

# “For the Perfecting of the Saints”

*Ephesians*

Lesson  
**39**  
Summary

## Scripture Summary:

*Eph. 1: Saints foreordained to receive the gospel—Gospel to be restored in latter-days—Saints sealed by Holy Spirit of Promise—They know God and Christ by revelation. Eph. 2: We are saved by grace through faith—Blood of Christ saves Jew and Gentile alike—Church is built upon foundation of apostles and prophets. Eph. 3: Gentiles are fellow heirs with Israel—The love of Christ passeth all understanding. Eph. 4: There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism—Apostles and prophets essential to the Church—Saints exhorted to live righteously—They are sealed unto the day of redemption. Eph. 5: Saints exhorted to avoid uncleanness and walk uprightly—Husbands and wives should love each other. Eph. 6: Children should honor their parents—Servants and masters judged by the same law—Saints should put on the whole armor of God.*

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## Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

**“Ephesians Is an Epistle for All the World”** “. . . for Jew and Gentile, for husband and wife, for parent and child, for master and servant. It was the mind and will of God in Paul's day; it is the voice of inspiration in our day; it is an epistle of universal appeal and application. Ephesians proclaims the supremacy of God, the glory of his gospel, the dignity and identity of the Church through which salvation is offered to man. It contains some of Paul's best writing, and is a document that deals with fundamentals, with the gospel of God in all its saving glory.” (Bruce R. McConkie, Doctrinal New Testament Commentary, Vol.2, p.489)

**Same Gospel Will be Restored – for All People:** “. . . the same gospel had in his day shall be restored in the dispensation of the fulness of times; That through obedience to the gospel the saints receive the Holy Spirit of Promise and are sealed up unto eternal life; That God and Christ and the gospel are known only by revelation; That salvation comes by the grace and goodness of God and is for all men, Jew and Gentile alike; That the gospel is administered through one true Church, the Church which receives revelation, the Church directed by living apostles and prophets; and that because of gospel law Christ's people live righteously, perfect their families, and qualify for exaltation.” (Bruce R. McConkie, Doctrinal New Testament Commentary, Vol.2, p.489)

**Obsessions with Women Gods:** As stated in **Lesson 32: “Live in the Spirit,”** the challenges in Ephesus included the religion of worshiping Diana, the goddess of fertility. Female gods became popular, such as goddesses of victory, a fish goddess (mermaid), and one connected with fertility, Astarte. This goddess was later known as Ashteroth (the word Easter seems to have been derived from Astarte). Ephesus had a large business surrounding the popular goddess Diana. The subsequent veneration of Mary, the mother of Jesus, beginning in Ephesus became a counterfeit substitute for the Diana religion. Note how the business of religion eclipsed the essence of religion.

**Symbolic Seven:** Seven is a prime number and is very symbolic in the Bible. The two annual holy seasons celebrating the deliverance of Israel, Passover (in the Spring) and Sukkoth (in the Fall) are seven days in length. “The idea of orderliness is also conveyed by a fascinating use of numbers, especially the number seven. The first verse of Genesis in the Hebrew text contains seven words . . . the word *Elohim (God)* is mentioned 7 x 5 (35) times; ‘earth’ 7 x 3 (21) times; ‘good’ seven times. The section on the seventh day consists of 7 x 5 (35) words and the term ‘seventh day’ is mentioned in each of three seven word phrases.” (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.) “Non-LDS Bible scholars (e.g., Fensham) usually arrange the principal biblical covenants into a fivefold sequence (Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, and the New Testament covenant), but Latter-day Saints follow a sequence of seven main dispensations (Adam, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Christ and his apostles, and Joseph Smith) . . .” (Encyclopedia of Mormonism, Vol.1, Covenants in Biblical Times)

**Seven Also Applies to Purification – Through to the Last Days:** It took seven days of rain to cover the earth to cleanse it in Noah's time. Lepers, priests, women, and sacrifices required seven days of purification. It may be considered that the seven dispensations are a type of a purification in order to prepare for the Lord's arrival in the last days. Paul speaks of the last days and today, modern religious feelings indicate that the last days are at hand. Rabbi Abraham Cohen Kook, the first Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi in Erez (land) Israel noted the arrival of the beginning of the last days. “The majority of religious leaders believed that there could be no return to Zion before the coming of the Messiah; and the active Zionists were mostly those who had abandoned their traditional religious roles and replaced them with secular, political activities. Rabbi Kook, on the other hand, believed that the return to Erez Israel marked the beginning of divine redemption (*athalta di-ge'ullah*).” (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

**“We Want Messiah Now!”** This slogan, plus “Prepare for The Imminent Arrival of The Messiah,” are bright yellow banners prominently posted in Israel’s Orthodox community. Various leaders of Islam have also proclaimed the imminent return of Mohammed along with Jesus in what they sense are the “last days.” Christianity is generally geared to the imminent return of Jesus.

**Building is a Metaphor:** Sometimes it is used to denote the structure and stability of the Lord’s organization in the “last days.” “The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.” (Psalms 118:22)

“. . . Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.” (Isaiah 28:16) “Jesus saith unto them . . . the stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?” (Matthew 21:42)

“. . . built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together growtheth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.” (Ephesians 2:19-22)

**Perfect Building with a Separated Corner Stone?** Visualize an image of a building fitly framed with all parts of it functioning and without apparent holes or breaks in it. From a western building style architectural view, a cornerstone really cannot be separated and the building still remain “fitly framed.” However, picture an eastern building style, a pyramid. Its chief cornerstone is the capstone. It can be removed and the building is still “fitly framed.” A U.S. one dollar bill has that image – with the top, cap or chief cornerstone shown with rays beaming forth from an all-seeing eye. The pyramid also has twelve blocks as its foundation.

**The Same Imagery Applies to the Family:** As the children start their own family, the parents are “removed” from their former role yet still maintain a spiritual influence through their previous teaching and subsequent prayers and spiritual influence on their children. The unity of the family can still be imaged as “fitly framed.” As with any home, protection from unwarranted outside influence is necessary. Security systems or defensive armor are part of the proper stewardship of the family’s leaders. With the Lord as the Chief Cornerstone and following His instructions to defend ourselves with *truth, righteousness, preparation, faith, spirit, prayer, and perseverance*, we can protect our families inside or outside of the home.

**Righteous Armor:** Paul’s family teachings include sexual purity and propriety as a piece of righteous armor. In the previous [Lesson 33: “Ye Are the Temples of God,”](#) we stated that “Latter-day Saint doctrine is more definitive in that any sexual contact or activity with any body including our own, that leads to improper sexual emotions is simply unwarranted.” The constant perfecting of ourselves and the family members around us spreads to the community around us. It establishes a ripple that affects all the world.

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