robert Gromacki, “Ephesians 1:3-14: The Blessings of Salvation,” in *New Testament Essays in Honor of Homer A. Kent, Jr.* (Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 1991), 234. Cf. John 14:6; Acts 4:12.

¹⁸⁸Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 38; O’Brien, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 118.

¹⁸⁹O’Brien, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 118. This “word of truth” can be understood against an Old Testament background where God’s word partakes of His

gospel of the truth of God which reveals the reality of God's saving purposes and humankind's place within them.

When the Ephesian believers believed the gospel, they were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit as a seal implies the notions of ownership and protection, which verifies that believers belong to God. In the Old Testament God set a sign on His chosen ones to distinguish them as His own possession and to keep them from destruction (Ezek 9:4-6). In the New Testament times shepherds often marked their flocks with a seal to distinguish their own sheep from those of others.¹⁹⁰ The seal also has this significance in Revelation 7:1-8; 9:4. Therefore, believers' reception of the Holy Spirit is the sign that they belong to God in a special sense and have been stamped with the character of their owner.¹⁹¹ As believers are God's possession, they are protected until He takes complete possession of them (1:14). In this sense, "the Spirit is an eschatological seal who marks believers out as a people who will be protected through the testings, the battles, and the sufferings of the end-time, which are already upon them (cf. 6:10-18)."¹⁹² The Spirit's sealing of believers is asserted in 4:30: in the Spirit believers "were sealed for the day of redemption." The expression of sealing is also used by Paul in relation to the Spirit at 2 Corinthians 1:22: "[God] set his seal of ownership on

character and is utterly reliable. The Psalmist prays, "take not the word of truth . . . out of my mouth" (Ps 119:43). In contrast with the false teaching of the heretics, Paul says in Colossians that the gospel is called "the word of truth" (1:5).

¹⁹⁰G. Fitzer, "σφραγίς κτλ," in *TDNT*, 7:950.

¹⁹¹Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 39.

¹⁹²*Ibid.*

us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.”¹⁹³

Paul’s teaching that believers have been sealed with the Holy Spirit can be understood in an eschatological perspective. On the one hand, to have received the Spirit as a seal means to be assured that we belong to God. On the other hand, the seal of the Holy Spirit means security for the future, and the certainty that we shall finally receive our inheritance in Christ. Neill Hamilton writes, “Eph. 1:13 also presents the relation of the Spirit to the believer in such a way that we see the Spirit as present to the believer not only now while he believes in Christ, but also after the time when the believer has a function of the Spirit in the believer’s present which is only meaningful in relation to the future.”¹⁹⁴

Paul describes the seal as “the promised Holy Spirit” (τῷ πνεύματι τῆς ἐπαγγελίας τῷ ἁγίῳ) or some other translations render it as “the Holy Spirit of promise” (AV, NASB). The former rendering presents the Holy Spirit as prophesied in the Old Testament (Isa 32:15; 44:3; Ezek 36:26-27; 37:14; 39:29; Joel 2:28-29; cf. Acts 1:4-8; Gal 3:14). The translation “Holy Spirit of promise” leaves open the option that the

¹⁹³The relationship between being sealed with the Holy Spirit and baptism has been discussed by some writers (Barth, *Ephesians*, 135-44). Some scholars hold that this sealing refers either to water baptism or occurs during water baptism (Richard C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul’s Epistle to the Galatians, to the Ephesians and to the Philippians* [Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1961], 383; C. W. H. Lampe, *The Seal of the Spirit* [London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1951], 4-5). They contend that these verses have been interpreted in this way by early church fathers. But Paul does not develop the topic of baptism in these passages; they are concerned primarily with God’s redemptive acts before water baptism. Therefore, “sealing” in this verse is a reference to the actual reception of the Spirit on the part of the believers, which was a distinguishable event for the early Christians (Acts 8:17, 18; 10:44-46; 19:6).

¹⁹⁴Neill Hamilton, *The Holy Spirit and Eschatology in Paul*, Scottish Journal of Theology Occasional Papers no. 6 (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1957), 28.

Spirit's having been promised is in view or it also indicates that the Holy Spirit brings with Him to believers the promise of glory to come.¹⁹⁵ Designating the Spirit as the Spirit promised in the Scripture is the preferable interpretation.¹⁹⁶ The τῷ πνεύματι . . . τῷ ἁγίῳ (“Holy Spirit”) is in the dative case, which means that the Spirit is the means or instrument of the sealing.¹⁹⁷ God seals believers in Christ with the promised Holy Spirit when they have heard and believed the word of truth which brings the salvation. That the Spirit indwells believers means that they belong to God. Gordon Fee correctly observes, “The Spirit, and the Spirit alone, marks off the people of God as his own possession in the present eschatological age.”¹⁹⁸ On the eschatological dimension of the coming of the promised Holy Spirit, Snodgrass claims, “The coming of the Spirit, along with Jesus’ resurrection, convinced the early church that the end times had begun.”¹⁹⁹

Paul goes on to preach that the Holy Spirit by whom Ephesian believers were sealed when they believed the gospel of truth is now called the deposit guaranteeing our

¹⁹⁵Bruce, *Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 265; Woodcock, “Seal of the Holy Spirit,” 158.

¹⁹⁶For example, Gal 3:14 shows that the Spirit is viewed as the fulfillment to the promise to Abraham. Acts 2:17 also takes up the promise of Joel 2:28-32 and witnesses that it has been fulfilled by the coming of the Spirit. For this interpretation, Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 40. Gordon Fee observes, “The Holy Spirit, the crucial element of the promised new covenant with Israel, has been received by Gentiles as the seal that they too are God’s possession as the new eschatological age unfolds” (*God’s Empowering Presence*, 671).

¹⁹⁷Therefore, it can be translated “by/with the Holy Spirit.” τῷ ἁγίῳ is placed at the end to emphasize the personal righteous character of the Spirit.

¹⁹⁸Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 670. The author notes that “the reception of the Spirit by these Gentile believers is what brings them into the inheritance of the new covenant and guarantees their final destiny” (ibid.).

¹⁹⁹Snodgrass, *Ephesians*, 54.

inheritance until the redemption (1:14). The word ἀρραβών transliterates the Hebrew noun עֶרְבּוֹן.²⁰⁰ In the New Testament it is used only in Paul's letters and always with reference to the Spirit of God.²⁰¹ Paul implies that by giving the Holy Spirit to believers God does not simply promise them their final inheritance but actually provides them with a foretaste of it. The Spirit that the believers received is the first installment and guarantee of the inheritance in the age to come that waits for God's children. When God sealed and guaranteed Ephesian believers with the Holy Spirit, God had in view their full and final redemption as His possession. Redemption signifies the final deliverance (4:30), when God takes full and complete possession of those who already belong to Him.²⁰²

²⁰⁰It is translated in different ways: "deposit" (NIV), "pledge" (NASB, JEB, NRSB). For its usage in Hebrew Scripture, see Ronald B. Allen, "ערב," in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer Jr., and Bruce K. Walke (Chicago: Moody, 1980), 2:693-94. Allen observes that the verb עֶרַב means (a) to barter or exchange, (b) to pledge, and (c) to become surety for a practice vigorously condemned in the Old Testament, e.g., Prov 6:1-5; 11:15). In Gen 38:17-20 the Hebrew text has עֶרְבּוֹן which is translated by ἀρραβών in the LXX. In this passage it clearly refers to the normal pledge. This meaning cannot be applied to our passage because the pledge is returned when the full payment is made, whereas ἀρραβών is a portion of the whole payment. In Greek law in the New Testament times ἀρραβών is known to have been given in at least two contexts: contracts for the hire of services and contracts of sale. In Eph 1:14 the promised Holy Spirit is the present deposit or initial installment of the believers' future inheritance. See the thorough analysis of Alastair James Kerr, "APPABΩN," *JTS* 39 (1988): 92-97; Woodcock, "Seal of the Holy Spirit," 150-54, 159-60.

²⁰¹2 Cor 1:22; 5:5. In 2 Cor Paul proclaims that God sealed the believers and gave them the Holy Spirit in their hearts as a down payment of more to come. In 2 Cor 5:5 Paul explains that believers are given the Spirit as a deposit or guarantee of their future heavenly dwelling. Alastair James Kerr in his analysis of its usage concludes that "'a first installment' is most likely to convey the sense to a modern reader (Kerr, "APPABΩN," 97).

²⁰²O'Brien, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 122. The expression, "for the redemption of the possession" has been interpreted along two ways. First, some commentators hold that the phrase speaks of the way in which believers have received the Spirit as a down payment of the inheritance which will become their possession fully on the future day of

Paul here describes the eschatological enjoyment of the Holy Spirit in terms of an initial payment. Herman Ridderbos writes, “An *arrabon* is promise, but it is more than promise; it is also realization. It is deposited money that both promises the full payment in the future and gives a partial payment in the present.”²⁰³ On the significance of the eschatological concept of the Spirit as ἀρραβών, C. K. Barrett observes:

For Paul also, the gift of the Spirit means both the realization of the eschatology and areaffirmation of it; so much is implied by his use of the term *arrabon*; the present possession of the Spirit means that part of the future blessing is already attained, and equally that part still remains future, still unpossessed.²⁰⁴

Our passages also show Paul’s understanding of the Spirit as part of his “already but not yet structure of his eschatology.”²⁰⁵ On the one hand, God’s people have already entered into their inheritance because the Spirit as “first installment” means

redemption. Second, some scholars take the expression as referring to believers as God’s possession rather than their possession of the promised inheritance. The latter interpretation is more likely. Elsewhere in the New Testament ἀπολύτρωσις (“redemption”) is always an act of God. Here, too, God is the most likely agent of redemption and the one who possesses His people. God’s people as the object of His possession is a common theme in the Old Testament. They were called by God “my own possession from among all peoples” (Exod 19:5; Deut 14:2; 26:18; possibly Isa 43:21; especially, Mal 3:17 says, “‘They will be mine,’ says the Lord Almighty, ‘in the day when I make up my treasured possession’). It is found in the New Testament (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet 2:9). For this interpretation, Bruce, *Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 266-67; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 41-42; Snodgrass, *Ephesians*, 55; O’Brien, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 121-22; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 244.

²⁰³Ridderbos, *Paul*, 409. The author goes on to say, “it is the deposit or down payment, which is at the same time the guarantee of the future eschatological inheritance that will be acquired in the resurrection. Here again the eschatological gift is divided into two portions, the first of which has become present experience, but the fullness of which remains an object of future eschatological realization” (ibid.).

²⁰⁴C. K. Barrett, *The Holy Spirit and the Gospel Tradition* (New York: Macmillan, 1947), 153. H. M. Shires, *The Eschatology of Paul in the Light of Modern Scholarship* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1966), 154.

²⁰⁵Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 671.

present possession of what has been promised. On the other hand, as “first installment” the Spirit also guarantees the future consummation of what is now realized partially. This concept is in line with Paul’s emphasis on realized eschatology. “Along with the resurrection of Christ, the Spirit is the certain evidence that the future has been set in motion; and the Spirit’s indwelling presence serves as God’s own guarantee that we are to inherit all that has been promised.”²⁰⁶ Paul’s eschatological perspective can be applied to his preaching of “for the redemption of the possession.” The proposition ἐἰς in this case may indicate purpose, denoting that believers are sealed with the Holy Spirit “for the purpose of the redemption of the possession,” but it more likely indicates time so that they are sealed “until the redemption of the possession.”²⁰⁷ “Redemption” is a parallel idea seen in Romans 8:23, where believers who have been adopted into God’s family (Rom 8:15; Eph 1:5; 2 Cor 5:5) have the firstfruits of the Spirit. “Firstfruits” refers to the earlier part of a large harvest yet to come. Therefore, this phrase also “reflects the ‘already but not yet’ eschatological perspective.”²⁰⁸

²⁰⁶Ibid.

²⁰⁷For the first interpretation, NASB, JB, Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 42; Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 672. For the second interpretation, AV, RSV, NIV, NRSV, Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 245.

²⁰⁸Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 672. Hoehner also observes that “there are two redemptions or more accurately two phases of redemption. The first phase was in the past, which set us free from sin and its obligation. The second phase is future when Christ comes for the saints. This will set us free from the presence of sin. We are ‘already’ set free from sin’s penalty and power ‘but not yet’ from its presence and temptations. In the meantime we have the initial installment, the ministry of the Holy Spirit as our portion” (*Ephesians*, 245).

The Filling of the Holy Spirit

One of the other ministries of the Holy Spirit in Ephesians is the filling of the Holy Spirit. In 5:18 Paul exhorts believers: “Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.” This command consists of a twofold imperative indicating “never do so” in the former case and “always be so” in the latter.²⁰⁹ Paul’s primary emphasis lies in his exhortation for the Ephesian believers to live by the Spirit continually. Paul’s command to his readers not to get drunk does not indicate that they should stop some present wrong practice.²¹⁰ Rather, we have to understand Paul’s admonition in context. From 4:17 on Paul has been contrasting the unacceptable behavior of the Gentiles and that of believers. In 4:17-19 the Gentile’s life is described as life in darkness, and in 4:20-24 the believers are urged not to go back to their old lifestyles. Now believers are to live as they have been taught in Christ (4:20-24). The antithesis

²⁰⁹Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 720. This marks the third contrast in 5:15-18, which shows a negative behavior with a positive one. The first exhortation of each verse is preceded by μή, and the second by ἀλλὰ. The first two show general instruction: “Walk not as unwise but as wise” (5:15b); “do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is” (5:17). The third admonition is more specific: “do not get drunk on wine . . . but be filled with the Spirit” (5:18).

²¹⁰Some scholars claim that Paul was referring to misconduct at mealtimes among believers, which is similar to the drunkenness at the Lord’s table in Corinth (1 Cor 11:21). See Peter W. Gosness, “Ephesians 5:18-20 and Mealtime Propriety,” *TynBul* 44 (1993): 363-71. This is not likely because our context does not indicate any of these occasions. Some commentators hold that Paul admonishes Christian believers that they should not follow pagan religious behavior, especially the cult of Dionysius, the god of wine, where they filled themselves with wine. Paul exhorts believers to be filled with Spirit instead of being drunk with wine. Cleon L. Rogers Jr., “The Dionysian Background of Ephesians 5:18,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 136 (1979): 245-57; Moritz, *Profound Mystery*, 94-95; Max Anders, *Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians & Colossians*, Holman New Testament Commentary, ed. Max Anders (Nashville: Holman Reference, 1999), 172. This interpretation is also unlikely because there is not clear evidence that this cult had a continuing negative influence on the churches of Asia Minor.

between these two lifestyles continues first in the concrete exhortations in 4:25-5:2, then in the contrast of light and darkness in 5:8-14, and finally in the contrast between the foolish behavior of unbelievers and the wise conduct of believers in 5:15-17. Therefore, the prohibition of drunkenness can be understood as part of their antithesis. For drunkenness is described by Paul as the lifestyles of darkness (1 Thess 5:6-8; Rom 13:12, 13).²¹¹ Therefore, drunkenness epitomizes the life of darkness which belongs to the believers' past. Fullness of the Spirit makes their new life in Christ.²¹²

Paul's prohibition, "do not get drunk on wine," serves as a foil to his positive exhortation, "be filled with the Spirit." Hoehner rightly observes that "the contrast [between twofold exhortation] is not between the wine and the Spirit but between the two states expressed by the two verbs: being drunk with wine leads to dissipation but being filled by the Spirit leads to joy in fellowship and obedience to the commands of the Lord's will."²¹³ Gordon Fee calls this imperative the key to all others and the ultimate imperative in Paul's letters.²¹⁴ A number of points should be emphasized regarding this imperative.

First, the present passive imperative suggests that believers cannot fill

²¹¹Other references to drunkenness as vice in the New Testament include Matt 24:49; Luke 12:45; 1 Cor 5:11; 6:10; 1 Tim 3:8; Titus 2:3; and 1 Pet 4:3.

²¹²Gordon Fee also suggests that "it is merely another way, a more powerfully metaphorical way to be sure, of repeating Paul's basic imperative found in Gal 5:16: 'Walk in/by the Spirit.' All truly Christian behavior is the result of being Spirit people, people filled with the Spirit of God, who live by the Spirit and walk by the Spirit." Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 721.

²¹³Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 702.

²¹⁴Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 721-22.

themselves. In the passive to “be filled” can connote the idea “that a man is completely controlled and stamped by the powers which fill him.”²¹⁵ In other words, the one who is filled is characterized by the one who fills him. The believers, therefore, are the patients who are filled by the Spirit—the agent. They are urged to be filled with the Holy Spirit.²¹⁶ Second, the present imperative πληροῦσθε (“be filled”) indicates that believers’ experience of the Spirit’s filling is continuous. The indwelling and sealing of the work of the Holy Spirit are bestowed on every believer at the moment he accepts Christ as Savior.²¹⁷ However, “be filled with the Spirit” in the present imperative indicates that this exhortation does not just occur once at the moment of salvation, but is a command to continue to make room for the Spirit’s work in the believer’s life. The filling with the Holy Spirit is more than the Spirit’s indwelling; it is a continual lifestyle.²¹⁸

Third, what does it mean to “be filled with the Spirit”? To understand “filling” language in context, we have to consider its earlier uses in Ephesians.²¹⁹ In 1:23 Paul

²¹⁵Gerhard Delling, “πληρόω,” in *TDNT*, 6:291.

²¹⁶Most scholars suggest that “the Spirit” refers to the Holy Spirit of God, but some earlier commentators argued that “be filled with the Spirit” meant “be filled in one’s own spirit” (T. K. Abott, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary of the Epistles to the Ephesians and to the Colossians*, The International Critical Commentary [Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1897], 161-62; R. C. Lenski, *Interpretation of St. Paul’s Epistle to the Galatians to the Ephesians and to the Philippians*, 619).

²¹⁷The Bible teaches, “If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ” (Rom 8:9).

²¹⁸Andreas J. Köstenberger, “What Does It Mean to Be Filled with the Spirit? A Biblical Investigation,” *JETS* 40 (1997): 233.

²¹⁹O’Brien, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 392.

proclaims that the church as Christ's body already shares His fullness.²²⁰ The idea of being filled with the Spirit recalls that of being filled up to all the fullness of God in 3:19, which is "a reference not simply to the Father but to the triune God who is the content of this fullness."²²¹ According to 4:10, the descended and ascended Christ is the agent who fills everything. The ultimate goal for believers as the body of Christ is to attain the knowledge of the Son of God to become mature Christians, which is defined as the fullness of Christ (4:13).

In light of these earlier usages of the fullness language, O'Brien notes that "the *content* with which believers have been (or are being) filled is the fullness of (the triune) God or of Christ."²²² His contention is correct because believers are transformed by the

²²⁰Colossians also indicates the divine fullness in Christ: "For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him" (1:19); "For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form" (2:9).

²²¹O'Brien, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 392.

²²²*Ibid.* O'Brien further notes, "No other text in Ephesians (or elsewhere in Paul) focuses specifically on the Holy Spirit as the content of this fullness. It is better, then, to understand 5:18 in terms of the Spirit's mediating the fullness of God and Christ to believers." Chip Anderson claims that "to fill/filling" in Ephesians is directly related to God's activity in Christ. He notes: "'the fullness of time' (1:10); the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who 'fills all in all' (1:22c-23); 'to know the love of Christ . . . that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God' (3:9); 'he who descended . . . he also ascended far above all the heavens that he might fill all things' (4:10); and 'until we all attain . . . the knowledge of the Son of God, to be a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ' (4:13)" ("Rethinking 'Be Filled with the Spirit': Ephesians 5:18 and the Purpose of Ephesians," *Evangelical Journal* 7 [1989]: 62). Anderson claims that Eph 5:18 should be understood in light of the general purpose of Ephesians. He concludes that although "there are many facets to the *plerao/pleroma* references, there is one overall theme: God's ultimate purpose in Christ and the relationship of the believer to that purpose. Thus, Paul's concept of *pleroma* encompasses the totality of God's redemptive plan in Christ and every eschatological facet of that plan . . . this command must be related to the theme of God's ultimate redemptive activity in Christ Jesus and how the redeemed community relates to this activity" (62-63). Lincoln also notes that "the Spirit mediates the fullness of God and of Christ to the

work of the Holy Spirit into the likeness of God and Christ. Therefore, “Be filled with the Holy Spirit” means that Ephesian believers are exhorted to allow the Spirit to change them more and more into the image of God and Christ.²²³ The exhortation to be filled with the Holy Spirit of God has links with what precedes as well as with what follows. Believers who have been sealed by the Holy Spirit (1:13; 4:30) and exhorted not to grieve the Holy Spirit (4:30) are urged to let the Holy Spirit have the fullest control, so that He can enable them to walk wisely and to understand Christ’s will in their entire life.

The exhortation of 5:18 against drunkenness corresponds exactly with the wording of the LXX of Proverbs 23:31, μή μεθύσκεσθε οἶνον. The Proverbs text and Ephesians 5:18 share the μή . . . ἀλλὰ construction. In Proverbs, not becoming drunk with wine is contrasted with conversing with the righteous while in Ephesians it is contrasted with being filled with the Spirit. Paul’s exhortation in Ephesians to speak to one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs (5:19) can be related to the Proverbs imperative to converse with the righteous.

Believers are living already in the new age where the work of the Holy Spirit is in full bloom. But they experience these eschatological blessings of the fullness of the Holy Spirit only in part, and look forward to a future consummation of the fullness of it.

believer” (*Ephesians*, 344).

²²³O’Brien, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 392. Gordon Fee also comments, “Paul is recalling the final purpose clause in the prayer of 3:14-19, that they be empowered by the Spirit so that as Christ thus dwells in them by the Spirit they come to be ‘filled unto the fullness of God’ himself. . . . God’s people so filled by/with the Spirit’s own presence that they come to know God in all his fullness and reflect such in the way they live in relationship to one another and to God himself” (*God’s Empowering Presence*, 722). This explanation is consistent with the parallel passage in Colossians 3:16: “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.”

The part the Spirit plays in eschatology illustrates the tension between what believers already have and what they still anticipate. Paul's exhortation of being filled with the Holy Spirit shows his eschatological perspective. O'Brien claims, "It is obvious from these references to the fullness terminology in Ephesians that the exhortation to be filled by the Spirit is part of the eschatological tension between the 'already' and the 'not yet.'"²²⁴ On the basis of what God has done for believers through the redemptive work of Christ Jesus, Paul proclaims that the church as the body of Christ already shares His fullness (1:23), but they are exhorted to be filled with the fullness of God (3:19). Paul's petition for the Ephesian believers presupposes that they have not yet been filled. "God begins to answer this petition here and now, and he will consummate his work on the final day when the readers are filled with *all* his fullness. Similarly, the body of Christ has not yet reached mature manhood; it is moving toward the fullness of Christ (4:13). And in the process the Holy Spirit is powerfully at work transforming believers both individually and corporately into the likeness of Christ."²²⁵

Summary to This Section

In this section we have examined Paul's preaching on the Holy Spirit in light of the Old Testament, especially focusing on his understanding the Holy Spirit as an indicator of the end time, the person of the Holy Spirit, and the sealing and filling of the Holy Spirit. According to Paul, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon believers is an obvious indicator that the end time has already begun. That the Spirit is personal is

²²⁴O'Brien, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 393.

²²⁵Ibid.

evident in that when believers are exhorted not to grieve the Holy Spirit of God (4:30). He is identified as the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our ultimate redemption in Christ (1:13-14). As a new creation, believers are exhorted to be filled with the Holy Spirit to be mature to the fullness of Christ (4:13).

We have also discussed how Paul's preaching of the Holy Spirit shows his eschatological perspective. Biblical concepts which show us the eschatological role of the Holy Spirit are the terms "guarantee" (or "a first installment") or "seal." The word ἀρραβὼν as applied to the Holy Spirit particularly underscores the role of the Spirit in eschatology. It indicates that the Holy Spirit is possessed by every believer now as the guarantee of the future completion of his salvation in the day to come. To have received the Holy Spirit as a seal implies assurance that we belong to God. The seal of the Spirit does not only mean our salvation by the sacrificial work of Jesus, but also security and certainty for the future redemption. Paul's exhortation to believers to be filled with the Spirit of God is a request that they have to allow the Holy Spirit to work in their entire life, which shows an ongoing process in believers' lives between already saved and not yet glorified. Geerhardus Vos correctly claims that what is unique about Paul is his understanding of the universality of the Spirit's work. Not only does the Spirit now live in every believer; he also works in every aspect of his religious and ethical life.²²⁶

²²⁶Geerhardus Vos, *Pauline Eschatology* (Princeton: The Princeton University Press, 1930; Phillipsburg, NJ: Reformed and Presbyterian Publishing Company, 1994), 58. As regards the link between the Holy Spirit and Paul's eschatological perspective, Vos notes, "The 'Pneuma' was in the mind of the Apostle before all else the element of the eschatological or the celestial sphere, that which characterizes the mode of existence and life in the world to come and consequently of that anticipated form in which the world to come is even now realized" (ibid., 59).

CHAPTER 3

PAUL'S PREACHING ON THE CHRISTIAN LIFE AS A NEW CREATION

Introduction

In Ephesians Paul unfolds the doctrinal or theological message in chapters 1-3 and presents the practical or applied exhortations in chapters 4-6. This structure is not accident but reflects Paul's redemptive-historical perspective (Eph 2:8-10). God's truth will not rest in a human heart as mere doctrine, but influences every part of the believer's life. The first half of Ephesians proclaims primarily what God has done for believers; the second speaks mainly of what believers should do as a newly created body of Christ.¹ However, we cannot separate Ephesians into two independent sections as if each part can exist without the other. When we divide Ephesians into theology and application, it does

¹On the different emphasis of Ephesians between the indicative message and the imperative message, Ballenger observes that "the writer moves from the immanent trinity to the economic trinity, from God as worshiped to God as working, from the question of what God means to us to the question of what we mean to God, from believing in the Trinity to participating in the Trinity, from the fullness of God to being filled with the fullness of God (3:19), from the mission of God to the mission of the church" (Isam E. Ballenger, "Ephesians 4:1-16," *Interpretation* 51 [1997]: 292). For some other view, Markus Barth observes that the first part of Ephesians should be read not as theology, but as doxology (Markus Barth, *Ephesians: Introduction, Translation, and Commentary on Chapters 1-3*, Anchor Bible A [New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1974], 426). Lincoln also claims that the terms "theological" or "doctrinal" do not do justice to either the form or concept of chapters 1-3, and suggests that chapters 1-3 should be read as an extended thanksgiving for the privileges and status which believers enjoy in Christ as members of the church (Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 42 [Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1990], xxxvi).

not mean that theology is not practical; neither does it mean that there is no theology in chapters 4-6. Even though the division is obvious, it is primarily a matter of emphasis.

Although Paul proclaims practical issues in chapters 4-6, the theological ground of the ethical admonition is always in his mind. For Paul, there is no divorce of Christian theology from the Christian life. These are merely two sides of one coin because Christian faith and the Christian life are inseparable. Christian preachers, therefore, should maintain a proper balance between theology and practice. Theology without practice will make Christianity an academic warehouse of doctrine devoid of transforming power; practice without biblical theology reduces Christianity to either legalism or a “social gospel.” Paul’s preaching in Ephesians presents a model for these two axes because he consistently provides doctrine first as a basis for the practice.²

In Paul’s letters, the division of doctrine and practice is substantiated by the distribution of the imperative mood. In Ephesians the imperative is used forty-one times, only once in chapters 1-3 (2:11) but forty times in the last three chapters.³ The Christian life of believers presented in the last three chapters is solidly based on the knowledge given in the first three chapters. One commentator observes, “Ephesians contains more

²For example, in Romans after presenting a doctrinal or theological discourse until 11:36, Paul exhorts the believer to practice with the words, “I urge you” (12:1). Paul’s other letters show similar formulations: 1 Corinthians 1:10; 4:16; 16:52; 2 Cor 2:8; 6:1; 10:1; Phil 4:1; 1 Thess 2:12; 3:2; 4:1, 10; 5:14; 2 Thess 3:2; 1 Tim 2:1; Phlm 9-10. The beginning of the ethical admonition is signaled by the clause beginning with “I urge you,” together with the introductory “therefore” (1 Thess 4:1; Rom 12:1; Eph 4:1; Phil 4:1). For a more detailed study of Paul’s application, see Mary Breeze, “Hortatory Discourse in Ephesians,” *Journal of Translation and Textlinguistics* 5 (1992): 313-47.

³This ratio is quite higher than in Paul’s other letters. For example, in Romans the imperative is used sixty-two times: thirteen times in chapters 1-11 and forty-nine times in chapters 12-16.

specific practical applications for daily life than any other NT book.”⁴

The central message of Paul’s preaching in Ephesians can be summarized as follows: God has provided the spiritual blessings of unity and reconciliation to humanity by the work of Christ’s death and resurrection through the Holy Spirit, *so that believers can live a Christian life worthy of their calling for God’s glory*. According to Paul’s preaching, on the basis of God’s spiritual blessing of unity and reconciliation in Christ, believers should live worthily of the calling which they have received as the beginning of God’s new creation. Paul issues these commands to the newly created body of Christ individually and corporately. They instruct the children of God concerning life in a new creation. In this chapter we will examine how Paul preached the believer’s life as a new creation focusing on some significant exhortations.

The Conduct of Christian Life

Paul strongly urges Christians to live as the firstfruits of God’s new creation. The worthy walk (4:1-6:20) consists of characteristics and behaviors which promote peace and unity (cf. Isa 11, 65, 66). The believers were once in the old man, Adam (4:22), and lived in a manner characterized by the old man—sin, rebellion, and disunity. This included having a darkened understanding, hardness of heart, and sensuality, greed, impurity, and deceit (4:17-19). Nevertheless, on the basis of Christ’s death and resurrection and the work of the Holy Spirit, Paul commands believers to put off the old man, Adam, and to put on the new man, Christ (4:24). We will examine how Paul commands believers to follow Christ as the children of God against the Old Testament

⁴Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 499.

background.

Live a Life Worthy of Your Calling

On the basis of God's mighty salvation and the creation of a new humanity, Paul exhorts Ephesian believers, "I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received" (4:1). This exhortation is the basis of the subsequent exhortations.⁵ Paul proclaims that the believer's earthly life should reflect his divine calling.

Paul introduces the hortatory section with the words "I urge you" that are characteristic of his epistles, and mark a transition to a new section.⁶ The exhortation "to live a life worthy of the calling you have received" grows out of the redemptive work of God, which was expounded in the first three chapters. Like Paul's other epistles, these ethical imperatives are grounded in the indicatives of God's saving work in Christ. This is a comprehensive exhortation which deals with every aspect of Christian life and stands as

⁵Peter O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 273-74. Gordon Fee observes that Ephesians 4:1-16 sets the stage for what follows in 4:17-6:20, and amplifies "how the exhortation of v. 1 is to work out in the various community and household relationships" (*God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994], 698).

⁶Paul could command Ephesian believers to accept his authority, but he normally requests or exhorts his churches rather than commands them. The verb παρακαλῶ ("urge") reflects the attitude of Paul's approach, which has three main senses: (1) to comfort (Matt 2:18; 5:4; Luke 16:25; Acts 20:12; 2 Cor 1:4; 7:6-7, 13; Eph 6:22; Col 2:2; 4:8; 1 Thess 3:7; 2 Thess 2:17); (2) to appeal, entreat, request (Matt 8:5; 14:36; 18:32; Mark 1:40; 5:18, 23; 6:56; Luke 8:41; 2 Cor 9:5; 12:8, 18); and (3) to exhort (Luke 3:18; Acts 2:40; Rom 12:1; 2 Cor 10:1; Phil 4:2; 1 Thess 4:1; 1 Peter 2:11; 5:1). For the study of this word, see Otto Schmitz and Gustav Stählin, "παρακαλεῶ, παράκλησις," in *TDNT*, 5:793-99.

the topic sentence for the rest of the letter.⁷ Paul uses peripatetic language (περιπατέω) to describe lifestyle both positively (Eph 4:1; 5:2; Rom 6:4; Gal 6:16) and negatively (Eph 2:1; 1 Cor 3:3; Col 3:7; 2 Thess 3:11).⁸ Here Paul is referring to the believer's lifestyle indicating that the believer should change his conduct to conform to the calling of God. Paul may use this language due to the influence of his Rabbinic training. Rabbinic literature typically refers to the narrative portions of the Torah as Haggadah (i.e., indicative) and to the ethical portions of the Torah as Halakah (i.e., imperative). The term Halakah comes from Hebrew root הָלַךְ (“to walk”).

