

**EPHESIANS – THE MYSTERY OF GOD’S CHURCH –
OUR IDENTITY, OUR WALK, OUR WARFARE
PROGRAM 2 (#912182)
WEEK 1 (912341)
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**SERIES: Ephesians – The Mystery Of God’s Church –
Our Identity, Our Walk, Our Warfare**

TITLE: Program 2 – His Word Is Your Only Hope

TUESDAY

OPEN

When you sit down my friend and think about your life. Is there a time when you went through absolutely unbelievable incredible darkness? And you think, but I didn’t even know how dark things were, and what I did in that darkness absolutely plagues me. Listen, listen carefully my friend: the Word of God can heal what was done in the darkness. We’ll talk about it today.

PART ONE

You know some days can be so gloomy. The sun is there, but it’s just not shining. It’s not getting through the darkness of the clouds, and there’s kind of a settled gloominess that comes over your soul. And sometimes on those dark days what you want to do is you want to just go and just want to cuddle and huddle and have something warm to drink. But sometimes, because of

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the darkness, because of the gloom, because the sun doesn't seem to be shining, your thoughts go back to times in the past to times when you did things that you never should have done, times when you said things that impacted relationships, times when you made decisions that really actually changed lives, and you wonder, "Why did I do it?" And "God, where were You when that happened? Why? Why?" Listen, we're studying the book of Ephesians, and today what we're going to do is we're going to look at a little bit of the life of the author of Ephesians. And as we look at Paul I want you to see that there were times of darkness in his life, there were times of gloominess in his life, and yet, even though he went through those periods he was able to write under the inspiration of God, this awesome epistle. An epistle is a letter, an awesome epistle to those that were living in Ephesus, to those who were around Ephesus who were the faithful in Christ Jesus. And what he wrote was enough to lift the gloom and keep the gloomy days away even when you can't see the sun, to know and to rest assured that there is brightness, that there is day and that you and I are children of the light because of what God has done in Christ Jesus. This is what we want to look at today, Beloved. I want to take you to the historical background of the book of Ephesians. Now what you and I are doing as you sit down with me day by day, as you sit here and one on one we study the Word of God together, chapter-by-chapter and verse-by-verse, as we go through this I want you to learn how to study God's Word for yourself. I want you to learn how to study it, what we call inductively. Precept Ministries International is known as the Inductive Bible study people. Now what do we mean by that? Well inductive simply means that you are discovering truth for yourself. And you're discovering truth for yourself so that you know that you know that this is truth and that this is what God says, and so [you're not tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine and cunning craftiness of men, in which they lie in wait in order to deceive you.] (Paraphrased, Ephesians 4:14) Do you know that that that I just quoted is from the book of Ephesians? And

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Paul was concerned that those in Ephesus would understand who they are and whose they are. Because whose you are makes you who you are, especially if you know the truth and you live in the light of that. Well as you study the Bible inductively, as you discover truth for yourself it begins with careful observation. Observation is simply seeing what the text says. I mean it takes your eyeballs and you just glue them on the page and you see what it says. Well one of the ways that you begin a study of an epistle, a letter, is you want to discover everything that you can about the author and everything that you can about the people to whom it was written. We call those the recipients. And so what I do is every time I study an epistle I always color in my Bible the reference to the author in blue. I color the reference to the recipients in orange. So any epistle, it doesn't matter who the recipients are, whether they're the people in Galatia in that region of Galatia, or the people in Ephesus, I always color them orange so I know immediately, whenever I look at an epistle, if I see a blue that this is a reference to the author. If I see an orange it's a reference to the recipients. You say, you know, I'm just not into coloring. Well I can understand that, but I'll tell you one thing, if you will get into coloring, male or female, if you will get into coloring it is going to make all the difference in the world. We have many many macho men on our staff. As a matter of fact, we have great male teachers here at Precept Ministries International, and they travel all across the United States and all across the world, and they're men's men and they color their Bibles. And men have told me over and over again, Kay, I had a hard time with it. But once you do it you find out, hey, other people color code. I mean if you're into electronics color coding is the big thing that you do to help you remember where this goes and where that goes. So we're into color coding. All right, now, what you would do is you would go through and you would read the book of Ephesians, all the way through. It's only six chapters long, okay. So as you go through those six chapters you're going to color every reference to Paul. You're not going to color plural

