

# EPHESIANS

## The quest for unity

# GOD'S PLAN TO UNITE ALL IN CHRIST

## Ephesians 1



# Paul and Ephesus



➤ **AD54** On his 2<sup>nd</sup> journey Paul preached briefly in the synagogue in Ephesus.

**Acts 18:19-21**

➤ **AD55-57** On his 3<sup>rd</sup> journey Paul preached in Ephesus for three years. As a result "all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks" **Acts 19:8-10; 20:31**

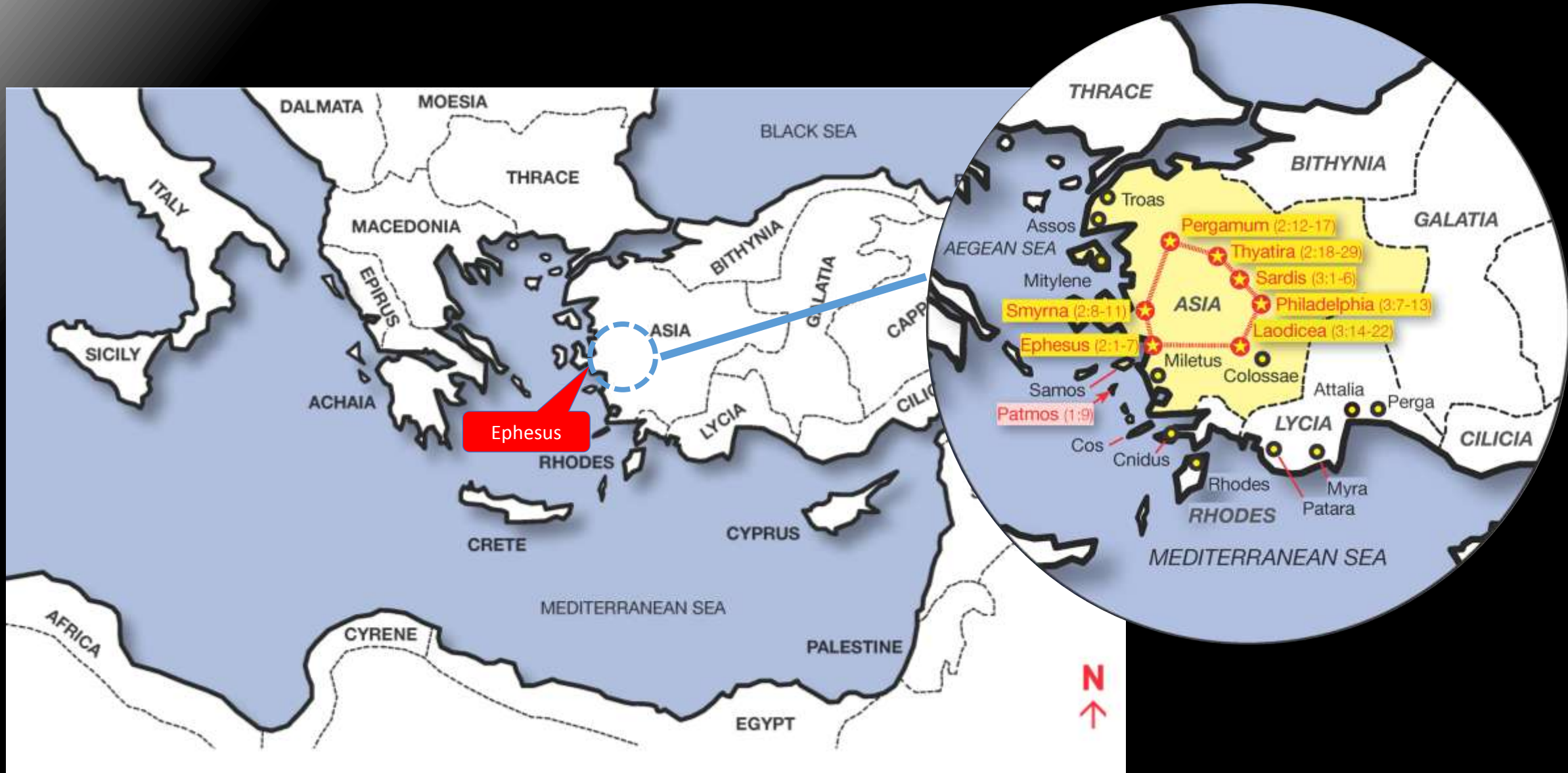
➤ **AD58** On the return leg of his third journey, Paul calls the elders of Ephesus to Miletus and warns them "that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in" **Acts 20:17-38**

