

**Quarter 4 Lesson 3**  
**Sixth Grade**  
**God's Family--His Church**  
**Ephesians**

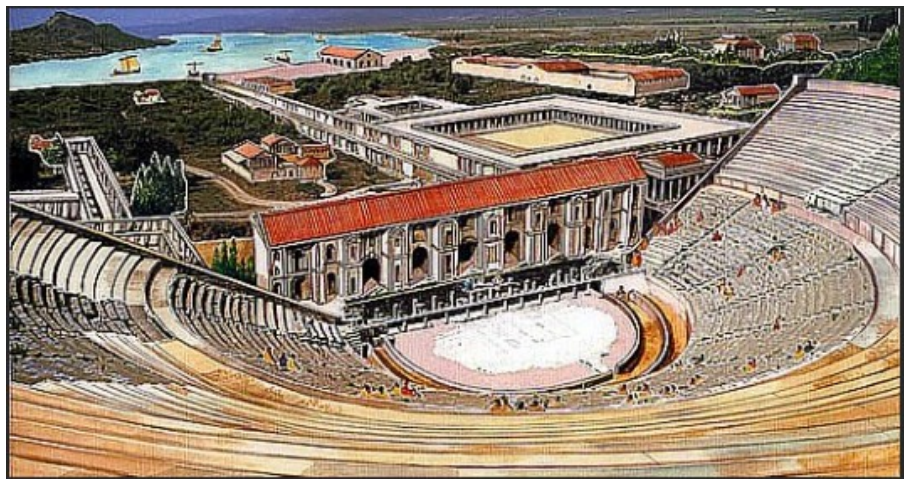
**Memory Verse: "Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil."**

**Ephesians 6:11**

Introduction

It appears that the apostle Paul wrote this letter to the church at Ephesus around 62 A.D. toward the end of his life. In Acts we learned that Paul had spent three years in Ephesus, and it is clear that the Ephesians cherished his ministry among them. Paul was in prison at the time he wrote this letter, presumably in Rome awaiting his trial before Nero.

Ephesus was a large city on the west coast of Asia Minor, at the mouth of the Cayster River on the shore of the Aegean Sea. It was an important seaport and trade center with a population of about 300,000 people. It contained a theater that seated an estimated 25,000 people. It was



also the location of the Temple of Artemis (also known by its Roman name of Diana) which was ranked as one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.

It was in Ephesus that Paul encountered both great opportunities as well as great dangers. This is where the silversmiths had him falsely arrested, because the spread of the gospel was hurting their business of making and selling idols.

Scriptures

Eph 1: 1-3 In these verses **Paul** identifies himself as the **author** and addresses and greets the Christians in Ephesus.

Eph. 1: 7-9 Paul refers to the "**redemption**" we have **through the blood of**

**Jesus**, as well as, the **forgiveness of sins** given to Christians **through the grace of God**.

What is redemption? *Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary* defines redemption as "the deliverance by payment of a price." In other words, a redeemer is someone who delivers (frees) someone else from some sort of danger or difficult situation by paying a ransom (price). Paul reminds the Ephesians that Jesus was our redeemer, and He paid the ransom when He shed His blood on the cross so that, through God's grace, they/we can have forgiveness of sin.

Eph 2:1-9 Paul discusses how the **Ephesians** were once "dead" in their sins (before they became Christians) but were now "alive" (living righteous lives). They **had made changes in the way they were living**. Paul reminds them of God's great love and mercy. "For **by grace** you have been **saved through faith**. And **this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God**, not a result of **works**, so that no one may boast." (*Remember how we discussed in earlier lessons that just doing a "checklist" of good works is not enough to get us into heaven. We must have the right attitude; we must glorify God.*)

**Salvation is a gift of God**. If someone gives you a present, and you refuse to open it, you receive no blessing from the gift--even if it is something you really want. You have to open the present to get any use out of it. Likewise, God is offering us a gift: forgiveness of sins and a home with Him in heaven. However, we have to "open" that gift by becoming faithful Christians and doing our best to follow His commandments. As Paul stated, being saved won't be because of anything **we** have done, it will be because of **God's** grace.



