

NUS: Does Paul mean "good works" in the future tense or those which we now perform? Taken either way they are good for us to walk in. They are witnesses to Christ's working in us. EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS 1.2.10.²⁷

THAT WE SHOULD WALK IN THEM. CHRYSOSTOM: He does not say "so that we might begin" but "so that we should walk"—all the way. For walking is a metaphor that suggests continuance, extending to the end of our lives. Suppose

we had to walk a road that leads to a royal city, but after having gone almost all the way we grow faint almost at the end and stop. We would then have no profit. Instead Paul says we are created "for good works."²⁸ HOMILY ON EPHESIANS 4.2.9.²⁹

²⁷BT 1972:153 [1256B-C]. ²⁸Hence we need grace not only sufficient now but also prepared beforehand as sufficient for all future occasions. This we already have. ²⁹IOEP 2:161; cf. NPNF 1 13:68.

2:11-16 THE SALVATION OF THE GENTILES

¹¹Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called the uncircumcision by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands—¹²remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near in the blood of Christ. ¹⁴For he is our peace, who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility, ¹⁵by abolishing in his flesh the law of commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, ¹⁶and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby bringing the hostility to an end.

OVERVIEW: Paul illustrates the extent of God's mercy to Gentiles (CHRYSOSTOM), whose former state was a preparation for their future spiritual state (EPIPHANIUS), which they now possess as the true circumcision (JEROME). They were strangers to truth and the covenants (TERTULLIAN, MARIUS VICTORINUS) and hence to God (JEROME). They are now called to accept their destiny as the true Israel (ORIGEN)

and give thanks for the love of Christ (AMBROSIASER). Only he, our Creator, can overcome the flesh (MARIUS VICTORINUS), uniting Jews and Gentiles in a new humanity (CHRYSOSTOM) by breaking down their mutual animosity (AMBROSIASER) and overcoming the barrier between sin and God. The law was good in its time, though now it has been transcended (CHRYSOSTOM). Though the law's ceremonial

rules are discarded (AMBROSIASER), the moral commandments must be kept in the spirit (THEODORET). A new creation is coming into being (CHRYSOSTOM) that embraces Jews and Gentiles (THEODORET). Christ is the true mediator because he alone is able to reconcile all things (CHRYSOSTOM). The new person in Christ (TERTULLIAN) is a unity of soul and spirit (MARIUS VICTORINUS). The resurrection brings that person peace with God (THEODORE OF MOPSUESTIA). The crucified one joins himself with us to join us to God (GREGORY OF NYSSA), vanquishing the old enmity by taking us into his body (CHRYSOSTOM).

2:11 Gentiles in the Flesh

REMEMBERING THE CIRCUITOUS PATH OF SALVATION. CHRYSOSTOM: Many are the evidences of God's love of humanity. God has saved us through himself, and through himself in such a special way, remembering what we were when he saved us and to what point he has now brought us. For each of these stages in itself is a great proof of his benevolence. Paul now reviews at each stage what he writes. He has already said that God has saved us when we were dead in sins and children of wrath. Now Paul shows to what extent God has raised us. HOMILY ON EPHESIANS 5.2.11-12.¹

ON THE FIGURE OF GENTILES IN THE FLESH. EPIPHANIUS: The phrase "Gentiles in the flesh" contrasts types of realities. The type in the flesh was awaiting the time of the spirit. The less perfect fulfillment of the circumcision is expressed in relation to its more perfect fulfillment. PANARION 42.12.3, THIRTY-SIXTH REFUTATION OF MARCION.²

DISTINGUISHING FOUR POSSIBLE GENTILES

AND JEWS REGARDING CIRCUMCISION.