➤ **AD62** Just five years after his ministry in Ephesus, Paul writes a circular epistle to those in and around Ephesus whilst in bonds in Rome. **Eph 3:1; 4:1; 6:20**

➤ **AD66** Paul writes 1<sup>st</sup> Epistle to Timothy who was in Ephesus.



# Paul's letter to the seven ecclesias



# The result of Paul's preaching



The temple of “the great goddess Diana ... whom all Asia and the world worshippeth”

- **Acts 19:10** All they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord.
- **Acts 19:13-17** some impostors of Paul were exposed and humiliated.
- **Acts 19:19** many in Ephesus which used curious arts burned their books.
- **Acts 19:20** mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.
- **Acts 19:23** there arose no small stir about that way.
- **Acts 19:24-41** the makers of shrines created an uproar that embroiled the whole city.
- **Acts 20:1** the apostle Paul was caused to leave Ephesus.

# Gnosticism

- **1 Tim. 6:20-21** “avoid oppositions of science (gnosis) falsely so called. Which some professing have erred concerning the faith”
- Among the majority of the followers of the movement “Gnosis” was understood not as meaning ‘knowledge’ or ‘understanding’, in our sense of the word, but ‘revelation’. These little Gnostic sects and groups all lived in the conviction that they possessed **a secret and mysterious knowledge, in no way accessible to those outside, and not based on reflection, on scientific inquiry and proof, but on revelation.** It was derived from the times of primitive Christianity; from the Saviour himself and his disciples and friends, with whom they claimed to be connected by a secret tradition, or else from later prophets, of whom many sects boasted. **Encyclopaedia Britannica.**

# Gnosticism cont'd

- "Gnosticism... was not... the open enemy of Christianity. It professed to give its approval and patronage to the gospel. The gospel was very good as far as it went; but the Gnostics had 'a more excellent way.' They understood the gospel better than the apostles themselves. It was a mistake to suppose that the historical facts and mere precepts of the Scriptures were to be taken literally. It was a still greater mistake to suppose that the Scriptures contained all that was necessary for man's spiritual well-being. There was a higher knowledge, a more profound gnosis; and this the gnostic would attain to and impart. Illumined by this, men would see that everything else was comparatively of unimportance. The philosopher whose mind was enlightened by this esoteric knowledge need not trouble himself much about his conduct. He was steeped in light. Good actions could not seriously detract from it. Indeed, there were many things commonly regarded as bad, which the true Gnostic would not shun, but seek, as a means of enlarging his experience". A. Plummer.