“Calling” appears three times in Ephesians (1:18; 4:1, 4) referring to God's call of believers into fellowship with Christ Jesus.⁹ In the present context, the reference is not only to God's salvation by election and adoption (1:4-5), but also to their union in one body, the church. Therefore, Hoehner rightly comments that “the call to walk worthy of the calling refers not only to the individual believers but also the corporate body of believers.”¹⁰ God's calling of believers does not only bestow upon them a gift of salvation, but also imposes a responsibility. Believers are expected to conform to the will of God as a proper response to His calling.

In 4:2-3 Paul explains five specific virtues that produce a life worthy of the

⁷For other examples, 1 Thess 2:12; Rom 12:1; 1 Cor 10:31; Phil 1:27; Col 1:10; 3:17.

⁸Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 504.

⁹For Paul κλησις (“calling”) normally indicates a religious call or an invitation by God (Rom 11:29; Eph 1:8; 4:4; 2 Thess 1:11; Heb 3:1). It is also linked with election (1 Cor 1:26; 2 Pet 1:10; 2 Tim 1:9) because in the verb from it is used of those whom God foreknew and predestined (ibid.).

¹⁰Ibid., 505.

believer's calling: "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace." The first four virtues "humility," "gentleness," "patience," and "loving forbearance" move toward the fifth, the unity of the Holy Spirit. "Humility" or "lowness," the first virtue for Christian life found in Paul, was not considered a virtue in the ancient world, but was used in a derogatory sense denoting servility, weakness, or shameful lowliness.¹¹ Unique to Christian literature is the model of humility demonstrated by Jesus Christ in His sacrificial death on a cross (Phil 2:5-8). There are two reasons why Paul gives this virtue priority. First, Paul tries to stress a life of unity regardless of their diverse background of the believers. Humility brings about reciprocal unity, while pride only provokes disunity. Second, Paul was aware of their past pride and encouraged them to obey and depend on God with humility.

"Gentleness" or "meekness" denotes strength under control. Its meaning should not be associated with weakness. It is rather a work of divine grace among believers producing patience and submission to God. Jesus' reign is characterized by meekness. He fulfilled the role of the messianic king who brought salvation without using

¹¹Ernest Best, *Ephesians*, The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998), 362. The word ταπεινοφροσύνης does not appear before New Testament times. It occurs seven times in the New Testament (Acts 20:19; Eph 4:2; Phil 2:3; Col 2:18; 3:12; 1 Peter 5:5). In Phil 2:3 it is in contrast to "self-seeking" and "vainglorious boasting" and in 1 Pet 5:5 it is in contrast to the proud. It conveys "lowliness of mind" or "humility." For the study of this word, see Walter Grundmann, "ταπεινός κτλ," TDNT, 8 :21-22. In the Old Testament, this word occurs more than 250 times, often in contexts which indicate the Lord bringing down the proud and arrogant, and exalting the lowly or poor whose trust is in God. The prophets express it in warnings of judgment (Amos 2:6, 7; 8:6, 7; Isa 2:9, 11), the historical books describe it with references to events (Judg 4:23; 1 Sam 1:11), while the psalmists indicate the theme in their prayer (Ps 10:17, 18; 25:18; 3:17), and in the wisdom literature "humility" is the fruit of experience and the rule of life (Job 5:11; Prov 3:34; 11:2). Ibid., 1-26.

force (Matt 21:5). Jesus described Himself as meek and lowly of heart (Matt 11:29). Here Paul indicates that “meekness” is a virtue of Christians as well as a fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:23).

The third characteristic of the believer’s life is “patience.” It is used for the endurance of grief or for the disposition of one who is slow to anger (James 1:19). Patient people can demonstrate long-suffering toward insulting people. This quality of long-suffering is also a fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:23). The fourth virtue “loving forbearance” is similar to patience. Paul urges Ephesian believers to walk worthy of their calling by bearing with one another in love. These four characteristics are used to exhort believers to maintain unity of the Spirit. Even though they have been transformed by the Holy Spirit, there were probably tensions between Jewish and Gentile believers. Paul enumerates these virtues for a church consisting of Jews and Gentiles so that they can promote the unity of the Spirit.

Paul now exhorts the church “to make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace” (4:13).¹² The previous four characteristics for Christian life are essential to achieve the aim of unity of the Spirit. Lincoln claims, “This clause is parallel to the previous one in that it too begins with a participle and ends with a prepositional phrase with ἐν.”¹³ The church’s unity is described as “the unity of the Spirit,” which signifies that the Spirit, not believers, creates Christian unity. Believers are

¹²Our passage parallels Paul’s command to the Philippians when he exhorts them to “make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose . . . Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus” (2:2-5).

¹³Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 237.

not exhorted to create it but to manifest and maintain it.¹⁴ God has initiated this unity in Christ through His death and resurrection (2:11-22). As a result of Christ's sacrificial work on the cross, Jew and Gentile have access to God in one Spirit (2:18). Since believers should manifest the unity and reconciliation of God through Christ's redemptive work in their lives, they are exhorted to live in conformity to their calling. Paul explains that this unity is an obvious manifestation of the new creation.

As the basis of Christian unity, Paul proclaims the three persons of the Trinity as the basis of Christian unity (Eph 4:4-6). The sevenfold list is divided into sets of three to reflect the three persons of the Trinity. The remaining four unities refer to believers' relationship to the Spirit, Son, and Father.¹⁵ Unity among Christians, regardless of their diverse backgrounds, is the means by which the church manifests the unity of the triune God to the world.

Paul goes on to proclaim the diversity of gifts and functions which exists in the Church and to indicate their relationship to God's overall purpose (7-16). Paul links unity in 4:1-6 to diversity in 4:7-10, and establishes their interdependence in 4:11-16. The diversity ultimately contributes to the unity of the body of Christ because Christ grants different gifts to each part of the body for the purpose of enriching the whole community of God. As a result, the believers reach full maturity and attain the fullness of Christ.¹⁶

¹⁴Hoehner observes that "there is no exhortation to establish peace because it has been done in Christ. Nor is there an exhortation to organize unity because this has been accomplished by the Holy Spirit. Instead, Paul's concern is to preserve, maintain, or protect that unity" (*Ephesians*, 513).

¹⁵O'Brien, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 280.

¹⁶Paul elsewhere shows the similar discussions: Rom 12:3-8 and 1 Cor 12:4-31.

Paul's use of the body metaphor reflects the "already not-yet" tension of the two ages. The body of Christ is already complete by the unifying work of the triune God, but it still grows into maturity to the fullness of Christ. O'Brien claims that the body of Christ is "a heavenly entity," and yet it is still "an earthly reality" and "it is both present and future, with a consummation occurring at the parousia."¹⁷

Live a Life as New Created Humanity

After encouraging unity in 4:1-16, Paul exhorts believers to walk in holiness in 4:17-32. At first, Paul describes the wickedness and futility of the believers' previous existence.¹⁸ After portraying the Gentile's impure life, Paul strongly exhorts in Ephesians 4:20, "You, however, did not come to know Christ that way."¹⁹ Paul here draws from the Old Testament tradition in which knowledge of God always has strong ethical implications (cf. Hos 4:1-6). What believers knew, heard, and were taught is expressed in three infinitives: put off your old self, be renewed in the attitude of your minds, and put on the new self (Eph 4:22-24).²⁰ Putting off the old self (4:22) and putting on the new

¹⁷O'Brien, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 317.

¹⁸The adverb ("no longer") in 4:17 implies that Ephesian believers walked as the Gentiles before their conversion.

¹⁹The sharp contrast to the former Gentile's life is stressed by: (1) the emphatic placement of ὑμεῖς ("you"). Best notes, "It is not the basis of everyone's life that has been changed, only that of believers" (Best, *Ephesians*, 425); (2) the adversative δὲ; the adverbial conjunction, οὕτως which applies what had been stated before (5:24, 28, 33) (Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 593). For Christian existence set over against a non-Christian life conduct, see Ernest Best, *Essays on Ephesians* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997), 139-55, where the author examines Eph 4:17-21, 22-24; 5:8, 15-18.

²⁰The changing cloths metaphor appears again in 6:10-20. This imagery also shows that the renewing of the mind is not only internal only, but it is also external (Barth,

(4:24) both refer to “an inceptive action” while “being renewed” (ἀνανεοῦσθαι) in 4:23 denotes “a repeated action.”²¹

Paul’s exhortation about the old life and the new life appears more specifically in 4:25-5:2. As a newly created humanity believers are urged to show proper behavior such as speaking the truth and controlling their anger, obeying the Holy Spirit, forgiving, showing mutual love, and imitating of God. We will now examine these four important exhortations against the background of the Old Testament.

Speak the truth. Of specific exhortations about the old life and the new life, Paul’s first admonishment is: “Therefore, each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body” (4:25). Paul already exhorted believers to put off the old self, the life represented by Adam, and put on the new self, the life represented by Christ Jesus (4:17-24). As unified members of one body of Christ, Paul admonishes believers to put off falsehood and speak truthfully to their neighbor (4:25). Since the new person is created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness, he must speak the truth. This admonition was given earlier in 4:15, where Paul insists that the essential means of building up the body of Christ is speaking the truth in love. As “the truth” comes from God Himself (4:24) and is found in Jesus (4:21), it should be the distinguishing mark of new creation speech.

Ephesians, 540; C. Mack Roark, “Interpreting Ephesians 4-6: God’s People in a Walk Worthy of His Calling,” *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 39 [1996]: 36).

²¹Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 609. Hoehner further notes that “those in verses 22 and 24 are middle voice signifying that the subject is receiving the benefit of his or her action, whereas in verse 23 it is passive where the subject is a recipient of the action.”

Paul quotes directly from the Old Testament of Zechariah 8:16.²² He follows closely the LXX (λαλεῖτε ἀλήθειαν ἕκαστος πρὸς τὸν πλησίον αὐτοῦ) rather than the Hebrew Scripture with the only variation being the proposition μετὰ τοῦ πλησίου rather than πρὸς τὸν πλησίον of the LXX.²³ “Speak the truth to each other” is the first of a series of admonitions in the exhortatory section (8:16-19) of Zechariah 8, which follows immediately upon the divine promises regarding new Jerusalem (8:1-15).²⁴ The imperative of 8:16 is directed to the remnant of God’s people. They will inhabit Zion, which will be called “the City of *Truth*” because of the presence of Yahweh (8:3).²⁵ In Ephesians 4:25 Paul picks up this exhortation and addresses it to the new community in Christ (4:24).

Paul’s quotation from Zechariah reflects his eschatological viewpoint. Paul picks up what is predicated concerning the future of God’s people in terms of a new

²²Commentators disagree about whether Paul is quoting Zechariah directly, or whether the reference to Zechariah has been mediated through Jewish ethical traditions. Moritz claims that our passage “clearly draws on the Greek text of Zechariah and can be regarded as a quotation rather than mediated general Jewish ethical tradition.” See Thorsten Moritz, *A Profound Mystery: The Use of the Old Testament in Ephesians* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 88.

²³Hebrew Scripture of Zechariah 8:16 reads אָמַת אִישׁ אֶת־רֵעֵהוּ אָמַת (“Speak the truth to each other”).

²⁴Zech 8:16 is an introduction of a series of exhortation: “These are the things that you should do.”

²⁵“Thus says the Lord, ‘I will return to Zion and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. Then Jerusalem will be called the city of Truth, and the mountain of the Lord of hosts will be called the City of Truth, and the mountain of the Lord of hosts will be called the Holy Mountain’” (Zech 8:3).

Jerusalem and he relates it to the “one new man.”²⁶ Paul preaches that the believers are God’s new community in Christ, “upon whom the ends of the ages have come.”²⁷ Therefore, Paul’s exhortation to the believer to speak the truth as fruit of new created humanity indicates that the eschatological age has come.

In your anger do not sin. As for the second exhortation, Paul urges the believer not to sin by indulging anger, for uncontrolled anger threatens the unity of the body of Christ: “‘In your anger do not sin’: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry” (4:26).²⁸ The wording of Ephesians 4:26a corresponds exactly to that of the LXX Psalm 4:5a (both Ephesians and LXX have the expression ὀργίσεσθε καὶ μὴ ἁμαρτάνετε). Paul’s dependence on Psalm 4:5 is further supported by the fact that the imperative (ὀργίσεσθε) is a *hapax legomenon* within the Pauline Corpus.²⁹ The Old Testament context illumines its use of it in Ephesians. The Psalmist has been accused of some sin even though he is innocent, but God transformed his anger into joy and peace (Ps 4:7-8). Therefore, the psalmist exhorts his readers not to sin in their anger. Because the Hebrew

²⁶O’Brien, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 338.

²⁷Ibid. O’Brien states on Paul’s eschatological perspective: “Within the new society one’s *neighbor* is a fellow-believer, who has a right to the truth. What is predicted of the eschatological future of God’s people in terms of new Jerusalem language in the Old Testament passage is picked up by Paul in relation to the ‘new person’, God’s new community in Christ, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. The salvation-historical and typological connections between the two communities, and thus the accompanying practical exhortations, are patent.”

²⁸Unlike the consistent pattern of other exhortations, statement of the negative and then the positive, here Paul states the positive and then the negative.

²⁹Moritz, *Profound Mystery*, 89.

word רָגַז literally means “shake” or “tremble.” Peter C. Craigie notes, “The psalmist advises his adversaries to keep their rage within themselves, to maintain control of their actions and their evil words.”³⁰

Most commentators agree that the first imperative is concessive or conditional “Although (if) you get angry, do not sin.”³¹ It is possible, but it seems more likely to accept both of these imperatives as commands, one as positive (ὀργιζέσθε) and the other as negative (μὴ ἁμαρτάνετε).³² However, the positive imperative does not necessitate Christian anger, for Paul’s emphasis does not lie in righteous anger, but in preventing anger from causing sin. The reason that the new created community of Christ should not sin when they are angry or let their anger fester over time, is so that they will not provide the devil with an opportunity to get hold of the believer (4:27).

The third exhortation which illustrates the change from the old life to the new is that believers work industriously rather than steal: “He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need” (4:28). The former life of the Gentiles involved “stealing” which was strictly prohibited both in the Old Testament (Exod 20:15; Deut 5:19; Isa 1:29; Jer 7:9) as well as in the New Testament (Mark 10:19; Rom 13:9).

³⁰Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms 1-50* (Waco, TX: Word, 1983), 81.

³¹Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 301; Klyne Snodgrass, *Ephesians*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 250; Moritz, *Profound Mystery*, 89-90; Best, *Ephesians*, 449. This is a possible interpretation, but seems to ignore the coordinating conjunction which makes the two statements equal.

³²F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, New International Commentary on the New Testament, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 361; O’Brien, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 339; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 620.

Believers should practice it no longer. Rather than harming others, their lives should benefit to those who are in need.

Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God. Fourth, Paul urges that the Ephesian Christians should not grieve the Holy Spirit, by whom they were sealed for the day of redemption (4:30). As already mentioned, Paul quotes LXX Isaiah 63:10 that speaks of God's people rebelling and grieving His Holy Spirit. The surrounding context is again important in understanding Paul's exhortation to the new man. Isaiah 63:8-10 says:

He said, "Surely they are my people, sons who will not be false to me"; and so he became their Savior. In all their distress he too was distressed, and the angel of his presence saved them. In his love and mercy he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old. Yet they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit. So he turned and became their enemy and he himself fought against them.

It is clear from this context that God saved and redeemed His people, yet they grieved His Holy Spirit by rebelling against God, which resulted in God turning against His chosen people. In Ephesians 4:30 Paul urges that the new man should not grieve the Holy Spirit by rebelling against God. Paul emphasizes that the Holy Spirit has sealed the new man for redemption. Rebellion against God may be an indication that one is not truly saved. Obedience to God, then, is the firstfruit of new creation life.

Be imitators of God. Paul commands believers to be "imitators of God" as God's beloved children (5:1). The believer's status as a child of God is the basis on which Paul makes this demand to "be imitators of God." Christ redeemed and then God adopted them into His family through the sacrificial work of Christ Jesus (1:4-5). Since they have richly experienced the love of God, Paul urges that they should imitate God and reflect His image.

The word μιμητής occurs six times always in conjunction with γίνομαι (“to become”) in the New Testament. Paul urges the believer to imitate him (1 Cor 4:16; 11:1; 1 Thess 1:6; 2 Thess 3:7) as he imitates Christ, and asks his churches to imitate other churches (1 Thess 2:14; Heb 6:12).³³ Only in this context does Paul exhort believers to become imitators of God the Father. The command to imitate God is breathtaking to modern Christians, but it is a thoroughly biblical idea and not unusual in Jewish or Greek thought.³⁴ The actual language of imitation is not common in the LXX and is never used with reference to imitating God.³⁵

There is implicit reference in the Old Testament to the notion of following the Lord wholeheartedly (Num 14:24; 32:11, 12; Josh 14:8, 9, 14; 1 Sam 12:14; Kgs 11:6; 14:8), and the theme found in the Holiness Code (Lev 19:2): “Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy.” In terms of content, the closest parallel in the New Testament is with Luke 6:35 (Matt 5:44-48), where God’s kindness and mercy are made the model for human conduct.

The command also reflects Paul’s eschatological perspective. In the first

³³For Paul’s imitation imagery, see D. M. Stanley, “‘Become Imitators of Me’: The Pauline Conception of Apostolic Tradition,” *Biblica* 40 (1959): 859-77; Andrew D. Clarke, “‘Be Imitators of Me’: Paul’s Model of Leadership,” *TynBul* 49 (1998): 329-60.

³⁴Barth observes that imitating God does not appear in the Old Testament, but is found in Hellenistic Jewish writers, particularly Philo (Barth, *Ephesians*, 556, 588-92); Hoehner shows many instances how Philo used the concept of imitating God (Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 644-45). Lindars does not take into account this verse when he asserted that the imitation of God is “neither biblical nor true to the ethical position of Jesus and the early Church, in so far as these can be recovered from the New Testament” (Barnabas Lindars, “Imitation of God and Imitation of Christ,” *Theology* 76 [1973]: 395).

³⁵Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 310. The author notes that the actual language occurs in Wid 4:2; 9:8; 15:9; 4 Macc 9:23; 13:9.

creation Adam should have imitated God because he was created “in God’s image” (Gen 1:26). Adam however perverted “the image of God” by sins. But his disobedience is overturned by Christ’s obedience. Now Paul preaches that Christ’s death and resurrection are the ground on which believers accurately reflect “the image of God.” Paul already preached that those who “walked according to the course of this world” (2:2) cannot follow the command of God, for they were dead in their trespasses and sins (2:1). Therefore, the command of “being imitators of God” indicates that the new creational age has come because the believers are urged to imitate God, which the first Adam should have done.

Walk as the children of light. The newly created humanity should walk in unity (4:1-16) by preserving the unity they have in Christ as modeled by the unity of the triune God. Children of God are exhorted to walk in holiness (4:17-32) because they are new people in Christ and their conduct should reflect their new identity. The conduct of the newly created humanity is reflected in Paul’s urge for believers to be imitators of God and to walk in love as Christ demonstrated in His sacrificial love on the cross (5:1-6). Now Paul exhorts his believers to walk in the light as children of light, which is pleasing to the Lord, rather than to follow the deeds of darkness (5:8-14).

In 5:8 Paul preaches that “you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light.”³⁶ The imperative περιπατεῖτε is in the present tense,

³⁶There are three exhortations in which Paul uses the word περιπατέω (“live/walk”). He exhorts Ephesian believers to walk in love as Christ loved us and gave Himself for us (5:2), to walk as children of light (5:8), and to walk as wide men (5:15), which means that they will discern what the will of the Lord is.

which implies habitual conduct for those who are children of light.³⁷ Paul plays on the symbolism of “light and darkness” by introducing the “once-now” contrast to focus attention on the transfer of believers from one dominion to another.³⁸ Once they belonged to the rule of darkness, but now because of their new relationship with their Lord, they belong to the children of light. According to Paul, Christians not only inhabit the realm of light, they are the light. Paul does not say that the believers were *in* darkness but that they *were* darkness itself.

Paul’s contrast between light and darkness reflects the first creation (Gen 1:3). In the beginning darkness was over the surface of the deep (Gen 1:2). God created “light” to shine (Gen 1:3). The New Testament proclaims that God is light (1 John 1:5), and believers are the children of God (5:1), and they are exhorted to walk as children of God. In Paul’s preaching believers are recreated from their darkness (4:18; 5:8) and become new creation because they are the children of light. The recreation of the children of God is the basis of Paul’s challenge that Christians should bear the fruits of the light such as “goodness, righteousness, and truth” (5:9).

We have discussed how Paul preached the life conduct of the newly created humanity in Jesus Christ against the backdrop of the Old Testament. Paul’s preaching

³⁷Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 671.

³⁸O’Brien, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 366. The same scheme occurs also in 2:1-10, 11-22. The word σκότος (“darkness”) denotes primarily theological connotations such as evil (Job 19:8; 22:11) and wickedness (Ps 82:5). The term φῶς (“light”) primarily refers to the character and revelation of God. God is clothed with light (Ps 104:2). Light comes from God (Ps 4:6; 89:15; Isa 60:19-20). The symbolism of light and darkness in the Qumran material signifies the two ways of life in relation to God. See Karl Georg Kuhn, “The Epistle to the Ephesians in Light of the Qumran Texts,” in *Paul And Qumran: Studies in New Testament Exegesis*, ed. and trans. Jerome Murphy-O’Connor (Chicago: The Priory Press, 1968), 122-24.

shows that a believers' new life should reflect the new creation. Believers have been made holy and new already, but they are consistently exhorted to pursue a godly life. So far we have examined Paul's admonition to believers' regarding their individual and corporate lives. The next section will deal with how Paul deals with three sets of relationships in the household in the era of the new creation against the Old Testament background: wife/husband, children/parents, and slaves/masters.

Believers' Relationships in the Household

Paul preaches that the life worthy of God's calling should be demonstrated not only in individual Christian life but also in household relationships. Paul has exhorted believers to walk wisely, making the most of every opportunity (5:15-16). Newly created believers are also admonished to understand the will of God and accomplish this by the empowering power of the Holy Spirit (17-18). The effect of the Spirit in believers' lives is reflected in the five consecutive participles: "Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ" (19-21). Verse 21 not only serves as a final characteristic of a life filled by the Holy Spirit, but also as an introduction to the household code.³⁹

³⁹There is no conjunction in a section of 5:22-6:9, which indicates that this household code is not a new section but a continuation of the previous exhortation of walking in wisdom (5:15). There are several suggestions on the meaning of this verse. See O'Brien, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 400-4; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 720. O'Brien concludes, "The apostle is not speaking of mutual submission in the sense of a reciprocal subordination, but submission to those who are in authority over them. . . . In the light of Christ's power and holiness believers will be subordinate to those who are in authority

If the previous exhortation is dealing with Christian life primarily within the church setting, the household code deals with the domestic side of the Christian life. Paul now admonishes believers to apply the spiritual blessing of unity and reconciliation for the new creation within the Christian household: “wives and husbands,” “children and parents,” and “slaves and masters.”⁴⁰

Wives and Husbands

In 5:22-33 Paul compares the relationship of husbands and wives to the larger vision of the church as the body of Christ. In 5:22-24 Paul admonishes wives to “submit to their husbands as to the Lord.” Verse 22 provides the initial exhortation, and this is grounded in the husband’s headship over his wife, which is like Christ’s headship over the church (23). Paul does not exhort every woman to submit to every man, but wives to their own husbands. Paul presents the church’s submission to Christ as the model of the wife’s submission to her husband. The admonition of a wife’s submission to her husband is repeated in verse 24 and reinforced by the words, “in everything.”⁴¹

In 5:25-32 husbands are admonished to love their wives as Christ loved the church. The statement of the responsibility of a husband to his wife is more than twice as

over them” (*Letter to the Ephesians*, 404-05).

⁴⁰Parallels of relationships within the Christian household are found in Col 3:18-4:1; 1 Tim 2:8-15; 6:1-10; Titus 2:1-10; 1 Pet 2:18-3:7.

⁴¹“In everything” indicates that the wife should submit to her husband in every area of life. “Just as the church is to submit to Christ in everything, so in every sphere wives are expected to submit to their husbands. The motivation for doing this is a true and godly reverence for Christ (O’Brien, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 417).

long as that of a wife to her husband.⁴² The model and basis of the husband's love for his wife is Christ's love for His church. Paul stresses the character and weight of Christ's love by indicating that "just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her" (25). Christ's sacrificial love for the church presents not only the model for husbands, but also presents the purpose of their love relationship. Paul explains the goal of Christ's sacrificial love for the church: "to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless" (26-27).⁴³ Husbands have been exhorted to love their wives as Christ loved the church with His sacrificial love and in the same way that they love their own bodies (28). In this verse the husband's love for his wife is reinforced by repetition. As we have discussed, Paul's admonition to wives and husbands shows the notion of submission and love in their relationships.

In Ephesians 5:31, Paul quotes Genesis 2:24 to emphasize the union of Christ and the church as the prototype/antitype of marriage, and this text provides the substructure of his thought throughout.⁴⁴ The first aspect of the husband/wife relationship is to establish perfect unity, which reflects the perfect unity of the triune God. The husband-wife relationship, however, was broken by sin. After the fall, a woman's desire

⁴²In contrast to the similar passage in the household code in 1 Pet 3:1-7, where the wife's duty is more than four times as long as that of the husband.

⁴³Snodgrass indicates, "Imagery from the Old Testament about the relation of God and Israel stands behind this use of the marriage analogy. Israel was viewed as God's marriage partner (see esp. Isa. 54:5-7; 62:4-5; the book of Hosea). Ezekiel 16:1-14 may provide the background for Ephesians 5:26-27, for it describes God as caring for, washing, marrying, and adorning Israel with splendor" (*Ephesians*, 297).

⁴⁴For a detailed discussion of the mystery of the relationship between Christ and the Church as a typology of marriage, see chapter 2 (67-70).

will be for her husband, and the husband will rule over his wife (Gen 3:16). “Desire” (תשוקה) in both Genesis 3:16 and 4:7 is related with the following word “rule” (משל in 3:16 and 4:17). The interrelationship between “desire” and “rule” needs more detailed study, but we can find that the original unity of the husband-wife relationship is broken.

Paul portrays Christ and the church as the new Adam and new Eve of the new Creation. Husbands of the new creation should love their wives as Christ loved His church. Wives should submit to their husbands as the church submits to the Savior (5:23). Adam and Eve compromised the relationship of perfect peace between them. The destroyed unity between husband and wife was recovered by the perfect unity between Christ and the church. Therefore, as O’Brien notes, a truly restored Christian marriage will “mirror the relationship between Christ and his church.”⁴⁵ He further observes, “Further, this ‘mirroring’ will involve both the husband *loving* his wife as Christ loves the church, and the wife gladly *submitting* to her husband as the church is to be subordinate to Christ.”⁴⁶

Paul’s understanding of this perfect harmony between wives and husbands shows his eschatological viewpoint. The unity of husbands and wives in the new creation has been emphasized by the perfect relationship between Christ and the church through Christ’s death and resurrection. When there is peace, instead of conflict, between husbands and wives, it is clear that *Shalom* predicted in Isaiah 11:6-12 and Isaiah 65:17, 25 has begun. The unity and peace between wives and husbands is partial and progressive because the new creation is inaugurated but not consummated. The marriage of the Lamb

⁴⁵O’Brien, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 408.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*

and His bride is yet to be (Rev 19:7-9). Therefore, believers' marriages reflect and anticipate the Lamb's wedding.

Children and Parents

The second household relationship Paul discusses is that between parents and children.

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother"—which is the first commandment with a promise—"that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth." Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. (6:1-4)

Paul admonishes children to "obey their parents in the Lord, for this is right" (6:1). Paul's appeal is reinforced by the following phrase, "in the Lord." The prepositional phrase ἐν κυρίῳ ("in the Lord") refers not to God but to Christ.⁴⁷ This command does not mean "obey your Christian parents," but rather it means to obey them as part of one's obedience to the Lord whether they are Christians or not.⁴⁸

Paul proceeds to provide the motivation for obedience. It is the right thing to do before the Lord. The word δίκαιος can be used to indicate the righteous character of God (Rom 3:26) and of Christ (2 Tim 4:8) or a righteous person (Rom 5:7). Most commentators consider this expression (τοῦτο γὰρ ἐστὶν δίκαιον) as an appeal to a

⁴⁷It is consistent throughout Eph: 2:21; 4:1, 17; 5:8; 6:10, 21.

⁴⁸"In the Lord" virtually should be synonymous with "as to the Lord" in 5:22. Hoehner notes that "the prepositional phrase 'in the Lord' more likely qualifies the verb, thus emphasizing the children's ultimate obedience to the Lord. . . . the prepositional phrase does not define the limits of obedience, but rather it shows the spirit in which the obedience is to be accomplished" (*Ephesians*, 786). The parallel passage of Colossians 3:20 also supports this interpretation: "Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord."

general sense of what is right or fitting.⁴⁹ Moritz, however, holds that Ephesians may be combining, rather than distinguishing, “what is *right* and what is *demand*ed by the Law.” Therefore, he argues that “it may be best to read τοῦτο γάρ ἐστίν δίκαιον as an introduction to the quotation, rather than as a separate reason given for the injunction to honor one’s parents.”⁵⁰ The latter understanding seems more likely because Paul does not merely argue ethically, but theologically from a Christian perspective. Even though the command for children to obey their parents was a cultural norm, for Paul it was “right” because of their relation to Christ.⁵¹

Paul cites the fifth commandment of the Decalogue to support his exhortation to children to obey their parents: “‘Honor your father and mother’—which is the first commandment with a promise” (6:2).⁵² The two promises are given to those who keep this commandment: “that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth” (6:3). Paul quotes in 6:2-3 from Exodus 20:12 or Deuteronomy 5:16.⁵³ Paul’s

⁴⁹Barth, *Ephesians*, 756; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 403; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 787.

⁵⁰Moritz, *Profound Mystery*, 171. Moritz (171-74) argues that: (1) only four verses earlier (Eph 5:31) the author introduced a Pentateuchal indirectly by means of a γάρ-construction; (2) the Old Testament itself regularly connects what is δίκαιος with keeping the law (cf. Ps 37:28-31, 34; Prov 28:1-12, etc), and (3) the author of Ephesians is elsewhere at pains to link the ethical continuity between the people of God in the old covenant and those in the new (cf. Eph 4:25-32). For this interpretation, Snodgrass, *Ephesians*, 321; O’Brien, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 442.

⁵¹Snodgrass, *Ephesians*, 321.

⁵²This commandment for children to honor their father and mother is quoted five other places in the New Testament, but only in Ephesians is the attached promise also cited: Matt 15:4; 19:19; Mark 7:10; 10:19; Luke 18:20. Old Testament has many related commandments (Exod 21:15, 17; Lev 19:3; Deut 27:16; 21:18-21).

⁵³It is more likely that Paul quotes from the LXX of Exod 20:12 (τίμα τὸν

quotation of the Old Testament here may be better understood in light of the instruction to parents. Parents are commanded not to “exasperate their children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord” (6:4). Paul adds “of the Lord” to indicate that parents do not simply discipline their children to be obedient to their authority, but that through their training and instruction their children will ultimately come to know and obey the Lord Himself. Although this is not a direct Old Testament quotation, it may best be understood against the background of Deuteronomy 6:7-25 and 11:19-21. Parents are commanded to teach God’s words and commandments to their children. Deuteronomy 11:21 makes it clear that parents are to do this “so that your days and the days of your children may be many in the land that the Lord swore to give your ancestors, as many as the days that the heavens are above the earth.” Thus, the commands to both children and parents are to be understood against the background of the conditions for inheriting and keeping the promised land (Deut 6:23).