JEROME: By calling the Ephesians "Gentiles in the flesh," he shows that in the spirit they are not Gentiles, just as conversely the Jews are Gentiles in spirit and Israelites in the flesh. Therefore the Jews and Gentiles are subject to a fourfold division: Some are circumcised in spirit and flesh, as were Moses and Aaron. . . . Some have been circumcised neither in spirit nor in flesh, as were Nebuchadnezzar and Pharaoh. . . . A third group are circumcised only in the flesh. . . . Lastly come those of whom he now speaks, . . . believers such as today we see in the whole host of believing Gentiles around the world. EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS 1.2.12.³

2:12a Separated from Christ

PREVIOUSLY DESTITUTE OF KNOWLEDGE OF GOD. THEODORET: He wants to show that Christ is the provider of all goods for them. "For previously," he says, "you were destitute of the knowledge of God and did not enjoy the goods promised beforehand to Israel." EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS 2.12.⁴

2:12b Alienated from Israel

TRUE ISRAEL. MARIUS VICTORINUS: The true way of Israel consists in living according to the Spirit, thinking according to the Spirit and being circumcised from unworthy desires. EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS 1.2.12.⁵

2:12c Without Hope and Without God in the World

HAVING MANY GODS BUT WITHOUT GOD.

¹IOEP 4:146. ²GCS 31:178-79. ³PL 26:471D-472A [579]. ⁴CPE 2:14. ⁵BT 1972:154 [1257B-C].

JEROME: When he says "having no hope, without God in the world," he does not deny that the Ephesians had many gods before they believed in Christ. His point is that one who is without the true God has no god worthy of the name. And the next phrase, "without God in the world," is significant: The Gentiles in a sense already had God indeed in the form of anticipation, because God knew beforehand that he would have them. In God's foreknowledge they were never without God. But enmeshed in the world they were without God.⁶ **EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS 1.2.12.⁷**

2:13 Once Far Off, Now Brought Near

FROM WHAT WERE THEY ONCE FAR OFF?

TERTULLIAN: They were once far off from the Christ of the Creator, from the way of the Israelites, from the covenants, from the hope of the promise, from God himself. Once far off, the Gentiles now come close in Christ to the things that were once far off. **AGAINST MARCION 5.17.12-13.**⁸

NOW BROUGHT NEAR TO THE COMMONWEALTH OF TRUE ISRAEL. **ORIGEN:** Paul is responding to those who think that believers in Christ may enter into the commonwealth of Israel but that it is some entirely different one that has nothing in common with the history of Israel. . . . It is those who know the spiritual law and live in accordance with it who are made dwellers in the commonwealth of Israel, more so than those who are Israelites in the body only. **EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS.**⁹

WHETHER ONE CAN BE FAR FROM GOD WHO IS EVERYWHERE. **JEROME:** God in his entirety is everywhere. Who can be separated from him

when all things are in him? . . . He is, however, said to be far away from the unrighteous, according to Proverbs [15:29]. . . . Just as far as the unrighteous are away from him, so close is he to the saints. Just when God seemed to be furthest from the Ephesians, he was coming close to them by the blood of Jesus. **EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS 1.2.13-14.**¹⁰

BROUGHT NEAR BY THE BLOOD OF CHRIST.

AMBROSIAS: He reminds us that we were brought close to God by the blood of Christ in order to show how great is God's affection toward us, since he allowed his own Son to die. We too, enduring in faith, should not yield to despair in any of the agonies inflicted on us for his sake, knowing that what he deserves from us exceeds all that our enemies can bring upon us. **EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS 2.13.**¹¹

2:14a Christ Is Our Peace

THE PEACEMAKER DESTROYS THE WALL OF PARTITION. **MARIUS VICTORINUS:** Christ, he says, "is our peace." Elsewhere Paul calls him mediator. He interposed himself of his own accord between divided realms. Souls born of God's fountain of goodness were being detained in the world. There was a wall in their midst, a sort of fence, a partition made by the deceits of the flesh and worldly lusts. Christ by his own mystery, his cross, his passion and his way of life destroyed this wall. He overcame sin and taught that it could be overcome. He destroyed the lusts of the world and taught that they ought to be destroyed. He took away the wall in the midst. It was in his own flesh that