Eph 3:4-6 Paul refers to how God's plan for man was revealed to the apostles and prophets by the Holy Spirit and was **given to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews**. The gospel is for everyone.

Eph 4:1-6 Paul reminds the Ephesians of the way Christians are to "walk": "**with all humility and gentleness**, with **patience**, bearing with one another in **love**, eager to maintain the **unity** of the Spirit in the bond of **peace**,..."

**Humility**: A person who is humble focuses more on God and others than on himself/herself. (*On which of these do you focus more: God, others, or yourself?*)

**Gentleness**: A person who is gentle is kind, considerate, and shows compassion. (*Would you characterize yourself as gentle?*)

Patient: A person who is patient is able to tolerate delays or problems without becoming annoyed. *(Do you ever struggle at times with being patient? Most people I know certainly do--especially me! But if we consciously try to exercise patience, it will come.)*

Love: In last week's lesson we discussed love as presented in I Corinthians 13. A person who shows love is patient, kind, not boastful, not arrogant or rude, not irritable, and does not rejoice in wrongdoing. *(Are you trying to further develop these character traits in your life?)*

Unity: Paul states that Christians are to be united, because "there is **one body and one Spirit...one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.**"

Eph. 4: 2-29,32 In these verses, Paul again talks about the conduct of Christians; they are to change from their old way of living and turn to living as a "new man." He reminds Christians:

- not to lie, but speak the truth
- when angry, do not sin
- do not let the sun go down on your anger
- do not give the devil any opportunities to trick you into sinning
- do not say bad things, but say good things that build people up not tear them down
- be kind, tenderhearted, and forgiving.

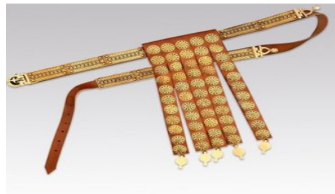
Christians make up the family of God. He knows that we are not perfect, but He does expect us to honor Jesus in the way we live and work together. This is the reason Paul told us in Ephesians 6:10-20 about the armor of God.

Just as the Roman soldiers put on armor to protect themselves during battle, the armor of God helps to shield us from the schemes of the devil whenever we find ourselves in a battle against him.

Let's look at what this armor is:



**The belt of truth**--Wearing the belt showed that the soldier was ready for action. Truth should surround us like a belt.



**The breastplate of righteousness**--Without righteousness we leave ourselves open to the devil's attacks. To be righteous, we must do what is right in God's eyes. When we follow God's commandments, the devil can't penetrate our armor.



**Shoes for the feet**--Successful armies had to have good shoes to be able to undertake long marches on foot. By having on our spiritual shoes, we are ready to go and preach the gospel of peace to others.



**Shield of faith**--Soldiers used their shields to protect themselves against whatever objects were hurled at them by the enemy. Likewise, when we have a strong faith in God's power and His love for us, we will be able to overcome the temptations that the devil throws at us.



**Helmet of salvation**--Helmets were used by soldiers to protect their heads from physical blows. By wearing the helmet of salvation, we can receive tremendous hope and comfort knowing that Jesus sacrificed Himself so that we can be saved. That peace will thwart the devil's blows.



**Sword of the Spirit**--The sword of the Spirit is the Word of God. Like the Roman gladius (a short sword), God's Word can also help us to conquer all our enemies, including that most difficult one, our human weaknesses. "The Word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword..." Hebrews 4:12



Paul said in Eph. 6:10, "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might." We wear the armor of God to protect ourselves from evil and its temptations. We use the "weapons" God has given us to fight sin. As the church we must work together to do the Lord's will and build a strong spiritual family of Christians who will honor and serve our Creator. *(How strong is your armor?)*



CONTRIBUTED BY

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