

# Paul's Letter to Christ's Congregation at Ephesus

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## Chapter 1

### Greeting

1 Paul, emissary of Christ Jesus through the will of God, to the saints who are in Ephesus and faithful in Christ Jesus: 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

### God's Unique Blessings on the Hebrew Nation

3 Blessed<sup>1</sup> the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, He who blessed us with every spiritual blessing in heavenly<sup>2</sup> [realms] through Christ, 4 since, before the foundation of the world, He chose us in Him to be holy and without blemish before Him in love, 5 having foreordained us to adoption<sup>3</sup> by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the delight of His will, 6 to praise of the glory of His grace by which He highly favored<sup>4</sup> us *"in the one having been beloved."* [Deut. 33:5,26 (LXX)]<sup>5</sup> 7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the abundance of His grace 8 which He overflowed to us in all wisdom and understanding; 9 having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good intent which He determined in Himself, 10 to administer<sup>6</sup> the completion of the times [in order] to sum up all things together in Christ, what is in heaven and what is on earth — in Him. 11 In Him also we have received an inheritance, having been foreordained according to the purpose of the one who conforms all things according to the purpose of His will, 12 that we, having before hoped in the Christ<sup>7</sup>, should be to the praise of His glory.

### God's Grace Extended to the Nations

13 In Him you also, hearing the word of truth — the gospel of your salvation — in whom also believing, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, 14 who is the deposit of our inheritance unto redemption of the purchased possession, unto

## Notes

1. The adjective "εὐλογητος" (blessed), when used without a verb of being, it is a *Hebraism* with the sense of "may He be well-spoken of, extolled and honored." It always identifies the speaker as Jewish.

2. There is no justification for the addition of "places" after the adjective "heavenly." Heavenly is a neuter adjective.

3. The "adoption" relates specifically to Israel (cf. Rom. 9:4, Gal. 4:4-5).

4. The adjective "εχαριτωσεν" (translated "made us accepted" - KJV) is better rendered "highly favored." (cf. Luke 1:28).

5. τῷ ἡγαπημένῳ, articular perfect passive participle, Lit., *"in the one having been beloved,"* quoting from Moses' last words of blessing to Israel (Deut. 33:3-5, 26-29 LXX). It refers to God's deliverance of Israel from bondage in Egypt, giving them His Law. David made a prophecy of Israel's eventual restoration, and used the same title for Israel, Psalm. 29:6 LXX. (See also: Isa. 44:2 & Jer. 11:15 LXX). The perfect tense indicates past completed action, as opposed to ongoing action. It refers to God's love for that nation manifest in His election. Had Paul meant Christ, he would have written τὸν ἀγαπητὸν (the beloved one), as in Luke 20:13.

6. Lit. "unto the administration"

7. The earliest known commentary on this statement comes from Tertullian (2nd century), as follows: *"Again, what Christ do the following words announce, when the Apostle says, 'That we should be*

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praise of His glory.

## Paul's Desire and Prayer for the Ephesians

15 Therefore I also, after hearing of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love to all the saints, 16 do not stop giving thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, 18 the eyes of your mind having been enlightened, that you may perceive what is the hope of His calling, what is the wealth of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the excelling magnitude of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power 20 which He performed in Christ, raising Him from the dead and seating Him at His right hand in the heavenly [realms], 21 higher than all authority and power and might and government, and every name being named, not only in this age but also in the coming [one]. 22 And [He] placed all things under His feet, and gave Him headship over all things to the congregation 23 which is His body, the fullness<sup>8</sup> of the all in all filling One.

## Chapter 2

### The Former Condition of Jew and Gentile

1 And you, who were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2 in which you used to walk according to the course of this world, according to the ruler of the dominion of the air, the spirit now working in the sons of disobedience, 3 among whom we all also behaved in the lusts of our flesh, acting out the desires of the flesh and the mind, and were naturally children of wrath, just like the rest.

### God's Grace and Mercy Uniting Jew and Gentile in Christ

4 But God, being abundant in mercy, through His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in sins, [He] made us alive together in Christ<sup>1</sup> (by grace you were saved), 6 and [He] lifted us up, and made us sit together in the heavenly [realms] in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in coming ages He

*to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ?' Now, who could have first trusted — ie., previously trusted — in God, before His advent, besides Jews to whom Christ was previously announced from the beginning? He who was thus foretold, was also foretrusted. Hence, the Apostle refers the statement to himself, that is, to the Jews, in order that he may draw a distinction with respect to the Gentiles, (when he goes on to say:) 'In whom you also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel (of your salvation); in whom ye believed, and were sealed with His Holy Spirit of promise'." (Tertullian, Against Marcion, xvii)*

8. Note that the "congregation" which is His "body" was already (present tense) the "fullness" of Christ when Paul wrote Ephesians (cf. Eph. 4:13).

