

## ] Kenosis Pleroma [

Introduction to the Epistle to the Ephesians

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~ The word “*square*” is a stereotype that was used in the hippy-era of the American nineteen-sixties and seventies; used as an adjective for a man who was what we call “*straight-laced*” today. It is another term that has gone the antiquated way of “*modesty*,” “*patriotism*,” “*holiness*,” and “*honesty*.” A “*square*” was the person who volunteered for community service when they didn’t have to. It was a person who honestly made an attempt to do their job better than anyone else. It was the type of person who became so absorbed in their work that they have to be reminded to take a break and rest. Is that your work ethic today?

A “*square*” didn’t cut corners or goof off. A “*square*” believed God and believed *in* God – and they would say so in public, while dedicating their entire life to the Lord. A “*square*” is one who would read the Scriptures and make an attempt to apply them to his life when no one was watching. This was the type of person who believed in honoring their country, their fellow man, their father and mother, and doing unto others as they would have others do unto them – and esteeming others better than themselves – and that kind of stuff.

A “*square*” was the person who lived within his means – and never cared about “*keeping up*” with the world. This is the type of person that didn’t want to eat today and pay later, either. The “*square*” got his information from the Word of God instead of the internet; although the internet wasn’t around back then – I think you know what I mean. This is the type of person that taught their children it is more important to play fair and by the rules than to cheat, hurt, lie and steal to win.

Well, the modern man who does not use foul language, does not drink alcohol, or take medications for “*stress*,” and who does not wink at the sins of the world that consume everyone else is always ridiculed, insulted, laughed at, and extremely misunderstood today; and their motives are questioned — but never trusted. There was a day when it was a

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compliment to be called a “square shooter.” Today, it’s beyond trite. Can you call yourself a “square?” Will you stand up and be humiliated for the Lord Jesus Christ today? The “square” is the one who dignifies the undignified human race, my friends. You may want to think about that.

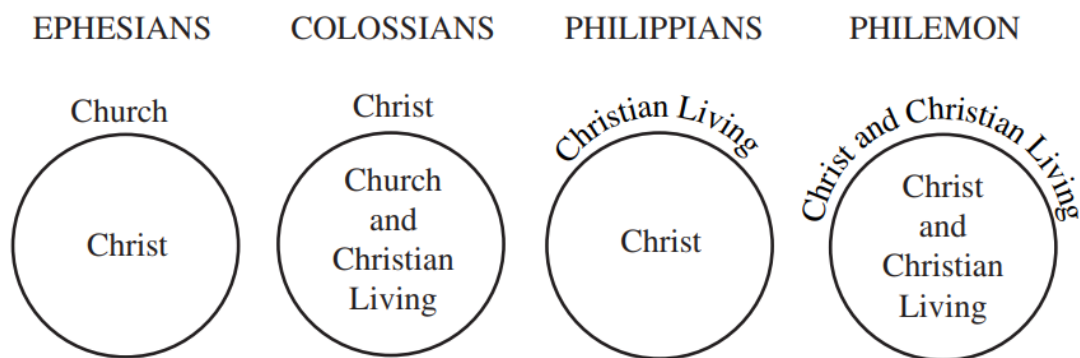
*~ Our gracious and loving Heavenly Father, we thank You today that there are a few men and women who are still holding to the basic truths and wisdom found only in Your Word; while most people are working feverishly to tear it down in the name of being civilized and sophisticated and innovative and original. Oh, Lord our God, help us to find the old path that leads to the old rugged cross; and we pray these things in Jesus Name ~*

In the year A.D. 62, four men left a prison visitation in Rome. Their destination was in the province of Asia, in what is designated as modern-day Asia Minor and, specifically, Turkey. These men had on their persons four of the most sublime compositions of the Christian faith mankind knows anything about. These precious documents would be invaluable if the originals were in existence. Roman officials did not comprehend the significance of the writings by an unknown prisoner named Paul; because, if they had, these men would have been apprehended and the documents would have been seized and destroyed.