The relationship between parents and children may also be understood as typologically indicating the relationship between God and His children. The Old Testament makes it clear that obedience to God demonstrates sonship (Deut 6-7), and it was the necessary condition for receiving and retaining of the inheritance of the promised land. Obedience to parents was directly related to obedience to God in Deuteronomy 21:18-21, where disobedient sons are commanded to be stoned to death. Obedience to one’s parents not only brings peace and unity to relationships between parents and children, but also between believers and God. If children dishonor and disobey their

πατέρα σου καὶ τὴν μητέρα ἵνα εὖ σοι γένηται καὶ ἵνα μακροχρόνιος γένη ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς)
because of the closer wording.

parents, they will most likely have the same attitude toward God.⁵⁴ When there is peace between parents and children through children's honor and obedience to their parents, it is obvious that the new creation peace predicted in Isaiah 11:6-12 and Isaiah 65:17, 24 has begun. God's mighty work of reconciliation in the parent-child relationship is the sign that the new creation is inaugurated.⁵⁵

Slaves and Masters

The relationship between slaves and masters is the third item in the household code.

Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free. And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him. (6:5-9)

The command for slaves is the same as that for children: "obey your earthly masters."⁵⁶

Christian slaves are given the same exhortations which Paul has already admonished to

⁵⁴Gerald Blidstein, *Honor Thy Father and Mother: Filial Responsibility in Jewish Law and Ethics*, The Library of Jewish Law and Ethics, ed. Norman Lamm (New York: KTAV, 1975), 1-59.

⁵⁵Paul's exhortation to Christian fathers indicates a transformed life conduct from that of their surrounding society. In Paul's contemporary society the authority of the head of the house gave the father unlimited power over children. Israel followed the patriarchal family structure that the father had absolute control over his children, even over his married sons and their wives if they lived with him. See Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions*, trans. John McHugh (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1961), 19-20. Unlike the trends of his days, Paul's exhortation asks a reciprocal responsibility from children and parents.

⁵⁶As the household codes are read out, slaves would learn of their own Christian duties as well as those of their masters, which signifies that they were as much members of the body of Christ as their masters.

all other Christians, that is, they are urged to obey Christ, serve the Lord, and seek His glory willingly.⁵⁷ Proper obedience should be carried out “with respect and fear.” The twofold expression “with respect and fear” usually indicates “the fear of humans in the presence of God and his mighty acts.”⁵⁸ This is not the slavish terror of the unbeliever, but it is an obedience rendered with reverence and awe before God and Christ. Paul’s exhortation, “just as you would obey Christ,” signifies that their service is related to their attitude toward the Lord.⁵⁹ Believing slaves should also obey their masters “with sincerity of heart,” which underlines the purity of motivation in their relationship with their masters. According to Paul, slaves have the opportunity to serve Christ in serving their masters.

The admonition for slaves to obey their masters is reinforced by the following exhortations: “Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men” (6:6-7). When believing slaves perform their duties to their masters as slaves of Christ, according to Paul, they are fulfilling the will of God. We can read Paul’s philosophy of God’s will and human responsibility. “God’s will is to be

⁵⁷On the status of the slaves within Christian circles, Snodgrass notes, “Slaves no longer belonged to their owners, did not really serve them, did not merely do their will, did not seek to please them, and were no different from them. They were slaves of Christ, served him, and did God’s will, and the slave owners were to treat them the same way as slaves were to treat owners” (*Ephesians*, 323).

⁵⁸O’Brien, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 449. The author notes that “Paul is the only writer to use this expression (1 Cor. 2:3; 2 Cor. 7:15; Phil. 2:12) . . . the phrase has to do with an attitude of due reverence and awe in the presence of God, a godly fear of the believer in view of the final day” (449-50).

⁵⁹This Christ-centered perspective has been found throughout the household code: 5:21, 22, 25; 6:1.

performed by ‘slaves of Christ’ within the everyday life of the household.”⁶⁰ Paul prompts slaves to maintain their integrity in their service to their masters by specifying that the Lord will reward both slave and freeman (6:8).⁶¹

Paul also holds masters responsible for proper behavior towards slaves. The command, “treat your slaves in the same way,” was a shocking concept to slave owners in the first century Graeco-Roman world.⁶² The reciprocal relationship of master and slave before their Lord is emphasized twice more. First, Paul reminds his audience that the Lord is the master of them both. Second, God does not show any favoritism (6:9). Paul’s command for the masters to treat their slaves in the same way suggests that respect, fear, and sincerity should characterize their role as masters.

Paul does not give a direct quotation from the Old Testament, but since the previous two relationships are to be understood against the backdrop of the Old Testament, we can assume that Paul relies on the Old Testament in understanding the relationship between masters and slaves. Leviticus 25:39-46, which discusses the treatment of slaves, is probably in Paul’s mind. It is clear that an Israelite sold to another

⁶⁰O’Brien, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 451. Lincoln also observes, “Believing slaves who perform their household duties as slaves of Christ will also be doing the will of God, since that will has been expressed supremely in Christ.” Lincoln goes on to say that “the will of God which has its focus in Christ is concerned not only with his plan for salvation and the cosmos (cf. 1:5, 9, 11) but also with the everyday life of household work and duties. Those who see themselves as slaves of Christ will carry out God’s will in the sphere of the house . . . ‘from the soul’” (*Ephesians*, 421).

⁶¹In the parallel passage of Col 3:24, the reward is identified with the eternal inheritance that has been prepared for believers (Col 1:5, 12, 27; 3:1-4).

⁶²Snodgrass notes that masters “would have to treat their slaves with respect and fear and with sincerity of heart as to Christ. That alone should have abolished slavery for Christians” (*Ephesians*, 324).

Israelite because of poverty should be treated as a hired worker or a temporary resident, not a slave. Furthermore, the masters are commanded “not to rule over them ruthlessly, but “fear your God” (Lev 25:43). Leviticus 25:46 also emphasizes that they can inherit the slaves but they “must not rule over their fellow Israelites ruthlessly.” The reason for this is given in Leviticus 25:42 in God’s statement that the Israelites are His servants, whom He brought out of Egypt.

God brought His chosen people out of the slavery of Egypt to lead them into the Promised Land. This theme, found in Exodus, can be helpful in explaining Paul’s thought on slaves and masters. As with the relationships between the previous two groups, the relationship between masters and slaves can be understood as typologically pointing to the relationship between God and His people. Believing slaves who serve their earthly masters can be compared with believers who serve God. Paul explains that both earthly masters and slaves are servants of God (6:9). Paul further states that God does not show any favoritism between earthly masters and slaves (6:9; Deut 10:17).⁶³ Therefore, Christian relationships between slaves and masters reflect in a typological manner the relationship between God and His people.

Equitable treatment of slaves points to the equality of all people in the consummated new creation (Gal 3:26-29). When slaves serve masters without a thought of reward or merely for appearance, it points to the radical other-centeredness brought by the new creation.

⁶³Paul explains this thought in Gal 3:28, where he proclaims that “There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

Believers' Spiritual Warfare

From Ephesians 4:1 to the end of his letter, Paul urges believers to walk worthily of the calling they have received from God. They are exhorted to live a new and distinctive Christian lifestyle. They are also urged to be strong in the Lord and to put on God's mighty armor as they engage in a spiritual warfare with the powers of evil. Throughout this paragraph on believers' spiritual warfare, Paul uses warrior imagery that is drawn from the prophecy of Isaiah, which portrays the armor of Yahweh and His Messiah (11:4-5; 49:2; 52:7; 59:17). The Isaianic references depict the Lord as a warrior dressed for battle to vindicate His own people. Paul uses the image of a warrior to portray believers' spiritual warfare. The "full armor of God," which believers are urged to put on as they engage in a spiritual warfare (6:11), is "Yahweh's own armor." In Isaiah God and His Messiah have already tested this armor for war, and it is now provided for God's people as they engage in a spiritual battle.⁶⁴

Paul describes this warfare as "against the devil's scheme" (6:11) and the powers of Satan (6:12), he reminds his audience of the notion of trial in the last days. Paul understands the tribulation of the last days against the background of Daniel 12:7-

⁶⁴O'Brien, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 457. Yoder Neufeld claims that what is described in 6:10-20 is the imagery of the Divine Warrior in full armor that was developed from Isa 59, Wisdom 5, and 1 Thess 5. The author contends that in Ephesians the community of believers step into the role of the Divine Warrior to conquer the cosmic hostile powers. See Thomas R. Yoder Neufeld, "*Put on the Armour of God: The Divine Warrior from Isaiah to Ephesians*," *Journal for Study of the New Testament Supplement Series*, vol. 144 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997). Contra Yoder Neufeld, Hoehner contends that "in Ephesians the body of believers does not appear to be portrayed in the imagery of the Divine Warrior but rather are enjoined to be soldiers strengthened in the Lord to stand defensively (not to conquer) against the onslaughts of the evil one" (*Ephesians*, 818).

10.⁶⁵ One can see false teaching and deception are among predominant expressions of the inaugurated phase of the tribulation. Therefore, Paul admonishes believers to put on the “full armor of God” (6:11, 13). Paul uses Old Testament quotations, allusions, and imagery to explain many components of the armor, and each of them indicates that the eschatological end-time has entered into believers’ lives.

Paul summarizes what he has preached in earlier chapters and challenges Ephesian believers to take action for spiritual war.⁶⁶ Paul’s exhortation to be strong (6:10) with its indication that the resources for strength are “in the Lord and in His mighty power” recalls the emphasis on the availability of God’s power manifested in Christ’s resurrection and exaltation (1:19-20). It is the same power operative in Paul’s apostleship (3:7). Paul’s earlier stress on believers’ triumph over evil powers does not imply full and

⁶⁵The last days are characterized by tribulation. One of the hallmarks of tribulation is false teaching (Dan 8:25).

⁶⁶Robert A. Wild observes that the five imperatives founded in this concluding section reiterate the thirty-one imperatives of 4:1-6:9 (Robert A. Wild, “The Warrior and the Prisoner: Some Reflections on Ephesians 6:10-20,” *CBQ* 46 [1984]: 284-98). Moritz, however, claims that this concluding paragraph concludes not only the second half of the epistle but all six chapters. According to his analysis, the recapitulation of various themes or terminology from the earlier chapters appears in 6:1-20. The most striking evidence is that the cluster of five theological terms such as truth, righteous, faith, word, and Spirit link 1:13 with 6:14-17. Therefore, he concludes that 6:10-20 “should be interpreted with the entire epistle in view” (Moritz, *Profound Mystery*, 181-83). For this interpretation, see also Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 432-33, 438; idem, “‘Stand, Therefore . . .’: Ephesians 6:10-20 as *Peroratio*,” *Biblical Interpretation* 3 (1995): 99-114; Snodgrass indicates many correspondences between this paragraph and the earlier chapters (*Ephesians*, 335-36). O’Brien connect the pieces of armour in 6:14-17 with the earlier chapters of the epistle: “So truth (1:13; 4:15, 21, 24, 25; 5:9), righteousness (4:24; 5:9), peace (1:2; esp. 2:14-18; 4:3; 6:23), the gospel (1:13; 3:6; cf. 2:17; 3:8) or word of God (1:13; 5:26), salvation (1:13; 2:5, 8; 5:23), and faith (1:1, 13, 15, 19; 2:8; 3:12, 17; 4:5, 13) are important theological themes which are recapitulated in relation to the weaponry believers are to employ in their spiritual warfare” (*Letter to the Ephesians*, 459).

final victory. Paul recognizes that the believer's present life is a continuation of spiritual war against evil powers.

Paul's strong exhortation for spiritual war seems strange because he preached that believers have already been seated in the heavenly realms with Christ (1:19-20). Believers have already experienced the victory of Christ over evil powers through His resurrection, but they are admonished here to stand firm against the devil's schemes. This reflects Paul's eschatological perspective in believers' lives. Believers have already achieved an ultimate victory in Christ, so that they can now experience new creation life, but they are still urged to fight against evil powers. This shows tension between the "already" and the "not-yet." "Christ's triumph over the powers has 'already' occurred (1:21), so believers no longer live in fear of them. But the fruits of that victory have 'not yet' been fully realized, so Christians must be aware of the conflict and be equipped with divine power to stand against them."⁶⁷

Paul explains that believers' spiritual warfare consists of two parts. First, Paul exhorts the believers to be strong in the Lord and to put on the armor of God in their warfare against evil powers (6:10-13). Second, Paul admonishes the believers to stand firm. This imperative is followed by an inventory of the believer's arsenal (6:14-20). We

⁶⁷O'Brien, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 458-59. Lincoln also notes on this tension: "Christ has triumphed over the powers, but they still exist (1:21; 3:10); indeed, the ruler of the realm of the air at present at work in those who are disobedient (2:2), and the new life of believers is frequently contrasted with the surrounding darkness, alienation, and immorality of Gentile life in the evil days of the present throughout 4:17-5:14. Now the fact that Christian existence takes place on a battleground between the old age and the new, between darkness and light, between evil and good, is brought more explicitly to the fore, but the accent remains on believers' participation in the victory, on their prevailing in the battle" (*Ephesians*, 438).

will now examine Paul's preaching of the believer's spiritual warfare against the backdrop of the Old Testament.

Be Strong in the Lord

Paul exhorts Ephesian believers, "Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power" (6:10). The passive form of the first imperative, "be strong," indicates that believers do not empower themselves, but this empowering comes from an external source. The following phrase explicitly indicates that this power is from Christ Jesus.⁶⁸ The present tense implies that their strengthening should be continual. The exhortation to be strong in spiritual battle can be understood against the Old Testament. Joshua was urged to "be strong and courageous" (Josh 1:6, 7, 9; Deut 31:6, 7, 23). In a critical situation in the life of David, he also "found strength in the Lord his God" (1 Sam 30:6), while at a later date the God of Israel says of His people gathered home from exile, "I

⁶⁸Believers' empowered by an external source fits the corresponding passive in Paul's prayer that the believers might be strengthened with power through the Spirit (Eph 3:16), and his final exhortation to the Corinthian believers to "be strong" (1 Cor 16:13). The plural imperative ἐνδυναμοῦσθε ("be strong") was taken by Neufeld as addressed to the community corporately. He contends that the "whole community is called to be empowered," adding that this exhortation "should not be understood, as it usually is, in individualistic terms" (*Put on the Armour of God*, 111). Contra Neufeld, Best contends that this exhortation exclusively refers to individual believers (*Ephesians*, 586). We may see this passage addressing primarily individual believers, but the corporate body is also implied. O'Brien comments: "The plural here . . . signifies *common* action: believers *both* individually *and* corporately are to heed the apostolic injunction. As they engage in a deadly spiritual warfare with the powers of evil they are not only to be empowered themselves so as to stand firm; they are also to encourage their fellow-believers to do likewise, so that *together as one* they will resist the devil" (emphasis his, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 460 n 84). Similar to O'Brien's interpretation, see Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 818-19.

will make them strong in the Lord” (Zech 10:12).⁶⁹

Paul explains why believers have to be strong in the Lord and how His power can be appropriated: “Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes” (11). The concept of putting on the armor of God is the functional equivalent of Paul’s previous exhortation about putting on the new self (4:25).⁷⁰ Putting on the new humanity is in essence the same as putting on the armor of God. The emphasis is on the full protection of believers against evil powers, which shows the serious nature of the believer’s spiritual warfare. “The armor of God” can be understood as the armor that God provides, or the armor that God Himself wears, or even the armor that is God Himself. As the words are genitives of origin, the first interpretation that God provides this weaponry for believers is most likely.⁷¹

The armor of God and His Messiah can be found in Isaiah 11:5; 52:7; 57:19. The Isaianic references describe the Lord as a warrior who fights with His own armor against His enemies to vindicate His people. As Snodgrass indicates, “all the armor language is a way to talk about identification with God and his purposes.”⁷² Therefore, some of the weapons believers are to wear—truth, righteousness, and salvation—suggest

⁶⁹Bruce, *Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 403.

⁷⁰Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 442; Snodgrass, *Ephesians*, 338; O’Brien, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 462.

⁷¹O’Brien, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 463; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 823. Lincoln, however, suggests that in view of the Old Testament passages which depict God as a warrior in similar armor, it is plausible that “the armor given by God to believers is in some sense His own” (*Ephesians*, 442).

⁷²Snodgrass, *Ephesians*, 339.

that “we are to put on God or at least the characteristics of God.”⁷³

The purpose for which the believers need to put on the divine armor is so that they can stand against the devil. Believers have already experienced the victory won by God in Christ (1:19-22), and God has seated them with Christ in the heavenly place, but they are exhorted to fight spiritual wars against the schemes of the devil. This shows Paul’s eschatological perspective of the believer’s life, between the “already” and the “not yet.”

Paul further explains why believers need to put on the full armor of God. He explains that the struggle is not physical but supernatural: “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” (6:12). The term *πάλη* (“struggle”) usually denotes a wrestling match, but it is more generally used to suggest “conflict, struggle.”⁷⁴ Paul’s instruction shows the nature and dimension of believers’ spiritual warfare in which we are engaged. The apostle stresses that this war is not against other people, but against the spiritual forces of evil. Therefore, believers are repeatedly exhorted to put on the divine armor (6:10, 11, and 13).

⁷³Ibid. This idea is close in meaning to the distinctive admonishment of Eph 5:1, “Be imitators of God” and 2 Cor 10:4, “The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.”

⁷⁴Arnold, *Ephesians, Power and Magic: The Concept of Power in Ephesians in Light of Its Historical Setting*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 63, ed. G. N. Stanton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 117; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 825. This term does not occur in the LXX and only here in the New Testament.

Stand Firm with the God's Armor

In 6:14 Paul reiterates the exhortation about the need to “stand.”⁷⁵ The subsequent inventory of the different pieces of the believer’s armor illustrates the total equipment supplied by God. Six items in particular are described: truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation, and the Word of God. We will examine these six weapons in canonical context. The first step in the believer’s preparation for war is to fasten the belt of truth around his waist (6:14b). The fastening of clothing securely around the waist signifies preparation for vigorous activity, in this case, readiness for spiritual battle.⁷⁶ Paul’s terminology alludes to the LXX of Isaiah 11:5, where the Messiah is described as having girded His loins with truth. The armor which the Messiah wears in battle to vindicate His people is provided for believers as they engage in spiritual warfare. After the battle when the Messiah restores His kingdom, there will be peace and reconciliation (11:6-12). Therefore, by putting on the truth of God (4:24; 5:9), believers can stand firmly against the schemes of the devil.⁷⁷

The second step in the believer’s preparation is to put on “the breastplate of righteousness” (14c). Paul alludes to Isaiah 59:17 where “the breastplate of righteousness” was part of God’s armor. Some commentators believe the term refers to

⁷⁵“Stand” plays an important role in Paul’s epistles (1 Thess 3:8; 2 Thess 2:15; Gal 5:1; 1 Cor 10:12; 16:13; 2 Cor 1:24; Rom 11:20; Phil 1:27, 28; 4:1; Col 4:12). For its specific use, see Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 447.

⁷⁶Ibid. For example, in Luke 12:35, 37; 17:8, girding one’s loins is a sign of readiness for service.

⁷⁷Moritz indicates the implications of Paul’s allusions to Isa 11, “In your struggle against the enemies or powers make use of the well-proven weaponry described by the Prophet. Draw confidence from the fact that the struggle will be decided on God’s terms” (*Profound Mystery*, 190).

the passive righteousness of justification, but most regard it as the active righteousness of sanctification.⁷⁸ According to the context, God puts on His attribute of righteousness as a breastplate. In the context of Ephesians, believers are to act righteously in their daily life with God and others by putting on God's righteousness.⁷⁹ Righteousness in a believer's life is described as a direct result of God's creation of a new man (5:9).

The third step in preparation for spiritual warfare is to shod the feet "with the readiness of the gospel of peace" (15). This verse reminds us of the notions of peace being proclaimed to both gentiles and Jews in 2:17. The language corresponds to Isaiah 52:7: "How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace." In Ephesians 6:15 Paul adapts the wording of Isaiah to fit the syntactical pattern of his sentence.⁸⁰ The meaning of this metaphorical expression, especially the term rendered "readiness/preparation," raises many questions. According to the context, "readiness of the gospel" signifies a willingness to share or announce the gospel of peace.⁸¹ Paul instructs those who have appropriated this peace for themselves to shod

⁷⁸For the former interpretation, Barth, *Ephesians*, 796-97; Thorsten Moritz, "'Summing-up all Things': Religious Pluralism and Universalism in Ephesians," in *One God, One Lord in a World of Religious Pluralism*, ed. Andrew D. Clarke and Bruce W. Winter (Cambridge: Tyndale House, 1991), 108. For the latter interpretation, Bruce, *Epistle to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 408; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 448; Snodgrass, *Ephesians*, 342; O'Brien, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 474-75; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 841.

⁷⁹In 1 Thess 5:8 Paul made the virtues of faith and love the Christian's breastplate, but he also described righteousness as essential for the spiritual battle when he explained "the weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left" (2 Cor 6:7).

⁸⁰O'Brien, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 475.

⁸¹For this interpretation, Bruce, *Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 408; O'Brien, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 477. Rom 10:15, which alludes to

their feet with preparation to proclaim the gospel of peace.

The fourth step in preparing for spiritual warfare is to “take up the shield of faith” (16). In the Old Testament the shield was used a metaphor for God’s protection (Gen 15:1; Ps 5:12; 18:2, 30, 35; 28:7).⁸² The phrase consists of an appositional genitive, which signifies that the faith itself is the shield. The question now arises as to whether the emphasis falls on God’s faithfulness or the Christian’s act of believing.⁸³

The fifth step in preparation for spiritual warfare is to “take the helmet of salvation” (6:17a). Like the breastplate of righteousness, this also comes from the background of Isaiah 59:17, where God the victorious warrior wears “the helmet of salvation on his head.” Paul preaches that God gives His helmet of salvation to believers for their protection from spiritual warfare. As the genitive is one of apposition, this helmet is salvation itself. Paul already proclaimed that the believer’s salvation is secured, thus, he can stand firmly with confidence in the ultimate victory against the devil’s schemes.⁸⁴

the same verse of Isa 52, indicates messengers who are sent to preach the Christian gospel.

⁸²O’Brien, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 479. Neufeld observes that God is called as divine warrior to take up weapon and shield to intervene on behalf of His afflicted people (Neufeld, *Put On the Armour of God*, 140).

⁸³It is possible to interpret it as the believer’s objective faith, that is, the holding of God’s faithfulness, but Paul most likely describes the believer’s subjective faith. Most commentators follow this interpretation. For example, Barth, *Ephesians*, 772-73; Bruce, *Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 408; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 449; O’Brien, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 479; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 846. Moritz, however, holds that the reference is both Christ’s faithfulness and the human response of faith (*Profound Mystery*, 204).

⁸⁴Lincoln comments: “In the OT God is himself salvation and deliverance for those oppressed . . . and here in Ephesians believers are to receive the divine salvation,

The last action necessary for the believer's spiritual warfare is to "take the sword of the Spirit," which is identified as "the word of God" (17b). Believers should not only withstand the devil's scheme, but also take the offensive against its powers. "The sword of the Spirit" indicates that the Spirit makes the sword powerful and effective.⁸⁵ Paul apparently alludes to Isaiah 11:4, where the Spirit of the Lord is resting on the Messiah (11:2) who shall "strike the earth with the word of his mouth" and slay the wicked "with the breath of His lips" (11:4). The passage is referring to the eschatological subjugation of the nations to the Messiah.⁸⁶ In Ephesians it refers the believer's ongoing warfare with the evil powers of darkness. When Paul urges his audience to take "the sword of the Spirit," which is "the word of God," it signifies "the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation" (1:13), and "the gospel of peace" (6:15).⁸⁷ As believers take the word of God and proclaim the gospel, they can overcome the schemes of the devil. Lincoln notes that "it is the gospel of peace and reconciliation that is the sword that

but in line with his more realized eschatology this writer again thinks of salvation as a present reality. . . . what ultimately protects believers is that God has already rescued them from bondage to the prince of the realm of the air and seated them with Christ in the heavenly realms (cf. 2:1-10). By appropriating this salvation as their helmet, believers have every reason to be confident of the outcome of the battle" (Ephesians, 450).

⁸⁵Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 451; O'Brien, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 482. "Of the Spirit" is probably a genitive of source, not a genitive of origin, meaning that the sword is from the Spirit.

⁸⁶This imagery occurs in 2 Thess 2:8, where the Lord Jesus will slay the lawless one with the breath of His mouth; in Revelation Christ wages war with the sword of His mouth, and His word reveals people's deeds for what they are (1:16; 2:12, 16; 19:13, 15).

⁸⁷Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 451.

enables the *militia Christi* to advance.”⁸⁸

The believer’s weapons described in 6:14-17 are fundamentally divine attributes. In the battle with evil powers it is not the believers’ own strength that brings victory, but the strength of God almighty. However, believers are exhorted to participate in spiritual war with the full armor of God.⁸⁹

Conclusion

This chapter has explored how Paul preached the Christian life as a new creation. For Paul theological proclamation is the foundation of ethical exhortation. In other words, Paul’s indicative messages, focusing on what God has done for humans through the redemptive work of Christ, are the ground for his imperative messages. Paul’s imperative messages focus on how newly created believers can and should live a Christian life in conformity to their high calling.

As believers obtain the spiritual blessings of redemption and reconciliation, they should and can demonstrate transformed lives and unity in both the church and the Christian household. According to Paul’s proclamation, the believer’s new created life is described as that of a new self, which belongs to the light, whereas his former life is portrayed as that of the old self, belonging to the darkness.

Furthermore, the Holy Spirit plays a significant role in Paul’s imperative

⁸⁸Ibid. He further comments, “As the Church continues to be the reconciled and reconciling community, the gospel conquers the alienating hostile powers and brings about God’s saving purposes.”

⁸⁹Eckel comments, “Ethical obligations come into play only as the believer’s response to God’s prior act” (Paul T. Eckel, “Ephesians 6:10-20,” *Interpretation* 45 [1991]: 290).

preaching. The Holy Spirit is the agent of transformation in their lives. Both salvation and sanctification in the Christian life are the work of the Holy Spirit. In Paul's preaching there is no dichotomy between the Holy Spirit's work in redemption and His work in sanctifying for the believer. William Barclay aptly explains:

Paul saw the divine indicative in peculiarly dynamic terms—it was not simply a matter of what God *had* done (in election etc.) but what he *continued to do* in and for the believer. The most effective way of expressing this was by reference to the *Spirit*, since this was a familiar way of denoting God's presence and power. By describing Christian ethics in terms of "walking in/by the Spirit" Paul could convey this sense of *constant* divine power and direction without, however, diminishing the urgency of his moral imperatives.⁹⁰

Paul's imperative messages in Ephesians can also be understood against the backdrop of the Old Testament. The relationship between God and Israel in the Old Testament worked typologically to reflect the relationship between God and His new created humanity, the church. We also explored that the believer's life of new creation reflects an eschatological dimension. Believers are living in tension between the "already" and the "not-yet." They have experienced a triumph over the evil powers in Christ, but the fruits of that victory have not yet been fully realized. Therefore, as a proper response to God's redemption, believers have to pursue lives of holiness and light by the power of the Spirit.

⁹⁰John M. G. Barclay, *Obedying the Truth: A Study of Paul's Ethics in Galatians*, Studies of the New Testament and Its World, ed. John Riches (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988), 227.

CHAPTER 4

HOMILETICAL IMPLICATIONS OF PAUL'S PREACHING IN EPHESIANS

Indicative and Imperative in Christian Preaching

Introduction

Two sections comprise Paul's preaching in Ephesians: the indicative section (Ephesians 1-3) and the imperative section (Ephesians 4-6).¹ In the simplest terms it is the contrast between what God has done for believers and what believers should do in response. In Ephesians, the indicative is the foundation for the imperative. In other words, Paul does not begin his preaching by telling believers what they have to do; he begins by describing what God has done in Christ Jesus through the Holy Spirit for believers. This formulation of the indicative and the imperative does not occur only in Ephesians, but also in most of his epistles.² Sometimes the indicatives and the imperatives of the message lie together in Paul's epistles, but the indicatives are always the ground for the imperatives.

¹It is a well-known fact that the indicative section and the imperative section in Paul's epistles were generally described as the "theological" or "doctrinal" and the "ethical" respectively. Scholars prefer the terms "indicative" and "imperative." We may call each section the "doctrinal indicative" and the "ethical imperative."

²For example, Rom 1-11 primarily presents a theological indicative, while Rom 12-15 presents a practical imperative. For other examples, see Gal 5:25; 1 Cor 1:10; 4:16; 6:12-20; 16:52; 2 Cor 2:8; 6:1; 10:1; Phil 2:12-13; 4:1; 1 Thess 2:12; 3:2; 4:1, 10; 5:14; 2 Thess 3:2; 1 Tim 2:1; Phlm 9-10.

The relationship between the indicative and the imperative in Paul's epistles is sometimes regarded as the fundamental structure for his doctrinal and ethical preaching.³ In this section we will examine the rhetoric of Paul's preaching in Ephesians, which we will call the indicative-grounded and the imperative-oriented. Our investigation will deal with (1) the relationship between the indicative and the imperative in preaching; (2) the Holy Spirit in the indicative and the imperative; and (3) the structure of the indicative-grounded and the imperative-oriented in Christian preaching. Our study of the basic structure of Paul's preaching in Ephesians will help us establish an effective preaching methodology.

Relationship between the Indicative and the Imperative in Paul's Preaching

Before we examine the relationship of the indicative to the imperative, we will define the indicative and the imperative according to the Pauline paradigm. Herman Ridderbos defines these two terms well:

What is meant is that the new life in its moral manifestation is at one time proclaimed and posited as the fruit of the redemptive work of God in Christ through

³For example, C. H. Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments* with an Appendix on Eschatology and History (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1936; reprint, 1980); Geerhardus Vos, "The Pauline Eschatology and Chiliasm," *The Princeton Theological Review* 9 (1911): 26-60; idem, *The Pauline Eschatology* (Princeton: The Princeton University Press, 1930; Phillipsburg, NJ: Reformed and Presbyterian Publishing Company, 1994), 1-41. Vos observes that Paul's formulation of the indicative and the imperative plays a fundamental role in the structure of his eschatological ethics; William D. Dennison, "Indicative and Imperative: The Basic Structure of Pauline Ethics," *CTJ* 14 (1979): 55-78; Georg Strecker, "Indicative and Imperative According to Paul," *AusBR* 35 (1987): 60-72; Michael Parsons, "Being Precedes Act: Indicative and Imperative in Paul's Writing," *EQ* 60 (1988): 99-127; Jeffrey Scott Duvall, "A Synchronic Analysis of the Indicative/Imperative Structure of Pauline Exhortation" (Ph.D. diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1991).

the Holy Spirit – the indicative; elsewhere, however, it is put with no less force as a categorical demand—the imperative.⁴

By “indicative” we mean that which is the work of God for the new life in the fallen humanity in Christ Jesus through the Holy Spirit. The indicative finds its foundation in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and transforms believers through the work of the Holy Spirit. According to Paul’s indicative preaching, believers are the firstfruits of a new creation, a covenant community of God, the body of Christ Jesus, and the temple of the Holy Spirit. By “imperative” we have in mind Paul’s proclamation that the believer should manifest his new life and herald the new creation through a life style empowered by the Holy Spirit.

