

STUDY THE BIBLE 25 (STB 25) "THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS: WALK WORTHY"

Paul's epistle to the church at Ephesus is best understood comparing and contrasting the **three** accounts in the New Testament – his visit in the book of **Acts** (Acts 18:24 – 21:38) where he spends three years between 54-58AD; what he writes five years to them, being a prisoner in Rome 61-63AD, with the book of **Ephesians**; and the account, written by the apostle John, around 80AD, in the book of the **Revelation** (Rev 2:2-7)

Like all final reports, God outlines the 'good' and the 'bad' in the Revelation account, where

1. God commends them on **ELEVEN** worthy points by saying

*"I know **thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them** which say they are **apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted ... But this thou hast, that **thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.**" (Rev 2:2-3, 6)***

2. However, God has **ONE** thing against them, and says

*Nevertheless I have **somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.***

3. So God urges them towards **FOUR** things, by saying

4. **REMEMBER** therefore from whence **thou art fallen, and REPENT, and DO the first works;** and **"...OVERCOMETH ... to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."** (Rev 2:4-5,7)

REMEMBER WHAT?

Being once idolatrous, wicked and sinful heathens, Paul says they are to **REMEMBER** that

*"...you hath he quickened, who were **dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation** (behaviour) **in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.**" Ephesians 2:1-3*

REPENT FOR WHAT and DO WHAT?

It was **NOT** to repent of the things brought to remembrance, as these had been dealt with when they got saved. No, they had fallen into **OTHER sinful behaviours** since their salvation, of which they needed to repent, and **do** something about.

THE MISUNDERSTANDING

Left their first love (Rev 2:4) is misunderstood to mean they had stopped loving Jesus. So Pastors today address their congregations with "Well people we don't want to be like the Ephesians do we? No Sir, so lets put our hands in the air and tell him how much we love Jesus." Now this is all fine and good, however we are reminded by the Saviour himself who says *"If a man love me, **he will KEEP my words ...**" John 14:23.*

WHERE ARE CHRIST'S WORDS TO BE FOUND?

Paul says *If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are **the commandments of the Lord.** 1 Corinthians 14:37.* The mistaken belief by many Christians, is that, because Jesus fulfilled the law, we don't have to, so therefore we are free from the laws that would keep us from liberty. No dear Reader, to **keep** Christ's words, are to **obey** the commandments of Paul found in the epistle to the Ephesians, and covered under the general heading of *"... **walk worthy ...**" (Eph 4:1).*

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

It comes as a complete surprise, for most Christians, to find that Paul restates the Old Testament Ten Commandments (minus the 4th of course). However there is a difference. Instead of the seemingly harsh *"... **thou shalt not ... make, take, bow, do, kill, commit, steal, build, lift, covet, bear, go, suffer ...**" (Exodus 20:3-17), God speaks in a more **kindly** and **fatherly** fashion as is befitting those who can now call him *Abba Father* (Rom 8:15) as the bondage of the Law created fear, *For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. Romans 8:15.* Furthermore, now being adopted, the Ephesians had God the Father and Jesus dwelling in them, as the word says *"...and my **Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.**" John 14:23, which the Old Testament saints never had.**

So God **LOVINGLY, and kindly, REASONS** with the Ephesians, as children who are now in the family, and not as bastards and the illegitimate (those children who are born outside of lawful marriage).

WHAT WORKS NEEDED TO BE DONE?

*That ye **put off** concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And **be renewed in the spirit of your mind;** And that ye **put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour:** for we are members one of another. **Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:** Neither give place to the devil. **Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him***

labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. Ephesians 4:22-32.

As can be seen, these are some of the Ten Commandments restated with kinder words and reasons.

HOW AND WHY HAD THEY LEFT THEIR FIRST LOVE?

There were two reasons – the **world** and the **Jews**.