When they said good-bye to the apostle Paul, each was given an epistle to bear to his particular constituency. These four letters are designated the “*prison epistles of Paul*,” since, of course, he wrote them while imprisoned in Carcere Mamertino – that’s the prison in ancient Comitium. He was awaiting a hearing at that time before the madman Nero — who was the Caesar at that time. Paul, as a Roman citizen, had appealed his case to the emperor, and he was waiting to be heard. Frankly, I believe Paul fully expected to be exonerated and freed. Anyways, these four men were Epaphroditus from Philippi, who had the Epistle to the Philippians. Tychicus from Ephesus had the Epistle to the Ephesians. Epaphras from Colosse had the Epistle to the Colossians. Onesimus, who was Philemon’s runaway slave from Colosse, had the Epistle to Philemon. Philemon was a believer in Christ and Paul’s trusted friend.

These four epistles present a composite picture of Christ, the church, the Christian life, and the interrelationship and functioning of all three. These different facets present the Christian life on the highest plane. **EPHESIANS** presents “*the church, which is His body*” — this is the invisible church, of which Christ is the head. **COLOSSIANS** presents Christ who is “*the head of the body of the church*.” The emphasis is upon Christ rather than on the church in Colossians. **PHILIPPIANS** presents Christian living, with Christ as the dynamic for said life: Paul wrote, “.... *I can do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth me.*” **PHILEMON** presents Christian living in action in a pagan society. To Philemon, Paul wrote, “.... *if thou count me, therefore, a partner, receive Onesimus as myself. If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee anything, put that on mine account.*” The gospel walked in shoe leather in the first century — and it worked.

In **EPHESIANS**, Christ is exalted above all things, God having “*put all things under His feet.*” Christ is the center of the circle of which the church is the periphery. In **COLOSSIANS**, Christ is the fullness of God — “*Pleroma.*” He is the periphery of the circle of which Christian living is the center. In **PHILIPPIANS**, Christ is the center of the circle; Christian living is the periphery. The “*Kenosis,*” which means the “*emptying,*” is given there. In **PHILEMON**, Christ is both the center and circumference: “*Hearing of thy love and faith, which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all saints.*” That is all very, very, very important to understand.



Dr. Arthur Pierson labeled Ephesians “*Paul’s Third Heaven Epistle.*” It has also been titled, “*The Alps of the New Testament.*” It is certainly the Mount Whitney of the High Sierra’s of all Scripture and, quite simply, we can call it

*the church epistle.* Most credible fundamental conservative scholars consider Ephesians the absolute pinnacle, acme and apex of truth and Biblical revelation found in all of Holy Writ. I think that is likely true. Some have suggested Ephesians is so utterly profound that only the very elect – the chosen few – can even begin to understand it. I think that may be true, too; however, I have noticed that those who say those things always seem to include themselves in an exclusive inner-circle; one that typically excludes Andrew Hunt.

Well, friends, I will be honest with you readers – because I always am honest with you – I’m not even going to pretend to be competent to present this book of the Bible in a meaningful or adequate way. This epistle, plainly stated, is beyond me. We’re going to get so high on the mountaintop of God’s government that most of us won’t even be able to breathe. As always, I am going to do my best with the aid of the Holy Spirit speaking through me to help us both understand Ephesians better. I make no promises.

That said, and as a side note, let me add that most men say the two books in the Bible that can be least understood are Ephesians and Revelation. Liberalism always reduces Revelation to a conglomerate of symbolism and spiritualism that no one can allegedly figure out. The liberal also reduces Revelation to the place where they claim it means one thing to you and another thing to me — and something else to them, of course. Well, that would mean it is meaningless; so, I don’t buy it. Further, they say that Ephesians is so high that it’s just too high for anyone. Well, the two books of the Word of God that can be arranged systematically, logically, chronologically, and even mathematically, are Ephesians and Revelation. There are no two other books in Scripture as logical as those two.

See, when I started writing the Spiritual Safari, I did so because I wanted to know what the Bible was really all about. I wanted to know if there were really any contradictions that could not be intelligently deciphered. I wanted to understand if the myriad paradox’s honestly had a purported two-fold explanation. I was tired of hearing people say they believed the Bible from cover to cover, when not a single one of them seemed to know anything at all about what was between the covers. I still hear that pious,

self-serving and self-righteous creed everywhere – but I have found out that *VERY FEW* – and I do mean *VERY* few – people really believe the Bible from cover to cover.