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1. The clause, "made us alive together **in** Christ," can also be rendered "made us alive together **with** Christ." "The Christ" is in the dative case, which requires that we supply a preposition in translation. Our judgment is that the context virtually demands "**in** Christ," since "εν Χριστοϋ" (**in** Christ) occurs 4 more times immediately following this verse (vss. 6,7,10,13); "εν αυτω" (in Himself) occurs once in v. 15; "εν ενι σωματι" (**in** one body) occurs once in v. 16; and "εν ω" (**in** whom - referring to Christ) occurs once in v. 22. The sense of the whole clause is the union of Jew and Gentile together **in** Christ. This meaning is also clearly borne out by the remainder of the chapter. (cf. 1:10, 3:6,14-15)

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may demonstrate the super abundance of His grace in kindness upon us in Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace you were saved through faith, and that not from yourselves; [it is] God's gift, 9 not from deeds, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are His handiwork, having been created in Christ Jesus upon<sup>2</sup> good deeds which God foreordained, that in them we should walk.

## The Former Plight of the Gentiles

11 Therefore, remember that formerly you, the gentiles, (being called in the flesh, "uncircumcised," beneath her<sup>3</sup> who is called "the circumcised" — done in flesh by hands) 12 that you were at that time without Christ, estranged from the community of Israel and foreigners to the promised covenants, having no hope and without God in the world.

## Christ Rectifies their Plight and Unites them with the Saints of Israel

13 But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. 14 For He is our peace, the one who made both one and demolished the wall of separation, 15 having abolished in His flesh the obstacle — the law of commandments in ordinances — that with the two He might create in Himself one new man, making peace, 16 and might reconcile both to God in one body by the cross, thereby having removed the obstacle. 17 And coming, He preached peace to you — those far away — and peace to those near. 18 For through Him with one spirit<sup>4</sup> we both have access to the Father. 19 Therefore, now you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but [you are] fellow citizens among the saints, and God's family, 20 having been built upon the foundation of the emissaries and prophets<sup>5</sup>, Jesus Christ Himself being the corner stone, 21 in whom the whole building, being assembled together, is increasing toward a holy temple in the Lord, 22 in whom you too are being built together in spirit<sup>6</sup> toward a dwelling place for God.

2. The preposition is "επι." Most translations have "unto" here. But, had Paul meant "unto," he would have used "εις." The preposition "επι" means "upon." Here it likely refers to the good example of Christ Himself, rather than the good works that believers are supposed to do.

3. Israel was referred to by Paul in the feminine gender. This may be a subtle reference to Hosea's reference to Israel as an adulterous wife.

4. Whether to capitalize "spirit" in the clause, "with one spirit," is a difficult decision. It can have two different meanings, either referring to the Holy Spirit, or the unity of spirit between Jew and Gentile (or unity of believers in general). The context seems to favor this latter sense, which is also the sense of the same clause in Phil. 1:27. When in doubt about whether to capitalize "spirit" when both make sense in the same context, we do not capitalize, so as not to attribute something to the Spirit of God that Paul did not intend. We capitalize the word "spirit" when it has the definite article (the Spirit), when accompanied by an adjective of identification (eg. Holy Spirit, Spirit of Truth), a pronoun that refers to God (His Spirit), or a genitive noun that identifies (eg. Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ), or context demands

5. "The apostles and prophets" forms a Sharp TSRS construction. Both terms are being united by a single article. In the plural, this can either mean "Apostles" who are also "prophets" (synonymous) or that both are united.

6. See note 4.

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## Chapter 3

### Paul's Administration of the "Mystery" for the Gentiles

1 For this reason I, Paul, the captive of Christ Jesus for you gentiles — 2 if indeed you have heard of the administration of God's grace which was given to me for you, 3 how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I briefly wrote already<sup>1</sup>, 4 by which those reading might understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), 5 which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men in the way it has now been revealed to His holy emissaries<sup>2</sup> and prophets through the Spirit<sup>3</sup>: 6 [that] the gentiles [should] be co-heirs, of the same body, and co-partakers of the promise in Christ through the message. 7 Of this I was made a servant according to the gift of the grace of God given me by the efficient operation of His power.