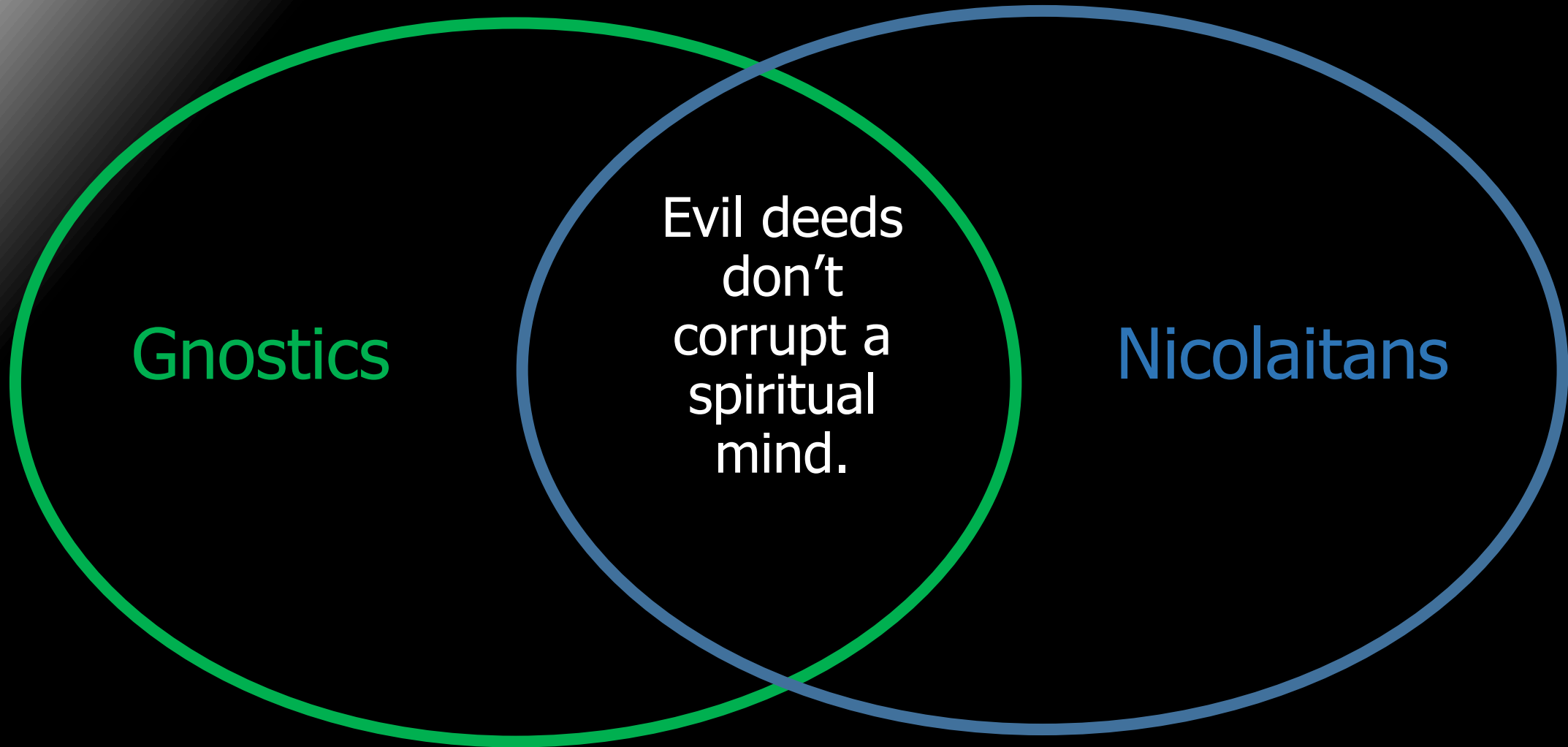


# Nicolaitans

- **Rev 2:6** “But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate”.
- Nicolaitans believed the soul was essentially divine and their bodies were evil, therefore **there was nothing the body could do to corrupt the soul**, and since we are saved by grace, not by works, there were no works that could take away your salvation. Hence Nicolaitan Gnostics used these ideas to justify an immoral way of life.



# The common ground of Gnosticism and Nicolaitans



# The state of the believers

## ➤ Wrong doctrine

- “of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things” **Acts 20:30**
- “be no more ... carried about by every wind of doctrine” **Eph 4:14**
- “charge some that they teach no other doctrine” **1 Tim 1:3**
- “if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine” **1 Tim 1:10**

## ➤ Gnosticism

- “oppositions of science (gnosis) falsely so called” **1 Tim 6:20**

## ➤ Judaism

- the Jews believed that salvation by works was compatible with a life in Christ.
- “every creature of God is good and nothing to be refused” **1 Tim 1:4-10**
- “divers were hardened and believed not but spake evil of that way” **Acts 19:9**
- “the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people” **Acts 21:27-28**

# The state of the believers cont'd

## ➤ Immorality

- The Gentiles believed that serving the flesh was compatible with a life in Christ.
- "henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk" Eph 4:17
- Lying, anger, stealing, corrupt speech, bitterness, wrath, clamour, evil speaking, fornication, uncleanness, covetousness, drunkenness. Eph 4:25-31;5:3-6;18
- "love of money" 1 Tim 6:10