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pronouns. You’re not going to color, “we” or “us”. You’re only going to color singular pronouns. All right, and then you’re going to color every reference to the Ephesians in orange. What is the purpose? Well immediately you can look down and see where the author is mentioned. Immediately you can look down and see where the recipients are mentioned. But then there’s another process to this, and that process is looking at every place where they’re mentioned and then listing, making a list of what you learn about that person. For instance, **“Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God....” (Ephesians 1:1a)** So you would simply write down, okay, Paul’s an apostle. All right, ah, you would write, or if you want to be extensive you could say he’s **“...an apostle...by the will of God....” (1:1b)** Then you would put down, as you go through what you’re going to find out is you’re going to find out where Paul was. And I’m going to tell you. Paul was in prison. And so you’d find out okay this is where Paul is. You talk about a dark day, you talk about a gloomy day, you talk about wondering where the sun is and here you are a prisoner. But you see Paul understands. Paul knows that he is a prisoner of Christ Jesus. I mean he’s in jail. He’s in prison by the will of God. He knows that he is not just the pawn of men, but that God is sovereign. So as you go through and make those lists, now you don’t put down a whole lot of things. You just put down what is obvious, I mean just what pops up, what do you observe, what do you learn. Does it tell you who he is? Does it tell you what he is? Does he tell you where he is? Does he tell you when it is happening? So you look for the five W’s and an H when you make a list. Does it tell you who? Does it tell you what? Does it tell you when? Does it tell you where? Does it tell you why? Does it tell you how? For instance, how was Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ? The how was by the will of God. So this is what you’re going to do. Now listen, when you get the study it’s going to explain it to you in greater depth. But I’ve also written a book called “How to Study Your Bible” and it sounds technical, but it is a good book. It’s used in a lot of Bible schools and other places to

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help people learn how to study the Word of God. We want you, Beloved, to know the Word of God, because when you know the Word of God it is the light of life and the light of life illuminates the darkness. Okay, so now let’s get into Paul. All right, and what we see in Ephesians, chapter 1 is that Paul was an apostle of Christ Jesus according to the will of God and of Christ Jesus. All right now, what I want you to do is I want you to go back with me to the book of Acts. And Acts is going to tell us how Paul came to know Jesus Christ and this is what we saw in our last lesson. We saw that Paul begins this epistle with a eulogy of praise. He says, **“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in...heavenly places...just as He...,”** God, **“...chose us in Him...,”** in Christ **“...before the foundation of the world....”**

(Ephesians 1:3-4a) So Paul is so thrilled because what he knows is that even though there was darkness in his life he was chosen by God in Christ, when? **“...Before the foundation of the world....” (1:4b)** Now we’re going to get into the depth of that in later programs. But right now what I want you to see is who Paul is, who Paul was. Well Paul is mentioned for the first time in Acts chapter 7, and this is where I want us to go. In Acts chapter 7 this young man Stephen, with the face of angel, has stood before the council, the Sanhedrin, of the Jewish rulers and he has just explained the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ and the darkness that those people remained in because they did not believe the gospel. Well we’re going to leave you with that for just a minute and give you this important announcement, and then we’ll come back to Saul and the darkness that was over those Jewish men at that time.

PART TWO

Welcome back my friend. Let’s sit down one on one and let’s look at the Word of God. Do you know that Paul writes about himself in his epistle to

Timothy, his son? And he says that he was the chief of sinners. He looks back at that time in his life when he was in great darkness and he didn't know it. He thought he was an enlightened man, and yet he wasn't. Well let's go back to that time. Remember I told you before the break that Stephen was speaking to all of these Jews, to the council. The council was the Sanhedrin. And as he spoke to them and as he laid out for them the history of Israel, their history, showing about the coming of the Christ and the Messiah, he says in verse 51, he says, **“You men who are stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did. Which one of the prophets did you fathers not persecute? [And] they killed those who had previously announced the coming of the Righteous One....” (Acts 7:51-52a)** “The coming of the Righteous One” is the coming of the Christ. And all the way through Ephesians you see it's Christ Jesus, Christ Jesus, in Him, in the Messiah. And so the Messiah is the Promised One. Messiah and Christ are the same. Messiah's the Hebrew word and Christ is the Greek word. And it says, and they **“...previously announced the coming of the Righteous One, whose betrayers and murderers you have now become.” (Acts 7:52b)** You have become the betrayer. You have become a murderer. You're in a dark period of your life. **“You who received the law as ordained by angels, and yet did not keep it.” (Acts 7:53)** You said, “[This is God's law. It came by God. It was ordained by angels, and yet you broke it].” (Paraphrase, Acts 7:53) And he says, **“Now when they [had] heard this, they were cut to the quick, and they began gnashing their teeth at him.” (7:54)** And it says that [he was filled with the Holy Spirit, and he looked up and as these men took up these stones and began to stone him to death, stone him to death, because they did not want to come to the Light so that their deeds might be seen as what they really were.] (Paraphrased, Acts 7:55-58) Do you know the way that you get out of darkness, Beloved? It's admitting that it's darkness. It's confronting the darkness. It's saying, “Hey this is not