Firstly, as in the present day, unless Christians walk according to the word of God, they are in danger of taking on not just the characteristics of the city in which they live, but indeed, the whole world, due to the evils of the internet. The city of **Ephesus** was like most cities today. If ever there was a godless and depraved city, Ephesus was one. It was a city of luxury, fornication, sexual sin, money greed, sorcery, magic arts, Jewish philosophy, Greek philosophy, government endorsed temple prostitution, trade and commerce. They worshipped the goddess Diana, representing 'sexual freedom', and as then, as today, you could buy all sorts of trinkets, figurines, dolls and idols, mostly depicting men in ungodly poses.

Secondly, much to the displeasure of many of the Christians, those who were formerly of the Jewish faith at Jerusalem, Paul taught that Christians could be free from the **works bondage** of becoming circumcised. These Christian Jews were bitterly opposed to **uncircumcised Gentiles** taking upon themselves the liberty of having access to their God, and having **their** Messiah as Saviour.

WHAT HAPPENED AT EPHEBUS?

The people and events mentioned are **Apollos**; disciples of **John's baptism**; Paul disputes for three months in the synagogue; teaches in the school of Tyrannus; does **miracles** with handkerchiefs; deals with **exorcists** and **vagabond** (wandering) unsaved Jews; **delivers** the sons of Sceva; **magic** books of sorcery are burned along with the curious arts; confronts the **greed** of Demetrius and the **silversmiths**; the town clerk deals with the uproar over **Diana**; Paul's **warnings** to the church.

They were a **very good church**, as they had confronted and **overcome** all of the evils of corruption, covetousness, greed, false apostles, exorcists, vagabond Jews, Diana worship, sorcery, magic, fornication, Nicolaitanes and so on. As John's Revelation points out, they were in danger of **not persevering**, and this is shown by the word "**overcom-eth**" (Rev 2:7), with the ending of "-eth" meaning overcoming in the present and continuously, all the time with no rest, and into the future.

It is no wonder as he left them "... *they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him, Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship. Acts 20:37-38.* Their best friend and teacher was going away. He wanted them to

WALK WORTHY

Paul, having been taken to the 3rd heaven, knew what was coming up for them.

As they were **heathens** in the **PAST**

...in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath ... Ephesians 2:3

They should now live **stedfast** in the **PRESENT**

That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; Eph 4:14

As **grievous wolves** will enter in the **FUTURE**

... in the vanity of their mind, ... Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: ... Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. Corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; Ephesians 4:17-22

Paul's Ephesian epistle is in **THREE PARTS**:

1. They are now in Christ

In Chapter 1 Paul tells them they are **in Christ and what that means**.

2. How they got into Christ

In Chapter 2 Paul says there is **no separation between the Jew and the Gentile** because of Christ.

As shown before at Pentecost in the Old Testament, where two loaves were baked (Lev 23:17), Paul's constant mission was to stress the unity of **ONE** church in Christ, not two churches.

In chapter 3 Paul reminds them of his **special revelations given to him by God**.

3. How they will act

In Chapters 4,5,6, Paul gives many instructions on the **behaviour** and **spiritual armour** needed by Christians.

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Ch 1 = Chosen in him (not 'into')

The most used word in this chapter is "**in**". Paul hopes the repetition of this word will sink into the minds of the church at Ephesus. He uses such phrases as "**in** Christ Jesus (V1), "**in** heavenly places" (v3,20), "**in** him" (v4), "**in** the beloved" (V6), "**in** whom (v7), "**in** Christ" (v20), "**in** his body" (v23) and so on.

Now **the Calvinist** utterly fails to have the truth of verse 4. They read

*"According as he hath **chosen us IN him** before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:" (Eph 1:4)*

as

*"According as he hath **chosen us INTO him** before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:" (Eph 1:4).*

We are **not** chosen into Christ, but once in Christ, this is where we are chosen!

"For what?" you may ask.

Having gotten into Christ, we are them **predestinated** to **become like him**. Our beginning in Christ is the start, the **pre** (the start of the journey that ends with the) **destination** of having glorified bodies in heaven. The predestination does **not** occur before the foundation of the world. It starts once we are in Christ.

Paul then ends with Christ being the head over the church which is his body (v23).

"Hello Visitor to our church, are you a member yet?"

"Oh, you're talking about **membersh**ip****. Oh yes, I am a member of Christ's body. I am in him."