⁶In their limited vision of the future salvation, which had not yet unfolded, they were without God. ⁷PL 26:472C-D [580]. ⁸CCL 1:715. ⁹JTS 3:405. ¹⁰PL 26:472D-473A [580]. ¹¹CSEL 81.3:83.

he overcame the enmity. The work is not ours. We are not called to set ourselves free. Faith in Christ is our only salvation. **EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS 1.2.14-15.**¹²

HOW HAVE BOTH BEEN MADE ONE? THEODORE OF MOPSUESTIA: Christ, conferring immortality on us through his resurrection, has put an end to this division [between Jew and Gentile], for there can be no circumcision of an immortal nature. **CATENA 2.13.**¹³

2:14b Breaking Down the Wall of Hostility

THE WALL BETWEEN JEW AND GENTILE BROKEN DOWN.

AMBROSIAS: The passion of the Savior made peace between the circumcision and the uncircumcision. For the enmity, which was between them like a wall and divided the circumcision from the uncircumcision and the uncircumcision from the circumcision, was abolished by the Savior. His command is that the Jew should not so presume on his circumcision as to reproach the Gentile, nor should the Gentile trust in his uncircumcision, that is, his paganism, so as to abhor the Jew. Both, made new, should maintain in Christ their faith in the one God. **EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS 2.14.1.**¹⁴

THE WALL BETWEEN GOD AND HUMANITY.

CHRYSOSTOM: Some say that the wall between them is that of the Jews against the Greeks, because it does not allow them to mix. I do not think so. Rather I think that the wall between them is common within both. It is the hostility proceeding within the flesh. This was the mid-wall cutting them off, as the prophet says, "Do not your sins stand in the midst between you and me?"¹⁵ The midwall was the enmity that God had both toward Jews and toward Greeks.

But when the law came this enmity was not dissolved; rather it increased. "For the law," he says, "works wrath."¹⁶ **HOMILY ON EPHESIANS 5.2.13-15.**¹⁷

2:15a Abolishing the Law of Commandments and Ordinances

LAW AS FENCE. **CHRYSOSTOM:** The law was a fence, but this was made for our security. This is why it was called a fence, so that it might fence us in. . . . Now he has "abolished the law of commandments" through his teaching. Oh, what love of humanity! He gave us a law that we might keep it, but when we failed to keep it and deserved punishment he dissolved the law. **HOMILY ON EPHESIANS 5.2.13-15.**¹⁸

CEREMONIAL LAW NO LONGER BINDING.

AMBROSIAS: The law that he abolished was that which had been given to the Jews concerning circumcision and new moons and food and sacrifices and the sabbath. He ordered it to cease because it was a burden. In this way he made peace. **EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS 2.15.**¹⁹

UNDER THE GOSPEL THE TEN COMMANDMENTS STILL REMAIN FREELY TO BE OBEYED.

THEODORET: Christ dispelled the enmity between us and God. He gave his own flesh as a ransom for us. Once this was done, he put an end to the things that separated you and them.²⁰ For this is what he means by "the law of ordinances." He has not annulled the Decalogue. . . . For Christ the Lord himself held these up to the one who wanted to know the

¹²BT 1972:155 [1258B-C]. ¹³CGPEP 6:145. ¹⁴CSEL 81.3:83. ¹⁵Is 59:2. ¹⁶Rom 4:15. ¹⁷IOEP 4:149. ¹⁸IOEP 4:150. ¹⁹CSEL 81.3:84. ²⁰Gentiles and Jews.

way to eternal life.²¹ But by doctrines he meant the gospel teaching, since the realizing of full maturity lies in the responsive choices²² of the will. . . . Yet these gospel teachings are not laid down as laws. They are a matter of free choice. What he does lay down as law is what he inscribed on nature when he created it in the beginning. EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS 2:14-15.²³

