An Overview Of The Book Of Ephesians

The City Of Ephesus:

Ephesus was located at the mouth of the Cayster River on the west coast of the Roman province of Asia in what is now Turkey. Being on the Aegean Sea, Ephesus was an important commercial port city. It was also situated at the junction of natural trade routes. The city lay about midway between Miletus to the south and Smyrna to the north.

Ephesus was a major population center and the capital of the Roman province of Asia. It contained a theater that was one of the largest known of all that have remained to modern times. The auditorium was a semicircle that measured 495 feet in diameter, with 63 rows of seats that provided seating for an audience of 24,500 spectators. It was in this theater that the silversmiths led by Demetrius rioted against the Christian mission work of Paul and his companions.

Adding to the attraction of Ephesus was the temple of the Greek goddess Artemis, who in the Latin language was called Diana. This temple was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. The temple was a magnificent work of Ionic architecture, which was four times the size of the Greek Parthenon in Athens. The temple stood on a platform about 418 feet long and 239 feet wide. The platform had ten steps that led up to its pavement. The temple itself was 342 and 1/2 feet long and 164 feet wide. The temple consisted of two rows of eight columns each in the front and rear and two rows of twenty columns each on both sides of its sanctuary. In all the temple contained one hundred columns. Each column was a monolith of marble 56 feet high. The eighteen columns at each end were sculptured. The temple roof was covered with large white marble tiles. The inner sanctuary of the temple was 105 feet long and 70 feet wide. The Goths destroyed this temple in 260 A.D.

Ephesus was home to a large number of Jews. They had a synagogue in the city, where Paul began his mission work (see Acts 19:8). When some of the Jews who had hardened their hearts against the gospel of Jesus began persecuting those who believed in Jesus, Paul turned to the Gentiles. From Ephesus the gospel spread throughout the whole province of Asia (see Acts 19:10).

Writer:

"Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God," Ephesians 1:1. See Ephesians 3:1 also.

Date Of Writing:

LThe latter part of A.D. 60 to 61

Recipients:

"To the saints who are in Ephesus and faithful in Christ Jesus," Ephesians 1:1.

It has been asserted that this letter was not originally written to the church in Ephesus. This assertion had been made because a few ancient Greek manuscripts did not contain in the first verse the words "in Ephesus" In the past the two most notable of these manuscripts was given undue superiority in evaluating what should or should not be considered part of the original Greek text. The undue superiority given to these manuscripts has since diminished. In more recent times a shift has occurred to considering the value of all ancient manuscripts. The evidence of all the manuscripts indicates the words "in Ephesus" should be retained as part of the original text written by Paul.

An additional argument made against the letter having been written to the church of Ephesus was Paul's failure to include any personal greetings to individuals in the church of Ephesus. It is asserted that since Paul had worked among the Ephesians for such a long period of time, it would only be natural for him to have included his personal greeting to those whom he knew in the church. This is an argument from silence, which in itself proves nothing. It loses validity in the light of other letters Paul wrote to other churches. Neither of Paul's letters to the Thessalonians contains any personal greetings either, even though Paul had ministered in that church and revisited it. On the other hand, Paul's letter to the Romans contains numerous greetings to individuals in the church of Rome, a church and a city he had never visited prior to his writing of that letter. The lack of greetings, therefore, does not substantiate that the letter we know as the letter to the Ephesians could not have been written to the church of Ephesus.

Purpose:

To strengthen the Christians in the church of Ephesus.

Being a prisoner in Rome who was awaiting trial, Paul could not revisit the church in Ephesus, as he had revisited other churches he had established during his first and second missionary journeys. Paul had established the church in Ephesus on his third missionary journey about seven to eight years earlier. He wrote his letter to the Ephesians to do what he could not do personally. He wrote to strengthen and confirm the believers there in the grace of God and the gospel of Christ, as well as to encourage them in performing their works of service and holiness in response to God's saving grace.

Content:

While Paul's companion letter to the Colossians emphasized the greatness of Christ, who is the head of the church, Paul's letter to the Ephesians emphasized the church itself, of which Christ is its head.

The first three chapters concentrate on the church being God's workmanship, which he made to be what it is according to his eternal plan of salvation. It was a plan that began in eternity, was implemented in time, and will be completed on the day of judgment when God receives his church of believers into heavenly glory. This plan of salvation is all by God's grace See Ephesians 2:8, 9.

The last three chapters concentrate on the response of the believers to God's plan of salvation as the recipients of his grace. The believers are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus, to do good works. Their good works will be holy lives of loving service to God and their neighbor. See Ephesians 2:10.