If the reader is looking for excellent examples of how to pray for people, we can look no further than here in this chapter (v16-23) and also Ephesians 3:14-19, Philippians 1:9-11 and Colossians 1:9-12.

Paul sets out all the blessings of being in Christ.

C2 = Quickened in Christ

Dead in trespasses and sins (v1)

Were children of disobedience (v2)

Fulfilling the lusts of the flesh (v3)

But he is rich in mercy (v4)

We are quickened (v5)

Seated in heavenly places (v6)

Saved not of works but saved unto good works (v8-10)

*For by grace are **ye saved through faith**; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: **Not of works**, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus **unto good works**, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. Ephesians 2:8-10*

Were without hope & without God in the world (v12)

Made nigh by the blood of Christ (v13)

The dividing wall has been broken (v14)

In Paul's journeys, there were certain **false Jewish teachers** that would come along on his coat-tail, insisting that Gentiles could **not** become Christians without keeping the **laws of Moses** eg **days, times and festivals** (Gal 4:10), and in particular, **circumcision** (Acts 15:1). As Paul says "...*certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, **Except ye be circumcised** after the manner of Moses, **ye cannot be saved.**" (Acts 15:1)*

These **false teachers, Judaizers**, were not willing to accept Paul's doctrine of getting saved, and staying saved, without the works of the law. They insisted that a Gentile could not become a Christian unless he first adhered to Moses' laws. They made it their business to trouble and vex Christian churches, being fixed in their determination to make Christianity a sect and a branch of Judaism. Much like today, certain Jews, and Jew loving people, are infiltrating churches with their demonstrations of Jewish rites and festivals. They are intent on stamping "Moses" on everything and drawing believers away from the sufficiency of Christ.

Slain the curse and demands of the Law (v15)

Access to the Father (v18)

No longer strangers but saints (v19)

Framed into God's building (v21-22)

The foundation of the building are the apostles and prophets

The cornerstone is Jesus Christ (v)

To be "quickened" simply means to be brought alive, from being dead in sins.

You are **not** saved by works but you saved to do good works.

C3 = Mystery of the church

Paul explains his credentials as the leader (v1-5, 7-8)

Gentiles are to be fellow heirs in Christ (v6)

Mystery of the church in Christ (v9)

The love of Christ (v17-19)

C4 = Walking worthy as Christians - the Ten Commandments restated for Christians

Walk worthy (v1)

With lowliness, meekness, longsuffering and forbearing in love (v2)

With unity of the Spirit (v3)

One baptism (not water) with the Spirit (v4-5)

Christ went to hell and took the OT saints back to heaven (v8-10)

Offices needed to perfect the church (v11-12)

Don't be tossed around like children with different doctrines (v13-17)

You were blind and walked in the lusts of the flesh (v18-19)

The new man is renewed (21-24)

Ten Commandments (numbers 3, 6, 8, 9) restated

no lying (#9 in v25)

no anger (#6 in v26)

no stealing (#8 in v28)

speak what is good (#3 in v29)

Put away bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour and evil speaking (v31)

Be kind, tender-hearted, forgiving to one another (v32)

You will note that the Ten Commandments are more than covered in the above passages except the one about keeping the Sabbath (Saturday).

The Ten Commandments are delivered more harshly with "Thou shalt not...."

You will note that the language of God through Paul is more kindly in keeping the commandments.

Put it this way, as a child in God's family, he speaks to us, who are saved, as you would to your own children – kindly and gently hoping that they will respond out of love.

Although the Jews were chosen by God they are still not born again. God hopes that they will obey him out of love all the way through.

	Ten Commandments	Paul's Commandments
Number 9	Ex 20:16 "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour."	Eph 4:25 "Wherefore putting away lying , speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another."
Number 8	Ex 20:15 "Thou shalt not steal"	Eph 4:28 "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth."

C5 = Walking worthy as Christians - the Ten Commandments restated for Christians

be followers of God (#1 in v1)

no fornication #3 in v3)

no covetousness (#3 in v3)

C6 = Walking worthy as Christians with the armour of God

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Harley Hitchcock