2:15b Creating One New Being

CHRIST UNIQUELY FITTED TO CREATE A NEW HUMANITY. TERTULLIAN: He was born in a singular way from a virgin by the Spirit of God. He was born to reconcile both Gentile and Jew to God, both of whom had offended God. He reconciled them into one body through the cross. The enmity was in this way slain. This reconciliation took place in his flesh through his body as he suffered on the cross. AGAINST MARCION 5:17:15.²⁴

THE NEW SPIRITUAL PERSON. MARIUS VIC-TORINUS: Their souls have thus been reconciled to the eternal and the spiritual, to all things above. The Savior, through the Spirit, indeed the Holy Spirit, descended into souls. He thereby joined what had been separated, spiritual things and souls, so as to make the souls themselves spiritual. He has established them in himself, as he says, "in a new person." What is this new person? The spiritual person, as distinguished from the old person, who was soul struggling against flesh. EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS 1:2.14-15.²⁵

CREATING ONE NEW PERSON IN PLACE OF GENTILE VERSUS JEW. CHRYSOSTOM: Don't you see? The Greek does not have to become a Jew. Rather both enter into a new condition.

His aim is not to bring Greek believers into being as different kinds of Jews but rather to create both anew. Rightly he uses the term *create* rather than *change* to point out the great effect of what God has done. Even though the creation is invisible, it is no less a creation of its Creator. HOMILY ON EPHESIANS 5:2.13-15.²⁶

A SINGLE PERSON WITH ONE HEAD. THEODORET: He has reconciled both, that is, those from Gentile and from Jewish backgrounds, in the one body that was offered on behalf of all, so that they may at last be made one body. And he has called all believers a single man because Christ our Lord is the one head, and those who have been favored with salvation fill the role of members. EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS 2:16.²⁷

IN HIMSELF. CHRYSOSTOM: He did not pass the task of reconciliation on to another. He made himself the means of combining one with the other. This produced one wonderful result. He himself was the first instance of this reconciliation, a result greater than all the previous creation. For that is what *in himself* means: Having assumed dominion over the Jew and then of the Greek, he himself became their mediator. He brought them together, doing away with all that estranged them. Now he has fashioned them anew through fire and water—no longer water and earth but water and fire.²⁸ He became a Jew when he was circumcised. Then, being cursed, he became a Greek outside the law and one more excellent than either Greek or Jew. HOMILY ON EPHESIANS 5:2.15.²⁹

²¹See the narrative of the encounter between Jesus and the rich young ruler (Lk 18:18-25). ²²Responsive to grace. ²³CPE 2:15A. ²⁴CCL 1:716. ²⁵BT 1972:156 [1258D-1259A]. ²⁶IOEP 4:151. ²⁷CPE 2:15. ²⁸Compounded no longer of the earthly but of the spiritual. ²⁹IOEP 4:151.

2:15c Making Peace

PEACE BETWEEN GOD AND SINNERS. CHRYSOSTOM: "Making peace" may mean their peace with God or with one another. . . . The focus is primarily on peace with God, as is made clear by what follows. What does he say? He has fully reconciled both to God in one body through the cross. He did not say "to some degree reconciled" but "fully reconciled." Even before this human nature was in principle reconcilable,³⁰ as we see in the righteous and before the law. HOMILY ON EPHESIANS 5:2.16.³¹

2:16a Reconciled to God Through the Cross

THE ENMITY IS SLAIN IN HIMSELF. GREGORY OF NYSSA: Taking up the enmity that had come between us and God on account of sins, "slaying it in himself," as the apostle says (and sin is enmity), and becoming what we are, he joined the human to God again through himself.