Theme:

"For we are God's[1] workmanship, having been created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared in advance that we should walk in them." Ephesians 2:10

Ephesians

Part 1: The Greeting Ephesians 1:1, 2

1 ¶ 1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by 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.

Part 2: The Church Is God's Workmanship, Created in Christ Jesus Ephesians 1:3-3:21

A. A Song of Praise to the Triune God: Ephesians 1:3-14

1. To God the Father for His Plan of Saving His Church, Which Began with Electing His Believers in Eternity Ephesians 1:3-6

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms in Christ,
4 since he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before him. In love
5 he predestined us for adoption as sons to himself through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will,
6 to the praise of his glorious grace, which he graciously granted to us in the Beloved One.

[1] Lit. his

2. **To the Son of God, Christ Jesus, Who Saved the Church by His Redeeming Work Ephesians 1:7-12**

7 In him[2] we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace,
8 which he richly bestowed to us in all wisdom and understanding
9 by having made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, which he planned in him
10 for administration during the fullness of the times, to bring all things together again for himself in Christ, the things in[3] the heavens and the things on the earth, in him,
11 in whom we also were assigned an inheritance[4] that had been predestined[5] according to the purpose of him who keeps working all things according to the counsel of his will,
12 in order that we who have been the first to hope in Christ may be for the praise of his glory.

3. To God the Holy Spirit, Who Guarantees the Believers' Eternal Inheritance Ephesians 1:13, 14

13 In him also you, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, in whom you also believed, were sealed with the Holy Spirit of the promise,
14 who is the down payment of our inheritance, until the redemption of those who are God's possession,[6] to the praise of his glory.

B. Thanksgiving and Prayer Ephesians 1:15-23

¶ 15 For this reason I also, since I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your[7] love for all the saints,[8]
16 do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention *of you* during[9] my prayers,
17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in a thorough knowledge of himself,
18 *that* the eyes of your hearts having been enlightened, you get to know what is the hope of his calling, what is the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,[10]
19 and what is the surpassing greatness of his power in us who believe according to the working of the strength of his might,
20 which he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated *him* at his right hand in the heavenly realms
21 high above all rule and authority and power and dominion and every name that is named not only in this age but also in the age to come.
22 And *God* put all things under his feet, and gave him as head over all things for the church,
23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

C. God's Plan of Salvation for His Church Ephesians 2:1-3:21

1. God Saved Jew and Gentile by His Grace through Faith Ephesians 2:1-10

2 ¶ And while you were dead in your transgressions and sins,
2 in which you formerly walked according to the evil ways of this world,[11] according to the ruler of the powers[12] of the air, the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience;

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[2] Meaning the Beloved One who was mentioned in v.6, referring to Jesus Christ

[3] Lit. on, upon

[4] Lit. assigned a lot

[5] Lit. having been predestinated

[6] Lit. until the redemption of the possession

[7] Lit. the

[8] Lit. holy ones

[9] Or, in the time of

[10] Lit. holy ones

[11] Lit. "according to the age of this world"; the Ephesian Gentiles formerly conformed to the evil age in which they lived

[12] Lit. "of the power"; the singular word "power" is used collectively of the demons whom the devil rules over

3 among whom we ourselves also all lived at one time in the lusts of our flesh, carrying out the will of the flesh and of the mind, and we were by nature children of wrath just like the rest;[13]
4 but God, who is rich in mercy, because of his great love with which he loved us,
5 and while we were dead in transgressions made us alive together with Christ – by grace you have been saved –
6 and he raised *us* up with *him* and seated *us* with *him* in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus,
7 in order that he may show in the coming ages the surpassing riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.
8 For by this grace[14] you have been saved through faith; and this not from yourselves, *it is* the gift of God,
9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.
10 For we are God's[15] workmanship, having been created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared in advance that we should walk in them.