## ➤ Superstition

- "seducing spirits and doctrines of devils" 1 Tim 4:1

## ➤ Wrong practice

- Women teachers 1 Tim 2:12
- Fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness Eph 5:11

# Structure of epistle

## **Ch. 1-3 Our wealth in Christ**

### **Ch. 1 God's plan to unit all in Christ**

1:1 – 1:2 Opening salutation

1:3 – 1:14 God's plan to unite all in Christ

1:15 – 1:23 Paul's prayer for their greater spiritual comprehension

### **Ch. 2 One new man in Christ**

2:1 – 2:10 The new individual in Christ

2:11 – 2:22 The "new man" (Jew & Gentile) in Christ

### **Ch. 3 The mystery revealed by Paul**

3:1 – 3:13 Paul's defence of his stewardship

3:14 – 3:21 Paul's prayer for Christ's work to be fulfilled in us

## **Ch. 4-6 Our walk in Christ**



# Principalities & powers

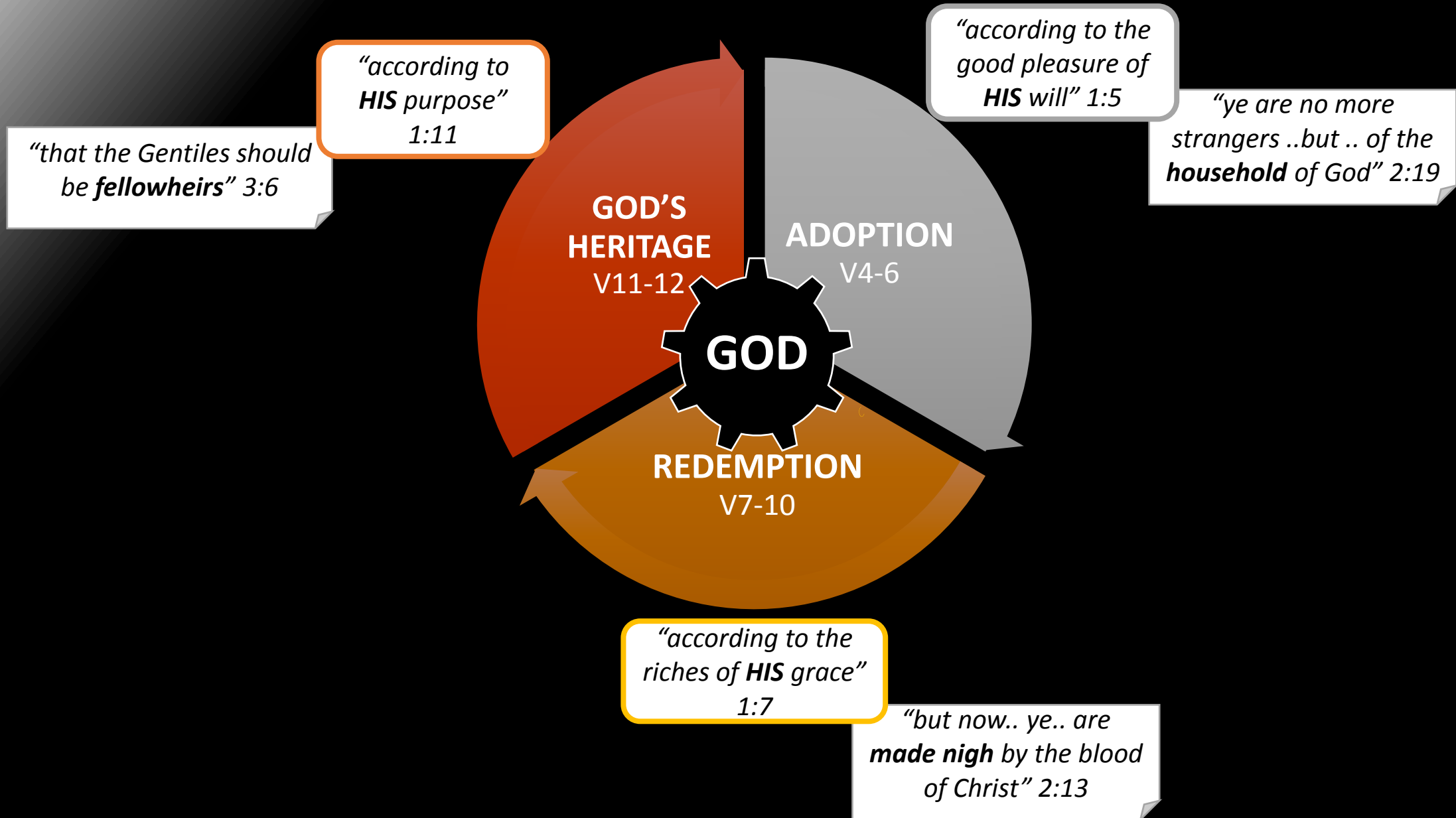
## Principalities & powers

- Rulers of darkness 6:12
- Spiritual wickedness in high places 6:12
- Destiny – mother of harlots opposed to Christ 1 Tim 4:1-3; Rev 2:2; Cmp Acts 19 with Rev18

## Saints in the heavenlies

- now are ye light 5:8
- let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints 5:3
- Destiny - called to sit together with Christ 2:5

# 1:3-12 God's plan to unite all in Christ



# Election – puts us on a path to adoption

- Election provides an **opportunity** of salvation, not an assurance of salvation - **2 Pet 1:10**
- What has been predetermined is the **process** by which we can be saved, and our **opportunity** to participate in it - **Rom 8:28-29**
- The process by which we are saved is **conforming to the likeness of Christ** - **1 Pet 1:2**
- We are given this opportunity according to the **good pleasure of God's will**, not because of any goodness on our part- **Rom 9:11; Eph 1:5**
- What ought to be our response? – be holy and without blame – **Eph 1:4**



# What is redemption?

- Gk *apolutrosis* – a release on payment of a ransom (Vines).
- Release from what?
  - The power of sin (diabolos): “that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage”. **Heb 2:15**
  - The condemnation of sin: “being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus”. **Rom 3:24**