When Paul proclaims that believers have already been saved, but they are still exhorted to continue to work out their salvation, it sounds contradictory.⁵ This seeming contradiction raises a question: What is the relationship between the indicative and the imperative in Christian preaching? Scholars generally agree that the indicative and the imperative are the basic structure of Paul’s epistles, but vary in their opinions about their

⁴Herman Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*, trans. John Richard De Witt (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975; reprint, 1997), 253. Dennison observes that the sentiment of Ridderbos’ definition summarizes the Pauline structure as it has been understood since the late nineteenth century (“Indicative and Imperative,” 57).

⁵The indicative and the imperative occur with such force and consistency that some scholars have spoken of a “dialectical paradox” and of an “antinomy.” For example, Bultmann views the relationship as one of “true antinomy.” A true antinomy is defined as a series of “statements that contradict each other but still belong together, statements that arise out of a common situation and are as a result intimately related” (Rudolf Bultmann, *The Old and New Man in the Letters of Paul*, trans. Keith R. Crim [Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1967], 8). See Dennison’s explanation of the matter (“Indicative and Imperative,” 63-64) and Duvall’s well-reasoned criticism on Bultmann’s idea (Duvall, “Synchronic Analysis of the Indicative/Imperative Structure of Pauline Exhortation,” 21-28).

relationship. The positions of scholars can be divided into three categories: (1) the indicative and the imperative are unrelated; (2) they are indistinguishable; and (3) the indicative and the imperative are inseparable but distinguishable.⁶

Sharp distinction of indicative and imperative. C. H. Dodd holds that the indicative and the imperative form the basic structure in Paul's epistles. In *Gospel and Law*, he claims that both the indicative and the imperative are of equal importance.⁷ Dodd's systematic distinction between what God has done for believers and what God exhorts believers to do represents his greatest contribution to the history of the problem.⁸ Dodd recognizes two elements in the New Testament: the religious and the ethical. The former includes religious themes such as faith, worship, communication with God, salvation and hope. The latter deals with human conduct, requirements of the Christian life, and moral judgment. He notes that "the division between the two parts . . . is pretty

⁶For the history of the relationship between the indicative and the imperative in Paul's epistles, see Victor Paul Furnish, *Theology and Ethics in Paul* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1968), 242-79; Dennison, "Indicative and Imperative," 55-68; Parsons, "Being Precedes Act," 99-113. Duvall, "Synchronic Analysis of the Indicative/Imperative Structure of Pauline Exhortation," 10-53.

⁷C. H. Dodd, *Gospel and Law: The Relationship of Faith and Ethics in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1951), 4. Before C. H. Dodd, there were two lines which emphasized either the indicative or the imperative to the neglect of the other. For example, Hans Windisch regarded the imperative as dominant, whereas Albert Schweitzer holds that the indicative is dominant. Schweitzer's emphasis on Paul's mysticism of the being-in-Christ shows his ethical idealism. For this discussion, see Duvall, "Synchronic Analysis of the Indicative/Imperative Structure of Pauline Exhortation," 29-32.

⁸Duvall, "Synchronic Analysis of the Indicative/Imperative Structure of Pauline Exhortation," 33.

well marked.”⁹

Dodd distinguished the two even more emphatically in *The Apostolic Preaching and its Development*.¹⁰ According to Dodd, “kerygma” means proclamation, public announcement or declaration whose content was the life and work of Jesus Christ. “Didache” means the ethical principles and obligations of the Christian life. His sharp distinction between Christian theology and ethics, however, fails to account for how Paul explicitly bases one upon the other. Parsons states, “Dodd’s overemphasis on the distinction between the indicative and the imperative is unsatisfactory and unworkable as a true reflection of Paul’s thought.”¹¹

The fusion of indicative and imperative. Victor Paul Furnish views the question of the indicative and the imperative as “*the* crucial problem in interpreting the Pauline ethic.”¹² Rejecting Dodd’s sharp distinction between “kerygma” and “didache,” Furnish swings to the opposite extreme of identifying them with each other.¹³ Furnish denies any distinction between the theological section and the ethical section of Paul’s epistles. On the basis of unity of the indicative and the imperative, Furnish argues against

⁹Dodd, *Gospel and Law*, 5. Dodd claims that this pattern is clear in Romans, Galatians, Colossians, and Ephesians. For other epistles, he insists that the same pattern can be traced by analogy.

¹⁰Dodd, *Apostolic Preaching and Its Development*.

¹¹Parsons, “Being Precedes Act,” 103.

¹²Furnish, *Theology and Ethics in Paul*, 9. He states, “the relationship of indicative and imperative, of ‘theological’ proclamation and ‘moral’ exhortation, is *the* crucial problem in interpreting the Pauline ethic.”

¹³*Ibid.*, 106-07.

the distinction between “kerygma” and “didache.” First, Furnish claims that the gospel or the “kerygma” is not a series of theological propositions or religious truths. Rather, it is the event of preaching (1 Thess 2:13; Rom 9:6; 1 Cor 2:4-5) and “God’s coming to men in the preached word, not the verbal substance of that preaching.”¹⁴ “Kerygma” is synonymous with both “gospel” and “the word of God.” Second, he argues that Paul did not understand “didache” as merely moral instruction as opposed to theological propositions. By “didache” Paul intends preaching.¹⁵

Furnish analyzes Romans to prove that the separation between indicative and imperative as suggested by Dodd cannot be sustained. He claims, “Not only do the letters serve to affirm, defend, and clarify the preaching, but—as the apostle himself specifically says in 1 Thess 2:11-12 and 4:2—his original evangelizing activity already included exhortation, encouragement, and instruction.”¹⁶ His conviction is grounded on the assumption that Paul presents his major theme in Romans 1:16-17 that the whole of the epistle is an explication of the gospel of righteousness from God.¹⁷ According to Furnish,

¹⁴Ibid., 107.

¹⁵Furnish contends that the distinction between Paul’s ministry as kerygmatic and Timothy’s ministry as didactic is a misleading dichotomy (ibid., 108).

¹⁶Ibid., 113.

¹⁷Furnish also regards Rom 12-13 as a prime example of the implications of Paul’s eschatology for his ethics. For him the Pauline dialectic of present-future is closely connected with the dialectic of indicative-imperative. He notes, “The future is totally *God’s* future, and it does not progress or develop from the past and present (which is man’s). The salvation which is already present is not, therefore, somehow qualitatively preliminary or second-rate. What is given in the present is given in *fullness* (although there is still something *not* given—namely resurrection from the dead and the final cosmic triumph of God’s power over death)” (ibid., 215).

the purpose of the last four chapters in Romans is not different but the same as the first eleven.

Furnish claims that the believer belongs to Christ and the gift of the new life is inseparable from the claim of Christ's lordship. As the believer has been rightwised on the basis of his faith, he belongs to a new realm.

He stands under the aegis and hegemony of a new Sovereign. He has been given not just the *possibility* of a new life, but an actually and totally new existence. . . . in Christ he knows that redemption is not just deliverance from the hostile powers to which he was formerly enslaved, but freedom *for* obedience to God. For Paul, obedience is neither preliminary to the new life (as its condition) nor secondary to it (as its result and eventual fulfillment). Obedience is *constitutive* of the new life.¹⁸

Furnish contends that it is a misunderstanding to say that the imperative is "based on" or "proceeds out of" the indicative.¹⁹ In fact, the Pauline concept of grace is inclusive of the Pauline concept of obedience; and, therefore, he formulates the specific relationship between the indicative and the imperative as one of internal union even to the extent of fusion.²⁰ "The Pauline imperative is not just the result of the indicative but fully

¹⁸Ibid., 225-26.

¹⁹Ibid., 225. Furnish states that "though they [indicative and imperative] are not absolutely identified, they are closely and necessarily associated. God's *claim* is regarded by the apostle as a constitutive part of God's *gift*."

²⁰Though Furnish denies "absolute identification" in favor of "close and necessary association," Duvall evaluates that Furnish's formulation resembles the former more than the latter and is thus described as "union" (Duvall, "Synchronic Analysis of the Indicative/Imperative Structure of Pauline Exhortation," 40). Duvall states, "Furnish formulates the specific relationship between the indicative and the imperative as one of the internal union, even perhaps to the extent of fusing the two moods together." Dennison also shares this interpretation of Furnish's position: "Furnish's language has only intensified the unity of the indicative and imperative" ("Indicative and Imperative," 68).

integral to it.”²¹ Furnish’s contention draws a close relationship between the indicative and the imperative. However, his fusion of indicative/imperative does not pay a sufficient attention to Paul’s distinction between God’s activity in Christ and God’s activity in the church. Parsons states that “in so fully combining the indicative and the imperative, Furnish virtually denies the possibility of genuine command and of the Christian pattern of conduct in Paul’s thought.”²²

An intimate relationship between the indicative and imperative. The former paradigms for relationship between the indicative and the imperative in Paul’s epistles show opposite extremes. The relationship between the indicative and the imperative is either so distinct from each other that the two are mutually exclusive or they exist in such a fusion that they are indistinct and are treated as identical. In Paul’s preaching both in Ephesians and the other epistles, the indicative and the imperative cannot be separated but are distinguishable. We should seek to understand the content of Paul’s ethical construction of the indicative and the imperative and their relationship each other on his terms. Two scholars have attempted to maintain the balance between these two aspects of Pauline theology.

For Dennison the fundamental element for the indicative is an affirmation of Christ’s death and resurrection (Rom 6:2, 5), to which Paul’s following exhortations are

²¹Ibid.

²²Parsons, “Being Precedes Act,” 107. “For a similar contention of the fusion of the indicative and the imperative, see Paul Ramsey, *Basic Christian Ethics* (London: SCM Press, 1953).

directly related and from which they cannot be separated.²³ His contention is correct because if we do not comprehend Christ's death and resurrection, Christians lose the ground for their ethical behavior which is the central to Paul's soteriology. Dennison summarizes the relationship between the indicative and the imperative as follows:

"Become what you are in Christ."²⁴

Dennison rejects the idealistic way of interpreting the relationship because the actual historical death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ are in view. He realizes that "the imperative expresses a lifestyle which is grounded upon the indicative."²⁵ Therefore, "doing the works of righteousness (imperative) is a witness and testimony by the believer to the covenant community and to the world of the actual historical death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ (indicative)."²⁶ The two formulations cannot be separated, and the order is irreversible. He seems to maintain a proper balance between the indicative and the imperative. Dennison conceives of Paul's dynamic for ethics as "the indicative and the imperative grounded completely in Jesus Christ and made effectual in the new covenant community by the work of the Holy Spirit."²⁷

Michael Parsons, on the other hand, examines four key passages (Rom 12:1-2; Phil 2:12-13; Gal 5:25; 1 Cor 6:12-20) in order to determine the relationship between the

²³Dennison, "Indicative and Imperative," 68.

²⁴Ibid., 72.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Ibid., 72. The author goes on to say, "The imperative describes to the believer the kingdom way of life which he has by virtue of his union with Christ, because in reality the believer is a citizen of heaven even in this present life" (Phil 3:20).

²⁷Ibid., 78.

indicative and the imperative.²⁸ For Parsons indicative and imperative are closely related but strictly distinct. This distinctiveness can be summarized with a catch phrase: “being precedes act.” The indicative describes what God has accomplished in and through Christ Jesus. The imperative is grounded on the indicative, appeals to the indicative, and is intended to bring the indicative to full development. The ethical life of the believer is to reveal the character of the new life given by God. Therefore, he contends, “the indicative—past, present and eschatological—demands an application on the part of the recipients of Paul’s correspondence: they are a motive force in the apostle’s parenesis: a corrective factor to misbehaviour, and a sanction to right living before the Lord.”²⁹

Among the three major paradigms for the relationship between the indicative and the imperative in Paul’s epistles, we believe that the third one comprehends Paul’s thought the best. In Ephesians Paul urges Ephesian believers who have already been redeemed by the death and resurrection of Christ Jesus to walk worthy of their high calling from God. The imperative is given only to those who are called the body of Christ as members of God’s new creation. In Paul the indicative and the imperative are never separated; they are intimately related each other. The indicative underlies the imperative, and the assurance of the indicative is the transformed lives of God’s new creation people.

Three propositions aptly summarize the relationship between the indicative and the imperative as expressed in Paul’s preaching. First, the indicative and the imperative

²⁸Parsons, “Being Precedes Act,” 99-127.

²⁹Ibid., 127.

are irreversible.³⁰ Herman Ridderbos makes it clear that “it is immediately clear that the imperative rests on the indicative and that this order is not reversible. For in each case the imperative follows the indicative by way of conclusion.”³¹ The indicative has always the priority semantically, if not grammatically. The indicative is foundational for the imperative. If this sequence is reversed, it will turn the gospel on its head. Then, the basis of salvation is no longer God’s grace but human works.³² Scott Hafemann indicates this danger as follows:

The danger in preaching the Epistles, therefore, is that the imperatives of the text will be separated from the indicative theological statements upon which they are inseparably based, or from the fulfillment of the promises to which they inevitably lead. When this occurs, the gospel of God’s grace is perverted either into a demand for a life lived out before God on the basis of human achievement on the one hand, or into the kind of “easy believism” which fails to recognize that the growing life of obedience which inextricably flows from trusting in God’s promises in the power of the Spirit *is* the evidence of genuine conversion on the other hand. Thus, in preaching in the Epistles, the imperatives of the text must always be grounded in their indicative “substantiation.”³³

Second, the indicative and the imperative are inseparable. Christian preaching begins with God’s gracious work, but it does not end there. The indicative should always

³⁰For the relation between the indicative and the imperative, see Dennison, “Indicative and Imperative,” 72-73; Duvall, “Synchronic Analysis of the Indicative/Imperative Structure of Pauline Exhortation,” 227-28; John Carrick, *The Imperative of Preaching: A Theology of Sacred Rhetoric* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2002), 27-29.

³¹Ridderbos, *Paul*, 254-55. He further writes, “The imperative is grounded on the reality that has been given with the indicative, appeals to it, and is intended to bring it to full development” (ibid., 255).

³²Duvall, “Synchronic Analysis of the Indicative/Imperative Structure of Pauline Exhortation,” 227.

³³Scott Hafemann, “Preaching in the Epistles,” in *Handbook of Contemporary Preaching*, ed. Michael Duduit (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 372.

move on to the imperative. Therefore, the indicative and the imperative must never be separated lest the proper balance be destroyed. Divorcing the imperative from the indicative will not produce biblical preaching. Ridderbos claims that “the connection between the two is so close and indissoluble, they represent two ‘sides’ of the same matter, which cannot exist separated from each other.”³⁴

Third, the indicative and the imperative are distinguishable. Although these two do not exist separately, they are not the same. Allen Verhey states: “The indicative mood has an important priority and finality in the process of the gospel, but the imperative is by no means merely an addendum to the indicative or even exactly an inference from the indicative.”³⁵ The indicative and the imperative should never be fused together so that they lose their distinctiveness. Such a fusion will ultimately lead believers to neglect their responsibilities in their relationship with God. Therefore, there is a union, continuity, and intimacy between the indicative and the imperative in Paul’s epistles, and they are irreversible in their sequence, inseparable in their existence, and distinguishable in their intimacy.

³⁴Ridderbos, *Paul*, 256. He finds the reason for this inseparability: “the execution of the imperative is not in the power of man himself, but is no less a matter of faith. Indicative and imperative are both the object of faith, on the one hand in its receptivity, on the other in its activity.”

³⁵Allen Verhey, *The Great Reversal: Ethics and the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 104. But Verhey stresses the intimate connection between the imperative and the preceding indicative. He points out: “Participation in Christ’s cross and resurrection (the important priority of the indicative) and anticipation of the new age of God’s unchallenged sovereignty (the important finality of the indicative) are constituted here and now by obedience to God’s will (the imperative). He views the concept of eschatology in Paul’s epistles as decisive: “The juxtaposition of indicative and imperative is possible . . . precisely because of the present co-existence of the old age and the age to come” (ibid., 105).

The Holy Spirit in Indicative and Imperative Preaching

Then, how can the indicative and the imperative be unified as one integrated Christian message without them losing their distinct characteristics? If God is the sole agent of the indicative, who is the agent of the imperative? It is a misunderstanding to conclude that the indicative denotes the divine aspect and the imperative the human aspect.³⁶ Of course, there is a tension between the indicative and the imperative because they are in some places interwoven. This tension is sometimes regarded as the interplay of justification and sanctification. George Eldon Ladd stresses this tension in the New Testament:

The important point to note is that there is a tension between the indicative and the imperative. Sanctification is a factual past event (indicative); therefore it is to be experienced here and now (imperative). Believers have been sanctified; therefore they are to cleanse themselves from all that defiles. Therefore it is not correct to say that justification is the beginning and sanctification the continuation of the Christian life. Both involve the tension between indicative and imperative. . . . Therefore the fact of accomplished sanctification is one of the motivations to which Paul appeals for ethical conduct.³⁷

³⁶Ridderbos, *Paul*, 255. Ridderbos indicates: "Indicative and imperative thus do not represent a certain division of property in the sense that the indicative denotes the divine and the imperative the human share in the new life, or that the imperative arouses the believer to what God has done for him so that from his side, too, he not fail to give an answer. All this would set next to each other those elements in the gospel legalism."

³⁷George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974; reprint, 2001), 565. Ladd further comments that there is a tension between these two for Christian living. He believes this tension is because of the tension between the two ages. "Christians live in two ages. They are citizens of the new age while they still live in the old age. The new has come (2 Cor 5:17) while the old remains. The indicative involves the affirmation of what God has done to inaugurate the new age; the imperative involves the exhortation to live out this new life in the setting of the old world. The new is not wholly spontaneous and irresistible. It exists in a dialectical tension with the old. Therefore the simple indicative is not enough; there must always be the imperative—humanity's response to God's deed" (ibid., 568).

As Ladd indicated, it is wrong to conclude that justification is based on God's grace and sanctification is based on man's effort. In Paul's preaching in Ephesians it is the triune God, especially the Holy Spirit, who binds the tension of the indicative and the imperative. The triune God does not only bless believers to experience redemption but also guarantees their salvation in the final days. The new life is provided by the grace of God and sustained by the grace of God as well, although the grace of God in the believer's entire life does not weaken his responsibility.

According to Geerhardus Vos, the Holy Spirit is the one who unifies in the believer the principles of the indicative and the imperative. Vos connects the Spirit of God to the resurrection of Christ in order to demonstrate to the believer that God who raised Christ from the dead brings resurrection to the believer.³⁸ Furthermore, the Spirit of God is in union with the believer so that the believer can experience in his life the actual death and resurrection of Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. This is the indicative concept. Vos goes on to discuss the association of the Spirit and righteousness as it is related to believers.³⁹ The association of the Holy Spirit and righteousness is "on the one hand that of the a seal attesting justification as an accomplished fact [indicative],

³⁸Geerhardus Vos, "The Eschatological Aspect of the Pauline Conception of the Spirit," in *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation: The Shorter Writings of Geerhardus Vos*, ed. Richard B. Gaffin Jr. (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1980; reprint, 2001), 101-02. Vos states, "What God did for Jesus, He will do for the believer also. . . . God raised Jesus through the Spirit. Hence the argument from the analogy between Jesus and the believer is further strengthened by the consideration that the instrument through which God accomplished this in Jesus is already present in the readers." The strength of Vos's argument appears in Romans 8:11: "If the Spirit of God who raised Jesus dwells in you, then God will make the indwelling Spirit accomplish for you what He did for Jesus in the latter's resurrection" (ibid., 102).

³⁹Ibid., 109-11.

on the other hand that of the normal fruit of righteousness [imperative].”⁴⁰ In Titus 3:5, 6 Vos observes that the gift of the Holy Spirit plays a role in connecting justification [indication] and renewal [imperative]. Justification is the cause and renewal is the effect.⁴¹

When believers are given imperatives or commands in Scripture, the Holy Spirit equips them with strength to fulfill them. We cannot produce any good work in ourselves; we rely on the grace of Christ Jesus to work in us by the power of the Holy Spirit.⁴² Dennison also contends that it is the Spirit of God who unifies in the believer the principles of the indicative and the imperative:

The Holy Spirit brings to bear upon believers a new covenant consciousness which is eschatologically conceived in the actual redemptive-historical work of God the Father through His Son—Jesus Christ. . . . the Holy Spirit brings the covenant community consciously into union with Christ (indicative); the same Spirit performs and secures in us conscious works of righteousness (imperative) so that we are holy and blameless before the throne of a holy and just God.⁴³

⁴⁰Ibid., 109-10.

⁴¹Ibid., 110. He states, “In Titus 3:5, 6 the gift of the Holy Spirit proves the connecting link between justification and renewal, being the effect of the former and the source of the latter.” In the concept of renewal, Vos comments that Paul associates “walking by the Spirit” with the believer (Gal 5:16) (ibid., 111).

⁴²About the possibility of human’s performing good works, the Westminster Confessions says, “Even our best works, as they are wrought by us, are defiled and mixed with so much weakness and imperfection that they cannot endure the severity of God’s judgment.”

⁴³Dennison, “Indicative and Imperative,” 75-76. He goes on to state, “We could say that there would be a contradiction or antinomy in the evangelical formulation if the imperative was to be understood as works done apart from the Spirit of God, i.e., by our own autonomy, meritoriously securing salvation. However, such a concept is absent in the theology of Paul because by our abandonment of any good work in ourselves we rely solely upon the grace and mercy of Jesus Christ to work in us by the power of His Spirit” (ibid., 76).

Paul views the Holy Spirit as the eschatological gift through whom the power of the new age has already broken into this world. Lincoln rightly claims that the Holy Spirit is the link between “the renewal which is taking place now in the inner man (2 Cor 4:16) and the consummation of the renewal in the heavenly body.”⁴⁴ For Paul, the Holy Spirit empowers the believer’s ethical life (Rom 15:16; 2 Thess 2:13). When the indwelling of the Holy Spirit sustains the believer’s life, here indicative and imperative are cojoined because the activity of the Spirit consistently empowers and guides the believer’s life. It is when the believer experiences union with Christ not only in his regeneration but also in his life that the indicative and the imperative can be unified completely. Bornkamm correctly affirms that “the action is not divided between God and man making two propositions supplementary to each other. Each proposition substantiates the other.” He further comments, “Because God does everything you too have everything to do.”⁴⁵

The Holy Spirit who works for both believers’ salvation and their sanctification is an eschatological reality. Believers have experienced every spiritual blessing in Christ by the work of the Holy Spirit (Eph 1:4), but they are yet to wait for the complete consummation with certainty because the Holy Spirit is the guarantee of redemption for believers. In regard to Paul’s eschatological conception of the Holy Spirit

⁴⁴Andrew T. Lincoln, *Paradise Now and Not Yet*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 43 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 67, 142.

⁴⁵Günther Bornkamm, *Paul*, trans. D. M. G. Stalker (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 202.

associated with the believer, Geerhardus Vos observes several challenging points.⁴⁶ First, he declares that in 2 Corinthians 5:5, the “present Spirit is an anticipation of the future Spirit.” Second, there is an association in the ethical sphere of the Spirit with life so that the eschatological future is carried back into the present. Third, Vos contends that “Paul speaks of the present pneumatic state in terms which are either directly borrowed from the eschatological vocabulary, or strongly reminiscent of it.” Fourth, Vos argues that “even in the Old Testament where the ethical operation of the Spirit is mentioned, this is done in the form of a promise, so that from the outset it appears in an eschatological environment.” Therefore, we are now living in the age to come by the help of the living Spirit of God.

In a similar vein Ridderbos notes, “This being in the Spirit is not a mystical, but an eschatological, redemptive-historical category. It means: you are no longer in the power of the old aeon; you have passed into the new one, you are under a different authority. This is the indicative of redemption, the proclamation of the new state of life, and it can be followed by the imperative: If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.”⁴⁷

As we have examined, the indicative and the imperative are unified together in the believer by the work of the Holy Spirit. The work of the Holy Spirit is integral to both indicative and imperative in Christian living. However, the consistent indwelling of the Holy Spirit within believers does not preclude believers’ obligation to the concrete

⁴⁶Vos, “Eschatological Aspect of the Pauline Conception of the Spirit,” 112-13.

⁴⁷Herman Ridderbos, *When the Time Had Fully Come: Studies in New Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957), 52.

declarations of God's will described in Paul's commands. The presence of the Holy Spirit in believers' lives rather increases their responsibilities. Bornkamm establishes God's involvement both in the indicative and the imperative in the following words: "The believer's actions derive from God's act, and the decisions taken by obedience from God's antecedent decision for the world in Christ. Thus the two come together in equilibrium: to live on the basis of *grace*, but to *live* on the basis of grace."⁴⁸

Model of Indicative-grounded and Imperative-oriented Christian Preaching

The indicative and the imperative are the basic structure of Paul's epistles. The indicative and the imperative are closely linked, but each is distinct. The indicative has a priority in Paul's preaching because the exhortations are given to those who have experienced the salvation of God. However, the indicative is not preached without a proper imperative message because God's redemption necessarily requires a response of the believer as the first fruits of a new creation. In this part we will establish a proper balance for the indicative and the imperative as the basic formulation for Christian preaching.

Indicative-grounded Christian preaching. Christian preaching should take the indicative message as its foundation. On the ground of God's redemptive work for humanity, all other exhortations will proceed. When Christian preaching emphasizes the imperative message to the neglect of the indicative, it encourages "legalistic moralism" or

⁴⁸Bornkamm, *Paul*, 202-03 (emphasis his).

“pietistic mysticism.”⁴⁹ On the significance of the indicative and the imperative in

Christian preaching, Gresham Machen correctly notes:

The liberal preacher is really rejecting the whole basis of Christianity, which is a religion founded not on aspirations, but on facts. Here is found the most fundamental difference between liberalism and Christianity—liberalism is altogether in the imperative mood, while Christianity begins with a triumphant indicative; liberalism appeals to man’s will, while Christianity announces, first, a gracious act of God.⁵⁰

According to Machen, liberalism begins by preaching what we have to do, whereas Christian preaching begins by telling what God has done for the sinner. He further observes that “the liberal preacher offers us exhortation. . . . [but] it cannot remove the dreadful fact of sin. Very different is the message of the Christian evangelist. He offers not reflection on the old but tidings of something new, not exhortation but a gospel.”⁵¹

When Machen asserts that “Christianity begins with a triumphant indicative,” he stresses the historicity and factuality of the Christian religion. The indicative message especially deals with the historicity of Christ’s death and resurrection. With regard to the crucifixion, Paul preaches that Christ died to bear the sins of His people. Concerning the

⁴⁹Dennison, “Indicative and Imperative,” 78.

⁵⁰J. Gresham Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1923; reprint, 2001), 47. Machen criticizes the method of communication focusing on exhortations in the Hellenistic age with that of Christianity. He observes, “The strange thing about Christianity was that it adopted an entirely different method. It transformed the lives of men not by appealing to the human will, but by telling a story; not by exhortation, but by the narration of an event. . . . Where the most eloquent exhortation fails, the simple story of an event succeeds; the lives of men are transformed by a piece of news” (ibid., 47-48). Focusing on the significance of the indicative mood of the message, Machen does not develop fully the importance of the imperative. When he criticizes the exhortative message, it means the exhortation to the neglect of the indicative as its basis.

⁵¹Ibid., 121.

resurrection of believers, Paul preaches that God raised them up with Christ and seated them with Him in the heavenly realms (Eph 2:6). John Murray convincingly shows what happens to the believer through Christ's death and resurrection: "The believer died to sin because he died with Christ, and he lives in newness of life because he rose with Christ."⁵²

Ephesians 1-3 shows that these historical acts of Christ ground Christian experience in reality. The following selected statements of Paul concerning the triune God, especially the work of Christ, demonstrate very cogently the triumphant indicative of the gospel:

God chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ. (1:4-5)

God made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment—to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ. (1:9-10)

God made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. (2:5-6)

For Jesus himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. (2:14-15)

Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household. (2:19)

It is evident that the central messages of the gospel in Ephesians (God's

⁵²John Murray, *Principles of Conduct: Aspects of Biblical Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 205-06.

election, God's eternal plan, salvation, and reconciliation through Jesus Christ) are expressed in the indicative mood. Paul always preached the grace of God through the work of Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit first in order that his audience would identify themselves as a newly created humanity. Without recognition of their new identity, they could not pursue lives worthy of God's calling.

Paul's other epistles employ the same structure: the indicative followed by the imperative. In Colossians, after establishing the nature and work of Jesus Christ in the face of heterodoxy (chapters 1-2), Paul urges Colossian believers to live the Christian life as the first fruits of God's new creation (chapters 3-4).

The apostolic preaching recorded in Acts also starts with the indicative mood before it proceeds to the imperative mood. In his Pentecost sermon, Peter proclaimed:

Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him (Acts 2:22-24).⁵³

The significance of the indicative message in Christian preaching is that it is concerned with the great work of God in Jesus Christ in human history. It grounds preaching in the historical saving acts of God in Christ thus incorporating each believer's life into the story of redemption. Even though application is involved in Christian preaching, preaching should primarily deal with the exposition of the Word of God. John Carrick rightly argues, "The sermon must be informative; it must teach; it must explain

⁵³Similarly, Acts 2:29-36; Peter also employs the same indicative mood in his sermon in Acts 3:12-18; 10:34-43).

and expound; it must explicate the Scriptures; it must be didactic.”⁵⁴

Preaching focused on the imperative without a proper treatment of the indicative will leave the congregation with the impression that they can save themselves. Paul preaches to the Ephesian believers: “As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins” (Eph 2:1). “We were by nature objects of wrath” because we followed our sinful desires and thoughts (Eph 2:3). That is why Paul emphatically asserts:

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast (Eph 2:8-9).

Christian preaching should first emphatically proclaim God’s great work of salvation. All Christian ethical exhortations should proceed from this ground. Therefore, it is important to distinguish God’s redemption and its application to believers.⁵⁵ Only those who have been redeemed by God’s grace are exhorted to be “imitators of God” as God’s children (Eph 5:1).

⁵⁴Carrick, *Imperative of Preaching*, 15. He further notes, “It is . . . fundamental mood of *language*; it is the fundamental mood of *history*; and it is also the fundamental mood of *preaching*.”

⁵⁵Carrick correctly highlights the distinction between redemption accomplished and redemption applied: “Redemption accomplished focuses, of course, supremely on the atonement of Christ. Inevitably, however, the atonement of Christ involves, indeed presupposes, a series of redemptive acts which include the incarnation, the resurrection, and the ascension of Christ. It is by means of the incarnation, the atonement, the resurrection, and the ascension of Christ that God has accomplished upon the cross—‘It is finished’ (John 19:30)—that the triumph of this accomplishment is most clearly displayed. . . . The application of redemption involves, as Professor John Murray puts it, ‘a series of acts and processes.’ It involves effectual calling, regeneration, repentance and faith, justification, adaptation, sanctification, perseverance, union with Christ, and glorification. It is important to note that in *some* of these acts and processes—especially in those where the responsibility of man is emphasized, notably, for instance, in repentance, faith, sanctification, and perseverance—it is the imperative mood, not the indicative mood, that is utilized in the Scriptures” (*Imperative of Preaching*, 20).

Imperative-oriented Christian preaching. We have contended that Christian preaching should begin by proclaiming what God has done for fallen humanity just as Paul did in Ephesians and other epistles. Although Christian preaching begins with a triumphant indicative, it does not end there. God inspired Paul to command holiness as a result of and in response to the indicative.

In Christian preaching the indicative and the imperative should be preached not as either/or but as both/and. The preacher should always proclaim the indicative before the imperative. When the preacher proclaims the imperative first, the congregation will fall into ethical legalism or hopeless despair.⁵⁶ In fact, such preaching deprives Christianity of its distinctiveness and power reducing it to one religion among many.