2. God United His Church of Jew and Gentile through Christ's Atoning Sacrifice and the Apostles' and Prophets' Teachings Ephesians 2:11-22

¶ 11 Therefore continue to keep in mind that at one time you *who are* Gentiles in the flesh, who are called "Uncircumcision" by the so-called "Circumcision" made in the flesh by human hands,
12 that you were at that time apart from Christ, shut out from the state of Israel and strangers from the covenant of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.
13 But now in Christ Jesus you, who were at one time far away,[16] have been brought near by the blood of Christ.
¶ 14 For he himself is our peace, the one who made the two one and who tore down the dividing wall of the barrier,
15 by having abolished with his flesh the hostility, *namely* the law of the commandments in decrees, in order that he might in himself form the two into one new man, making peace,
16 and he might reconcile the two to God in one body by means of the cross, having in himself put an end to[17] the hostility.
17 And he came and brought the good news of peace to you *who were* far way and peace to those *who were* near;
18 for through him we both in one spirit have access to the Father.
19 Consequently you are no longer strangers and aliens; on the contrary, you are fellow citizens of the saints and members of the household of God,
20 having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the corner *stone*,
21 in whom the whole building being fitted together grows into a holy temple in the Lord,
22 in whom you are also being built up into a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

3. God Had His Eternal Plan of Salvation Preached to the Gentiles Ephesians 3:1-21

3 ¶ For this reason, I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles –
2 If, indeed, you have heard of the office of administrator of the grace of God that was entrusted to me for you,
3 that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I have briefly written before,
4 by which[18] you are able when you read it to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ,
5 which *mystery* was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to his holy apostles and prophets,
6 *that* the Gentiles are fellow heirs *with the Israelites* and fellow members and fellow sharers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel,

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[13] Lit. even as the rest
[14] Lit. "the grace"; the grace previously mentioned in v. 5 & 7
[15] Lit. his
[16] Lit. those at one time being far away
[17] Lit. having killed or slain
[18] Lit. in regard, or reference, to which

7 of which I was made a minister by virtue of the gift of the grace of God that was given to me according to the working of his power.
8 This grace was given to me, the very least of all the saints,[19] to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, the inexhaustible riches of Christ,
9 and to bring to light to everyone what *is* the administration of the mystery that has been hidden from the earliest times in God who created all things,
10 so that the manifold wisdom of God might be made known now to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms through the church,
11 according to the purpose of the ages, which he made in Christ Jesus our Lord,
12 in whom we have the courage and confident access through our[20] faith in him.
13 Therefore, I ask *you* not to be losing heart in my tribulations in your behalf, which is your glory.
¶ 14 For this reason I bow my knees to the Father,[21]
15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name,
16 in order that he may grant you according to the riches of his glory to be strengthened with power by means of his Spirit in the inner man,
17 so that Christ dwells in your hearts through faith, in order that, having been firmly rooted and established in love,
18 you may be able to grasp with all the saints what *is* the breadth and length and height and depth,
19 and to know from experience[22] the love of Christ that surpasses this[23] knowledge,[24] in order that you may be filled to all the fullness of God.
20 Now to him who is able to do infinitely more than all we ask or think according to the power that is working in us,
21 to him *be* the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.

Part 3: The Church Is Created in Christ Jesus To Do Good Works Ephesians 4:1-6:18

A. To Strive for Unity in the Church Ephesians 4:1-16

4 ¶ Therefore I, the prisoner in the Lord, urge you to conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the calling with which[25] you were called,
2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love,
3 while making every effort to be keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace;
4 one body and one spirit, just as you were also called in one hope of your calling;
5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism;
6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.
¶ 7 Now to each one of us grace has been given according to the measure of the gift of Christ.
8 For this reason it says, "WHEN HE ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN, HE TOOK CAPTIVITY CAPTIVE, *and* HE GAVE GIFTS TO MEN."[26]
(9 Now what does "He ascended" mean except that he also descended into the parts lower than the earth?[27]
10 The one who descended is himself also the one who ascended high above all the heavens, in order that he may fill all things.)
11 And he himself gave some *to be* apostles, some *to be* prophets, some *to be* evangelists, some *to be* pastors[28] and teachers,

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[19] Lit. holy ones
[20] Lit. the
[21] Some early manuscripts add the words "of our Lord Jesus Christ"
[22] The words "from experience" are included because the Greek verb means to know from experience
[23] Lit. the
[24] Lit. the love of Christ surpassing the knowledge
[25] Lit. of which
[26] Ps.68:18
[27] Lit. from the earth
[28] Lit. shepherds

12 for the purpose of training the saints[29] for service work, for building up the body of Christ,
13 until we all arrive at the unity of the faith and the precise knowledge of the Son of God, *and arrive* at a full-grown man, at a mature measure of the fullness of Christ,
14 so that we are no longer infants, being tossed to and fro by waves and carried here and there by every wind of doctrine by means of the deception[30] and cleverness of men[31] in[32] deceitful scheming,
15 but speaking the truth in love, we will start to grow into him in regard to all things, who is the head, Christ,
16 from whom the whole body, being joined and held together by means of every supporting joint[33] according to the working appropriate to each individual part,[34] produces the growth of the body for building itself up in love.