  - Mortality: “we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body” **Rom 8:23**
- In what sense are we ransomed?
  - To be ransomed is to be purchased. We have been purchased by Christ’s blood.
  - **1 Cor 6:19-20** “ye are not your own ye are bought with a price”
  - **Rev 5:9 (RV)** “Worthy art thou to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and didst purchase unto God with thy blood”



# What is the inheritance in Eph 1:11?

- Gk – *kleros* – “to determine by lot, to assign by lot, to make an heritage” (Grimm Thayer’s lexicon).
- Other translations take the above meaning:
  - “In whom also we were made a heritage”. **RV**
  - “In whom also we were taken as an inheritance”. **Emphasized Bible**
  - “And it is in him that we were claimed as God’s own”. **Jerusalem Bible**
- Hence in Eph 1:11 (and in 1:18) the inheritance is **us**.
  - **Deut 4:20** “The Lord hath taken you to be unto him a people of inheritance”
  - **Deut 32:9** “For Yahweh’s portion is his people, Jacob is the lot of his inheritance”

# Eph 1:13-14 explained

- **Eph 1:13-14** “ ... ye (Gentiles) were sealed\* with that holy spirit of promise, which is the earnest# of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession ..”

\* sealed – to stamp to mark ownership, security, or destination.

# earnest – a pledge, a down payment.

- God gave the holy spirit gifts to the Gentiles to provide indisputable evidence that they were included in his purpose. This put God’s “seal” of approval upon them. **Acts 10:45**
- This “seal” was a pledge that God was prepared to grant them an inheritance if they remained faithful to his word. **Acts 20:32.**
- The seal was a pledge *unto* (with a view to) their redemption not *until* their redemption.
- The inheritance is referring to God. **Psalms 16:5-6; Eph 1:18**

# The aids to comprehending the blessings (Eph 1:17-18)

“the spirit of **wisdom** and revelation

Ability to apply knowledge

in the **knowledge** of him:

Gk. “epignosis”, full knowledge of God and his will

The eyes of your **understanding** being enlightened”

Gk. “dianoia”, deep thought. RV. “heart”.