John Stott notes, “We must distinguish between the divine initiative in Christ’s death and the divine appeal leading to man’s response today.”⁵⁷ According to his contention, the indicative and the imperative are complementary.⁵⁸ First, he contends that “we must never issue an appeal without first making the proclamation.” He observes that when preachers neglected this simple rule, it has done serious harm to the souls of men, and had brought much dishonour to the name of Christ. He further states that “the gospel

⁵⁶For example, Jesus said He was the vine and we are the branches and that if we abide in Him, we will bear fruit (John 15:1-2). The indicative precedes the imperative: “You are my branches” precedes, “Go therefore and bear fruit.” When we reverse the indicative and imperative, no matter how hard we may try, we cannot bear fruit because we are out of Jesus, the life giver.

⁵⁷John R. W. Stott, *The Preacher’s Portrait: Some New Testament Word Studies* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1961), 46.

⁵⁸Stott writes, “The great lesson . . . is that proclamation and appeal belong together. We must not separate them. One without the other makes true New Testament preaching impossible” (ibid., 54).

is not fundamentally an invitation to men to do anything. It is a declaration of what God has done in Christ on the cross for their salvation. The invitation cannot properly be given before the declaration has been made. Men must grasp the truth before they are asked to respond to it.”⁵⁹ Second, he asserts the significance of the imperative: “we must never make the proclamation without then issuing an appeal.” He further states that “proclamation without appeal is not biblical preaching. It is not enough to teach the gospel; we must urge men to embrace it.”⁶⁰ Stott rightly indicates the balance of the indicative and the imperative in Christian preaching. He concludes:

So the true herald of God is careful to make a thorough and thoughtful proclamation of God’s great deed of redemption through Christ’s cross, and then to issue a sincere and earnest appeal to men to repent and believe. Not one without the other, but both.⁶¹

In chapters 4-6 of Ephesians Paul exhorts believers to walk as children of God.⁶² Based on God’s spiritual blessings of redemption, reconciliation, and unity in Christ, Paul admonishes believers to maintain the unity of the church, individually and

⁵⁹Ibid., 55.

⁶⁰Ibid., 57. Stott indicates that many preachers are inhibited from making this appeal because they regard to “the call to repentance and faith as an attempt to usurp the prerogatives of the Holy Spirit.” He admits that human beings are fallen and not able to turn from their sins to Christ without the prevenient grace of the Holy Spirit, but repentance and faith are the gifts of God. Therefore, Christian preachers should appeal to a person’s heart based on proclamation of God’s work (ibid.).

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²The apostle uses περιπατέω (“walk/live”) to describe Christian behavior throughout, and this keyword appears within chapters 4-6 (4:1, 17; 5:2, 8, 15). Mary Breeze has a thorough analysis on how Ephesians 4-6 shows Paul’s hortatory discourse by dividing it into the generic commands about the readers’ lifestyle (4:1, 17; 5:1-2, 8, 15; 6:10) together and the specific commands that work towards keeping the generic ones (4:2-3, 25-32; 5:3-4, 10-11, 16-33; 6:1-9, 13-19). See Mary Breeze, “Hortatory Discourse in Ephesians,” *Journal of Translation and Textlinguistics* 5 (1992): 313-47.

corporatively, through the diverse ministries. Forty out of the forty one imperative verbs in Ephesians occur in chapters 4-6.⁶³ The following selected statements of Paul concerning the believer's life as a new humanity demonstrate the imperative of the gospel:

As a prisoner for the Lord, therefore, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. (4:1-3)

Therefore, each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body. (4:25)

Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love. (5:1-2)

Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. (5:21)

Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's scheme. (6:10)

All these messages demonstrate Paul's imperative proclamation. When preachers deliver these messages, it is imperative that they interpret them within context. For example, in Ephesians 4:1 we can discover a transition from the indicative message to the imperative. The ethical exhortation beginning with "I urge you" together with "then/therefore" is a typical introductory formula for Paul when he changes from the indicative to the imperative.⁶⁴ Since God redeemed Ephesian believers by the sacrificial blood of Jesus Christ and provided them with unity regardless of their backgrounds, they have to live in conformity to God's calling, especially demonstrating unity both in the Church and in the

⁶³The imperative message occurs only once in 2:11.

⁶⁴For example, 1 Thess 4:1; Rom 12:1; Phil 4:1.

household.⁶⁵ Believers' lives, therefore, should be a natural response to God's gracious work upon their lives. Paul's imperative messages strongly urge believers to reflect their identity of newly created people in all aspects of their lives.⁶⁶

These imperative messages continue till 6:20, almost till the end of Ephesians.

Paul's other epistles also demonstrate his utilizing the imperative on the basis of the indicative. For instance, in Romans 6, after Paul unfolds who they are in Christ (the indicative), he turns to the practical admonishment (the imperative): "Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness" (6:12-13).⁶⁷

⁶⁵Paul's exhortations to Ephesian believers show much emphasis on internal relationships rather than on the church's responsibility towards the unchurched. The answer can be provided in part by the situation of Ephesian believers. They were still living in a divided environment because of their diverse backgrounds. Because of the conflict of these environmental aspects, the church needed the ability to manifest a strong unified testimony to the working of God's power upon the believing community before it could have an effective outward ministry. See Breeze, "Hortatory Discourse in Ephesians," 344.

⁶⁶Lloyd-Jones comments on Eph 4:1-3: "So we are entitled to say that this word *therefore* introduces us to the doctrine of sanctification. . . . It is the 'therefore' of chapter 4, verse 1, that introduces us to the doctrine of sanctification. . . . In the light of this word *therefore* we must say that sanctification is not a gift to be received; it is rather something that has to be worked out in the light of doctrine. It is an imperative, it is a command" (D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Christian Unity: An Exposition of Ephesians 4:1-16* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980; reprint, 2000], 17).

⁶⁷This appears again in Rom 12:1-2, where Paul exhorts the audience on the basis of God's mercies to live in a distinctive way. On the ground of the indicatives already outlined and argued, Paul exhorts believers a voluntary response. Like Eph 4:1 with a transition from what has been predominantly theological exposition in the former chapters, Paul here addresses his audience with apostolic authority what the redeemed people should do.

In Philippians 2:12-13 the indicative and the imperative follow in rapid succession: “Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.” On the relationship between the indicative and the imperative message of Philippians 2:12-13, Carrick writes: “The relationship between the indicative and the imperative here reflects the relationship expressed in the Bible between the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man. In other words, the indicative mood expresses the action of God; it expresses God’s sovereignty, God’s initiative: ‘It is God who works in you.’ Conversely, the imperative mood expresses the action of man; it expresses man’s responsibility, man’s cooperation: ‘Work out your own salvation.’”⁶⁸ In Pentecost after proclaiming the indicative message, Peter goes on to employ the imperative message to listeners: “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins” (Acts 2:38; cf. 3:19).⁶⁹

The imperative plays a vital role in Paul’s epistles. The preaching of the apostle Paul, the preaching of Peter, and the preaching of Lord Jesus Christ all testify to

⁶⁸Carrick, *Imperative of Preaching*, 89. Here the indicative is prior to and the basis for the imperative semantically, if not grammatically. “The word ‘for’ in the second clause furnishes the ground for the appeal in the first” (Ridderbos, *Paul*, 255). It also appears in Rom 6:14: “For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.”

⁶⁹We find here some different nature of the imperative message from Ephesians. The Ephesians were already believers, thus, the imperative messages were given to believers only. But in evangelistic preaching like in Acts 2, the imperative is proclaimed to unbelievers. Carrick distinguishes the two kinds of the imperative in the New Testament: If the focus of the *initial* imperative in the New Testament is upon repentance and faith, the focus of the *subsequent* imperative is upon sanctification and the requirements of Christian ethics” (*Imperative of Preaching*, 86).

the crucial importance of the imperative mood in the preaching. Therefore, Christian preaching must preach the imperative message grounded on the indicative. As the indicative message explains the grace of God, the imperative message must express the action and responsibility of man as a natural response to God's grace. God's initiative is expressed: "It is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose," so man's responsibility as God's people should be emphasized: "Continue to work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."

Without the imperative message following the indicative, Christian preaching cannot be complete. The imperative appears as the fruit of the indicative or response to the triune God who has already established a relationship with believers, while the indicative provides a ground and incentive. The imperative message underlines the work of the triune God, especially the help of the Holy Spirit who sustains and empowers us. By the work of the triune God, the indicative and the imperative are inseparably linked. Only when preachers maintain a proper balance of the indicative and the imperative, can they make their sermons not only biblical but also effective.

Conclusion to This Section

The goal of preaching Paul's epistles, like preaching in the rest of the canon, is to reveal the knowledge of God in order that believers can respond to God's redemptive work by conforming to God's character for God's glory. It is important then to establish a balanced and unified formulation of the indicative and the imperative in Christian preaching. It is a mandate for modern preachers not only to expound the Word of God on the basis of the author's intention but also to apply the truth of God in each sermon. For the purpose of this balanced communication of the Word of God, we must learn and

proceed with the methodology of Paul which is manifested in Ephesians.

The indicative stressed the redemptive work of God for humanity, which deals with the historicity and factuality of the death and resurrection of Christ Jesus. The indicative primarily appeals to the mind of people through the didactic element in preaching. The imperative emphasizes the application of God's redemption, which requires a responsibility of man as a fitting response. The indicative primarily appeals to the will of people through the directive element in preaching. Christian preaching must start with the indicative, but it must go on to the imperative. The balance of the indicative-imperative in preaching has profound theological and homiletical implications.

As we have examined, the controlling center of the indicative-imperative relationship is God's continuing grace with His people under the superintendence of the Spirit of God. For this reason, Sampley describes the Holy Spirit as a "prime eschatological link between the now and the not yet."⁷⁰ The Holy Spirit's work is essential for believers' justification and sanctification. Therefore, Christian preachers must preach the indicative as the foundation of the imperative and the imperative as the necessary response of believers to the indicative. We can call this model the indicative-grounded, imperative-oriented homiletic. As Paul demonstrates in Ephesians, Christian preaching must emphasize the unity of the indicative and the imperative via the work of the triune God in both. Faithful utilization of Paul's methodology in presenting the Word of truth through the indicative-grounded and the imperative-oriented homiletic will be a means for powerful communication of the Word of God to transform the lives of His people for God's eternal glory.

⁷⁰J. Paul Sampley, *Walking Between the Times: Paul's Moral Reasoning* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1980), 21.

Redemptive-historical Preaching

Introduction

Herman Ridderbos indicates that the whole content of Paul's preaching can be summarized as "the proclamation and explication of the eschatological time of salvation inaugurated with Christ's advent, death, and resurrection." He further observes, "It is from this principal point of view and under this denominator that all the separate themes of Paul's preaching can be understood and penetrated in their unity and relation to each other."⁷¹ Paul's epistle to the Ephesians verifies Ridderbos' contention. According to Paul in Ephesians, the work of the triune God, especially Christ's death and resurrection, is the essence of his proclamation. Through the sacrificial death of Christ and His triumphant resurrection from the dead, the promises in the Old Testament reached their fulfillment. By God's grace manifested through Christ's atonement, fallen humanity has now experienced God's redemption.

Ephesians demonstrates that Paul's preaching consistently emphasized redemptive history. In Ephesians chapters 1-3 Paul proclaims what God has done through Christ Jesus to redeem believers; in chapters 4-6 Paul presents how believers should live as God's newly created people through the power of the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, the indicative message and the imperative message coincide with the eschatological tension which believers experience in the two overlapping ages. The whole message of Ephesians reflects Paul's redemptive-historical understanding of Jesus Christ and believers' lives.

In this section we will examine three homiletical implications of Paul's preaching in Ephesians: (1) preaching's redemptive historical context; (2) preaching's

⁷¹Ridderbos, *Paul*, 44.

redemptive-historical character; (3) preaching's redemptive-historical form.

Preaching's Redemptive-historical Context

History as God's revelation. Redemptive history is the mode of biblical discourse because the Bible in all of its parts and through all of its genres focuses on the progressive self-revelation of God to His people in history. Greidanus notes, "Redemptive history is so significant because it is intimately related with God's revelation; in fact, redemptive history is itself *revelation*."⁷² Geerhardus Vos also observes, "Revelation is the interpretation of redemption; it must, therefore, unfold itself in installments as redemption does."⁷³

A key dynamic in gospel preaching is the interrelationship of revelation and God's redemptive-historical acts. Redemptive history is revelation, and revelation is a redemptive-historical act. Just as John emphasized Jesus as the Word in the sense of His being the ultimate vehicle of God's revelation, Paul emphasizes Jesus the Word as the context of that revelation. Sidney Greidanus indicates, "*God's* story of bringing his kingdom on earth is centered in *Christ*: Christ the center of redemptive history, Christ the

⁷²Sidney Greidanus, *Sola Scriptura: Problems and Principles in Preaching Historical Texts* (1970; reprint, Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2001), 121. Greidanus calls the redemptive history as God's revelation "redemptive revelational history" (122). He also indicates that "the terms 'redemptive history' and 'revelational history' are used interchangeably and the features of the one apply equally well to the other" (124).

⁷³Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948; reprint, Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1992), 6. Vos also notes that "revelation does not stand alone by itself, but is (so far as Special Revelation is concerned) inseparably attached to another activity of God, which we call *Redemption*" (5).

center of the Scriptures.”⁷⁴

VanGemeran in his book *Progress of Redemption* contends that Jesus Christ lies in the hermeneutical center of the Scriptures. He states, “The center of the Bible is the incarnate and glorified Christ, by whom all things will be renewed. All the acts of God, all the revelation of his promises and covenants, all the progression of his kingdom, and all the benefits of salvation are in Christ.”⁷⁵ It is the belief of the author that even the Old Testament is not merely preparation for the coming of Christ; it is the revelation of a proleptic redemption whose effects were ingressively felt under the old covenant though not paid for until the new.⁷⁶

As Christ is the focal point of all revelation, all the Scriptures should be interpreted in light of Christ’s life, especially His historical death and resurrection. In this sense, redemptive history provides the overarching context for any section of Scripture. Christ Jesus should be the center of all interpretations. A vital connection exists between the unity of redemptive history and the Christocentricity of redemptive history.⁷⁷

Greidanus writes, “The unity of redemptive history implies the Christocentric nature of

⁷⁴Sidney Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament: A Contemporary Hermeneutical Method* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 227.

⁷⁵Willem VanGemeran, *The Progress of Redemption: The Story of Salvation from Creation to the New Jerusalem* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1988), 27. VanGemeran’s description of the Scriptures in the redemptive historical approach is clearly indebted to the *Biblical Theology* of Geerhardus Vos. Following the system employed by Vos, VanGemeran explores theology according to its synchronic periods of biblical history and shows its connection between each period diachronically in order to find the progress of redemption and its unity of revelation. In this book he attempts to show how God in Christ leads his redemptive work from the Fall to the New Jerusalem.

⁷⁶VanGemeran, *Progress of Redemption*, 24.

⁷⁷Carrick, *Imperative of Preaching*, 111.

every historical text. Redemptive history is the history of Christ: He stands at its center, but no less at its beginning and end.”⁷⁸

Biblical theology for redemptive-historical preaching. Redemptive history is intimately connected with biblical theology in that it serves as both the center and circumference for biblical theology. It provides the focal point and the boundaries. The maxim, “a text without a context is just a pretext for a proof text,” points to the danger of trying to interpret a biblical text out of its context. To understand a passage in context preachers must certainly identify the literary context and the historical context. They must not, however, stop there. Redemptive preachers must also place a biblical text in the context of the whole biblical revelation. Geerhardus Vos defines Biblical Theology as “that branch of Exegetical Theology which deals with the process of the self-revelation of God deposited in the Bible.”⁷⁹

⁷⁸Greidanus by quoting Van ’t Veer insists that Gen 3:15 is a key to understanding all of the Scriptures because it “places all subsequent events in the light of the tremendous battle between the Seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, between Christ coming into the world and Satan the ruler of this world, and it places all events in the light of the complete victory which the Seed of the woman shall attain. In view of this, it is imperative that not one singly person be isolated from this history and set apart from this great battle. The place of both opponents and ‘co-workers’ can only be determined Christologically. Only in so far as they received their place and task in the development of *this* history do they appear in the historiography of Scripture. From this point of view the facts are selected and recorded”(Van ’t Veer, *Van den Dienst des Woord*, ed. R. Schippers [Goes: Oosterbaan & Le Cointre, 1944], 149, cited in Greidanus, *Sola Scriptura*, 135). Van ’t Veer proceeds “from the unity and Christocentricity of redemptive history to the unity and Christocentricity of Scripture.”

⁷⁹Vos, *Biblical Theology*, 5. He goes on to state that “‘revelation’ is taken as a noun of action. Biblical Theology deals with revelation as a divine activity, not as the finished product of that activity. Its nature and method procedure will therefore naturally have to keep in close touch with, and so far as possible reproduce, the features of the divine work itself.” Vos elsewhere defines, “Biblical Theology, rightly defined, is

When God revealed the redemptive plan for fallen humanity, He utilized words and deeds appropriate to His covenant people in their historical setting. Redemptive preachers must understand that the Old Testament declares God's promise and the New Testament proclaims its fulfillment in Christ Jesus. All the shadows which heralded the coming Messiah in the Old Testament are eclipsed by the coming of Jesus Christ in whom the reality is found. The redemptive historical context of preaching consists of three elements.

First of all, redemptive history is real history.⁸⁰ Vos writes, "The process of revelation is not only concomitant with history, but it becomes incarnate in history."⁸¹ The most obvious example of history's revelatory significance is the death and resurrection of Christ. Objecting to a division of two kinds of history, i.e., the divine history and the human history, Schilder insists, "All history is sacred history because all history is in reality God working toward his goal."⁸² Christ's redemptive work and resurrection is the climax of God's revelation for humanity. In this sense as Vos contends, "redemption and revelation coincide."⁸³ He indicates two points concerning this connection.

nothing else than *the exhibition of the organic progress of supernatural revelation in its historic continuity and multiformity*" (*Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation: The Shorter Writings of Geerhardus Vos*, ed. R. E. Gaffin [Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1980], 15, emphasis his).

⁸⁰Vos, *Biblical Theology*, 6; Greidanus, *Sola Scriptura*, 122.

⁸¹Vos, *Biblical Theology*, 6.

⁸²K. Schilder, *Preken*, vol. 3., ed. W. G. De Vries (Goes: Oosterbaan & Le Cointre, 1954-1955), 223, cited in Greidanus, *Sola Scriptura*, 122. Schilder further notes, "God's redemptive work does not make a separate history, detached from the 'profane,' but it enters history and comes about with and through history."

⁸³Vos, *Biblical Theology*, 7.

First, God's activities did not occur primarily for the purpose of revelation. Their revelatory character is secondary. Primarily, God's work initiates, shapes, or corrects His covenant relationship with humanity. Second, God's actions are never left to speak for themselves. They are always preceded by prophecy and followed by interpretation (indicative) and instruction (imperative).⁸⁴ Therefore, Christian preachers must believe that God realizes His ultimate plan of redemption through the three-fold, historical process of predictive word, divine act, and interpretive word.

Second, God's revelation through redemptive history is progressive. The Bible's unity is balanced by its gradual unfolding of the divine nature and plan. One part of Scripture is integrally united with all other parts, but not in a haphazard fashion. Every part of revelation moves a step closer to the completion of redemption. God's revelation advances toward fulfillment and consummation. For those of us in the final stages of this progress, the New Testament sheds its light on the Old Testament and brings new significance to old texts. According to Vos, God's revelation "has not completed itself in one exhaustive act, but unfolded itself in a long series of successive acts."⁸⁵ Therefore, God's revelation is directly connected with each other to make one big picture of God's redemption through Christ Jesus.

Similarly, Carrick contends that the redemptive-historical preacher must "seek constantly to draw lines of progression from any given text in the Old Testament to the

⁸⁴Ibid. Vos indicates the order: first word, then the fact, then again the interpretative word. The Old Testament reflects "the predictive preparatory word," the Gospels contain "the redemptive-revelatory fact," and the Epistles provide "the subsequent, final interpretation."

⁸⁵Ibid., 5.

Incarnate Christ.”⁸⁶ Hendrik Krabbendam also correctly indicates:

History is the story of that one, continuing, and progressing Christ. Thus a heavy emphasis is placed upon the person of Christ in His three-fold office of Prophet, Priest, and King, as He marches through history from creation to His incarnation and then on to His return, ever speaking, ever acting, and ever directing.⁸⁷

As the Bible shows progressive revelation, reaching its climax in the life of Christ, the Old Testament must always be interpreted under the light of the New Testament.

Third, God’s revelation through redemptive history shows organic unity. The unity of Scripture as one redemptive story leads preachers to hold that any text in the Bible should be understood under the whole picture of God’s revelation.⁸⁸ The immediate context must ultimately interact with the canonical context. When it does, the intent of the divine author, only partially expressed by the intent of the human author, comes fully into view. Schilder in his articles “Concerning the unity of ‘Redemptive History’ in Connection with Preaching” states:

Reformed people . . . believe that the Counsel of God has planned all things according to his will, that God fulfills that Counsel, that he reveals himself in Christ

⁸⁶Carrick, *Imperative of Preaching*, 111.

⁸⁷Hendrik Krabbendam, “Hermeneutics and Preaching,” in *The Preacher and Preaching* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Publishing, 1986), 232.

⁸⁸For the unity of the Bible, see John J. Davis, “Unity of the Bible,” in *Hermeneutics, Inerrancy, and the Bible*, ed. Earl D. Radmacher and Robert D. Preus (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 641-59. Davis contends that the Bible displays absolute unity in four areas: thematic unity, historical unity, prophecy and fulfillment, and Christological unity. Stressing Jesus as the most significant unifying factor, Filson contends, “It is a Christocentric message or nothing. Unity will be found only on the basis of that Christ-centered message” (Floyd V. Filson, “The Unity of the Old and the New Testament,” *Interpretation* 5 [1951], 151). For the same contention, see T. Glyn Thomas, “The Unity of the Bible and the Uniqueness of Christ,” *The London Quarterly and Holborn Review* 35 (1966): 219-27; J. Stanley Glen, “Jesus Christ and the Unity of the Bible,” *Interpretation* 5 (1951): 259-67.

to save the world; that it follows from this that history is a unity, and that this unity, which includes the unity of “redemptive history,” is apparent (to faith) in Holy Scripture which relates of this history that which is necessary for us to become acquainted with the central thrust of its development and its factual turning points.⁸⁹

As Schilder observes, redemptive-historical preaching concerns a synthetic approach in which the text is viewed not as a fragmentary collection but as a compound. Each of historical events in the Bible is not only connected with the others by its progressive growth, but also by the organic unity. The organic progress starts from “seed-form to the attainment of full growth.”⁹⁰

Since the Bible is a consecutive revelation of God, redemptive-historical preachers must emphasize the importance of a holistic approach in the interpretation and preaching of the Word of God.⁹¹ Schilder aptly summarizes that Reformed theologians “read the Bible not as a collection of stray fragments and books . . . but as a *unity*, they see as *progression* of revelation from the O.T. to the N.T., from shadow to reality, from less light to more light, from prophecy to fulfillment, from type to antitype, from this age to the one to come.”⁹²

⁸⁹K. Schilder, “Iets over de Eenheid der ‘Heilsgeschiedenis’ in Verband met de Prediking,” *De Reformantie*, XI (1931): 365, cited in Greidanus, *Sola Scriptura*, 123.

⁹⁰Vos, *Biblical Theology*, 7. Although it is seed-form at first, Vos contends, we should not say that “in the qualitative sense the seed is less perfect than the tree.” He further contends that “in the seed-form the minimum of indispensable knowledge was already present.”

⁹¹Carrick, *Imperative of Preaching*, 110.

⁹²K. Schilder, *Bij Dichters en Schriftgeleerden* (Amsterdam: Holland, 1927), 401, cited in Greidanus, *Sola Scriptura*, 124.

The tension of the “already” and the “not-yet.” Redemptive-historical

preaching holds that believers are living in the inaugurated eschaton. According to Paul’s preaching in Ephesians, there are two ages: this present evil age, and the age to come (Eph 1:21).⁹³ God has acted decisively for salvation and for judgment, fulfilling the promises, bringing an age of surpassing and eternal blessing through the life of Christ Jesus, especially His death and resurrection. God’s decisive action ensures that the future will bring an end to the present age and consummate the new age, an age of superlative blessing and superlative righteousness. The whole creation will partake in the glory and freedom of that new age. When the age to come arrives, all nations will worship the God of Israel, and there will be no end to that age nor any diminishment of the blessedness which characterized it.

Through the life of Jesus Christ, the powers of the new age have intruded into history. Christ’s sacrificial death on the cross brought an intrusion of the final judgment, while His resurrection from the dead brought an inauguration of the new creation. “And those who by faith are united to Christ have been transferred from this present evil age into the power of the eschatological age of the Spirit. They have entered the Kingdom of God.”⁹⁴ Those who are in Christ are now a new creation, but they have not yet

⁹³“This age” and “the age to come” do not mean two worlds but two different kingdoms. These two ages are separated by the second coming of Christ Jesus and the resurrection from the dead. Therefore, when Jesus Christ was resurrected from the dead, the new age was inaugurated, although it still waits for consummation at the second coming of Christ. See George Eldon Ladd, *The Gospel of the Kingdom: Scriptural Studies in the Kingdom of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959; reprint, 2003), 24-39. Geerhardus Vos thoroughly analyzes the biblical paradigm of two ages in *The Pauline Eschatology*. Eschatological two ages also occur in Matt 12:32; Mark 10:29, 30; Luke 20:34-36; Gal 1:4.

⁹⁴Lee Irons, “Redemptive-historical Preaching,” *Krux* (2001): 41.

experienced its consummation. The concept of the two ages establishes the ground of the believer's ethical life. They have already been accepted as holy, but they have to pursue holiness in their behavior. Paul preaches that believers are to walk as children of God to manifest their new identity in Christ against the evil days.

The reality in which the believer is situated in an earthly life creates a tension in the Christian life. Paul shows this tension of two ages in his preaching. On the one hand, God has blessed believers with every spiritual blessing in Christ (Eph 1:3), and raised them up with Christ and seated them with Him in the heavenly realms (Eph 2:6). On the other hand, believers are exhorted to continue to work out their salvation with fear and trembling waiting for a complete consummation (Phil 2:12). Believers now experience the glory of resurrection in Christ, but they live with great expectation of the full glory of the resurrection (2 Cor 5:1-5).⁹⁵ George Eldon Ladd rightly summarizes well the implications of the two ages:

The Age to Come is still future, but we may taste the powers of that Age. Something has happened by virtue of which that which belongs to the future has become present. The powers of The Age to Come have penetrated This Age. While we still live in the present evil Age and while Satan is still the god of This Age, we may taste the powers of The Coming Age. Now a taste is not a seven-course banquet. We still look forward to the glorious consummation and fulfillment of that which we have only tasted. Yet a taste is real. It is more than promise; it is realization; it is experience.⁹⁶

Believers realize that “the age to come overlaps the present age, creating a temporary

⁹⁵The author of Hebrews speaks of those who “have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and powers of the coming age” (Heb 6:4-5).

⁹⁶Ladd, *Gospel of the Kingdom*, 41.

eschatological tension.”⁹⁷ In Christ the new age has come, and the new creation has become a present reality. The two-age construction instructs us that God promises to secure the future through the revelation of what God has already done by Jesus Christ. Redemptive-historical preachers need to understand that Christ’s advent and finished work have inaugurated the kingdom of God, the eschatological age for all believers by the Holy Spirit, even though this present evil age will continue until the coming of Christ as the Lord of judgment and glory.

Preaching’s Redemptive-historical Character

Christ’s death and resurrection as the key to redemptive-historical

preaching. Redemptive-historical preachers believe that Christ’s death and resurrection are the center of the whole Scripture. In this sense, redemptive preaching is essentially Christocentric preaching. Paul emphasizes in Ephesians that through Christ’s death God has brought about salvation for fallen humanity; through Christ’s resurrection from the dead God has demonstrated the surpassing greatness of His power (Eph 1:19). Ridderbos writes on the significance of Christ’s death and resurrection in redemptive history: “The fulfillment of God’s prior redemptive promise, the fullness of the time, has therefore

⁹⁷Irons, “Redemptive-historical Preaching,” 41. Paul describes this tension in his epistle: “Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal” (2 Cor 4:16-18). When we say that the age of salvation has come, it does not mean that it has partially arrived, and partially it has not yet arrived. Rather, we are now living in the promised age of salvation and we are now living in the age of the resurrected Christ. We also are now living in the present evil age experiencing the salvation of God in our lives.

become manifest above all in Christ's death and resurrection."⁹⁸ Redemptive-historical preaching must be related to Christ directly or indirectly because all Scriptures are pointing to the Messiah, anticipated in the Old Testament, present in the New Testament, and coming in the future.

God-centered preaching. Redemptive-historical preaching centers on the triune God. The Bible is a self-revelation of God. The Bible was written to inform us about God in relationship to His creation and His people. The biblical authors' purpose is predominantly theological, and their primary interest is God's action in history, not history itself.⁹⁹ Greidanus rightly indicates that "the major clue we receive regarding God's purpose in the canon as a whole as well as in its individual passages is that God intends to tell us about *himself*: his person, his actions, his will, etc." Therefore, the most important question the reader should ask in interpreting a passage will be: "What does this passage tell us about God and his coming kingdom?"¹⁰⁰

The whole Bible reveals the God who acts in history. The Old Testament is theocentric just as the New Testament, where Jesus Christ as the Incarnate of God

⁹⁸Ridderbos, *Paul*, 48. He also notes that "the advent of Christ, his appearance, death, and resurrection, as well as the gift of the Holy Spirit, were above all the fulfillment of the promise, the dawning of the consummation of the history of redemption, eschatological event" (48).

⁹⁹William Sanford La Sor, David Allan Hubbard, Frederic William Bush, and Leslie C. Allen, *Old Testament Survey: The Message, Form, and Background of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 108.

¹⁰⁰Sidney Greidanus, *Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text: Interpreting and Preaching Biblical Literature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988; reprint, 2000), 114. He goes on to state that "the Bible reveals its theocentric nature. Everything is viewed in relationship to God: the world is God's creation; human beings are image-bearers of God; salvation belongs to God—in short, all of life belongs to and is governed by God."

Himself proves that He is God. According to Paul, God is described as the major subject who acts throughout Ephesians. God works everything for the sake of His eternal glory. God unified all things in Christ by raising Christ from the dead. God provided the blessings of unity and reconciliation between Jews and Gentiles. Stressing the work of God, John Stott states, “Jesus Christ is the means through whom, but not the source from whom, the reconciliation comes.”¹⁰¹ Of course, if the author of the reconciliation is God, the agent is Christ. It is “through Christ” and “in Christ” that God has accomplished the reconciliation.¹⁰² The God who initially provided all spiritual blessings through Christ Jesus now exhorts the believer to reflect his identity as a new creation.

God-centered interpretation of a passage is important especially in dealing with biblical characters. In biblical narrative God is always the chief protagonist. As Ernest Best indicates, most of the biblical characters have been recorded “for a purpose other than that of giving us information about the particular person.” For example, “the selection of incidents which we have been given about Peter has been dominated by an interest other than the character of Peter himself. . . . We ought to use the incidents of Peter’s weakness instead to argue for God’s mercy and strength.”¹⁰³ Redemptive-

¹⁰¹John R.W. Stott, *Preacher’s Portrait, The Preacher’s Portrait: Some New Testament Word Studies* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1961), 45. Stott explains, “It is God who reconciled, who gave, who was in Christ reconciling, who did not impute our sins to us, who entrusted to us the message of reconciliation, who makes His appeal to men, who made Christ to be sin.”

¹⁰²Ibid.

¹⁰³Ernest Best, *From Text to Sermon: Responsible Use of the New Testament in Preaching*, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1978), 90-91. Greidanus also points out, “Even in scenes where God, in a particular frame, is not one of the ‘characters’ or is not represented by one of the characters, the scene as a whole will undoubtedly reveal the

historical preachers must comprehend that the whole Scriptures are written to reveal God's great work in Christ, and they resist preoccupation with human characters.