of the day, this is of the night. This is darkness, this is not Light.” And the Bible talks about those that don’t know Jesus Christ being in a state of darkness, the darkness of sin, the darkness of thinking that everything is under your control when it’s not, because you’re not acknowledging God. And so these men, in their darkness, put Stephen to death. They stoned him to death. You say, “But what does that have to do with Saul?” Well, I’m so glad you asked. And this is what it says. **“When they had driven him...,”** verse 58, **“...out of the city, they began stoning him; and the witnesses laid aside their robes at the feet of a young man named Saul.” (7:58)** Now Saul is the Hebrew; Paul is the Greek translation of Saul. And so this is the apostle Paul. He’s not the apostle yet. He’s a man that is living in darkness, but thinks that he’s walking in the Light. And so he’s standing there. He’s hearing this whole thing. He’s watching them stone Stephen to death and he does not stop them. And it says, and when **“They went on stoning Stephen as he called [upon] the Lord and said, ‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!’ [And] falling on his knees, he cried ...[in] a loud voice, ‘Lord, do not hold this sin against them!’ [And] having said this...,”** it says **“...he fell asleep.” (Acts 7:59-60)** He didn’t die. He moved from death to life. He awakened in the very presence, the very presence of God. Because once you’re a believer in Jesus Christ death has no power over you. The darkness of death, the darkness of the kingdom of Satan has no power. You are no longer a child of darkness, but you step into the eternal light. And then chapter 8 says this, and **“Saul was in hearty agreement with putting him to death. And on that day a great persecution began against the church in Jerusalem....” (Acts 8:1a)** And so he is part of that persecution. So now we come back to Acts chapter 9, or we move forward to Acts chapter 9, because there’s an interlude. But the, but the author of Acts, which is Luke, so that you and I might understand the things that happened after Jesus Christ was buried and crucified and raised from the dead and ascended into heaven. Then the book of Acts was written so that you might

know those things that happened afterwards. He comes back to Saul because Saul is so key. It says, **“Now Saul, still breathing threats and murder[s] against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest, and asked for letters from him...,”** from the high priest, **“...to the synagogues at Damascus...,”** and that’s clear up where Assyria is today, **“...so that if he found any belonging to the Way....”** (Acts 9:1-2a) Now “belonging to the Way” remember Jesus said [He was the way, He was the truth and He was the life, and no one could come to the Father except by Him.] (Paraphrased, John 14:6) And so those that were following Jesus, they called them “those of the Way”. And it says, **“...both men and women, [that] he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.”**(Acts 9:2b) It did not matter if it was a woman. He was going to get every single person that was a Jew, that was claiming to believe in this Jesus Christ, this One that claimed to be born of a virgin, who died, and justly so. He was going to get those that were the followers of Him, the followers of the Way and he was going to bind them and he was going to bring them to Jerusalem. Do you know what? He thought he was absolutely right and he was in total darkness. Do you remember the time Beloved, when you thought you were absolutely right, and you look back and you were in total darkness? Maybe it was rebellion, maybe it was you were going to do you thing, maybe it was you were going to disobey these commandments of God, you were going to walk away from your parents religion, or you didn’t even care, you didn’t even know; you just went with the flow and you went with the crowd and you did what the culture said was all right. And now you look back at it and you think O, what horrible horrible darkness. Well when you look back at it the way that you get rid of the darkness is you meet light. And it says, **“[And it came about as he journeyed] he was approaching Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him; and he fell to the ground and [he] heard a voice saying... ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?’ And he said, ‘Who [art Thou] Lord’”** And He said, **‘I am Jesus whom you are**

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persecuting.” (Acts 9:3-5, *some KJV used in brackets*) He was persecuting Christians, not Jesus. Oh but what you’re going to see as you study through Ephesians, that what you do to Jesus you’re doing to a believer. What you do to a believer you’re doing to Jesus, because a believer and Jesus are one. And you’re going to see that awesome oneness and you’re going to see the light that comes. **“And he [says], ‘Who are you, Lord?’ And He [says], ‘I am Jesus whom you are persecuting.’”** (Acts 9:5) Well Saul was going to go into darkness. He was going to go into darkness. He was going to lose his sight until Ananias came and laid his hands on him and told him about a wonderful calling from God, the God who had chosen Paul, Saul in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world. O Beloved, when you learn the truth of that then all the darkness will disappear.