Either way, if you believe this is truly God's Word we are studying, then you are going to be interested in what the Spirit of God says it really says. So, let's get off of the gimmicks, and off of the methods of trying to lead and organize the church, or increase Sunday school attendance, or communicating with the younger generation, and all of that stuff. Those things may have a place; but – let me tell you this: if you don't really know what's in the Bible, none of those things are even relevant to you. Today, the only way to truly increase attendance is to actually teach Scripture wrong – but that's another subject for another time.

Alright, while our Spiritual Safari does not outline the books of the Bible as a normal Bible study would do, Ephesians – and even Revelation – are the easiest books to outline because they are so intrinsically logical. Frankly, Paul and John outline them for us. In Revelation, John was told to write the things he had seen, the things that are, and the things that will be. That's a simple three-fold division; and the remainder of Revelation is arranged according to series of sevens.

Here, in Ephesians, the outline is so simple, I would not be a worthy Bible teacher if I didn't point it out: we have six chapters, and the first three are the **Heavenly Calling** of the church – and that is the *doctrinal side*. Then, the last three chapters are the **Earthly Conduct of the Church** – and that is the *practical side*. I have noticed that most people either live on one side or the other of this epistle – but they have no balance in both. See, the Lord Jesus is the Head of the church, and Christ is in Heaven at the right hand of God the Father today. That's how you and I are identified with Him. However, the feet and body of the church are down here on earth; and Paul isn't going to leave us sitting around the Heavenlies twiddling our thumbs. No, Paul is going to tell us to walk worthy of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

I know it's nice and comfortable to sit around the Heavenlies while we boast of our position in Christ Jesus. Unfortunately, if we are ever going to

grow, we will have to come down out of the baby's highchair, cut some teeth, and eat some meat as we learn how to walk on the sidewalks of earth. Remember, when we left Galatians, we had just taken our first few baby steps of walking in the Spirit of God. In the day in which we are studying, those people were walking in an abject heathen and pagan society known as the Roman Empire. Moreover, this epistle is going to teach us to *STAND* as soldiers – *NOT* to fight – but to *stand*. The Lord Jesus will do the fighting for us. We shall hold our peace. Let's not make the common mistake about fighting sin and fighting the devil and resisting the world garbage we see all over religious circles. That's not what the Bible teaches....

**Deuteronomy 3: 22** *Ye shall not fear them: for the LORD your God he shall fight for you ~*

**Exodus 14: 14** *The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace ~*

**Deuteronomy 1: 30** *The LORD your God which goeth before you, he shall fight for you, according to all that he did for you in Egypt before your eyes ~*

**Exodus 14: 25** *And took off their chariot wheels, that they drave them heavily: so that the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Israel; for the LORD fighteth for them against the Egyptians ~*

**Deuteronomy 20: 4** *For the LORD your God is he that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you ~*

**Ephesians 6: 11** *Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to STAND against the wiles of the devil ~*

**Ephesians 6: 13** *Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to with STAND in the evil day, and having done all, to STAND ~*

**Jude 9:** *Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee ~*

Alright, I hope that makes it clear to those who think you are fighting sin and the devil – you aren't. You can't. Even Michael the archangel didn't rail against Satan; what makes you think you can do better than Michael the archangel? The moment you decide you're going to fight the devil, you have *ALREADY* lost, my beloved; you can just write that down – although you don't need to write it down, because I just wrote down eight Scriptures for you that tell you very clearly not to fight the devil. By the way, "*fighting the good fight*" is something else entirely, too, by the way; and we'll get to that soon — so, don't run around misquoting the Bible — because that's never a good thing to do. Just come down to earth and stand with your feet on the ground of sound doctrine; grounded in the right-dividing of Holy Writ.