Theocentric preaching is not different from Christ-centered preaching. Our focus on God indeed directs us to Christ who is the major agent through whom God accomplished His purposes. Bryan Chapell claims:

Theocentric preaching inevitably becomes Christocentric not because the sermon always cites the name of Jesus or draws to mind some event from his earthly ministry, but because it demonstrates the reality of the human predicament that requires divine solution. . . . Focus on God's redemptive activity sets the stage for Christ's work, alerts the human heart to its necessity, and/or exposes the divine nature. When we see God at work, Christ's ministry inevitably comes into view (John 1:1-3; 14:7-10; Col 1:15-20; Heb 1:1-3).¹⁰⁴

Christ-centered preaching. The New Testament proclaims that Jesus Christ is the ultimate fulfillment of the Old Testament history, promises, and prophecies. According to Paul's preaching in Ephesians, Christ Jesus is the major agent through whom God has accomplished all His purposes. The unity and progress of God's revelation culminated in the advent, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ.

Paul proclaims his conviction about the center of his message in 1 Corinthians 2:2. "For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified." Paul also showed his conviction that what he preached is "Jesus Christ as Lord" (2 Cor 4:5). Paul realized that Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of the prophecies

presence of God, for the human characters act out the scene against the backdrop of God's promises, God's enabling power, God's demands, God's providence" (*Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text*, 199).

¹⁰⁴Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994), 296. The author further states, "A sermon remains expository and Christ-centered not because it leapfrogs to Golgotha, but because it locates the intent of the passage within the scope of God's redemptive work."

promised in the Old Testament. Through Christ's life, especially His death and resurrection, a new age has been inaugurated in the believer's life. For Paul, all preaching is unabashedly Christological. Therefore, without focusing on Christ, we cannot interpret the message of Paul appropriately because for Paul the cross of Jesus Christ was the center of his preaching. Ridderbos indicates, "The fundamental structure of Paul's preaching is consequently only to be approached from his Christology." He further notes, "Paul's Christology is a Christology of redemptive acts. Here lies the ground of the whole of his preaching, and it is with the historical reality of this event, in the past as well as in the future."¹⁰⁵

Christ-centered preaching is the heart of apostolic preaching. Richard Lischer indicates that apostolic preaching centered on Jesus Christ: "A cursory review of the objects of the New Testament verbs for 'preach' shows how saturated with Christ that early proclamation was. Some of the objects are: Jesus, Lord Jesus, Christ, Jesus Christ as Lord, Christ crucified, Christ as raised from the dead, Jesus and the resurrection, good news about the Kingdom, Jesus as the Son of God, the gospel of God, Word of the Lord,

¹⁰⁵Ridderbos, *Paul*, 49. "This historical-eschatological character of Paul's Christology also places it in organic relationship with the revelation of the Old Testament. What has taken place in Christ forms the termination and fulfillment of the great series of divine redemptive acts in the history of Israel and the presupposition of the progress and consummation of the history of the world" (50). The unity of redemptive history is Christocentric. Scripture also should be interpreted Christocentrically. Van 't Veer contends that "every part of the one redemptive history can be properly interpreted only when this interpretation is Christological, for Christ is the center in which all of redemptive history has its unity and in Whom it finds its interpretation. If one disconnects a part from this Center, he has robbed it of its Christological character and retains, at best, an edifying moral which contains nothing particularly Christian" (Veer, *Van den Dienst des Woord*, 153, cited in Greidanus, *Sola Scriptura*, 136).

the forgiveness of sins, and Christ in you.”¹⁰⁶ Apostolic preaching does not focus exclusively on Jesus’ crucifixion, but it covers the person and work of Jesus Christ along with the kingdom of God.

C. H. Dodd demonstrated that the *kerygma* of the early church was Christological in nature, consisting of some six elements: First, the age of fulfillment has dawned. Second, this has taken place through the ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus, of which a brief account is given. Third, by virtue of the resurrection, Jesus has been exalted at the right hand of God, as messianic head of the new Israel. Fourth, the Holy Spirit in the Church is the sign of Christ’s present power and glory. Fifth, the Messianic Age will shortly reach its consummation in the return of Christ. Sixth, the *kerygma* always closes with an appeal for repentance, the offer of forgiveness and of the Holy Spirit, and the promise of ‘salvation.’¹⁰⁷ We can easily perceive that preaching in the New Testament focused on Jesus Christ in light of redemptive history.

Jesus Christ Himself stated that all Scriptures bear witness to Him: “You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me” (John 5:39). With these words, our Lord Jesus confronted what has always been the temptation in our reading of Holy Scriptures, that is, to read it without Christ as the supreme focus of revelation. Jesus also taught the redemptive perspective of the whole Scriptures when He walked with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. “Beginning with Moses and all the Prophets,” Jesus explained to

¹⁰⁶Richard Lischer, *A Theology of Preaching: The Dynamics of the Gospel* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1981), 73.

¹⁰⁷Dodd, *Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments with an Appendix on Eschatology and History*, 38-43.

them, “what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself” (Luke 24:27). Jesus also taught, “If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me” (John 5:46). According to Jesus Christ, Moses, all the prophets, and the whole Old Testament to testify Jesus, the Messiah.¹⁰⁸ As the whole Scriptures are moving toward the Redeemer and focusing on Jesus Christ, Christian preachers must put Jesus Christ in the center of their preaching. Bryan Chapell rightly claims, “Expository preaching is Christ-centered preaching.”¹⁰⁹

Most evangelicals agree that the whole Bible points to Christ. Preaching a specific biblical text in Christological perspective, however, requires hard work. The Christocentric preacher should not rush to apply every text to Christ Jesus without giving full attention to the immediate context.¹¹⁰ Yet, expository preachers can responsibly trace the themes of a passage that converge in Christ. This is a significant task for an expository preacher because texts sometimes do not seem directly related to Christ.

Preaching’s Redemptive-historical Form

Redemptive preaching does not necessarily mean that we mention the names “Christ Jesus,” “God,” or “the Holy Spirit” in every sermon. Paul many times exhorts

¹⁰⁸Philip was also aware of the centrality of Christ in Scripture for when he was asked the meaning of Isa 53 he “began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus” (Acts 8:35).

¹⁰⁹Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 272.

¹¹⁰A priori assumption that every text speaks of Christ results in “forced parallels” (Greidanus, *Sola Scriptura*, 144). Before developing the messianic message, the preacher must interpret the passage under the literary and the historical context to discover the author’s intention.

believers to live the Christian life worthy of their calling without mentioning any divine epithets. New Testament texts abound with ethical commands with no mention of Christ's death, resurrection, or the kingdom of God (e.g. James). Moreover, many Old Testament texts challenge the redemptive-historical perspective and require caution, creativity, and a broad biblical perspective concerning what redemption entails. Sidney Greidanus indicates preaching Christ is sometimes as broad as preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God.¹¹¹ How, then, can expository preachers prepare and deliver redemptive messages from Paul's epistles and other Bible texts?

Aspects of preaching Christ. Christian preachers should be careful not to create "a forced parallel" to Christ by superimposing ideas foreign to the text. Greidanus suggests that preaching Christ is to proclaim some facet of the person, work, or teaching of Christ so that people may believe and follow Him.¹¹²

First, preaching Christ is to proclaim the person of Jesus Christ. Redemptive preachers need to understand a biblical text in light of the person of Christ. Does this text reveal any aspect of the person of Christ directly or indirectly? In what sense is the person of Christ related with the present text? In Ephesians, Paul describes Christ as the Son of God through whom God has fulfilled all His eternal purposes. "The Son of Man" was depicted in Daniel 7 as a divine figure, and Jesus Christ intended to reveal Himself

¹¹¹Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament*, 8. Greidanus states, "One has only to look at a concordance to see how often the New Testament speaks of 'the gospel of the kingdom,' 'the gospel of Christ,' 'the gospel of Jesus Christ,' 'the gospel of the grace of God,' and 'the gospel of peace.' In these terms two characteristics stand out. Preaching Christ is good news for people, and preaching Christ is as broad as preaching the gospel of kingdom—as long as this kingdom is related to its King, Jesus."

¹¹²Ibid.

by means of this title. Paul also describes Christ as the Lord who fills the whole universe with His sovereign rule. The term “last Adam” was used by Paul to explain that Christ is the eschatological Adam who has fulfilled all God’s commands which the first Adam should have done. Christ also appears as a redeemer who provides believers with salvation or a reconciliator who broke the wall down between Gentiles and Jews to grant unity to believers. The person of Christ is especially important when we preach the Old Testament in redemptive perspective. Many Old Testament texts do not clearly point to the person of Christ. Therefore, preachers should comprehend this message always within a canonical context. In preaching Christ from the Old Testament, preachers can connect the Old Testament message with some facet of the person of Christ such as the Son of God, the Messiah, our Prophet, and our Priest.¹¹³

Second, preaching Christ is to proclaim the work of Christ. Redemptive preachers need to read the text in light of the work of Christ, not only His redemptive work but also believers’ earthly lives. In Ephesians, Christ’s death and resurrection appear as the central redemptive messages, but other works of Christ Jesus such as reconciliation, unification, redemption, and access of believers to Father God are also provided for believers by Christ. Paul’s preaching of Christ’s work of reconciliation shows his overall perspective of the Scripture in light of God’s whole revelation.

In the epistle to the Ephesians, the doctrinal messages (chapters 1-3) are involved with the work of Christ; the ethical messages (chapters 4-6) are also grounded

¹¹³Ibid., 9. Greidanus rightly indicates that the person and the work of Christ cannot be separated even though they are distinguishable. “Knowing who Jesus was (Messiah, Son of God) helped the disciples understand somewhat the profound significance of his work of preaching and healing and dying and rising” (ibid., 8-9).

on the work of Christ. Besides Christ's work of reconciliation through His suffering and death, Greidanus indicates that Christ's "miracles of healing (signs of the presence of the kingdom), his resurrection (victory over death), his ascension (the enthronement of the King), and his coming again (the coming kingdom)" also can be preached Christologically.¹¹⁴ In preaching Christ from the Old Testament, preachers can connect the message of the biblical text with the redeeming work of Christ and the just rule of our Lord.¹¹⁵

Third, preaching Christ is to proclaim the teaching of Christ. The law in the Old Testament should be interpreted by Christ, the law fulfiller in the New Testament. The teaching of Christ is especially significant when preachers deal with the wisdom literature in the Old Testament from the redemptive perspective. Proverbs and Ecclesiastes are probably the most difficult books from which to draw Christ-centered messages. In Ephesians Paul teaches, "Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil" (5:15-16). The contrast between wisdom and folly has its roots in the teaching of Proverbs (4:10-14; 9; 10:8, 14). According to the Proverbs, the life of wisdom as God's covenant community requires insight and understanding into God's will.¹¹⁶ "Redeeming the time" can find its root in Ecclesiastes 2. Ecclesiastes' teaching of vanity can be a good bridge to teach the life without Christ. Preachers can compare the biblical text with

¹¹⁴Ibid., 9.

¹¹⁵Ibid.

¹¹⁶Peter O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 381.

the teaching of Jesus Christ so that listeners can understand the text in light of Christ and His teaching under the full revelation of God's Word. "Jesus' teaching includes not only teachings about himself (Son of Man, Messiah), his mission, and his coming again but also teaching about God, God's kingdom, God's covenant, [and] God's law."¹¹⁷

As we have examined the meaning of "preaching Christ," it denotes a broader sense rather than a simple mention of the name of Christ. Expository preachers should approach the biblical text within its immediate context and develop a Christ-centered message within the canonical context to find how the text speaks to the person, the work, or the teaching of Jesus Christ.

Discovering the redemptive message. Every biblical text possesses a different dimension of redemptive revelation. Bryan Chapell indicates that there are three dimensions that a biblical text may reveal: text disclosure, type disclosure, and context disclosure.¹¹⁸ First, some biblical text may contain a direct reference to Christ or show a clear aspect of his messianic work. In Ephesians Christ's redemptive work through His death and resurrection is obviously presupposed throughout. Several texts show that Paul

¹¹⁷Ibid., 10.

¹¹⁸Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 274-80. Besides expository approaches, he explains that topical and textual approaches also can be used to deliver a redemptive message. These approaches do not necessarily lead unbiblical conclusions or to inappropriate redemptive messages. However, the author indicates that we cannot find clear biblical authority because "the redemptive truths were simply added to the message—not developed out of the text" (273). Doctrinal preaching and biographical message can also be proclaimed as an expository and redemptive preaching. The key to redemptive preaching does not lie in the methodology that the preacher employs but in the philosophy of the preacher who interprets the biblical text. Haddon Robinson rightly contends, "Expository preaching at its core is more a philosophy than a method" (*Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980; reprint, 2001], 22).

specifically described the work of Jesus Christ and its influence on believers (1:7-8; 2:13-22; 5:2, 25). Paul writes that by the blood of Jesus Christ, believers have been redeemed. Through Christ's sacrificial death on the cross, Paul proclaims, there is reconciliation between not only God and humanity but also between Jews and Gentiles.

In the synoptic Gospels many texts explicitly mention Jesus Christ's saving activity. In the Old Testament many texts can be interpreted as messianic prophecies.¹¹⁹ For example, the battle between the Son of woman and Satan in Genesis 3:15 must not only direct preachers to the cross of Jesus Christ but also to the whole picture of redemptive history (e.g. Rev 12). The servant songs of Isaiah 53 should not be interpreted without the sacrificial work of Jesus Christ on the cross. In such cases when Christ appears obviously preachers can explain the biblical text simply in light of His redemptive activity.¹²⁰

¹¹⁹Walter Kaiser thoroughly analyzes the messianic prophecies in the Old Testament and indicates that the Old Testament shows sixty-five direct predictions of the Messiah in the promise doctrine (Walter Kaiser, *The Messiah in the Old Testament* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995], especially, 240-42). For preaching Christ from the Old Testament, see E. W. Hengstenberg, *Christology of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1970); Charles H. Spurgeon, *Christ in the Old Testament: Sermons on the Foreshadowings of Our Lord in Old Testament History, Ceremony & Prophecy* (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1899; reprint, Chattanooga: AMG Publishers, 1994); Gerard van Groningen, *Messianic Revelation in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990); Edmund Clowney, *The Unfolding Mystery: Discovering Christ in the Old Testament* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 1988); Greidanus suggests six major ways of preaching Christ from the Old Testament: "the ways of redemptive-historical progression, promise-fulfillment, typology, analogy, longitudinal themes, and contrast" (*Preaching Christ from the Old Testament*, 203).

¹²⁰Chapell indicates, "A preacher who does not see redemptive work in an account of Christ's exorcism of a demon, a scene from the crucifixion, or a prophecy of the Savior's domination over evil cannot properly expound the text" (*Christ-centered Preaching*, 274).

Second, expository preachers need to interpret God's redemptive work by way of types in the Old Testament.¹²¹ Although many biblical texts, especially in the New Testament specifically reflect the person or the work of Jesus Christ, most of the Old Testament texts together with many in the New do not mention Christ clearly. Since God acts in redemptive history in regular patterns through similarity of redemptive acts, typology functions within redemptive history.¹²² R. T. France contends, "New Testament typology is thus essentially the tracing of the constant principles of God's working in history, revealing a recurrent rhythm in past history which is taken up more fully and perfectly in Gospel events."¹²³ Redemptive preachers should find how persons, events, or

¹²¹Ibid. According to Baker's definition, type is "biblical event, person, or institution which serves as an example or pattern for other biblical events, persons, or institutions which are designated as the antitype; typology is the study of types and the historical and theological correspondences between them; the basis of typology is God's consistent activity in the history of his chosen people." See David L. Baker, *Two Testaments, One Bible: A Study of Some Modern Solutions to the Theological Problem of the Relationship between the Old and New Testaments* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1976); similarly, Lampe defines that typology is "primarily a method of *historical* interpretation, based upon the continuity of God's purpose throughout the history of his covenant. It seeks to demonstrate the correspondence between the various stages in the fulfillment of that purpose" (G. W. H. Lampe, "Typological Exegesis," *Theology* 56 [1953]: 202). For typological interpretation of the Old Testament, see R. T. France, *Jesus and the Old Testament: His Application of Old Testament Passages to Himself and His Mission* (London: Tyndale, 1971); Leonhard Goppelt, *Typos: The Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament in the New*, trans. Donald H. Madvig (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982); Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 95-104; Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament*, 212-20.

¹²²Oscar Cullmann notes, "All typology . . . presupposes a salvation-historical background, namely, the relationship between the Old and the New Testaments understood from a salvation-historical point of view" (*Salvation in History*, trans. S. G. Sowers [New York: Harper and Row, 1967], 133). Greidanus also indicates, "The major presupposition underlying typological interpretation is that God as Lord of history works out his redemptive plan in history" (*Preaching Christ from the Old Testament*, 213).

¹²³France, *Jesus and the Old Testament*, 39.

institutions in the Old Testament are replaced by the person and the work of Jesus Christ in light of fuller revelation.

Goppelt indicates, “Paul employs typology to proclaim the universal significance of Christ’s redemption and the permanence of his church.”¹²⁴ In Ephesians Paul understands Christ Jesus as the last Adam typologically. Jesus is described “to fill everything in every way” (1:23) and “to fill the whole universe” (4:10), which commission Adam failed to obey (Gen 1:28). God’s subjection of all things under Christ’s feet and establishment of Christ as head over all things (1:19-23) also show that Christ is the last Adam who accomplished the mandate given to Adam (Gen 1:28). Adam is a type of Christ, but Paul describes that Jesus Christ is the opposite of Adam (Rom 5:12-19). Genesis 2:24 was used to refer to the relationship between Christ and the church as a typology of marriage.¹²⁵ The salvation-historical and typological connections between Israelites in the Old Testament and the church as the new people of God are also in Paul’s mind.

Third, where text or type does not disclose the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, the preacher must depend on context to develop the redemptive message.¹²⁶ Chapell contends that every passage possesses at least one of four redemptive foci. “Every text is predictive of the work of Christ, preparatory for the work of Christ, reflective of the work

¹²⁴Goppelt, *Typos*, 151. Goppelt states, “Typology demonstrates not only the nature of the new in comparison with the old, but it also shows that the new is founded directly and sorely on redemptive history” (152).

¹²⁵O’Brien, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 432.

¹²⁶Chapell, *Christ-centered Preaching*, 275.

of Christ, and/or resultant of the work of Christ.”¹²⁷ First, some biblical texts “predict” the redemptive work of Jesus Christ by way of describing the person or the work of Jesus. Paul used many Isaianic prophecies and messianic psalms in Ephesians to proclaim that Jesus is the promised Messiah who fulfilled the prophecies in the Old Testament. Other examples such as the Old Testament sacraments, the exodus, and the purification codes reveal what Jesus Christ will do even though the texts do not possess specific reference to Jesus.¹²⁸

Second, some biblical texts were written to “prepare” the people of God to understand the person or the redemptive work of Jesus Christ.¹²⁹ The Old Testament law can be interpreted as preparatory for the coming Messiah. Chapell notes, “The Old Testament believers were to understand their need for faith in a redeemer based on their own inability to keep any divine imperative perfectly.”¹³⁰ Third, when the passage neither predicts nor prepares for the work of Jesus Christ, the expositor should explain how the text “reflects” Christ’s redemptive work.¹³¹ Chapell contends that the preacher can ask what the text defines: (1) “God’s nature that provides the ministry of Christ”; (2) “and/or

¹²⁷Ibid.

¹²⁸Ibid.

¹²⁹Ibid., 276. Chapell indicates that this method is used most frequently to develop to focus on the redemptive message because most of biblical texts do not possess direct reference to the person, the work, or the teaching of Jesus Christ.

¹³⁰Ibid. He goes on to state, “Not only did God prepare for Christ’s work by planting the perception of need in the hearts of the Old Testament saints, he also prepared them (and us) to understand how the need would be satisfied.”

¹³¹Ibid., 277.

human nature that requires the ministry of Christ?”¹³² These questions are legitimate because all Scripture was written by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, therefore, every passage possesses some aspect of God’s revelation.

Finally, some biblical texts show a “resultant” message from the ministry of Jesus Christ. Paul proclaims that because of Christ’s reconciliatory work, believers of Jews and Gentiles have been reconciled to each other. They also have access to God because of the work of Christ. Only when God provides grace upon a depraved person, then can he possess faith in Christ. Paul’s ministry as a servant of the Lord is only possible by the grace of God. Believers’ obedience is not a means to gain God’s favor, but it is an expression of our gratitude to God’s great work of salvation.¹³³

We have examined the meaning of “preaching Christ” and some methods for arriving at Christ-centered messages. Redemptive preachers ought to start with the conviction that the whole Scripture tells God’s redemptive activities. Therefore, preachers can find a redemptive message in every text because all texts possess some aspect of the complete fulfillment of God’s redemption. A sermon becomes Christocentric when it places the intent of the passage within the progress of redemptive history. Chapell concludes that “the sermon’s purpose remains faithful to the text’s original aim of preparing the people of God to understand his redemptive activity;

¹³²Ibid.

¹³³Chapell contends, “Divine love made conditional upon human obedience is mere legalism even if the actions commended have biblical precedents. The only obedience approved by God is that which he himself has sanctified through the work of Christ.” He goes on to state, “To preach matters of faith or practice without rooting their foundation or fruit in what God would do, has done, or will do through the ministry of Christ creates a human-centered (anthropocentric) faith without Christian distinctions” (ibid., 279).

predicting it, reflecting its need, and/or detailing the results of Christ's work in our lives."¹³⁴ Messengers who are committed to proclaiming the work of God in Christ through the Holy Spirit should be reminded of Spurgeon's assertion:

Don't you know, young man, that from every town and every village and every hamlet in England, whatever it may be, there is a road to London? . . . So from every text in Scripture there is a road towards the great metropolis, Christ. And my dear brother, your business is, when you get to a text, to say, now what is the road to Christ? . . . I have never found a text that had not got a road to Christ in it, and if ever I do find one . . . I will go over hedge and ditch but I would get at my Master, for the sermon cannot do any good unless there is a savour of Christ in it.¹³⁵

Conclusion to This Section

In this section we have examined the homiletical implication of Paul's preaching in Ephesians in light of redemptive-historical preaching. Redemptive-historical preaching strives to understand the biblical text in its unique historical context against the progressive revelation of God's Word. The purpose of redemptive-historical preaching is to know what the text tells us about the person, work, and teaching of Jesus Christ. Paul's preaching in Ephesians consistently demonstrates his redemptive-historical perspective of the Trinity's redemptive work. From Ephesians 1, Paul unfolds the supremacy of Jesus Christ in God's redemptive activity. Paul's central message is the exposition of God's redemptive activities, and his other theological concepts are also related with God's historical deeds of salvation in Christ through the Holy Spirit.

Our discussion showed that Paul's preaching on the triune God reflects well the progressive revelation unfolded throughout the Bible. The Old Testament was not

¹³⁴Ibid., 296.

¹³⁵Charles Haddon Spurgeon, "Christ Precious to Believers," in *The New Park Street Pulpit* (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1860), 5:140.

only fulfilled through the life of Jesus, culminating in His death and resurrection, it is also waiting for its full accomplishment by the second coming and reign of Christ. For Paul Christ's sacrificial death and resurrection was the fulfillment of the prophecies promised in the Old Testament through which God fulfilled His eternal purposes. Through the triumphant resurrection of Christ Jesus, the end time has been inaugurated in the believer's life. Therefore, believers are living in a tension between the two ages: the "already" of the fulfillment of the Old Testament in the life of Jesus and the "not-yet" of its complete consummation at the second advent of Christ.

Redemptive preachers need to understand that the whole Scripture is pointing to Jesus Christ, who is the one who fulfills God's whole redemptive economy. Preaching redemptively requires not only awareness of biblical theology but also discovery of the message of Jesus Christ in all Scriptures. As redemptive-historical preaching reveals God's redemptive work in history, theocentric preaching inevitably becomes Christocentric preaching because Jesus Christ is the agent through whom God fulfills all His eternal purposes.¹³⁶ In this section we also have suggested some methods to discover the message of the person, work, and the teaching of Christ within a redemptive context to develop Christ-centered preaching.

¹³⁶Chapell states, "Theocentric preaching inevitably becomes Christocentric not because the sermon always cites the name of Jesus or draws to mind some event from his earthly ministry, but because it demonstrates the reality of the human predicament that requires divine solution" (*Christ-centered Preaching*, 196).

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The most significant factor in Christian preaching is the preacher's view of the authority of the biblical text in the sermon. The biblical text must govern the sermon, and the sermon must serve the biblical text. Haddon Robinson contends that God speaks through the Bible, therefore, when the preacher fails to ground his preaching in the biblical text, he abandons his authority.¹ Robinson also asserts: "Expository sermons are derived from and transmitted through a study of a passage (or passages) in context. Not only should an expositor find the substance of his sermon in the Bible, but he communicates it to his hearers on the basis by which he received it."²

Because the Bible is both the source and substance of preaching, the Christian preacher must deliver what the biblical text intends to speak. This conviction, however, is

¹Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development of Delivery of Expository Messages* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980; reprint, 2001), 20.

²Haddon W. Robinson, "Homiletics and Hermeneutics," in *Making a Difference in Preaching*, ed. Scott M. Gibson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999), 71. Therefore, he further states, "The preacher wrestles with exegesis and hermeneutics—the materials of grammar, history, literary forms, the thought and cultural settings of his text. In the pulpit he deals with enough of the language, background and context of his passage so that an attentive listener can follow the message from the Bible." Robinson's idea is well described in his definition of expository preaching: "Expository preaching is the communication of a biblical concept, derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of the preacher, then through the preacher, applies to the preachers" (*Biblical Preaching*, 21).

seriously attacked in the New Homiletic. The New Homiletic's rejection of biblical authority is inevitably detrimental to the church of Christ. When preaching does not focus on the text, its theological implications, and relevant application in context, it cannot be Christian preaching in which God works through the Holy Spirit.

Having addressed the New Homiletic's threat to the authority of the biblical truth in expository preaching, this dissertation explored Paul's preaching in Ephesians and discovered homiletical implications for a biblical model of expository preaching. Paul was one of the most influential preachers in Christian history. His epistles, whenever they were read before an audience, represent some of the earliest examples of Christian preaching and its transforming power. In this chapter, we will (1) summarize the main results of our investigation; (2) suggest a model of expository preaching; (3) and conclude by proposing a future direction for expository preaching.

A Summary of Paul's Preaching in Ephesians

Chapter one examined the New Homiletic by analyzing its major proponents and their assertions. New homileticians have criticized the effectiveness and validity of traditional preaching methodology. Rejecting proclaiming the exclusive truth of the gospel and propositional teachings of the biblical text, they emphasize the creation of an experience for the listener by way of inductive or narrative preaching. Their critique assertions are summarized by Rich Gosnell:

The deductive method is too rational and seeks to prove what is determined to be true by the speaker. . . . The deductive method does not allow for any dialogue between the speaker and the audience. The hearer is not allowed to contribute. The postmodern audience prefers participate dialogue with the text and sermon.³

³Rick Gosnell, "Proclamation and the Postmodernist," in *The Challenge of*

He goes on to state:

The inductive method of preaching will be appealing to the postmodernist. The inductive approach does not begin with a principle, or doctrine, but with examples. The role of the listener is accentuated in the inductive approach. The hearer is allowed to reflect, through participative dialogue, on the sermon. . . . The inductive approach allows persons to convince themselves. The inductive method enables postmodern people to involve their emotions, feelings, introspection, intuition, creativity, imagination, fantasy, and contemplation to make the sermon relevant for themselves. Meaning resides in the experience between the hearer and the sermon.⁴

Fred Craddock challenges the propositional and deductive sermon shape, and develops an inductive model emphasizing the experience of the listener. Rather than asserting the authority of the biblical text, Craddock emphasizes the listener's participation and personal interpretation to the sermon. Eugene Lowry develops Craddock's homiletical method and suggests adopting a narrative homiletical plot. David Buttrick develops the phenomenological method of preaching, which analyzes how the sermon occurs in the listener's consciousness.

The New Homiletic has contributed to the development of effective communication by emphasizing the role of the listener, but it significantly compromises Christian preaching by rejecting biblical authority and authorial intention in preaching. Without holding a high view of Scripture as the inspired Word of God, the Christian preacher has no foundation to preach with authority. Therefore, we concluded that the underlying philosophy of the New Homiletic ultimately undermines biblical preaching. Preachers must proclaim the Word of God with conviction about its truth.

Chapter two explored how Paul preached the triune God. On the basis of the

Postmodernism: An Evangelical Engagement, ed. David S. Dockery (Wheaton, IL: Victor, 1995), 383.

⁴Ibid., 384.

central message of Paul's preaching in Ephesians, we examined Paul's preaching of God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit with particular attention to Paul's use of the Old Testament and his eschatological perspective. According to Paul's preaching, the Trinity is described as the ground on which every spiritual blessing is bestowed on the believer by means of the election of God the Father (1:4-6), the redemptive work of Jesus Christ (1:7-12), and the seal of the Holy Spirit (1:13-14).

Paul preached that God is the protagonist who acts throughout Ephesians who creates one new person out of two unrelated groups. Paul's preaching of the theological themes such as the being of God, the work of God, the personality of God, the revelation of God, and the glory of God demonstrate that (1) he used the Old Testament in explaining most of these significant theological themes and that (2) his preaching reflects his constant eschatological perspective. This eschatological outlook is presented in Ephesians in terms of the eternal purpose of God, which is to unite all things under Christ. God has acted in history to reveal Himself and accomplish all His eternal purpose through the life of Jesus Christ, especially by His death and resurrection.

In Ephesians, Jesus Christ is described as the major agent through whom God not only revealed Himself but also fulfilled His eternal purpose. Through Christ's redemptive death and the subsequent resurrection, God fulfilled all His promises in the Old Testament. Yet, believers still anticipate a complete consummation at the second advent of Jesus Christ. As Herman Ridderbos rightly indicates, the central message of Paul's epistles lies in Christ's death and resurrection.⁵ If Jesus' death on the cross reveals

⁵Herman Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*, trans. John Richard De Witt (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975; reprint, 1997), 54.

the surpassing riches of God's grace, so Christ's resurrection from the dead is evidence of the surpassing greatness of God's power. Through Christ's death and resurrection God reconciled Himself with the fallen humanity and brought unity and reconciliation between humans themselves. As Christ's death signals the termination of the old age, so His resurrection brings an inauguration of the eschatological new age. Therefore, believers are proleptically experiencing taste of the resurrection in the ethics of a new life.

Paul preaches the Holy Spirit as an instrument of fulfilling God's eternal purpose in Christ Jesus. In Ephesians, the Holy Spirit is a life-giver to those who are spiritually dead, a transformer and sustainer for those who are in Christ, and a producer of the fruit of the new creation. Paul describes the Holy Spirit as the eschatological gift with whom the new age has already broken into the old.⁶ The Spirit of God in the Old Testament was given only to the three offices—kings, prophets, and priests. Thus, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon all believers is an explicit eschatological signaling of the last age. The Holy Spirit works as the link between the renewal of the believer's inner life and the consummation of the renewal of the believer's complete sanctification. Therefore, the Holy Spirit not only seals the believer for the completion of redemption but also guides him to live as the new creation.

Christ's death and resurrection is the foundation for Paul's eschatological preaching of the Old Testament because through His redemptive death and resurrection, the end time is inaugurated in the believer's life. Paul's use of the Old Testament to preach God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit demonstrates the progress of

⁶Ridderbos indicates that for Paul "the Holy Spirit is pre-eminently the eschatological gift, the revelation of the great time of salvation, in accordance with Old Testament prophecy" (Ridderbos, *Paul*, 87).

revelation throughout the Bible. The Old Testament was not only fulfilled through the life of Jesus Christ, it also anticipates its full accomplishment by the second coming of Christ. Therefore, believers are living in a tension between the two ages.