8 This grace was given to me, the least of all the saints, [that to] the gentiles I should preach the unimaginable abundance of Christ, 9 and illuminate everyone [regarding] the fellowship of the mystery, having been concealed from the ages in God who created all things through Jesus Christ, 10 so that the multiform wisdom of God might now be made known through the congregation to the authorities and powers in<sup>4</sup> the heavenly [realms], 11 according to the eternal purpose that He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, 12 in whom we have boldness and access with confidence by faith in Him.

### Paul's Prayer for the Ephesians

13 Therefore, I request that you not weary of my burden for you, which is your glory. 14 For this cause I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15 from whom is named<sup>5</sup> the whole family in heaven and earth, 16 that He would grant you the capacity to be strengthened [even] unto the inner man by His Spirit, according to the riches of His glory; 17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; being rooted and grounded in love, 18 that you may be able to absorb, together with all the saints,

1. See 1:9-10

2. Note that "emissaries" (αποστολοι) is plural. Paul was not the sole conduit for the "mystery" as is claimed by some.

3. εν πνευματι, the preposition "εν" implies instrumentality, not agency, as does also "Spirit" in the dative case. The Spirit was the instrument used by God to reveal the mystery to the emissaries and prophets. The revelation did not originate with the Spirit.

4. The Greek word "εν" can mean either "in" (in a spatial sense) or "with" (in an instrumental sense).

5. Note the present tense. Compare 1:10. This seems to imply the union of both Old and New Testament saints in one body in Christ (those in heaven and those on earth when Paul wrote).

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the width, length, height and depth, 19 to learn the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. 20 To Him who is able to do above and beyond all that we ask or imagine, according to the power that operates in us, 21 to Him be the glory in the congregation and in Christ Jesus to all generations, [to] the ages of the ages<sup>6</sup>, Amen.

## Chapter 4

### Maintain Original Christian Unity Around Essentials

1 Therefore, I the prisoner of the Lord, plead with you to live worthy of the invitation with which you were called 2 with all humility and meekness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, 3,4<sup>1</sup> one body and one Spirit endeavoring to preserve the Spirit's unity using<sup>2</sup> the bond of peace, [just] as you were [originally] called with one hope of your calling, 5 one Lord, one faith, one immersion, 6 one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in all.

### Gifts Provided for the Congregation's Maturity

7 But, grace was given to each one of us<sup>3</sup> according to the measure of Christ's gift. 8 Therefore He says, *"When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men."* [Psalm 68:18] 9 (Now this — *"He ascended"* — what does it imply but that He also descended into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He who descended is also the one who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fulfill all things). 11 And He indeed gave<sup>4</sup> the emissaries, also the prophets, also the evangelists, also the shepherds and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the performance of service, for building the body of Christ, 13 until we might<sup>5</sup> all attain to the unity of the Faith and knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of maturity of the fullness of Christ<sup>6</sup>; 14 so that we may no longer remain children, tossed about and carried off with every wind of teaching by the slight of men through cunning craftiness into the deception of heresy. 15 But, speaking truth in love, [we] may grow toward Him in every way who is

6. The Bible does not conceive of "eternity" as timeless, but as a series of finite, perpetual ages with no definite end in sight.

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1. It was necessary to rearrange the word order in verses 3 and 4 in order to place the subject before the verb as is proper in English. The clause "one body and one Spirit" is in the nominative case, and is therefore the subject of the verbals ("endeavoring to preserve"). Hence, the "body" and the "Spirit" are working together to preserve unity.

2. Gr. "ἐν" in the instrumental sense. That is, using "the bond of peace" as an instrument to maintain unity.

3. The first person plural pronoun can be either "inclusive" (meaning us and you) or "exclusive" (meaning only us). If it is the former, then Paul spoke of gifts given to himself and his readers. If it is the latter, he referred only to the apostles, prophets, evangelists, and shepherd—teachers named in verse 11.

4. The individual persons named are what He gave to the church, not "offices" to be filled.

5. The verb translated, "might attain" is in the subjunctive mood, indicating Christ's purpose or intent when He gave these men to His church, but not necessarily the result.

6. According to Eph. 1:23, this state (the universal church becoming the "fullness of Christ") had already been reached. However, Paul still prayed that each local congregation would achieve this as well (Eph. 3:14-19).