This epistle is going to take us into the Heavenlies, but it is going to get down to the absolute nitty-gritty of life, too. Trust me: the rubber is going to make full contact with the road in these next twenty-eight reports. If this leg of our expedition doesn't affect you where you live and move and breathe and have your being – then nothing ever will – I can assure you of that. The extremely practical aspects of the church are set forth before us now. In the first chapter, we see the church as a body; and verses fifteen through twenty-three is a prayer of Paul for knowledge and power; and we'll talk all about those aspects as we get to them. For now, I have already prayed that these reports will be very meaningful to you, personally, friends!

Ephesus was a leading center of civilization in that day, and an outstanding church existed there. Remember, the Holy Spirit would not permit Paul to enter the province of Asia on his second missionary journey. In Acts chapter sixteen at verse six we read, "*.... now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia....*" In other words, the Holy Spirit literally placed a roadblock on Paul's missionary highway. I have always wondered why that was; what I do know is that it just wasn't the right moment for Paul to be in that particular place. I accept that, but I would still like to know why it wasn't the right time.



Well, Paul went west at that time to Macedonia and Philippi, down to Berea, over to Athens, and on to Corinth; but on the way back, he went by Ephesus. That was a tremendous opportunity at the right time, too. Then, in Acts chapter eighteen verse nineteen through twenty-one, we read, “.... *and he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews. When they desired him to tarry longer time with them, he consented not; But bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem: but I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus.*”

Later, on Paul’s third missionary journey, he went back to Ephesus. At that time, he discovered another man by the name of Apollos had already been there during the interval between the second and third missionary journey; but Apollos had only preached the baptism of John — and *NOT* the Gospel of grace concerning the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ according to Scripture. Apollos didn’t know about the Gospel at that time. Later, Apollos did become a great Gospel expositor, and the rest is history.

Well, that background is absolutely critical to understanding everything that is going on in this epistle. Paul began a far reaching ministry – and I am prepared to say this was the greatest ministry ever conducted in what is modern day Turkey – up to right now as you read this report. Even at that time, there were millions of people residing there. This was the heart of the Roman Empire. Even the culture of Greece had departed from Greece, and was now blended-in along the west coast of modern-day Turkey at Ephesus; and Ephesus was the leading city of religion and culture, by far. Ephesus set the standard. It has an awesome climate and spectacular scenery, too. This is also where Paul tarried until Pentecost.

Paul taught in the synagogue for three months where he met many adversaries and enemies on a daily basis. Luke tells us in Acts chapter nineteen verses eight through ten, “.... *and Paul went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God. But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the*



*school of one Tyrannus. And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.”*

So, a tremendous impact was made concerning the furtherance of the Gospel in this area at that time. We have extreme and hyper-separationists in contemporary Christianity; and they usually don't even know what they are. They may be lovely Christians, but they don't act lovely to me – not ever. They seem to criticize me every time I speak about the Word of God to them. They always start with how they don't need any man to teach them, and they digress into telling me my knowledge is all man-taught and prideful; then they proceed to advise me I should practice what I preach, and that degenerates into outright insults from there. The funny thing is: not a single one of them know how I live or what I do. Interestingly, there are only a small handful of people who could even begin to talk about how I live my life; and, frankly, even *they* don't know much about me.

Well, the synagogue Paul was teaching in at Ephesus was *VERY* far from God, friends – *V-E-R-Y* far away from Christ. I have to laugh at those who criticize me because, what they do not know is, I would go *ANYWHERE* I could teach the Spiritual Safari in sound doctrine from the entire Word of God to the entire world. That's what I do, my beloved – and that's *ALL* I do, by the way. That's what Paul did – and I want to do it the same way. The systems of so-called Christianity we have invented in this modern-age is absolutely wrong in every direction, every way, every shape and every form and facet imaginable. Oh, yes, write that down, too. Later, some of you are going to hear me say some things that are so strong you *WILL* stop reading this so-called safari – if you haven't already.

Perhaps *no one* is reading this stuff anyways; and I am just writing to myself? Either way – is fine by me; you can just write that down, too. No one can honestly say I do not teach the Bible entirely, properly, correctly and completely. Those who do say that — and there are many — are either envious or malicious — or they are just plain liars. So, let's actually get the Word of God out to the world now ~

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