B. To Live a Pure Life Ephesians 4:17-5:21

¶ 17 So I declare this and insist *on it* in the Lord, *that* you no longer conduct yourselves as the pagans indeed conduct themselves in the depravity of their mind,
18 having been darkened in their[35] understanding, having been alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardening of their hearts,
19 who, having become calloused, gave themselves over to unbridled lust for the pursuit of every impurity with a greedy desire to have even more.
20 But as for you, you did not come to know Christ in this manner,
21 if indeed you have heard him and have been taught in him, since truth is in Jesus.
22 *You have been taught* with respect to your[36] former way of life to take off your[37] old man who is being corrupted according to deceptive lusts,
23 but continue to be renewed in the spirit of your mind,
24 and to clothe yourselves with the new man who was created in the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.
¶ 25 For this reason, having taken off falsehood, EACH ONE OF YOU KEEP SPEAKING THE TRUTH WITH HIS NEIGHBOR,[38] because we are members of one another.
26 BE ANGRY AND YET DO NOT SIN.[39] Do not let the sun go down on your anger,
27 and do not give the devil an occasion to act.
28 Let the one who steals steal no longer, but rather let him toil, working what is good with his own hands, in order that he may have *something* to share with the one who has need.
29 Do not let any rotten word proceed out of your mouth; on the contrary, if there is any good thing that is necessary[40] for building *others* up, *say that,* in order that it may give grace to those who hear.
30 And do not be grieving the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.
31 Let all bitterness and rage and wrath and shouting and slander be removed from you together with all malice.
32 But always be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other just as God in Christ also forgave you.
5 1 Therefore always be imitators of God, as beloved children,
2 and keep conducting yourselves in love, just as Christ also loved us, and gave himself up for us as a fragrant, aromatic sacrifice and offering to God.[41]

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[29] Lit. holy ones
[30] The Greek word literally means dice playing; it had a derived meaning of cheating
[31] Lit. of men in cleverness
[32] Lit. in accordance with, or, in regard to
[33] Lit. supplying joint
[34] Lit. according to the working with the measure of each individual part
[35] Lit. the
[36] Lit. the
[37] Lit. the
[38] Zech.8:16
[39] Ps.4:4
[40] Lit. of the need, or necessity

3 And do not let illicit sexual intercourse and any *kind of* impurity or greed even be named among you, as is fitting for saints,[42]
4 nor indecency nor foolish talk or coarse jesting, which are improper, but rather the giving of thanks.
5 For this you certainly know, realizing for yourselves that no fornicator or morally impure *person* or greedy *person*, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.
¶ 6 Do not let anyone deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience.
7 Therefore keep from being their partners.
8 For at one time you used to be darkness, but now *you are* light in the Lord. Keep conducting yourselves as children of light,
9 for the fruit of this[43] light *is* in all goodness and righteousness and truth,
10 while scrutinizing what is pleasing to the Lord.
11 And keep from participating in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but indeed rather keep exposing *them*,
12 for it is shameful to even speak of the things being done by them in secret,
13 but all those[44] things are made visible when they are exposed by the light,
14 for everything that is made visible is light. For this reason it says,

"WAKE UP, O SLEEPER.[45]
AND RISE FROM THE DEAD,[46]
AND CHRIST WILL SHINE ON YOU."[47]

15 Therefore keep watching carefully how you are conducting yourselves, not as unwise ones but as wise ones,
16 making a wise use of every opportunity[48] because the days are evil.
17 For this reason keep from being senseless; on the contrary, keep gaining insight into what is the will of the Lord.
18 And keep from getting drunk on wine, in which is a dissipated life, but keep being filled with the Spirit,
19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and voicing songs in your heart to the Lord,
20 always giving thanks above all to God the Father[49] in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,
21 subjecting yourselves to one another in reverence of Christ.