AGAINST EUNOMIUS 3.10.12.³²

2:16b Bringing Hostility to an End

HIS DEATH ENDED THE HOSTILITY. CHRYSOSTOM: No expression could be more authoritative or more emphatic. His death, he says, killed the enmity, wounded and destroyed it. He did not give the task to another. And he not only did the work but suffered for it. He did not say that he dissolved it; he did not say that he put an end to it, but he used the much more forceful expression: He killed! This shows that it need not ever rise again.³³ How then does it rise again? From our great wickedness. So long as we remain in the body of Christ, so long as we are one with him it does not rise again but lies dead. HOMILY ON EPHESIANS 5:2.16.³⁴

³⁰By faith anticipating grace even prior to its fulfillment. ³¹IOEP 4:152. ³²GNO 2:294. ³³So long as we remain in him. ³⁴IOEP 4:152.

2:17-22 THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

¹⁷And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; ¹⁸for through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, ²¹in whom the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; ²²in whom you also are built into it for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

OVERVIEW: Jews were near, Gentiles far off, but neither had any access to God except through Christ's Spirit (MARIUS VICTORINUS). The one Spirit guarantees unity (CHRYSOSTOM), viewed eschatologically (JEROME). We receive an honor analogous to that of Roman citizens (AMBROSIAS). The church is built on the concordant witnesses of both covenants (ORIGEN, MARIUS VICTORINUS, AMBROSIAS). Christ is the foundation for both prophets and apostles (MARIUS VICTORINUS). Among the many images used of Christ (CHRYSOSTOM), that of the cornerstone expresses his foundational and unitive function. The resultant temple is the community in which God dwells (MARIUS VICTORINUS). It includes not only angels (JEROME) but also the Ephesians themselves (MARIUS VICTORINUS).

2:17 *Preaching Peace to Those Near and Far Off*

Jews Were Near, Gentiles Far Off. MARIUS VICTORINUS: He distinguishes "those who are far off" from "those who are near." This refers to the Gentiles and Jews. For the Jews are obviously close and the Gentiles far off. Yet the Savior himself has brought the gospel to the Gentiles. Paul here mentions first that Christ by his advent has truly preached peace also to those who are far off, that is, the Gentiles, as is shown by many evidences. For those who come to belief from Gentile backgrounds ironically have a greater claim to be called sons than those from Jewish backgrounds. And yet, so that it may not be denied to the latter, he adds "and those who are near." EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS 1.2.17.¹

2:18 *Access in One Spirit to the Father*

ACCESS TO THE FATHER. MARIUS VICTORINUS: Both Jews and Gentiles "have access to the Father" through Christ himself. But how? "In one Spirit." For the Spirit, who is one with Christ, enters into us when we believe in Christ. We then feel God's presence, know God and worship God. Thus we come to the Father in that same Spirit through Christ. No one, whether Jew or Gentile, comes to the Father except through Christ. EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS 1.2.18.²

IN ONE SPIRIT. CHRYSOSTOM: "We both" means not less to one and more to another but having access by a single grace. For he has dispelled the wrath through death³ and made us all beloved to the Father through one Spirit. Note that *in* here means "through." HOMILY ON EPHESIANS 6.2.17-22.⁴

FULL CONSUMMATION YET AWAITING. JEROME: However, it should not be thought possible to achieve perfect and complete reconciliation in this world. . . . The making of the new person in Christ will be fully consummated when earthly and heavenly things have been reconciled, when we come to the Father in one Spirit and with one affection and understanding. EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS 1.2.15 SEQ.⁵

2:19 *Fellow Citizens, Members of the Household of God*

FELLOW CITIZENS ARE ONE WITH THE SAINTS. MARIUS VICTORINUS: What are we to understand by "fellow citizens with the saints?" It implies a distinction between citizens and saints.

¹BT 1972:157-58 [1260A]. ²BT 1972:158 [1260A-B]. ³Having dispelled the wrath of God through the death of the Son. ⁴IOEP 4:156. ⁵PL 26:475A [583].