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the head — Christ, 16 from whom the whole body being assembled and assimilated together through the contribution of every joint according to the proportion of efficiency of each part, growth of the body is self-perpetuating to the building of itself in love.

## **Exhortations to Holiness**

17 Therefore, this I say and testify in the Lord: You are to no longer walk like the nations walk, in the depravity of their mind, 18 having their understanding blinded, alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them because of the hardness of their heart; 19 who being beyond sensitivity, have surrendered themselves to promiscuity, to the performance of every impurity in covetousness.

20 But you have not so learned Christ, 21 if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him (since the truth is in Jesus) 22 to put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man, being corrupted according to the lusts of deceit. 23 And being renewed in the spirit of your mind, 24 to put on the new man who was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

25 Therefore, putting away the lie, *"Let each speak the truth with his neighbor"* [Zech. 8:16], for we are members one of another. 26 *"Be angry and do not sin"* [Psalm 4:4]. Do not let the sun go down upon your wrath, 27 nor give place to the devil. 28 Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need. 29 Permit no corrupt speech to come from your mouth, but what is good for building up the essentials, that it may bring grace to the hearers. 30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God in whom you were sealed until the day of redemption. 31 Allow all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and slander to be removed from you, with all malice. 32 And be kind towards one another, compassionate, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.

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## Chapter 5

### Avoid Sexual Impurity

1 Therefore, be imitators of God as dear children. 2 And walk in love, just as Christ also loved us and gave Himself for us — an offering and a sacrifice to God for a fragrant aroma. 3 But illicit sex and all sexual immorality or covetousness, let it not even be named among you as is proper for saints; 4 also obscenity, foolish speaking, coarse joking, which are not proper, but rather thanksgiving, 5 because this you know: that no promiscuous, sexually immoral, nor covetous person who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. 6 Let no one seduce you with vain words, because these things bring the wrath of God on the children of rebellion. 7 Therefore do not be co-participants with them.

8 For you used to be darkness, but now [you are] light in the Lord. Live like children of light, 9 (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth), 10 discerning what is acceptable to the Lord. 11 And have no co-participation with the barren deeds of darkness, but instead condemn them. 12 For it is shameful to even mention what is done by those in secret. 13 But everything condemned by the light is exposed, for the light is what exposes. 14 That is why He is saying: *"Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light."* 15 See to it that you walk very straight, not like fools, but like the wise, 16 making the most of the time because the days are perilous.

### Use Music Instead of Drunken Revelry

17 Consequently, do not be foolish, but consider what the will of the Lord is. 18 And do not be drunk with wine, in which is ruin; instead be filled in spirit<sup>2</sup>: 19 speaking to yourselves with instrumental music<sup>3</sup>, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making music<sup>4</sup> to the Lord with<sup>5</sup> your heart, 20 offering thanks always for everything to God the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, 21 submitting to one another in the fear of God.

1. If this is a quotation, there is no known source. Some scholars have suggested that it was from an ancient hymn. Paul may have simply revealed to the reader something he had personally heard directly from the Spirit.

2. The preposition is "ἐν," meaning either "with" (instrumental) or "in" (spatial). The word "spirit" does not have the definite article, or any distinguishing adjective or genitive noun to identify it with the Holy Spirit. The command, "but be filled in spirit," is held in contrast to the negative command, "be not drunk with wine." There is no preposition in the clause, "drunk with wine." "Wine" is a dative noun, and is the indirect object. If Paul meant "filled with Spirit" one would expect him to do the same, "the Spirit" being a dative noun. By changing the grammatical structure, and using the more explicit prepositional phrase, "in spirit," it is more likely he did not mean "with the Spirit" but rather "in (your) spirit." In other words, rather than filling your belly with wine, fill your spirit with music and praise to the Lord. There is no apparent way for the Ephesians to obey a command to "be filled with the Spirit." One does not have authority over God's Spirit.

3. The Greek word is "ψαλμος" (psalmos), meaning the plucking of strings. According to Strong's Greek Lexicon, "a set piece of music, i.e. a sacred ode (accompanied with the voice, harp or other instrument; a "psalm")." (compare: Psalm 33:1-3, Psalm 92:1-3, Psalm 144:9, Psalm 149:1-3, Psalm 150:1-6).

4. The Greek word is "ψαλλο" (psallo), to pluck the strings, the verb form of "ψαλμος" (see note 3).

5. The preposition "ἐν" can either mean "in" (spatial) or "with" (instrumental). Nestle's and UBS Greek texts do not contain the preposition.