Chapter three explored how Paul preached the believer's life as a new creation. If the first three chapters express primarily what God has done for believers, the last three chapters proclaim mainly what believers should do as God's new community. However, the theological section and the ethical section cannot be separated. Christian preachers should maintain a proper balance between doctrinal teaching and practical life.⁷ The conduct of Christian life that Paul exhorts in the latter three chapters is solidly based on God's redemptive work through Christ's death and resurrection. Paul exhorts believers to live a Christian life worthy of their calling, especially keeping the unity as a response to what God has done in Christ.

According to Paul, the believer's life should demonstrate both personal holiness and communal love. Based on the unity which God granted through Christ Jesus, Paul admonishes wives and husbands, children and parents, and slaves and masters to maintain unity in their relationships. When there is peace and unity instead of conflict among the household relationship, the shalom predicted in the Old Testament (Isa 11:6-12; 17:7, 25) is inaugurated.

The climax of Paul's sermon is his description of spiritual warfare (6:10-20). Our study showed that Paul's use of the Old Testament to describe Christian warfare is

⁷Hoehner rightly indicates that "in theology, head knowledge alone will make little difference in individual or corporate lives, and practice without theological knowledge has the potential to lead to heretical practice" (Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002], 499).

primarily drawn from the prophecy of Isaiah. The full armor of God which the believer is urged to put on as he engages in spiritual warfare is God's own armor, which God and His Messiah have worn and which He provided for His children.⁸ According to Paul, believers have already experienced the salvation of God and have been seated in the heavenly place with Christ (1:19-20), nonetheless they are urged to fight against the devil's schemes. This paradox is the climax of Paul's eschatological preaching. Christ's triumph over the evil powers and the believer's ongoing struggle for the fruits of the new creation is the warp and woof of Christian existence between the resurrection and parousia.

Based on the exegetical and theological investigation of Paul's preaching in Ephesians, chapter four drew homiletical implications for modern preachers. First, we have examined the relationship between the indicative and the imperative in Paul's preaching and suggested that the imperative should always be grounded in the indicative. Our investigation showed that the indicative and the imperative are irreversible, inseparable, and infusible. We also examined that the Holy Spirit is the controlling agent who unifies the indicative and the imperative as one integrated Christian message without each losing its distinct characteristics. As God is the sole subject who brought salvation, He constantly sustains and guides the believer's life by the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Second, we have vindicated that Paul's message in Ephesians reflects his redemptive-historical preaching. In Ephesians 1-3, Paul discloses what God has done through Christ Jesus for redemption, and in chapters 4-6 Paul proclaims how redeemed

⁸Peter O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 457.

people should live to demonstrate their new identity in Christ. These implications fall into three distinct categories: preaching's redemptive-historical context, preaching's redemptive-historical character, and preaching's redemptive-historical form.

A Model of Expository Preaching

From our investigation of Paul's preaching in Ephesians, we suggested two characteristics of expository preaching. First, expository preaching should be indicative-grounded and imperative-oriented. Second, expository preaching should be Christ-centered.

Indicative-grounded and Imperative-oriented Preaching

Expository preaching should start with the indicative message. Without the proclamation of God's gracious redemptive work through Jesus Christ and the continuing sustenance of the Holy Spirit, the imperative has no foundation. As Gresham Machen indicated, "Christianity begins with a triumphant indicative."⁹ Paul's preaching demonstrates how God accomplished redemption and reconciliation through the historical event of Christ's death and resurrection. Only when the believer understands the great work of God upon his life can he be exhorted to live worthy of his calling as a child of God.

The indicative message should primarily deal with the explanation of the Word of God. "Application is an essential part of preaching," but "exposition is the essential

⁹J. Gresham Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1923; reprint, 2001), 47.

prerequisite in preaching.”¹⁰ Bible exposition can be propositional, didactic, informative, and authoritative because it is grounded on the truth of the Word of God. When the New Homiletic abandons these characteristics in preaching and emphasizes the experience of the listener, it discards the authority of the preacher.

Christian preaching should emphatically proclaim God’s salvation first, but it should not end there. Biblical preaching should include the imperative message for the listener to respond to what God has done in Christ. In expository preaching, exhortation and application should be included necessary components. If the indicative message proclaims “what” God has done, the imperative message must present the “so what?”

The imperative should be grounded on the indicative message. Biblical preaching does not begin by telling the sinner what he must do, but it begins by telling the sinner what God has done. It does not exhort the believer to pursue holiness to gain some favor from God, but it exhorts him to seek for a godly life in response to God’s gracious work. The emphasis on exposition to the neglect of application will inevitably make Christianity theoretical and abstract. On the other hand, the emphasis on the indicative message without drawing a proper application will lead the listener into ethical legalism or hopeless despair.

The tension between the indicative and the imperative is correlative to that of the tension between justification and sanctification. Biblical preaching should not teach, however, that justification is by the work of God, while sanctification is the work of man. The controlling center of the indicative-imperative relationship is God’s continuing grace

¹⁰John Carrick, *The Imperative of Preaching: A Theology of Sacred Rhetoric* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2002), 14.

and the Holy Spirit's perpetual empowerment. The Bible teaches that the believer is saved, sustained, and secured only by the unconditional love of God. Bryan Chapell contends:

We are saved by grace alone.
We are sanctified by grace alone.
We are secured by grace alone.¹¹

Christians are exhorted to pursue holiness not to be ontologically holy, but they should seek for holiness because they are already holy, thus, they should manifest their identity as a response to God's calling.

We have discovered that just as the indicative is the foundation for the imperative, so also the imperative is grounded in the indicative and often supplies the purpose for the indicative. Paul's preaching in Ephesians and in others epistles consistently demonstrates the balance of the indicative and the imperative. His exposition of God's work is always followed by his specific exhortation to the believer's life. Carrick rightly indicates, "It is absolutely essential that *the great indicatives of Christ's accomplishment of redemption* be balanced by *the great imperatives of the Spirit's*

¹¹Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994). The author contends that the motives of change in Christian life should be based "a response to the love shown us by Christ," "an avoidance of the consequences of sin revealed by a loving God," and "a love for others loved by God" (307-8). Chapell elsewhere also indicates, "Our holiness is not so much a matter of what we achieve as it is the grace our God provides. Grace is God's willingness to look at us from the perspective that sees his holy Son in our place." See Bryan Chapell, *Holiness by Grace: Delighting in the Joy That Is Our Strength* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2001), 8. He further says that many Christians after initially trusting in Christ to make them right with God, embark on an endless pursuit of trying to satisfy God with good works that will keep him loving them. However, God "never stops viewing us from the perspective of his grace" (*Holiness by Grace*, 9). Our holiness is based only on Christ's righteousness, which He accomplished by His death on the cross.

application of redemption.”¹² The present writer will call this model the indicative-grounded, imperative-oriented homiletic.

Redemptive-historical Preaching

On the basis of Paul’s preaching, we suggest that expository preaching should be Christ-centered preaching. Redemptive-historical preaching is theocentric preaching rather than anthropocentric. Theocentric preaching is inevitably Christocentric because God’s eternal purpose is fulfilled through the life of Christ Jesus. Redemptive-historical preaching believes that Scripture points to the Messiah prophesied, present, and coming. Therefore, all Scripture should be interpreted in light of Christ’s life because Christ’s historical death and resurrection is the center of redemptive-historical preaching. Redemptive-historical preaching, however, should not ignore the literary meaning in the immediate context. Expository redemptive preaching must deal with the literary and historical context of the biblical text, but it must ultimately interact the canonical context. In this respect, redemptive history provides the overarching context for any biblical text.

In discussing redemptive contexts, we suggested three basic issues: understanding of history of God’s revelation, employing biblical theology for redemptive preaching, and heightening the tension of the “already” and the “not-yet.” The redemptive preacher should know that redemptive history is the mode of biblical discourse because the Bible is the book of God’s progressive self revelation. As God’s progressive revelation, it also shows organic unity. The Old Testament should be understood in the greater light of the New Testament.

¹²Carrick, *Imperative of Preaching*., 151.

The redemptive preacher holds that the believer is living in the inaugurated eschaton. As Christ's death brought an intrusion of the final judgment, His resurrection brought an inauguration of the new creation. For the believer, the end time has already appeared in the ministry of Jesus and especially in his resurrection and the outpouring of the Spirit. The believer now experiences the kingdom of God as the new humanity, even though he anticipates its full realization at the parousia.

For Christ-centered preaching, we suggested some means to discover the redemptive message. Preaching redemptively is to proclaim the person, the work, or the teaching of Jesus Christ. Expository preachers should approach the text within its immediate context and develop a Christ-centered message within the canonical context. When the connection between the biblical text and its extension, realization, or fulfillment in Jesus Christ is not obvious, preachers must consider the passage's role in the canon as a whole. Each text advances a theme or themes that, along with the rich diversity of other themes expressed in Scripture, intersect in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Suggestion for Future Study

We examined the indicative-grounded and the imperative-oriented formulation in expository preaching. The relationship of the indicative and the imperative is not unique to Ephesians or to Paul's other epistles. Scripture demonstrates the structure of what God has done and what man has to do as a proper response. In the Old Testament when the Lord confers the Ten Commandments, the indicative—"I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery" (Exod 20:2; Deut 5:6)—is followed by the imperative—"You shall have no other gods before me" (Exod 20:3-17;

Deut 5:7-21). Moses commands the Israelite to obey God and follow the Law as the people of God on the ground of God's redemption. In the synoptic Gospels the indicative-imperative also appears as the fundamental structure of Christ's teaching. As Christ proclaimed and invited the believer into the citizenship of the kingdom of God, he has to live according to the new commandment as the child of God.

The fundamental structure of the whole Scripture demonstrates the indicative and the imperative. In the whole Scripture the indicative message is the ground of the imperative; the imperative message inevitably follows the indicative. Thus, a direction for further study is the application of the indicative based/imperative oriented homiletic to each book of the Bible to verify the ubiquity of this pattern and its legitimacy as a representation of the Bible's own anatomy.

Expository preachers must tie themselves to Scripture as a faithful servant of the Word of God. As a common Reformed conviction, the primary task and responsibility of Christian preachers is to let the Scripture speak for itself. The ministry of the living Word of truth is a means through which the triune God works. God bestowed the honor and privilege of the proclamation of His Word to the preacher.

The proper employment of Paul's preaching in our pulpits is essential "to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ" (Eph 4:12-13). It is my prayer that the models of Paul's preaching in Ephesians investigated in this dissertation will be implemented by faithful preachers who have a passion to show the grace of God, the love of Jesus, and the power of the Holy Spirit so that the lost may be saved and the saved may commit their lives for the glory of God in the glad submission of their hearts.

APPENDIX 1

EXPOSITIONAL OUTLINE OF PAUL'S PREACHING IN EPHESIANS

Statement of the Central Message of Ephesians

God has provided the spiritual blessings of unity and reconciliation to humanity by the work of Christ's death and resurrection through the Holy Spirit, so that believers can live the Christian life worthy of their calling for God's glory.

Inductive Outline of Paul's Preaching in Ephesians

I. Introduction (1:1-2)

Paul introduces himself as an apostle of Jesus by the will of God and greets believers in Ephesus.

II. Indicative Preaching (2:1-3:21)

God provided the spiritual blessings of unity and reconciliation for humanity by Christ's death and resurrection through the Holy Spirit for God's glory.

A. Paul praises God who has blessed the spiritual blessing of unity to believers in Christ for the praise of God's glory (1:3-14).

1. Paul praises God for spiritual blessing to believers (1:3).
2. Paul praises God for election and adoption in Christ (1:4-6).
3. Paul praises God for redemption and the forgiveness of sins in Christ (1:7-8).
4. Paul praises God for revealing the mystery of His will to unite all things in Christ (1:9-10).
5. Paul praises God for assurance of the believer's salvation in the Holy Spirit (1:11-14).

B. On the basis of God's spiritual blessing to believers' faith in the Lord Jesus, Paul thanks God and prays for them (1:15-23).

1. Paul thanks God for the believer's faith in the Lord Jesus and their love for each other (1:15-16a).

2. Paul prays that the God of the Lord Jesus Christ may give believers the Spirit of wisdom and revelation for them to have better knowledge of God and know the hope of God's calling, the riches of God's inheritance, and God's great power for believers (1:16b-19a).
 3. God's power is manifested in raising Christ from the dead and exalting Christ by seating Him at God's right hand.
- C. Paul contrasts between the previous state of the spiritual death of believers and their current state in the new creation in Christ (2:1-10).
1. Believers were dead in transgressions and sins, following the ways of this world, gratifying the cravings of their sinful nature, and being by nature objects of wrath (2:1-3).
 2. God's love, mercy, and power made believers alive with Christ, raised them, and seated them in the heavenly realms with Christ (2:4-7).
 3. Believers were saved by God's grace and through faith in order to do good works as a new creation (2:8-10).
- D. Paul describes how Christ's death and resurrection made spiritually alienated Jews and Gentiles into a new, unified creation, resulting in peaceful reconciliation with God and one another (2:11-22).
1. The Gentiles were formerly separated from Christ and alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, but now they have been reconciled by Christ's death (2:11-13).
 2. Christ's death and resurrection destroyed the barrier between Gentiles and Jews and created one new creation. His death and resurrection reconciled not only between Gentiles and Jews, but also humanity and God, which resulted in a new, unified creation of Jews and Gentiles in peace (2:14-18).
 3. On the basis of Christ's death and resurrection, Jews and Gentiles are built up into a holy temple with Christ Jesus (2:19-22).
- E. On the basis of Jesus' reconciliation between Jews and Gentiles through His death and resurrection, the divine mystery has been revealed, and Paul describes his mission to reveal the mystery to the Gentiles (3:1-13).
1. Paul explains that his mission is to reveal the mystery of Christ to the Gentiles that was given to him by revelation. The mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs with Israel, members of one body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus (3:1-7).
 2. Paul explains that the mystery hidden for ages should be known now to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms through the church (3:8-13).
- F. On the basis of God's creation of a new humanity in Christ, Paul prays for believers and gives a doxology to God (3:14-21).

1. 3:14-19. Paul prays so that God may strengthen believers with power through His Spirit; so that the believers may know the love of Christ; so that they may be filled to all the fullness of God.
2. Paul gives glory to God who has provided the spiritual blessings more than believers ask or imagine. This doxology concludes the indicative section and functions as a preparatory way for the subsequent imperative section (3:20-21).

III. Imperative Preaching (4:1-6:20)

On the basis of the spiritual blessing of unity and reconciliation that God has provided for believers, Paul exhorts how the people of the new creation should live the Christian life worthy of their calling in an earthly life.

- A. Paul exhorts believers to live a life worthy of their calling. On the ground of Christ's blessing of reconciliation and unity, believers must keep the unity of the Spirit and grow up to Jesus (4:1-16).
 1. Paul exhorts believers to maintain unity of the Spirit and suggests a sevenfold confession of the unifying realities of the faith, which provides an essential motivation for the appeal of unity (4:1-6).
 2. Christ's death and resurrection are the basis for the distribution of grace to each individual believer, so that the body of Christ may be built up until the believer reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God (4:7-16).
- B. On the basis of a life worthy of God's calling, Paul exhorts believers to put off their old self, which is the life of the Gentiles and put on the new self, which is the life of the new creation (4:17-24).
- C. Paul demonstrates specific exhortations about the old life and the new (4:25-5:2).
 1. Paul exhorts the believer to live a new life style in accordance with being a new person (4:25-32).
 2. Paul exhorts the believer to reflect God by a life of love (5:1-2).
- D. Paul exhorts believers to put off the life of darkness and put on the life as children of light (5:3-21).
 1. Paul exhorts believers to evade sexual vices, greed, obscenity, foolish talk and coarse joking, which are the life of darkness. Instead, Paul urges the saints to walk as children of light and to learn what pleases the Lord (5:3-14).
 2. Paul exhorts believers to live wisely in the evil days and to be filled with the Holy Spirit (5:15-21).

- E. On the basis of the Spirit-filled life of the new creation, Paul shows how the unity of new relationship should be demonstrated within the Christian household (5:22-6:9).
 - 1. Paul shows how unity between wives and husband should be demonstrated in the new creation. Paul understands the husband-wife relationship as Christ-church relationship (5:22-33).
 - 2. Paul shows how unity between children and parents should be demonstrated in the new creation. Children should obey and honor their parents, while parents should bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord (6:1-4).
 - 3. Paul shows how unity between slaves and masters should be demonstrated in the new creation. Slaves should obey and serve their earthly masters as they do to Jesus, while masters should not threaten them (6:5-9).
- F. On the basis of the Spirit-filled life of the new creation, Paul exhorts believers to be enlightened that their life is a spiritual warfare (6:10-6:20).
 - 1. Paul exhorts believers to be strong in the Lord and put on the full armor of God for a spiritual warfare against the powers of evil (6:10-18).
 - 2. In a spiritual warfare, Paul exhorts believers to pray in the Spirit and watch for all believers (6:19-20).

IV. Conclusion (6:21-24)

Paul is sending Tychicus to provide believers with further information about his circumstances and concludes with prayer for peace, love, faith, and grace for them.

APPENDIX 2

SERMON OUTLINE OF EPHESIANS

True Blessings

Ephesians 1:3

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus,
who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.*

Exegetical Idea

Paul leads the Ephesians in praise for God as the source of blessing us as the recipients of blessing and everything necessary for life in Christ as the content of blessing.

Homiletical Idea

We should praise and thank God for spiritual blessing to us, and enjoy its blessing in our daily life.

I. Acknowledge the Source of Blessing (3a).

A. God is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (1:17; 2 Cor 1:3, 11:31).

God's blessing comes through our Lord Jesus Christ.

B. God is the source of every blessing.

1. God's creation is blessing.
2. God's sending Jesus is blessing.
3. God's salvation is blessing.
4. God's guidance in our life is blessing.

C. God is the object of our praise.

1. Blessed be the God who blesses us.
2. How do we bless God? By praising Him and serving Him.

II. Become the Object of Blessing (3b).

A. Blessings are given to God's children.

1. Special blessings are given to Israelites in the Old Testament.
2. Special blessings are given to God's children in the New Testament.
3. True identity of believers
 - a. Because of God's blessing, we know Jesus as our Savior and become God's children.
 - b. Celebrate these blessings in our life.

B. Blessings are given both corporately and individually.

1. Paul includes himself and his readers within this sphere of blessing. Paul uses “our” and “us.”
2. Paul also has all God’s people in mind. We are the object of God’s blessing.
3. Give thanks and be joyful as a response to God’s blessing!

III. Enjoy the Content of Your Blessings (3c).**A. Jesus promises to take care of material things for His people.**

1. “You are much more valuable than birds” (Matthew 6:25-34).
2. Spurgeon says, “He that gives us heaven will surely give us all that is needful on the road thither.”

B. Jesus promises blessings *par excellence*: spiritual blessings.

1. Spiritual blessings include election to holiness, adoption as God’s sons and daughters, redemption and forgiveness, and the gift of the Spirit (4-14).
2. Spiritual blessings are of the Spirit.
3. Spiritual blessings are eternal blessings.
4. Spiritual blessings are superior to material blessings.
5. Spiritual blessings are found only in Jesus Christ.
 - a. In Christ God has chosen us in eternity (1:3-4).
 - b. In Christ we have redemption and the forgiveness of sins (1:7).
 - c. In Christ we are chosen to become God’s people (1:11-12).
 - d. In Christ we are sealed as we belonged to Christ by the Holy Spirit (1:13-14).
6. Schaffer says, “To be in Christ . . . is to partake of all that Christ has done, all He is, and all that He ever will be.”

C. Jesus promises all spiritual blessings.

When we have nothing but Jesus, we have all. When we have all but Jesus, we have nothing.

D. Praise God for His blessing! Give thanks to God for His salvation in Christ!**Praise for God’s Election**

Ephesians 1:4-6

He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world . . . He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ . . . to the praise of the glory of His grace.

Exegetical Idea

Paul praises God because He chose us as His children. Based on this unbelievable privilege, we are called to be holy and to praise God.

Homiletical Idea

We should praise God for His election and live a holy life as a response to His gracious election.

I. Consider What God Has Done for Us (4-5).

A. God chose us before the creation of this world (4a).

1. God's election is God's total will and plan. God's election was before time as we know it.
2. Calvin says, "The very time of election shows it to be free; for what could we have deserved, or in what did our merit consist, before the world was made?" (Romans 9:11)

B. God chose us in Christ (4a-5a).

1. God's election was in Christ.
 - a. We lived in rebellion to God and alienation from Him.
 - b. Through Christ we have been adopted into the family of God.
2. God's election was due solely to God's gracious decision.
 - a. When God chose Israel, it had nothing to do with Israel's choice or righteous behavior (Deut 7:6-8; 14:2).
 - b. When God chose us, it is only by the grace of God.
3. God's adoption is not a requirement; it is a free choice.
 - a. A couple adopts a child because they want to, not because they have to. God does not have to save us; He does so because He wants to.
 - b. Adoption is based on God's love and mercy.

C. God chose us in His will (5b).

1. God's election can not be separated from His will and love.
 - a. God did not choose us by throwing dice.
 - b. Mackay says, "Where love is supreme there is not place for fate or caprice."
2. As God adopted in His will, our adoption is complete, and we are eternally God's sons and daughters.
3. "We have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will" (11).

II. Live Your Election! (4b, 6)

A. Be holy and blameless as a response to God's election (4b).

1. Sanctification means to be holy.
 - a. "Holy" means to set apart from the world and consecrated to God.
 - b. Sanctification is the same as "saint" in verse one.
2. Sanctification means to be blameless.

"Blameless" means to be free from sin, dirt, and filth.
3. Election promotes the moral excellence of the believer.
 - a. Election ultimately results in holiness.
 - b. "Make every effort to be holy, without holiness, no one will see the Lord" (Heb 12:14).

4. God's children bear the Father's likeness.
"Holiness" demonstrates God's attribute, and we are called to participate in God's attribute.

B. Praise the glory of God's grace (6).

1. God's election is solely by His grace.
2. Praise is the proper response to God's grace.

Praise for God's Redemption

Ephesians 1:7-10

*In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses,
according to the riches of His grace . . .*

Exegetical Idea

Paul praises God because of His redemption and forgiveness. God's salvation is based on His overflowing grace.

Homiletical Idea

Christians should praise God for the scope and depth of Christ's redemption.

A. Admit That You Are a Captive to: (7a)

1. The force of sin
 - a. All men sin and cannot help but sin (Romans 3:23; 7:14).
 - b. Man is sold under sin.
2. The force of corruption and death
The whole creation is corrupt (Romans 8:21).
3. The force of Satan
All unbelievers are under the power and influence of Satan.

B. Accept the redemption of Jesus' Blood (7a).

1. Man needs to be liberated from sin.
2. Man cannot liberate himself.
3. God has redeemed man by the blood of His Son Jesus Christ.
 - a. God has paid the ransom for man's release—the ransom of a life for a life.
 - b. God gave His own Son in order to set man free.
4. The blood of Christ was the cost at which the freedom of Christians was brought.
 - a. Believers are justified by God's grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.
 - b. God presented Jesus as a sacrifice of atonement by His blood (Romans 3:24-25).

C. Trust in Christ's Forgiveness (7b).

1. We need to be forgiven.
 - a. All men have transgressed the law of God.
 - b. All men have deviated from God.
 - c. All men have fallen from the way of God.
2. We are forgiven by the blood of Jesus.
 - a. Jesus took the penalty of sins and bore the punishment Himself.
 - b. Jesus stands for and represents all men.
 - c. God sees the man as being in Jesus Christ.
3. God's forgiveness is vast.
 - a. "As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us" (Psalm 103:12).
 - b. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more" (Jeremiah 31:34b).

D. Reject Efforts to Save Yourself (7c, 8a).

1. Our redemption is not based on our merit.
2. Our redemption is only by God's overflowing grace.
 - a. We are redeemed "according to the riches of His grace, which He lavished upon us" (7b, 8a).
 - b. Charles Hodge says, "Grace is unmerited favor—an overflowing abundance of unmerited love, inexhaustible in God and freely accessible through Christ."

Praise for God's Assurance

Ephesians 1:11-14

*You were sealed in Christ with the Holy Spirit of promise,
who is given as a pledge of our inheritance.*

Exegetical Idea

Paul praises God for the believer's assurance of salvation because it is guaranteed in the Holy Spirit.

Homiletical Idea

The believer should have assurance of his salvation and praise God for this assurance.

I. God Chose Us through the Gospel of Christ (11-13a).**A. God calls us in Christ through the gospel (11-12a).**

1. Salvation means to be "in Christ."
 - a. "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" (2 Cor 5:17)
 - b. Praise God for that those who accept the offer of salvation can be "in Christ."
 - c. Union with Christ means union with others.

- d. “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” Galatians 3:28).
- 2. We are “in Christ” through the gospel.
 - a. “In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of salvation, having also believed” (13a).
 - b. The gospel is Jesus Himself (John 1:14). Believing truth is believing Jesus.

B. God calls us for the praise of His glory (12b).

- 1. God chose us to praise His glory.
 - a. God’s salvation is ultimately for God’s glory.
 - b. To praise God’s glory is our first duty and privilege.
 - c. “You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light” (1 Peter 2:9).
- 2. Praise God for His glory revealed in Christ!

II. God Assured us of Our Salvation through Holy Spirit (13b-14).

A. How: with the Holy Spirit (13b-14a)

- 1. The Holy Spirit is given to the believer to give the believer perfect assurance of his salvation.
The Greek word, *sphragizo*, means to “make something with a seal of identification.” In the era that Paul lived a property owner used a signet ring to guarantee his word. If a question arose about ownership when the person came to claim his property, his seal was sufficient evidence to quell any question.
- 2. The Holy Spirit assures us that we are God’s cherished possession.
 - a. The Holy Spirit indwells the believer.
 - b. “The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children” (Roman 8:16).
- 3. Because the Holy Spirit assures our salvation, no one can take it away.
 - a. The root of our assurance of salvation is not in us, but in the grace of God who sealed us in the Holy Spirit.
 - b. Praise God for the assurance of our salvation with the Holy Spirit!

B. Why: to the praise of His glory (14b)

- 1. Praise God for His assurance of our salvation! (6, 12).
- 2. Clairvoux sings:
Of Him who died to salvation bring I could forever think and sing.
Arise, ye needy, He’ll relieve; Arise, ye guilty, He’ll forgive.

The Knowledge of God

Ephesians 1:15-23

. . . the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened . . .

Exegetical Idea

After giving thanks, Paul prays that Christian believers will grow in the knowledge of God so that they might know God's calling, inheritance, and power.

Homiletical Idea

Christians should pray for wisdom and revelation to know God more intimately.

I. Thanks: Beginning of Prayer (15-16)

A. Prayer in thanksgiving

1. Paul gives thanks for their faith and love.
 - a. Paul gives thanks for their faith in God's love and about their loyalty to the Lord Jesus.
 - b. Paul gives thanks for their love for all the saints.
 - i. Here "all" is important: they loved all their fellow Christians!
 - ii. Jonathan Swift says, "We have just enough religion to make us hate, but not enough to make us love one another."
 - c. Follow the great commandment of Jesus as Christian!
 - d. Believer Christ Jesus and love others!
2. Paul prays for Ephesians without ceasing.
 - a. "Cease not to give thanks" points to the sincerity and earnestness of Paul's gratitude to God for the Ephesians.
 - b. Christian family should pray for each other without ceasing, especially Christian leaders.

II. Knowledge of God: Content of Prayer (17-18)

A. Paul prays for wisdom and revelation (17).

1. The great need of believers is to grow in the knowledge of God.
 - a. Knowing Christ means saving faith.
 - b. Knowing Christ means spiritual growth.
 - c. Knowing Christ is having intimate relationship with Christ.
2. How can believers grow in the knowledge of God?
 - a. We must have the Spirit of wisdom, for it is the Spirit who can enlighten us.
 - b. We must have the Spirit of revelation, for it is the Spirit who reveals God to us.
 - i. A spirit that drives after God.
 - ii. A spirit that seeks to know God.
 - iii. A spirit that hungers after God above all else.

B. Paul prays for enlightenment (18a).

1. "I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened."
 - a. The eyes of heart is the window to know Christ.
 - b. As we have physical eyes, so we have heart eyes.
 - c. "God . . . made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ" (2 Cor 4:6)
2. Pray for God's enlightenment.

III. Knowledge of God: Result of Knowing God (18b-23)**A. We are assured of the hope of God's calling.**

What is the hope of the believers?

1. It is what has already been covered in the spiritual blessings of God (13-14)
2. Now we may experience the blessings of God only in part, but when the glorious day comes, we shall be righteous and perfect. What a great hope!

B. We are assured of God's inheritance.

What is the riches of his glorious inheritance?

1. Christ owns all the heavens, and we are His treasures.
2. The redeemed are worth more than the universe.
3. Our possession and heritage can be only given by grace of God.

C. We are assured of God's power.

1. What is the power of God?
 - a. Power of God is described "incomparable" and "mighty."
 - b. Power of God resurrected Jesus Christ from the dead.
 - c. Power of God exalted Jesus Christ on God's right hand.
2. We also are to experience the power of God
 - a. The church is called the body of Christ.
 - b. The church completes all for Christ.

Before and After

Ephesians 2:1-7

But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ.

Exegetical Idea

Believers were dead in transgressions and sins, following the ways of this world, gratifying the cravings of their sinful nature, and being by nature objects of wrath. God's love, mercy, and power made believers alive with Christ, raised them, and seated them in the heavenly realms with Christ

Homiletical Idea

Christians should understand and live out the radical transformation they have undergone in Christ.

I. Our Life without Christ (1-3)

A. A life of death (1a)

1. Before conversion, we lived a life of death.
 - a. “You were dead in your trespasses and sins.”
 - b. Death is not a figure of speech; this is an absolute statement.
 - c. The state of death is universal; all humanity is dead (1 Cor 15:21-22).
 - d. Death means separation from God.
2. The Bible speaks of three deaths.
 - a. Physical death: the separation of a man’s spirit from his body
 - b. Spiritual death: the separation of a man from God while he is living on earth
 - c. Eternal death: the separation of man from God’s presence forever

B. A Life of transgressions and sins (1b, 2)

1. Before conversion, we lived a life of transgression and sins.
 - a. “Transgression” means to fail, slip, blunder, deviate, or turn aside.
 - b. “Sin” means to miss the mark.
 - i. Man misses the mark of life.
 - ii. Man is not perfect – short of God’s glory.
2. The sinner follows after three things.
 - a. The sinner follows after the ways of this world.
 - b. The sinner walks under the power of Satan.
 - c. The sinner walks in disobedience.

C. A life of flesh (3a)

Before conversion we lived a life of sinful nature.

1. Unconverted man lives to fulfill the desires of his sinful nature.
2. Unconverted man knows nothing but this world and its appeals.
3. Unconverted man is self-centered, not God-centered; world-centered, not heaven-centered; selfish, not giving.
4. “For everything in this world – the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does – does not form the Father but from the world” (1 John 2:16).

D. A life under God’s wrath (3b)

1. Before conversion we lived under the wrath of God.
 - a. Paul preaches we “were by nature children of wrath.”
 - b. We were an object of wrath, not a child of God.
2. We did not have any way but to be punished by God.

II. Our Life with Christ (4-7)

A. God has made us alive with Christ (4-5).

1. Why has God made us alive?
 - a. God is full of mercy.
 - b. God is full of love (John 3:16)

2. When did God make us alive?
 - a. When we were dead in sins.
 - b. “While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom 5:8).
3. How did God make us alive?
 - a. By making us alive together with Christ
 - b. Christ’ life is our life.

B. God has raised us up with Christ (6a).

1. God raised Jesus for three reasons.
 - a. Jesus Christ lived a sinless and perfect life.
 - b. Jesus Christ died for man.
 - c. Jesus Christ was raised up from the dead.
2. God raised up us together with Christ.
By grace of God and through faith of Christ.

C. God has made us sit in heavenly places in Christ (6b).

1. We have union with Christ (Rom 8:11).
2. We have dual citizenship: citizen of earth and citizen of heaven.
3. The believer’s salvation, his resurrection, and exaltation is an accomplished fact.

