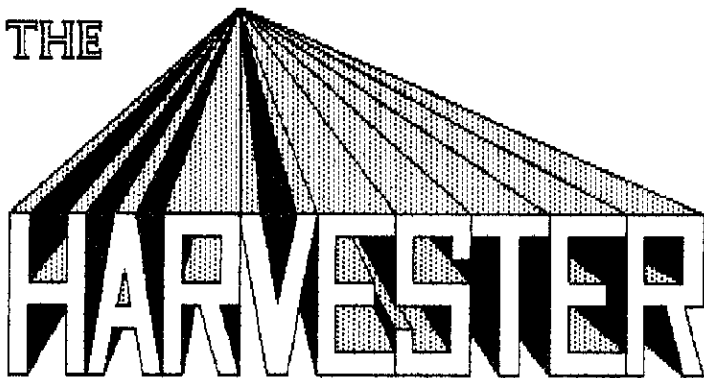


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*"The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest." (Luke 10:2)*

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No. 204

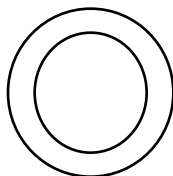
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## PAUL'S PRAYER FOR THE EPHESIANS

*"For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ,*

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THE HARVESTER  
1120 Sun Hill Road  
Birmingham, AL 35215-4106



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*which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God."*  
(Eph. 3:14-19)

Let's notice all of the things Paul prayed would be granted unto the Ephesians:

1. to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man,
2. that Christ would dwell in their hearts by faith,
3. that they, through love, might have understanding as "*with all saints*", and
4. to know the love of Christ, and through that love be filled with all fulness of God.

How impressive is the depth of Paul's prayer!

Take note that Paul offered similar prayers for the Colossians (Col. 1:9-11), the Philippians (Phil. 1:9-11), and the Corinthians (1 Cor. 1:4-7). While the mentioning of these prayers may appear to be Paul's style of written salutation, I fully believe that he did offer prayer to God on behalf of the parties mentioned. Let's let this be an example for us -- we, too, can offer similar prayers for each other! And we should!

Now let's take a close look at the components of Paul's prayer for the Ephesians.

1. Strengthening the inner man with might by his Spirit.

I think it is important that this was at the top of Paul's list. Rom. 8:6 says,

*"For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace."* We understand the need to leave worldly cares and thoughts behind and to live a spiritual life. Our thoughts (hence the word "minded") should be on spiritual matters. Still, this is not the only thing Paul prayed the Ephesians should gain -- he also prayed that they would be *"strengthened WITH MIGHT in the inner man"*!

*"For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance ..."* (1 Thes. 1:5) Also take note of these verses about the power of the Word of God: Rom. 1:16, Eph. 6:17, Heb. 4:12. Paul knew of the power of the Word of God, and he asked that the Ephesians would grow from it.

## 2. Christ dwelling in hearts by faith.

This is the second item on Paul's list. Let's take a look at a couple of verses.

*"And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him ..."* (1 Jn. 3:24) *"If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."* (John 14:23) Notice that Christ said He and His Father would abide in the hearts of those who keep His commandments.

Now, let's take a look at Rom. 5:1, *"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."* So faith is part of justification, and if we live justly,

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Ray McManus  
 141 County Road 474  
 Woodland, AL 36280  
 Phone: (256) 449-9221

Christ will abide in our hearts. This, along with the first item on Paul's list, lead us up to the third part.

3. That they, through love, might have understanding as "*with all saints*".

There are lots of verses that pertain to knowledge and wisdom -- we understand the need for these things. Still, notice exactly what Paul asked for in Eph. 3:18, "*May be able to comprehend with all saints ...*" He asked that the Ephesians and ALL saints (you and I including) would be able to COMPREHEND spiritual matters. By having this comprehension, the Ephesians would then be able to grow fuller in knowledge and wisdom, and thereby live according to the commands of Jesus. In turn, He would abide in their hearts.

4. To know the love of Christ, and through that love be filled with all fulness of God.

This last portion of Paul's prayer for the Ephesians would be the result of all of the previous components being answered. Certainly, if we grown in the inner man, grow in knowledge and wisdom,

and keep Christ's commands such that He would live in our hearts, then we will be able to know the love of Christ and be filled with all fulness of God.

