

# Ephesians 1

## Background to the book of Ephesians

- Who is the author of this letter? Paul – *Eph. 1.1, 3.1*
- Any clue to his circumstances? He was in prison - **Read Ephesians 3.1, 4.1, 6.20**
- Probably in prison in Rome (see last 2 chapters of *Acts*)
- One of the four letters written from prison: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon
- 1-2 *Timothy* were also probably written in 62 AD
- To whom was the letter addressed? The church at Ephesus (*1.1*)
- Where was Ephesus located? Asia Minor on coast of Mediterranean in what is today Turkey
- It was the capital city for the Roman province of Asia
- What pagan temple was located at Ephesus? Diana (Artemis) - remember the riot there in *Acts 19* – The statue makers were losing money
- Church at Ephesus - It was started by Aquila and Priscilla on the Second Missionary Journey (*Acts 18.18-19*), and Paul stayed there several years on his Third Missionary Journey
- Acts 20.17-38* – A famous message to the elders at Ephesus from Apostle Paul - Paul said he would see them no more
- He warned them to beware of false teachers in their midst
- Timothy later worked at Ephesus - *1 Timothy 1.3*
- A letter from Jesus to Ephesus - *Revelation 2.1-7*(they had drifted away from their first love)

## Theme of the Letter

1. The value of the church
  2. Doctrinal matters (especially *Eph. 2 and 5*)
  3. Walking in the Christian life
- Read 2.1-2, 2.10, 4.1-3, 4.17, 5.2, 5.8, 5.15-16**
- One interesting point: there are no personal greetings in Ephesians
  - Why? Paul probably meant to have this letter circulated among other congregations in Asia Minor - See *Colossians 4.16*

## Ephesians 1.1-14

**V1** – Paul’s normal way of identifying himself

- Common opening in First Century letters: person writing the letter, people to whom letter was written, some kind of greeting
- How did “*the will of God*” make him an apostle? On road to Damascus (not laying on of hands, etc.)
- To whom was the letter addressed? Saints at Ephesus
- So all faithful Christians are saints
- Denominational churches which "canonize" certain individuals as “saints” are badly mistaken in that practice
- The word *saint* comes from *sanctified*, which means to be set apart for a special service (as in serving God)
- Any characteristic of the saints at Ephesus? Faithful

**V2** – Grace (for Greek speaking members) and peace (shalom) for Jewish Christians

**V3** – In Greek New Testament, v 3-14 make up one sentence!

-Paul's mind goes on and on about the glories of God's gift of salvation to us

-**Why should God be blessed?** The father of the Lord Jesus Christ has given us every spiritual blessing

-**How do we receive every spiritual blessing?** Through Jesus Christ

-“Heavenly places” - probably reference to the church (in the world, but not of the world)

**V4** – **What happened before the foundation of the world?** God chose us to be saved

-**Who are the “us”?** Faithful Christians

-**How are we “blameless” if we commit sins?** *1 John 1.7* – If we walk in the Light, the blood of Jesus constantly cleanses us of our sins

**V5** – Many evangelical groups today are going back into Calvinism and predestination

-It is a very depressing theory – it is also arrogant

-Similar to "scientific determinism" = that our environment controls all our choices

-But it is not that a certain individual is predestined to be saved, but any person who obeys the gospel becomes predestined to be saved (see v 13-14 also)

-**When we accept the gospel, what is our new relationship with God?** We are adopted – we are now his children

**V6** – God's grace was freely given to us

-**Is grace withheld from anyone?** No – therefore, there is no predestination by name

-**What name does Jesus receive here?** Beloved

**V7** – **What is another value of being a Christian?** We have redemption and the forgiveness of sins

-Redemption = to be bought by a ransom

-Think of pawn shops in big cities – we leave an object, and the pawnbroker will try to sell it

-But we can "redeem" it (buy it back) if we have the money

-**What “redeemed” us?** The blood of Jesus

**V8** – Notice these terms in v 6 - *“freely bestowed on us*

-V 7 - *“riches of his grace”*

-V 8 - *“he lavished upon us”*

-Think about a man who is restoring an antique car – no expense is spared, whatever it takes, etc.

-Many times we will visit the house of some famous person (example: Mark Twain's house in Hartford, Conn.) – people lavish time and attention on the house (reproducing the original wall paper, etc.) and restore it

-God lavished His grace on us also; no cost was spared

**V9** – The mystery = the gospel, the plan of God to save us

**V10** – “Fullness of time” = the first century – all was ready

**Read Galatians 4.4** – Roman Empire had prepared the way for the coming of the Messiah

-**How?** Peace in the world, an excellent road system, a good legal system, etc.

-**What summarized all the plans of God?** Jesus Christ

**V 11** – **What is the inheritance we have obtained?** Salvation (at present and in hope)

-Paul again used “predestined”

**V 12** – **Which people were the first to hope in Christ?** The Jews

-In other words, the Jews were also first to praise God’s glory

**V 13-14** – Very important – the answer to predestination

-**What do we do to be predestined to be saved?** Listen to the message of truth and believe it

-Other Scriptures: *John 1.11-12, 2 Thessalonian 2.13-14, Hebrews 5.8-9*

-**What is given to us as a promise of our salvation?** The indwelling of the Holy Spirit (like a lay-a-way plan at stores)

-Some people will remember that dollar bills used to be called "silver certificates" (printed right on the dollar bill)

-That piece of paper could be redeemed for silver, if you desired it

-So the Holy Spirit is a sign of the promise that we have

## **Ephesians 1.15-23**

**V 15** – Paul had probably not been to Ephesus for 4-5 years

-**What had he heard of about the church at Ephesus?** Their faith and their love for each other

-**Wouldn’t that be a great compliment for any congregation?**

-Our goal today should be the same: sound doctrine, internal love, and unity

**V 16** – **What did Paul do because he heard of their faith and love?** Gave thanks in prayers for them

**V 17** – Such a beautiful verse

-**What did Paul request in his prayers?** That God would give them wisdom and a revelation in the knowledge of God

-*James 1.5* - we are told to pray for wisdom

**V 18-19** – **For what else did Paul pray?** Their enlightenment in...

1. The hope of his calling

2. The riches of his glory

3. And the surpassing greatness of his power

-Most people do not fully appreciate these things

-For some people church is just a place where you go and take kids, so they don’t turn out to be absolute hoodlums

-We often miss the awesome depths of the Christian faith

**V 20** – **What did God do for his Son?** Raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand

**V 21** – **How much authority was given to Jesus?** *Matthew 28.18-20* - All authority

-His name is superior - now and in the age to come

**V 22-23** – One of the most tremendous thoughts in the Bible: Christ is head over all things and has

given all things to the church

-The church is the fullness of Christ

-Some people say, "Jesus yes - the church no"

-In other words, "I like the teaching of Jesus, but I don't want to be restricted by a church"

-But that is impossible - we cannot take Jesus without also taking his church

**Lessons from *Ephesians 1*:**

-Intensely optimistic – we see the glory of God's grace to us and the glory of Christ's church

-These concepts lay the foundation for *Ephesians 2-6*

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