D. God will show us the riches of His grace (7).

1. God’s great purpose is to show the riches of grace toward us.
2. God will show His grace and kindness before His return, at His return, after His return, and in all ages.
3. The riches of His grace are experienced by living for Christ instead of ourselves.

By Grace, Through Faith
Ephesians 2:8-10

*For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves,
it is the gift of God; not as a result of works.*

Exegetical Idea

Believers were saved by God’s grace and through faith in order to do good works as the beginning of God’s new creation.

Homiletical Idea

We should do good deeds because we are already saved not in order to be saved.

I. Remember How We Are Saved! (8, 9)

A. Saved by God’s grace (8a)

1. Grace means the favor and kindness of God toward the utterly undeserving.
 - a. Grace is a free gift.

- b. As it cannot be paid, it is *priceless*!
- 2. Pascal said, “Grace is indeed required to turn a man into a saint; and he who doubts this does not know what either a man or a saint is.”

B. Saved through faith (8a)

- 1. Faith is our only legitimate response to God’s grace.
 - a. Faith is the only means of gaining access to God’s grace.
- 2. Faith is not the mere intellectual reception of Christian truth, but it pertains our belief and trust.

C. Saved not by works (9a)

- 1. Since we are not saved by works, we can’t boast about it at all!
 - “May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world” (Gal 6:14).
- 2. This is completely contrary to the spirit of our age!
 - a. Our age teaches, “You get what you pay for.”
 - b. We get what He paid for.

II. Remember Why We Are Saved! (10)

A. Created in Christ Jesus (10a)

Second creation by the Spirit of God

- 1. God places His divine nature into the heart of the believer.
- 2. God makes a new creation of the believer.

B. Created to do good works (10b)

- 1. Salvation is not *by* works, but our salvation is *for* works
 - a. If we are created to do *so*, it is right to do *so*.
 - b. Do good works as a response to God’s grace!
 - c. Show your good works as a sign of a new life within us!
- 2. New creation consists not only of the new man but new works that God prepared for us to do.

Being One in Christ

Ephesians 2:11-22

He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one, and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall . . . You are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens . . .

Exegetical Idea

Paul describes how Christ’s death and resurrection made spiritually alienated Jews and Gentiles into a new, unified creation, resulting in peaceful reconciliation with God and one another

D. Christ brings us access to God (18).

1. Jesus Christ is the one who throws open the door into God's presence
2. The Holy Spirit is the one who escorts us into God's presence

III. Being One in Christ – Gods' Family of Faith (19-22)**A. We became the church of Christ.**

1. We became God's nation.
2. We became God's family.
3. We became God's temple.

B. Live as the church of Christ who is called to be one family!**Revelation of Mystery of Christ**

Ephesians 3:1-13

*By revelation there was made known to me the mystery . . .
of which I was made a minister, according to the gift of God's grace*

Exegetical Idea

Because Jesus has reconciled Jews and Gentiles, the divine mystery has been revealed and Paul's mission is to reveal that mystery to the Gentiles.

Homiletical Idea

Christians should understand the mystery of Christ so they can share it with the world.

I. Know the Content of the Mystery! (1-6)**A. Know your purpose! (1-2)**

1. Paul existed to be a prisoner for Christ.
2. Paul existed to be a minister of God's grace.

B. Study the revealed mystery! (3-5)

It required a special revelation to become known (3).

1. Only God's special revelation reveals God's mystery.
2. Only God's grace reveals Christ as our Savior.

C. Participate in the three results! (6)

1. All are fellow-heirs.
2. All are of one body.
3. All share in God's promise: the new creation.

II. Preach the Glory of the Mystery! (7-13)**A. Preach the mystery of God as a minister of God's Word! (7-9)**

1. It caused Paul to become a minister.
 - a. By the power of God, Paul became a minister.
 - b. By the power of God, we can be ministers.

2. It caused Paul to become a preacher.
 - a. Paul was unworthy.
 - b. We are unworthy, but we are called to preach the gospel.
3. It caused Paul to become an evangelist.
4. Preach the mystery of good news!

B. Preach this mystery as the church of Christ! (10-13)

1. The Church is central to history.
2. The Church is central to the gospel.
 - a. Christ died to call us into the Church, a new humanity.
 - b. Each local church is the center of the gospel.
3. The Church is central to Christian living.
 - a. Paul saw his sufferings as the Church's glory.
 - b. Paul's gospel was Christ and the Church.
4. Preach the mystery of Jesus Christ as the body of Christ!

Prayer for the Church of Christ

Ephesians 3:14-21

I bow my knees before the Father . . . you may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ.

Exegetical Idea

One the basis of God's creation of a new humanity in Christ, Paul prays for believers and gives a doxology to God.

Homiletical Idea

Christians should pray for the spiritual maturity of their brothers and sisters.

I. Pray intensely for the church (14-17a).

A. Pray for the believer (14-15).

1. God's salvation through Christ was the basis for Paul's prayer (2:1-10)
2. Paul knelt down before the Father
 - a. "Kneel down" indicates a sign of desperate need or an unusual passion for the Jews; their posture was standing
 - b. The prayer addresses God as the Father; before Christ, men thought of God as far away and unconcerned with humanity. Christ, on the other hand, revealed Himself as God to us.

B. Pray for the inner strength of the believer (16-17a).

1. What is inner strength?
 - a. The believer needs to be strengthened with power in the "inner being."
 - b. "Inner being" means the deepest part of one's soul and heart.
2. Why do we pray for inner strength?

- a. Strength of the inner being delivers power to overcome the sinful nature.
- b. Strength of the inner being promises power to follow the way of Christ.
- 3. Who is the source of strength?
 - a. The Holy Spirit of God
 - i. We are born again by the Holy Spirit.
 - ii. We grow stronger by the Holy Spirit.
“Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day” (2 Cor 4:16).

II. Pray for the Love of Christ (17b-19a).

A. Pray for Christ to dwell in Our Heart (17b).

- 1. “Dwell” and “be rooted” mean a permanent not a temporary dwelling
 - a. The believer does not pray for Christ to enter the hearts of believers; Christ is already in their hearts.
 - b. The presence of Christ within the believer motivates him to follow Christ.
 - c. The more the believer is aware of Christ within him, the more he can walk and live in Christ.
- 2. Christ dwells within the believer by faith.
 - a. The mature Christian life starts with faith that Jesus is within me
 - b. The mature Christian life desires Jesus who is within me, to lead my life.

B. Pray for fuller understanding of spiritual things (18).

- 1. For the breadth, length, height, and depth
 - a. The breadth of love embraces the world.
 - b. The length of love last forever.
 - c. The height of love takes sinners to heaven.
 - d. The depth of love takes Christ to the lowest sinner.
- 2. These spiritual things are crucial for all believers to understand.
 - a. All believers must know four prayers.
 - b. The more believers comprehend, the more they will thank God and serve Christ with their whole heart.

C. Pray to know the love of Christ (19a).

- 1. To know the love of Christ surpasses all knowledge.
- 2. To know love of Christ is impossible, but Jesus calls us to this grand spiritual exercise for our souls.

III. Pray for the Fullness of God (19b-21).

When Jesus Christ comes into us, the trinity also dwells in us.

- 1. Only the Spirit of God can help us understand the fullness of God.
- 2. The real fullness of God is Jesus Christ.
- 3. “For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in Christ” (Col 2:9).

Unity of the Spirit

Ephesians 4:1-6

I entreat you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called . . . preserve the unity of the Spirit.

Exegetical Idea

Paul exhorts the believer to be eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit and suggests a sevenfold confession based upon the unifying realities of the faith, which provides a strong motivation for the appeal for unity.

Homiletical Idea

Christians should understand the unity which Christ Jesus brought into our life and exercise unity in daily life. We are not asked to create it, but to keep it by seeking it in our lives.

I. Character and Nature of Unity (1-2)

A. Unity is God's work.

1. "Therefore": Unity is the result of all that Paul has preached in chapters 1 through 3.
 - a. It is the product of the cross and God's work in Christ.
 - b. Unity is not what we can aim at but it is given to us.
2. Unity is a natural product for Christians: It is not an option but an order.

B. Unity is "of the Spirit."

1. Unity is provided by the Holy Spirit.
 - a. Christ brought unity by His death and resurrection.
 - b. The Holy Spirit calls us into the Church of Christ.
2. Only in Christ we can accomplish unity.

C. Unity is organic.

1. Unity is living and vital.
 - a. It is not a coalition.
 - b. It is not a result of human effort.
2. The church of Christ is a new creation, a spiritual body created by God in Christ.
 - a. There are no distinctions of man.
 - b. The analogy of the human body explains the nature of this unity.
 - c. When a person believes in Christ, he is joined into union with Christ by Spirit and becomes a member of the body by the power of the Holy Spirit.

D. Unity in diversity

1. There is diversity in unity, not a uniformity.
 - a. As the parts don't look alike, they don't function alike.
 - b. The parts are interdependent, and all work toward the same purpose.

2. We must understand each other in a holistic sense.
 - a. Some are within body and are unseen, but are very important.
 - b. Some are obvious in their work, while some are not, but all are important.

E. Life of unity

1. The way to walk worthily as Christians
 - a. Walk with humility.
 - b. Walk with gentleness.
 - c. Walk with patience.
 - d. Walk with love.

II. Practice Unity in the Christian Life (1-3).

A. We are called to keep Christian unity (1).

1. All believers are called to follow unity.
2. Make every effort to keep unity.

B. We are charged to build Christian unity (3).

1. Paul charges us to “be diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit.”
 - a. Unity is the result of Christ’s work, but it is our duty to keep it.
 - c. Urgent order for the local church
2. Under the name of Christ, all denominations and departments should be united.
 - a. Our Triune God is the root and example of our unity.
 - b. Genuine unity shows the actual presence of the kingdom of God.

III. Seven Reasons for Christian Unity (vv. 4-6)

A. What is the origin of Christian unity?

1. The source is one body.
2. The source is one Spirit.
3. The source is one hope.
4. The source is one Lord.
5. The source is one faith.
6. The source is one baptism.
7. The source is one baptism.

B. Unity is the visible manifestation of the triune God.

1. When unity is practiced in Christian circles, it represents the unity of the triune God.
Genuine unity is only given to Christians because it is the shadow of the God of three persons.
2. Keep the unity in your walk with the Spirit!

Unity in Diversity

Ephesians 4:7-16

I entreat you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called . . . preserve the unity of the Spirit.

Exegetical Idea

Christ's death and resurrection is the basis in distributing grace to each individual believer, so that the body of Christ may be built up until believers reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God.

Homiletical Idea

As the body of Christ and as a member of a local church, we have to serve Christ's body by playing our role and contributing to the growth of the body and the glory of God.

I. Every Believer Has Gift (7-10).

A. Every believer is gifted (7a).

1. Note, "To each one of us grace was given."
 - a. There is not a single believer exempted.
 - b. There is not a single believer who cannot serve the body of Christ.
2. Spiritual gifts are different from natural talent.
 - a. Spiritual gifts are given to build up the church.
 - b. God's work should be done by God's gifted person.

B. Every gift is given by Christ (7b-10).

1. Jesus Christ gives us the grace to use our gifts.
Jesus Christ is the gift-giver.
2. Jesus Christ paid the greatest price.
 - a. The great cost: The death of Christ and His descent into the lower parts of the earth.
 - b. The greatest value: That Christ might fill the whole universe with His presence.
3. As it is given by Christ.
 - a. Each gift is the best!
 - b. Each gift is equal!
 - c. We should not boast any of our gifts.
 - d. We only thank God.
 - e. We only try to use our gift for God's glory.

II. Every Believer's Gift Is Diverse (11)

A. Diversity in gifts

1. The gift of an apostle
2. The gift of a prophet
3. The gift of an evangelist
4. The gift of a pastor
5. The gift of a teacher

B. Unity in diversity

1. Every gift is given by Christ
 - a. It is Christ and Christ alone who gives spiritual gifts to men
2. Every gift is Christ-centered
 - a. All gifts are given to do the work of Christ.
 - b. All gifts are given to serve the body of Christ.

III. Every Believer's Gift Has a Purpose (12-16).**A. Equip saints: An immediate purpose (12).**

1. It is to equip believers to do the work of the ministry.
2. Lay people must be equipped to reach the lost and to minister to others' needs.

B. Become a mature man like Christ: An eternal purpose (13).

1. The minister of God works to bring about a perfect unity among God's people.
2. The minister of God works to bring about the knowledge of the Son of God
3. The minister of God works to bring about a mature person

C. Live in love: A personal purpose (14-16).

1. To no longer be children.
2. To grow up in all things.
3. To do his part in building up the church.

Put on the New!

Ephesians 4:17-24

You lay aside the old self . . . You be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

Exegetical Idea

On the basis of a life worthy of God's calling, Paul exhorts that believers should put off their old self, which is the life of the Gentiles and put on the new self, which is the life of the new creation.

Homiletical Idea

As God transformed us into a new self, we have to live a holy life as God's people.

I. Life of the Old Self (17-19)**A. Do not walk in the futility of thinking (17).**

1. "Futility" means empty, senseless, aimless, unsuccessful, and worthless.
2. When we push God out of our minds, our minds are void and empty of God. When God is not in our thoughts, our minds are ready to be filled with the things of this world.

3. We must never allow our mind to become empty of God

B. Do not be darkened in understanding (18a).

1. The unbeliever does not understand God.
2. Never allow your understanding to become darkened.

C. Do not be separated from the life of God (18b).

1. The unbeliever is separated from the life of God.
 - a. Because of their own willful ignorance and hardness of heart
 - b. They are responsible for their own death.
2. Praise Jesus Christ for His reconciliation for us with God by His death and life!

D. Do not lose sensitivity (19a).

1. "Lose sensitivity" means to become callous, hardened.
 - a. The more a person walks in sin, the more callous his conscience becomes to righteousness.
 - b. They do not walk as believers walk.
2. Ask God to soften our hearts toward Him and His words always!

F. Do not indulge in impurity (19b).

1. We have already been cleaned but we have to ask God to clean our heart always.
2. Seek for pure life in Christ as a new creation!

II. Life of the New Self (20-24)

A. Live according to what you have learned (20-21).

1. Christ is our teacher.
 - a. Through the voice of the minister Christ teaches His people.
 - b. We learn the Word of God through the minister.
 - c. We preach the Word of God through the gospel.
2. Christ is the One with whom we should walk always.

B. Put off the old and put on the new (22-24).

1. Put off the old person, the old self.
 - a. Abandon the life you had before you accepted Christ!
 - b. The nature of man, the natural, corruptible seed from Adam
2. Be renewed in your mind.
 - a. The mind of man has been affected by sin.
 - b. The mind is renewed by Christ.
 - c. Live a transformed life!
3. Put on the new person, the new self.
 - a. We are transformed into a new self created by Christ.
 - b. It is only possible by the power of God.

Imitator of God

Ephesians 4:25-5:2

Be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.

Exegetical Idea

Paul demonstrates concrete exhortations about the old self and the new, and concludes that believers should be imitators of God and live a life of love. To live up to the new creation, believers should put off falsehood, sin in anger, theft, unwholesome talk, all malice, and grieving the Holy Spirit. Instead they should speak the truth, speak helpful words, work to share with those in need, be kind, and forgive each other.

Homiletical Idea

Christians should be an imitator of God and live righteously as a new creation.

I. Righteous Living (25-32)

A. Lay aside falsehood and speak the truth (25).

1. The charge: Lay aside falsehood.
2. The reason: We are one body of Christ.

B. Be angry and yet do not sin (26-27).

1. The charge: Our anger should not lead you to sin.
2. The reason: We can be the devil's target.

C. Do not steal (28).

1. The charge: Do not steal but labor.
2. The reason: We can help others.

D. Do not grieve the Holy Spirit (30).

1. The charge: Do not grieve the Holy Spirit.
2. The reason: We were sealed for redemption.

E. Be kind (32).

1. The charge: Be kind and forgive each other.
2. The reason: God has forgiven you.
Forgiveness is the sign of Jesus' forgiveness.

II. Be an Imitator of God (1-2).

A. Imitate God because we are God's children (1).

1. God's beloved children must imitate God.
Just as children learn by imitating their parents, so we are to learn by imitating God.
2. This means our commitment, devotion, attention.
3. Great privilege: This command is given only to the children of God

B. Imitate God by walking in love of Christ (2).

1. Why?
 - a. Christ gave Himself up for us.
 - b. Christ died in our place, in our stead, as our substitute.
2. Walk in love, just as Christ has loved us and has given Himself as an offering and a sacrifice to God.
3. Show God in your love of others!

Walking in the Light

Ephesians 5:3-14

*But now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light
for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth*

Exegetical Idea

Paul exhorts the believer to evade sexual vices, greed, obscenity, foolish talk and coarse joking, which are the life of darkness. Instead, Paul urges the believer to walk as a child of light and to learn what pleases the Lord.

Homiletical Idea

Christians should live in the light as the children in the world of darkness.

I. Remember the Former Life (3-8a).**A. Life of darkness (3-6)**

1. Improper life for God's holy people
 - a. Sexual immorality
 - b. Impurity
 - c. Greed
2. Foolish talk
 - a. Just don't do that!
 - b. Rather speak thanksgiving!
3. Idolater
 - a. Immoral or impure person
 - b. No inheritance in the kingdom of God

B. Separate yourself from life of darkness (7-8a).

1. We have to abandon our former lifestyle.
 - a. We once lived in sin and separation from God.
 - b. We lived in moral and spiritual darkness.
2. We have to imitate God.
 - a. Separate yourself from darkness.
 - b. Follow Christ's step.

II. Walk as a Child of Light (9-14).

A. If you walk in the light (8b-10)

1. There will be the fruit of goodness.
 - a. Goodness produces righteousness.
 - b. Righteousness means a right relationship with God and with man.
2. There will be the fruit of truth.
 - a. Paul already admonished the Ephesians Christians (4:25).
 - b. People today are crying for people of truth and honesty.
 - c. Life of truth itself is witness of Christ.
3. There will be the fruit of obedience.
 - a. Walking in the light seeks to please God.
 - b. Walking in the light requires our quick action.
4. Bear the fruit by walking as a child of Light!

B. If you walk in the light (11-13)

1. We should not have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness.
 - a. When a Christian participates in the ways of the world, his influence and testimony will be extinguished.
 - b. Fellowship with the Lord and His Word and His people will build up the Christian and make him stronger.
2. We will expose the sin of others.
 - a. Darkness can not hide itself from the light.
 - b. Walking in the light influences everything it touches.
3. Change others by walking in the light!

Be Filled with the Holy Spirit

Ephesians 5:15-21

Be careful how you walk . . . be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.

Exegetical Idea

Paul exhorts believers to live wisely in the evil days and to be filled with the Holy Spirit

Homiletical Idea

We have to be filled with the Holy Spirit to walk as a mature Christian.

I. Walk in Spirit (15-17).

A. Walk in Spirit by being wise (15).

1. The wise person knows God personally.
 - a. Genuine wisdom comes from God.
 - b. He knows that he is on earth to live a righteous life.
 - c. She knows that her life on earth bears testimony to the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. The wise person walks in the presence and praise of God

- a. His thoughts are upon God all day long
- b. Theology of *Coram Deo* should lead our life *Coram Deo*

B. Walk in Spirit by redeeming the time (16).

- 1. The man of the Spirit uses his time wisely.
 - a. As time is a gift of God, man should not waste time.
 - b. What we can do is not to buy time, but to use it wisely.
- 2. The man of the Spirit uses his time by making the most of the opportunities.
 - a. Redeem the opportunities!
 - b. Why? Because the days are evil.
 - c. Stay alert to live righteously and to bear testimony to Christ.

C. Walk in Spirit by understanding the Lord's will (17).

- 1. A man of the Spirit understands the will of God.
 - a. By knowing the will of God, he can conquer the evil.
 - b. By knowing the will of God, he can apply it to the situations in every day.
- 2. Pray to understand the will of God!

II. Be Filled with the Spirit (18-21).

A. What is "Be filled with the Spirit"?

- 1. It is a command, not a suggestion: We have not exception.
- 2. It is a plural command to the whole church: All Christians must be filled with the Holy Spirit.
- 3. It is a passive command: God is the agent to fill. We must give ourselves to God to dwell in our heart.
- 4. It is a present tense command: We have to be filled with the Spirit continually.

B. Speak each other with a singing spirit (19).

- 1. A Spirit-filled person has a singing spirit.
 - a. A drunken person speaks a lot.
 - b. A Spirit-filled person sings a lot.
- 2. What do we sing?
 - a. Psalms
 - b. Hymns
 - c. Spiritual songs

C. Give thanks to God with a thankful spirit (20).

- 1. A Spirit-filled person has a thankful spirit.
 - a. Our lips are in God's creation.
 - b. Giving thanks to God leads our life to give thanks to people.
- 2. A Spirit-filled person believes a good and perfect will of God in his life "always" and "for all things"

D. Submit each other with a respectful spirit (21).

- 1. A Spirit-filled person has a submissive and respectful spirit.

- The believer has to submit to Jesus and to each other as well.
2. A Spirit-filled church has a submissive attitude.
There is no dissension or divisiveness.
 3. We have to submit to each other as to Jesus.

E. Pray to be filled with the Holy Spirit!

Submit and Love Ephesians 5:22-33

Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. . . . Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her.

Exegetical Idea

Paul shows how unity between wives and husband should be demonstrated in the new creation. Paul understands the husband-wife relationship to reflect the Christ-church relationship.

Homiletical Idea

A Christian husband must love his wife and a Christian wife must submit her husband to understand and testify of the love of Christ to His Church.

I. Submit to Your Husband As to the Lord (22-24).

A. The wife must submit to her husband.

1. To submit is God's will.
 - a. There is no equivocation: "Wives, submit to your own husbands!"
 - b. Submit with genuine heart just as to the Lord!
2. To submit is God's order for the family.
 - a. The husband is the head.
 - b. "Head" in Scripture is in authority not in being, for everyone is equal in essence.
 - c. Submit for function and order within an organization.

B. Submit to your husband as to the Lord.

1. "As to the Lord"
 - a. When we do anything, we do it as to the Lord.
 - b. Because we love Him, we do it as to the Lord.
2. Submission to husband is a sign of submission to the Lord.
3. Submission is a spiritual mystery.
 - a. The wife's submission is comparable to Christ and the church.
 - b. Christ is the pattern for the wife.

II. Love Your Wife As Christ Loved You (25-33).

A. Love her as Christ loves the church (25-27).

1. A husband's love toward his wife is the love of God Himself.
 - a. Agape love is a selfless and unselfish love.
 - b. Christ's love for the church is: "Christ gave Himself up for the church."

2. Give yourself to her.
 - a. It is not only a love of affection and feelings.
 - b. It is a love of the will and commitment.
3. Crisostom says, "If it be needful that thou should give thy life for her, or be cut to pieces a thousand times, or brought the Church to His feet by His great care, not by threats nor fear nor any such thing; so do thou conduct thyself towards thy wife."

B. Love her as you love your own body (28-30).

1. He should nourish and cherish his wife as he does his own body.
Love toward his wife is a specific act.
2. He should become one body with his wife.

C. Christian marriage leads to understand the mystery of God (31-33).

Honor and Train in the Lord

Ephesians 6:1-4

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. . . . Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

Exegetical Idea

Paul shows how unity between children and parents should be demonstrated in the new creation. Children should obey and honor their parents, while parents should not exasperate their children; instead, they should bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

Homiletical Idea

Christian children and parents must act according to the teaching of the Lord.

I. Acknowledge God's will to children (1-3).

A. Honor and obey your father and mother (1-3).

1. It is right to natural law.
 - a. Every society and culture is built on the premise that children should obey parents.
 - b. When this is broken, its society becomes destroyed.
2. It is right to divine law.
 - a. The Bible teaches, "Honor your father and mother, for this is the first Commandment with a promise.
 - b. Obeying the invisible God must be proved by obeying visible parents.
3. It is also right to natural law.
 - a. It is natural law.
 - b. It keeps children from bad habits and bad community.
 - c. It gives parents great happiness.

B. “Obey” means

1. Obey is “to listen carefully.”
2. Obey is voluntary action.
Obey is not a compulsory action, but it is a natural expression.

C. Obey “in the Lord” (1b).

1. Obey what is consistent with Christ and His Teaching.
2. Obey your parents as you obey the Lord.

II. Acknowledge God’s Will to Parents (4).**A. Don’t provoke your children (4a).**

1. Don’t provoke your children to anger.
 - a. Overcontrolling a child can exasperate a child.
 - b. Undercontrolling a child can exasperate a child.
 - c. Lack of understanding and fault-finding of a child can exasperate a child.
 - d. Eliminate factors which may exasperate your child!

B. Train your children in the Lord (4b).

1. Train your children in the Lord.
Training means the cultivation of mind and morals, commands and admonitions, reproof and punishment, correcting mistakes and curbing the passions, and the increase of virtue.
2. Instruct children in the Lord.
Instruct means counsel, exhortation, correction.
3. “In the Lord”
 - a. The Word of the Lord is the guide for Christian parents in rearing their children.
 - b. Rear children not after their own ideas but after the Lord’s Word.
 - c. Raising your children is the greatest mission.

Serving One Master

Ephesians 6:5-9

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. . . . Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

Exegetical Idea

Paul shows how unity between slaves and masters should be demonstrated in the new creation. Slaves should obey and serve their earthly masters as they do Jesus, while masters should not threaten them.

Homiletical Ideas

As Christian employers and workers, we have to treat each other just as we act before God

I. Remember God' Word to Workers (5-8).**A. Obey with respect (5a).**

1. This does not mean working with the slavish fear of men, but with the fear of God.
2. Respect and fear is to be the mark of the Christian workman.

B. Obey in sincerity of heart (5b).

1. Obey as to Christ.
 - a. Working for a master is pleasing Christ.
 - b. Obeying a master is a visible sign of obeying Christ.
2. Work with purpose and attention.
 - a. The workman does not beat time.
 - b. There should be no fakeness.
 - c. The Christian workman is a good workman.

C. Obey with conscientiousness (6).

The workman should be the same when a master is present or is absent.

- a. The workman is working not only before a master but also before God.
- b. This is the way of finding his identity of a good worker.

D. Obey with good will (7).

1. The workman must do it as to the Lord.
His work is as a servant of the Lord.
2. The workman works as though his boss is the Lord, not man.

II. Remember God's Word to Masters (9).**A. Treat your worker as they do before God (9a).**

1. Treat your worker in the same way.
 - a. If you want to be respected, treat them with respect.
 - b. If you want sincerity, treat them with sincerity.
 - c. If you want conscientiousness, show them the same.
 - d. If you want good will, show them your warm heart.
2. Give up threatening.
 - a. Instead of threatening every step should be taken to train unproductive workman.
 - b. Instruction with love and grace

B. Remember there is one master (9b).

1. God is the only master.
 - a. Everyone is under the same God.
 - b. Treat your worker as you act before God!
2. God shows no partiality.
 - a. Radical spiritual equality between masters and slaves in the first century
 - b. Equality between any positions today

We Are in the War Now

Ephesians 6:10-20

Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.

Exegetical Idea

On the basis of the Spirit-filled life of the new creation, Paul exhorts believers to be enlightened that their life is a spiritual battle. Paul exhorts believers to be strong in the Lord, to put on the full armor of God, and to pray in the Spirit for a spiritual warfare with the powers of evil.

Homiletical Idea

We have to fight against the spiritual evils in our daily life with the armor of God.

I. Be Strong in the Lord for Spiritual Warfare (10-13).

A. Know the soldier's charge (10).

1. Be strong in the Lord.
 - a. We do not empower ourselves, but rather our strength comes from the Lord and His mighty power.
 - b. Charge of not visible outfit, but spiritual preparation in the Lord.
2. The Lord is our source of strength.
 - a. Our strength is found in the Lord.
 - b. Our strength comes in a living, dynamic relationship with the Lord.

B. Know the soldier's enemy (11-12).

1. Our enemy is the devil and his strategies.
 - a. There is an obvious enemy of the Christian soldier.
 - b. We have to understand their strategies: they send false teacher, false teaching, divisive spirit, and much temptation to us.
2. The warfare is not human, but spiritual.
 - a. We fight against rulers, authorities, the powers of this dark world, the spiritual forces of evil.
 - b. The forces of evil are powerful and numerous.

C. Know the soldier's preparation: put on the full armor of God (13).

1. It is our duty to take the full armor of God.
 - a. Take the armor of God.
 - b. Take the "full" armor of God.
2. It is God's promise to protect His soldiers.
With the armor of God, we will gain victory.

II. Put on the Armor of God (14-20).

A. Put on the belt of truth (14a).

1. The belt is used to strengthen and support the body.
2. What is the belt of truth?

- a. Christ is the truth; we have to put on Christ.
- b. The Word of God is truth; we have to put on the Word of God.

B. Put on the breastplate of righteousness (14b).

- 1. It is used to protect the heart.
Righteousness keeps our heart from being wounded by evils.
- 2. How can we protect?
 - a. We have to put on the righteousness of Jesus Christ.
 - b. We have to strive after the righteousness of Christ.

C. Put on the sandals of the gospel (15).

- 1. The sandals are a sign of readiness to march.
- 2. Be ready to bear witness to the gospel.
Wherever our feet take us, we have to share the gospel.

D. Put on the shield of faith (16).

- 1. It protects our body from the fiery darts from the enemy.
- 2. We have to hold a complete and perfect trust of God.
 - a. Faith of Jesus wins in any battle.
 - b. We will win only by faith.

E. Take the helmet of salvation (17a).

- 1. It protects the head and the mind of the soldier.
- 2. We must protect our mind keeping all thoughts on the Lord Jesus.
 - a. The helmet that protects our mind is salvation.
 - b. Be assured of your salvation and ultimate victory!

F. Take the sword of the Spirit (17b).

- 1. The sword is a weapon used for offense.
- 2. The sword of the Spirit is the Word of God.
 - a. God's Word is the weapon that assures victory for the Christian soldier.
 - b. The Word of God is living and active and sharper than any double-edged sword.
- 3. Fight spiritual warfare in the power of the Holy Spirit!

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ABSTRACT

PAUL'S PREACHING IN THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS AND ITS HOMILETICAL IMPLICATIONS

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The purpose of this dissertation was to explore Paul's preaching of the significant theological themes in Ephesians in an attempt to establish a model of expository preaching for modern preachers. The study comprised five chapters. The introduction justified the investigation, explained and evaluated the New Homiletic, and summarized the history of the studies of Paul's preaching and Paul's use of the Old Testament in Ephesians.

Chapter 2 examined Paul's preaching on the triune God against the Old Testament backdrop. God has provided the spiritual blessings of unity and reconciliation to humanity by the work of Christ's death and resurrection through the Holy Spirit. The investigation demonstrated that Paul's preaching of God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit reflects his eschatological perspective that believers have already experienced the salvation but they still anticipate its consummation.

Chapter 3 surveyed Paul's preaching on the Christian life as a new creation primarily dealing with the latter three chapters. Paul's imperative messages, emphasizing on how newly created believers should live a Christian life in conformity of their calling, are grounded on his indicative messages, focusing on what God has done for humans

through the sacrificial death and resurrection of Christ. In Paul's preaching there is no dichotomy between the internal work of the Holy Spirit for the believer's redemption and His external ethical exhortation for the believer's life. Paul's preaching of the believer's life also reflected an eschatological dimension. The believer has experienced an ultimate triumph over the evil powers in Christ, but the fruits of that victory have not yet been fully realized.

Chapter 4 studied homiletical implications of Paul's preaching in Ephesians and proposed a model of expository preaching. First, expository preaching should be the indicative-grounded and the imperative-oriented. Second, expository preaching should be Christ-centered preaching, focusing on the redemptive work of the triune God in the canonical context. The conclusion summarized the main results of the investigation and suggested Paul's preaching in Ephesians and proposed a future direction for expository preaching.

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