But if this is so, who are the saints and who are the citizens? *Saints* refers to the apostles, prophets and all who formerly experienced God or spoke divinely through the Spirit dwelling within them. They in some way beheld God's presence, as did Abraham, either through the flesh, through the Spirit or through both flesh and Spirit, as with all the apostles. Those who have later believed in Christ without any such special means are "fellow citizens with the saints and members of God's household." EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS 1.2.19.⁶

THE ANALOGY OF CITIZENSHIP. AMBROSIAS: Believers become "fellow citizens" in a way analogous to all those who desired the peace of Rome. They brought gifts and were accepted as Roman citizens, as were the people of Cilician Tarsus. Paul was a Roman citizen of that city. So too anyone who has joined himself to the Christian faith becomes a fellow citizen of the saints and a member of God's household. EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS 2.19.⁷

2:20 *The Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets*

PROPHETS AND APOSTLES SHARE IN ONE DIVINE PLAN. ORIGEN: These are fitting words to cite against those who would divide the Godhead⁸ and think that the prophets belong to one God and the apostles to another. EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS.⁹

THE FOUNDATION FOR THE EDIFICE. MARIUS VICTORINUS: Jesus Christ and his teachings are the foundation for the apostles. The edifice built on this foundation consists in life and character and one's conduct and discipline. The primary foundation is for life; the rest of the edifice is for its adornment and edification. The primary foundation, I say, is to believe in

Christ, hope in him and trust in God. This foundation is the teaching of the apostles, which is also heard in the word of the prophets. Note the order of this distinction, first apostles and then prophets. The apostles beheld [God incarnate]; the prophets received the Spirit. These are the saints mentioned above: those who saw and those who were inhabited by the Spirit. Hence the teachings of the apostles and prophets are indeed the teachings of Christ, which proclaim the foundation of all eternal hope. EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS 1.2.20.¹⁰

THE HOUSEHOLD OF GOD IS BUILT ON BOTH COVENANTS. AMBROSIAS: This means that the household of God is built upon both the old and the new covenants. For what the apostles preached had been foretold by the prophets. In his words to the Corinthians, that "God placed in the church first apostles then prophets,"¹¹ he is concerned with the order of the church. But in this case he is speaking of the foundation in the prophets of old. EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS 2.20.¹²

2:21a *The Whole Structure Joined Together*

JOINED TOGETHER FROM ABOVE AND FROM BELOW. CHRYSOSTOM: See how he joins himself to us. Sometimes it is as if holding together and unifying the whole body from above. Sometimes it is as if joining the edifice from below, as if supporting the building with underpinnings and being its root. HOMILY ON EPHESIANS 6.2.17-22.¹³

⁶BT 1972:158-59 [1260C-D]. ⁷CSEL 81.3:85. ⁸As in Marcion's resistance to the Old Testament. ⁹JTS 3:407. ¹⁰BT 1972:159 [1261A-B]. ¹¹1 Cor 12:28. ¹²CSEL 81.3:85-86; cf. Theodoret, CPE 2:16. ¹³IOEP 4:157.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CORNERSTONE TO THE BUILDING. MARIUS VICTORINUS: He called this stone a cornerstone not merely because it is at the corner but because it is the first and most important stone. From it begins the foundation of the corner which joins and couples two things to make them one. Souls above already with Christ are united together with those that live in holiness and receive Christ in a mystery that is present. Souls below that are Christ's, including those of the Gentiles, are also joined by that cornerstone, Jesus Christ. EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS 1.2.20.¹⁴

2:21b A Holy Temple in the Lord

GROWING INTO A HOLY TEMPLE. MARIUS VICTORINUS: All souls made spiritual through Christ are joined and built up into a holy temple, where God dwells. As Christ is in all and God in Christ, all are a temple of God through Christ. EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS 1.2.21-22.¹⁵