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## Instructions for Relationships

22 Wives, [submit] to your own husbands just like to the Lord, 23 because the husband is head of the wife, just as Christ is head of the Congregation; and He is Savior of the body. 24 Therefore, just as the Congregation is subordinate to Christ, so also wives [should be] to their own husbands in everything.

25 Husbands, love your wives, just like Christ also loved the Congregation and gave Himself up for her, 26 that He might set her apart, cleansing [her] through the bath<sup>6</sup> of water [contained] in the message<sup>7</sup>, 27 so that He may present her to Himself a glorious Congregation, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she may be holy and flawless.

28 Likewise ought husbands to love their own wives just as [they love] their own bodies. The man who loves his wife loves himself. 29 No one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it just like the Lord does the Congregation. 30 For we are members of His body, *from His flesh and from His bones* [Gen. 2:23]<sup>8</sup>. 31 *"For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife and the two shall become one flesh."* [Gen. 2:24] 32 This is a great mystery. And I refer to Christ and to the congregation. 33 However, each one of you in particular [must] love his own wife as himself, and the wife should respectfully honor her husband.

## Chapter 6

1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, because it is right. 2 *"Honor your father and mother"* (which is the first commandment with a promise) 3 *"that you may prosper and remain long upon the land"*<sup>1</sup> [Ex. 20:12].

4 And you, fathers, do not exasperate your children. Instead, raise them in the training and instruction of the Lord.

5 Servants, obey your masters according to the flesh with respect and reverence, in sincerity of heart, just

6. The Greek word is "λουτρον" (loutron) meaning either "bath" (the act of bathing) or the container in which one bathes. The prepositional phrase, "of water" identifies this "bath" with baptism.

7. The "bath of water" was contained "in the message." The prepositional phrase "εν ρημα," does not refer to the written Word. "ρημα" always refers to the spoken word, a saying, a message, or a command. Here it refers to either Jesus' Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20), or to the Gospel message (Acts 2:38-39).

8. This clause does not appear in Nestle's or UBS Greek texts. It is apparent, however, that Paul was making a metaphor of Gen. 2:23, drawing a parallel between Eve's being of Adam's "flesh and bones" and the Church being one with Christ.

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1. The entire verse Paul quoted reads, *"Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you."* This is a reference to the "land of Israel," not to planet earth (the modern understanding of "earth"). In both Testaments, "earth" refers to dry land (excluding the sea and air), never to a planet (cf. Gen. 1:10).



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as to Christ, 6 not only when being observed, as those who patronize, but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, 7 serving with good will as to the Lord and not to men, 8 knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether servant or free.

9 Also you, masters, do the same to them, refraining from threatening, knowing also that your Master and theirs' is in heaven, and there is no preferential treatment with Him.

## **The Armor Necessary for Perseverance in the Coming Perilous Time**

10 Finally, my brothers, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His strength! 11 Put on the full armor of God so that you may be able to withstand the trickery of the devil, 12 because we do not struggle with flesh and blood, but with authorities, with powers, with the princes of the darkness of this age, against spiritual conspirators in the heavenly [realms]. 13 Therefore take up the full armor of God, so that you may be able to stand firm in that day, the perilous one<sup>2</sup>, and having accomplished everything, to stand firm. 14 Therefore, stand firm having girded your groin with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and having feet bound with the readiness of the message of peace. 16 Above all, raising the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the fiery arrows of the Wicked One. 17 Also take the helmet of salvation, also the sword of the Spirit which is the spoken word of God, 18 through every prayer and petition, praying at all times in spirit, being vigilant in everything with perseverance and petition for all the saints, 19 also for me: that speech may be given me to open my mouth with boldness to make known the mystery of the message, 20 for which I am an ambassador in bonds, that in this I may speak freely as I ought to speak.

## **Personal Remarks**

21 But in order for you to also know my affairs and how I am doing, Tychicus, beloved brother and

2. "τη ημερα τη πονηρα" lit. "the day, the evil one." The use of the definite article with both the noun and the adjective (2<sup>nd</sup> attributive position) indicates Paul meant to highlight a very specific future "day" known to his readers, during which the "armor of God" would be indispensable. This is almost certainly a reference to the "great tribulation" (Matt. 24:21).

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faithful servant in the Lord, will tell you everything, 22 whom I have sent to you for this same purpose, that you may know our affairs and he may comfort your hearts. 23 Peace be to the brothers and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 24 Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Let it be done.

*To the Ephesians, written from Rome by Tychicus*

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