C. To Honor Christ in Personal Relationships Ephesians 5:22-6:9

1. Husbands and Wives Ephesians 5:22-33

22 Wives, *continue to subject yourselves* to your own husbands as to the Lord,
23 for a husband is the head of his[50] wife as Christ is also the head of his[51] church, he *being* the Savior of the body.
24 Indeed as the church subjects itself to Christ, in the same way the wives also *are to subject themselves* to their[52] husbands in everything.
25 Husbands, continue to love your[53] wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave himself up for her,

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[41] Lit. as a sacrifice and offering to God as a fragrant aroma
[42] Lit. holy ones
[43] Lit. the
[44] Lit. the
[45] Isa.26:19; 51:17; 52:1; 60:1
[46] Isa.26:19
[47] Isa.60:1
[48] Lit. buying up for yourselves the opportunity, or the time; the Greek verb is intensive, meaning to buy up completely, so the word "every" is included
[49] Lit. to the God and Father
[50] Lit. the
[51] Lit. the
[52] Lit. the

26 in order that he may sanctify her by cleansing *her* in the washing of the water by means of the word,
27 in order that he may present to himself the church *as being* glorious, not having a spot or a wrinkle or any such things, but that she be holy and blameless.
28 In the same way the husbands are obligated to continue loving their own wives as their own bodies. The man who loves his own wife loves himself,
29 for no man at some time or other hated his own flesh; on the contrary, he nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also *nourishes and cherishes* the church,
30 because we are members of his body.
31 "FOR THIS REASON A MAN WILL LEAVE HIS[54] FATHER AND MOTHER AND WILL BE GLUED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO WILL BE ONE FLESH."[55]
32 This is a great mystery, and indeed I am speaking with regards to Christ and the church.
33 In any case, as for you Ephesians,[56] let each husband[57] also love his own wife in the same way as himself, and *let* the wife respect her husband.[58]

2. Children and Parents Ephesians 6:1-4

6 ¶ Children, always obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.
2 "KEEP HONORING YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER," which is the first commandment with a promise,
3 "IN ORDER THAT IT MAY BE WELL WITH YOU AND YOU MAY LIVE LONG[59] ON THE EARTH."[60]
4 And fathers, keep from making your children angry; on the contrary, keep bringing them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

3. Slaves and Masters Ephesians 6:5-9

¶ 5 Slaves always obey your[61] earthly masters[62] with fear and trembling in sincerity of your heart as for Christ,
6 not to please men when their eyes are on you[63] but as slaves of Christ doing the will of God from your heart,[64]
7 serving as a slave with enthusiasm, as for the Lord and not for men,
8 knowing that whatever good each one may do, he will receive this back from the Lord, whether slave or free.
¶ 9 And masters, continue to do the same things to them, giving up the threat, because you know that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no partiality with him.

D. To Put on the Full Armor of God Ephesians 6:10-20

¶ 10 In the future continue to become strong in the Lord and in the power of his strength.
11 Put on the full armor of God, in order that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.
12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

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[53] Lit. the

[54] Lit. the

[55] Gen.2:24

[56] The word "Ephesians" is added because the pronoun "you" is plural, referring to the men and women in the church of Ephesus

[57] Lit. each one

[58] Lit. that she respect the husband

[59] Lit. be long-timed; meaning live long

[60] Ex.20:12; Dt.5:16

[61] Lit. the

[62] Lit. according to the flesh

[63] Lit. not for the purpose of eye-service as ones who try to please men

[64] Lit. from the soul

13 For this reason take up the full armor of God, in order that you may be able to stand your ground when the evil day *comes,* and after you have thoroughly done everything, *be able* to stand.
14 Stand, then, by having your waist bound in truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness,
15 and having your[65] feet sandaled in the readiness of the gospel of peace,
16 in addition to everything[66] having taken up the shield[67] of faith, with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one;
17 and take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,
18 praying on every occasion in the Spirit by means of every *kind of* prayer and request, and to this end *always* being vigilant with all persistence and prayer in behalf of all the saints,
19 in my behalf also, that words[68] may be given to me when I open my mouth to boldly make known the mystery of the gospel
20 for which I am an ambassador in chains,[69] in order that I may speak it[70] boldly as I ought to speak *it*.

Part 4: The Conclusion Ephesians 6:21-24

¶ 21 Now in order that you may also know about the things concerning me, how I am doing, Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful servant in the Lord, will make everything known to you,
22 whom I have sent to you for this very reason, in order that you may come to know the things concerning us, and he may comfort your hearts.
¶ 23 Peace to the brothers and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
24 Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love.[71]

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[65] Lit. the

[66] Lit. in all

[67] It was a long oblong shield with four corners, behind which the soldier was protected

[68] Lit. word; however the Greek term for "word" was also used to denote "statement, or proclamation"; here "utterance, or words" seem appropriate

[69] Lit. in a chain

[70] Lit. in it

[71] Lit. in incorruption, or, in immortality; translations generally tie this word to the love mentioned earlier in this verse, understanding an undying, unfailing, immortal love; in itself what the phrase "in incorruption" means in this verse is unclear