If you were to take a step back and look at the "big picture" of Paul's prayer, you would see he asked that the Ephesians would grow in Christ in all ways necessary for them to become spiritually mature. Remember, Paul prayed to God to grant these things unto the Ephesians. As mentioned before, we can offer similar prayers for each other! And it is my prayer that we will.

CHAD PRINCE  
919 Pine Cliff  
Oxford, AL 36203

## SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. In Romans 16, who does Paul greet who has a church meeting at their house?
2. In what part of Eden was the garden?
3. God was going to use the Canaanites, Hittites, etc., to test the Israelites but He was also going to use them to teach the Israelites something. What?
4. Who asked that the legs be broken of the men on the crosses on the day of the crucifixion?
5. Righteousness and peace do what to each other according to Psalm 85?

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH . . .

and remember last month's questions?

1. To whom did God say to leave his country, his people, and his kindred and to go to an unknown land? ABRAM (Gen. 12:1)
2. In the book of Esther, the Jews killed how many men in the capital city, Susa? 500 (Esth. 9:6)
3. What did the soldiers say to Jesus in mock worship after He was sentenced to death? "HAIL, KING OF THE JEWS" (Mark 15:18)
4. A Christian's body is the temple of what? THE HOLY SPIRIT (1 Cor. 6:19)
5. What is the Old Testament book in which a large number of Hebrew men put away pagan wives? EZRA (Ezra 10)

## "BAPTIZED FOR THE DEAD"

*"Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?" (1 Cor. 15:29)*

Some mistakenly view this verse to teach that we who are yet alive may be baptized for someone who has already died. Our Mormon friends teach this, and no doubt others are troubled over what this verse is actually saying.

It had been mentioned in verse 12 that some were saying "there is no resurrection of the dead." But the following verses (13-28) speak in detail about the beautiful hope there is of a resurrection from death. Verse 20 assuredly states, "But now IS Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that sleep." Having shown that there will be a resurrection, Paul then supports his argument by asking about their purpose in being baptized.

Just what is the purpose of baptism? John wrote, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 Jn. 1:7) and in Romans 6:3-4 Paul explains that it is in baptism that we come into contact with the death of Christ (where His blood was shed). "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

Then he compares the benefit of baptism (a death, a burial, and a coming forth from the symbolic watery grave) with the resurrection of Jesus. "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection" (verse 5).

The ultimate value in baptism, then, is not to be realized in this present physical existence, but in a life beyond death. It is with this understanding that Paul asks his questions. If there is no life beyond death, then why are you

# BIBLE PRINCIPLES OF SALVATION

**I. All people have sinned** (Rom. 3:10, 23; 1 Jn. 1:8)

**II. A sinner will face eternal death** (Ezek. 33:8-9; Rom. 6:23; Rev. 21:8)

**Unless he:**

1. Hears the Word of God (Matt. 13:23; Rom. 10:17)
2. Believes Jesus is the Son of God (Mk. 16:16; Jn. 20:31; Heb. 11:6)
3. Repents of his sins (Acts 2:38; Acts 3:19; Acts 17:30)
4. Confesses his faith in the Lord (Matt. 10:32; Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:9-10)
5. Is baptized for the remission of sins (Jn. 3:5; Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16; Gal. 3:27; 1 Pet. 3:21)
6. Lives a faithful life (Matt. 25:21; Tit. 2:11-12; Rev. 2:10)
7. Prays for forgiveness, if he falls into sin again (Acts 8:22; Jas. 5:15-16; 1 Jn. 1:5-10)

**III. Only those who do the will of God shall be saved** (Matt. 7:21; Jas. 1:22; Rev. 22:14)

\* \* \* \* \*

(continued from page 7)

submitting to baptism which has that goal as its intent? Why be baptized for the benefits which are to be realized after death, if there is not going to be a resurrection?

Being baptized for the dead simply refers to being baptized with view to the wonderful hope of a life eternal beyond death.

HARRY COBB  
P.O. Box 75  
Wedowee, AL 36278