WHETHER THE ANGELS ARE WITHIN THIS EDIFICE. JEROME: It is maintained by some that the whole edifice built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets comprises not only human souls but also angelic powers, so that all

equally will become the abode of God. They argue that it would be absurd if angels and all the blessed forces who serve God in heaven would have no part in this blessedness. For in this is a building, put together harmoniously, that is growing into a holy temple of God to be an abode of God in the Spirit. EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS 1.2.19 SEQ.¹⁶

2:22 The Ephesians Also Built into the Edifice

THE EPHESIANS ARE STILL IN THE PROCESS OF BEING BUILT INTO THE EDIFICE. MARIUS VICTORINUS: As he does so often, he brings the argument back to individuals, that is, to the Ephesians. They themselves have been built into that same temple cornerstone. Here he cleverly adjusts his language to form an exhortation. They have not yet fully entered into this unity but are still being built up. There is a deficiency, and therefore he warns and exhorts them. EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS 1.2.21-22.¹⁷

¹⁴BT 1972:159-60 [1261B-C]. ¹⁵BT 1972:160 [1261C]. ¹⁶PL 26:476B-C [584-85], probably quoting Origen. ¹⁷BT 1972:160 [1261D].

3:1-6 THE PRISONER OF CHRIST JESUS

¹For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner for Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles—²assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace that was given to me for you, ³how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly. ⁴When you read this

you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, ⁵which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; ⁶that is, how the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

OVERVIEW: Paul is now a prisoner, which has become his permanent condition. We must look for order in Paul's meaning rather than in his words, which skip around and leave the reader in suspense (JEROME). He alludes to the charge that he received at Damascus (AMBROSI-ASTER) and notes that he has expounded the mystery of the gospel discreetly (THEODORET, AMBROSI-ASTER). We, however, cannot expect to receive it by a similar revelation (MARIUS VICTORINUS). The old prophets had partial revelation (CHRYSOSTOM). Paul and the apostles share an identical revelation (MARIUS VICTORINUS) and pass it on to new proclaimers (THEODORET). The Gentiles are fellow heirs of Israel and Christ, cemented in one body by mutual love (JEROME).

3:1a I, Paul

HE ESTABLISHES HIS OWN AUTHORITY TO SPEAK. MARIUS VICTORINUS: It remains, after he has stated the truth that all their hope is in Christ and thus they are all being built up together in the Spirit to be the dwelling place of God—it remains, I say, that he should teach them who he himself is and whether he himself is contributing to building them up together through the gospel and can give a reason for his own authority so that they may believe him. EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS 1.3.1-2.¹

THE DISJOINTED SENTENCE HAS A SIMPLE MEANING. JEROME: After a diligent search I have found nothing that answers to his prior

clause. . . . For he does not say, "For this reason I, Paul, have done this or that or have taught this or that." Instead, leaving the thought in suspense, he goes on to other matters. Perhaps we ought to pardon him for what he himself has admitted when he said, "if unschooled in speech, at least not in knowledge,"² and look for order in his meaning rather than in his words. This can be rendered as follows: "I, Paul, in the chains of Jesus Christ and in chains for you Gentiles, have learned the mystery so that I may hand it on to you." EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS 2.3.1.³

3:1b A Prisoner for Christ Jesus

THE SOUL CONFINED IN THE BODY AS A PRISON: TWO POSSIBLE READINGS. JEROME: We often read that the body is called the prison of the soul. The soul is confined as if in a cage. Paul, for example, was constrained by the ties of the body and did not return to be with Christ so that the preaching to the Gentiles might be perfectly accomplished through him. But I grant that there are some who introduce another meaning here: Paul before his birth was predestined and sanctified from his mother's womb for the purpose of preaching to the Gentiles. For this vocation he took on the bonds of flesh. EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS 2.3.1.⁴

¹BT 1972:160 [1262A]. ²2 Cor 11:6. ³PL 26:477B-C [586]. ⁴PL 26:477D-478A [587].