Thought that arouses passion.

*Paul prayed that they would manifest an intimate and passionate knowledge of God’s will in their lives.*

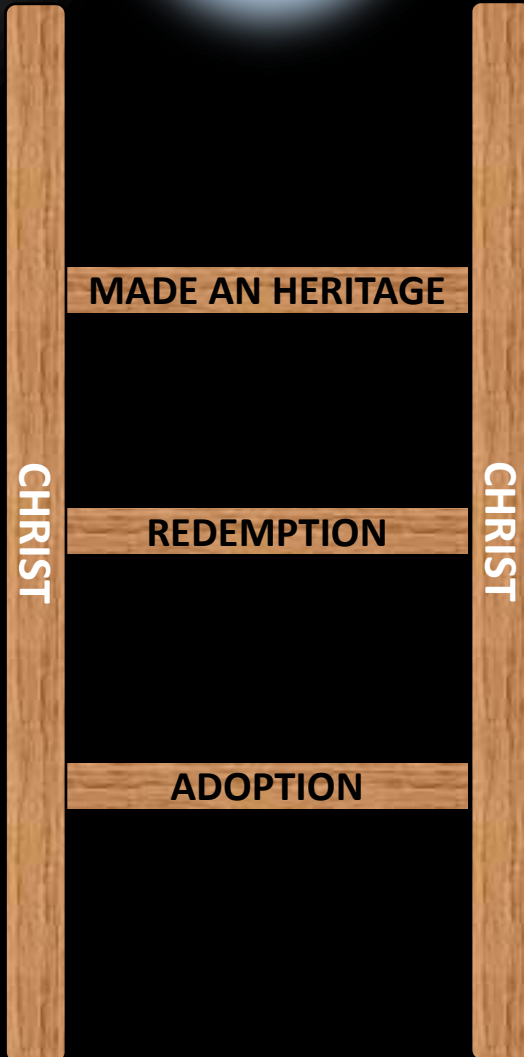
To the praise of HIS glory

GOD

## PAUL'S PRAYER

Ephesians 1:15-23

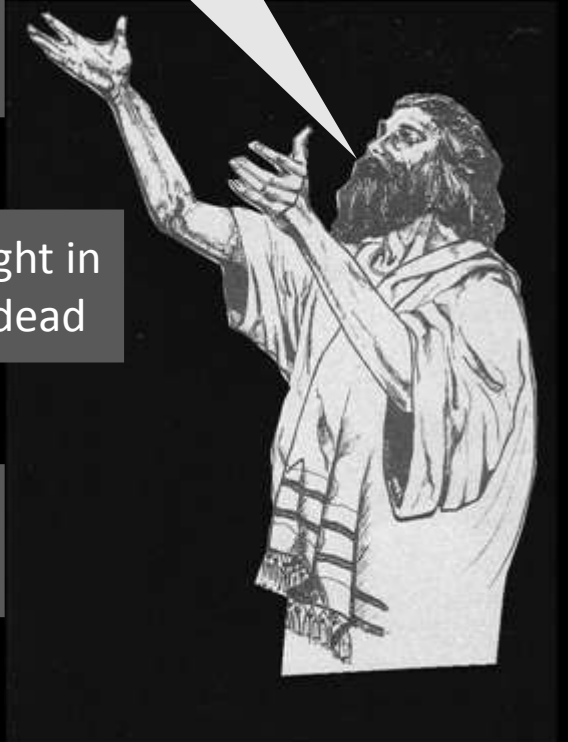
*I pray that ye  
may  
comprehend ..*



V18. the riches of the glory of HIS  
**INHERITANCE** in the saints

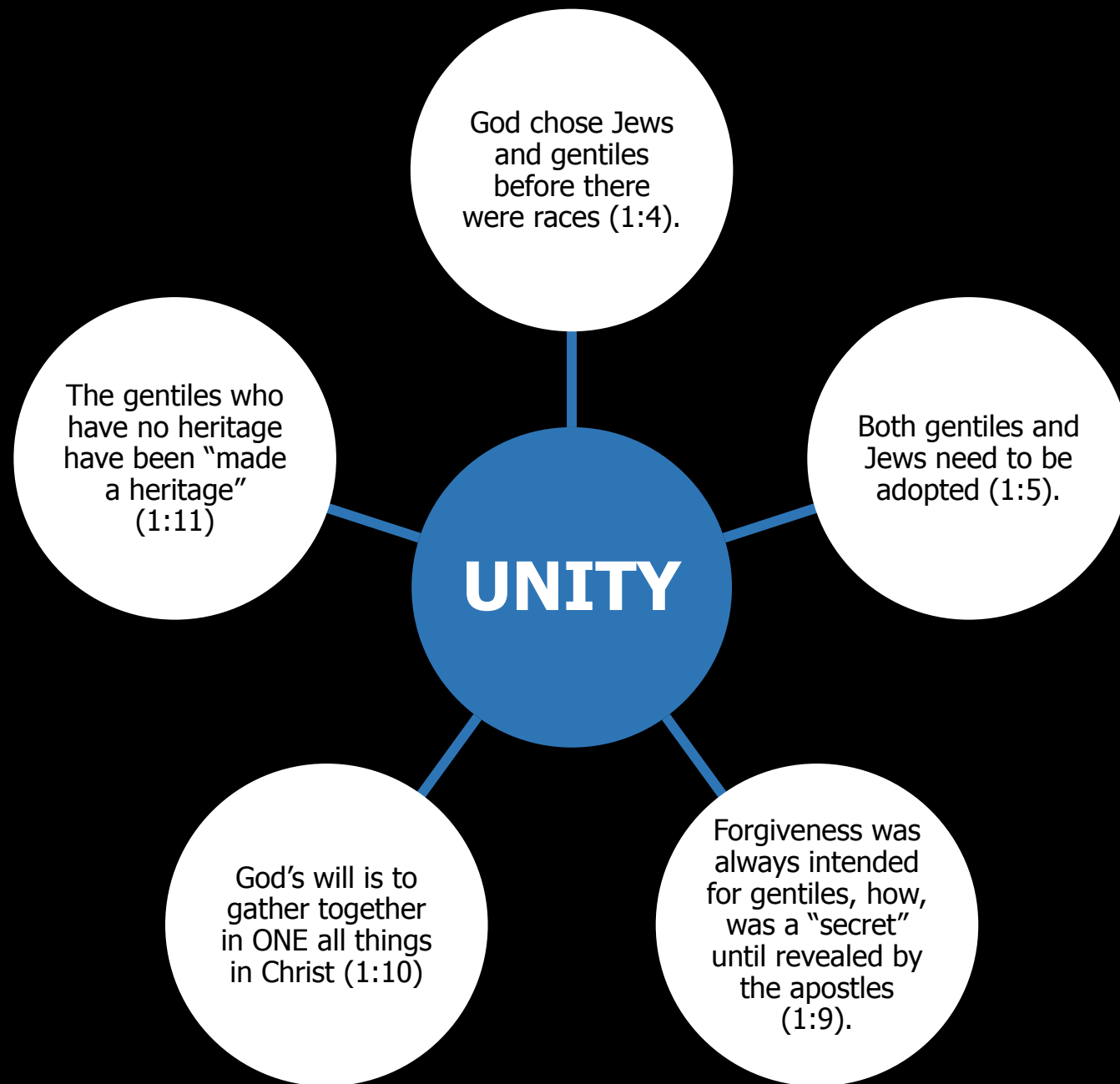
V19. HIS mighty power which he wrought in  
Christ when he **RAISED** him from the dead

V18. what is the hope of HIS **CALLING**





# THE THEME



# What does it mean for us?

## ADOPTED



We've been chosen for adoption. How much are we trying to integrate into our new family?

## REDEEMED



We've been delivered from the power of sin. Do we allow it to reign in our body?

## MADE AN HERITAGE



We've been made God's heritage, vessels to manifest Him forever. Is our desire to manifest Him now?