

EPHESIANS SESSION 1

Background: Ephesus was a large, prosperous, and bustling port city in the Roman province of Asia Minor. At that time, there were approximately 350,000 people living there. Ephesus rivaled Corinth for its depravity due to the worship of Artemis (Diana). The temple of Artemis was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Paul spent nearly three years there, the longest he stayed in any single city to establish a church. He encountered significant opposition as people were being saved and turning from idol worship because it affected the livelihood of the silversmiths. At one point, a riot broke out that caught the attention of the whole city.

Date: This letter was written by Paul around 61-63 AD from Rome and is one of the “prison epistles”.

Theme: God’s grace and divine purpose which is centered in Jesus Christ. This book is amazing because of its revelation of God’s eternal purposes from outside of time. The first chapter is some of the loftiest scripture contained in all the Bible.

Ephesians 1:1-2 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace *be* to you, and peace, from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ. *The greeting, like all of Paul’s addresses*

Ephesians 1:3 Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ: *To bless the name of God is to praise Him because of what He has done for us. We have been blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ...meaning that our blessings originate in Christ and are accessible from heaven. That’s better than earthly blessings because earthly blessings are temporary while spiritual blessings are eternal.*

Ephesians 1:4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: *We were chosen in Christ, not apart from Christ...before the world was. Christ was elect before the foundation of the world so if you are in Christ that makes you elect from the foundation of the world. A lot of people miss this concept of election. God chose Abraham to bless him, to give him a nation, a land, and a Messiah. That’s election...BUT in choosing Abraham we are all blessed because of Christ - Galatians 3:8* And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. *Yes God chose Abraham to reveal Himself to, to bless his line, to birth a nation that would eventually have God’s law, the kingdom, the priesthood, the prophets*

and the temple...BUT all of that was so that they could be the light of the world so that all other nations would see that light and come to God through them. Jesus plainly said this in his sermon on the mount. In Christ we are holy and without blame before the Father in love.

Ephesians 1:5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, *The word predestined means to determine the destination beforehand. This verse is not saying we were predestined to be saved, it is saying that we are predestined to the adoption of children. In Roman culture adoption came when the children were adults and were mature and responsible to receive their inheritance. Even children born into the family had to be adopted so they could INHERIT. Predestination in the Bible doesn't have anything to do with God determining before time, who is going to heaven and who is going to hell. Predestination is assurance doctrine for the saved that since we have been born again, the destination is that we be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. In simpler terms, if we have experienced salvation of the inward man, then we are predestined to experience salvation of the outward man (get a glorified body like Christ's)* **Romans 8:29** For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Ephesians 1:6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. *Our salvation is to the praise of God's grace! Grace is the unmerited favor of God, it's getting for free what you do not deserve. In salvation God has lavished grace on us who deserve nothing good from Him. This praises God's grace and He has made unacceptable people such as we are, acceptable in Jesus Christ.*

Ephesians 1:7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; *Redemption is the repurchase of captured goods or prisoners; the act of procuring the deliverance of persons or things from the possession and power of the captors by the payment of a ransom. The blood of Christ has bought our freedom from sin and Satan and has delivered us from sin's penalty and God's wrath. We are on the best of terms with God now because of the forgiveness of our sins.*

Ephesians 1:8-9 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: *In God's divine purpose of grace He has greatly given us skillful understanding of His will, which was hidden before but now revealed.*

Ephesians 1:10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: *God's purpose from the beginning was to have a people like Himself that would glorify Him*

on the earth and make the earth look like heaven. Adam and Eve were set over God's creation and told to be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth. If they had done that without falling into sin, the earth would've been filled with the knowledge of God and the image of God. Christ died to restore the image of God through the new birth and to re-establish the kingdom of God on the earth. At the end of all dispensations of time, Jesus Christ will have subdued this creation and brought it back under the rulership of God. Because of Jesus Christ we will have new heavens and a new earth with redeemed people of all ages living in unity and righteousness in agreement with heaven.

Ephesians 1:11-12 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. *In Christ, we are going to inherit eternal life, a glorified body and share in all that Christ shall inherit (which is all things). The order goes – foreknowledge, election then predestination. Salvation is in three tenses...justification (declared to be righteous and happens at the moment of repentance and faith) sanctification (the progressive act of making us righteous in our daily life) glorification (putting on a glorified body without sin to match the new inner man). Predestination means that if you have experienced justification then you will experience glorification without fail. When we are glorified we will be trophies of God's grace in eternity to His praise.*

Ephesians 1:13-14 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory. *Up till this point Paul has been talking about their salvation from God's perspective before the world was. Now he starts talking about it in time – when they heard the gospel, when they trusted Christ, and now he wants them to know that they were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. The Greek word translated sealed is "sphragizo" which means ownership and the full security carried by the backing of the owner. Sealing in the ancient world served as a "legal signature" which guaranteed the promise (contents) of what was sealed. Having the Holy Spirit in us now is the earnest (what we got up front) as a promise that we will receive all the rest.*

Ephesians 1:15-16 Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; *Paul always prayed for the churches, and he writes down specifically what he is praying for.*

Ephesians 1:17-23 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and

what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what *is* the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

Paul prays for 4 things for these people:

- **Wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him** – If we learn anything more about the Father and the Son, it is because they revealed it unto us through the word and the Spirit. All Christians should desire to know God more intimately because the better you know God, the more you can love and trust Him.
- **That they may know the hope of His calling** – That the Lord would reveal to them the reason that they were saved. When God reveals your purpose to you, then you understand what the hope of His calling is. Beyond that, to know that our future is to be glorified and conformed to Christ's image.
- **That they may know what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints** – This refers to understanding the immense love God has for His people, recognize them as precious and valuable to Him, and appreciate the future inheritance they will receive from Him.
- **That they may know the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe** – Paul prays for them to full comprehend the amazing power God demonstrated in raising Jesus from the dead and seating Him in authority at His right hand. He also wants them to understand that they have access to that power since they are in Him. There's not anything or anyone that hasn't been placed under Jesus Christ. The enemy may fight us, cause us problems, discourage us but the power and authority of Jesus Christ can do three things – Reverse it, Overrule it, or Redeem it to make it serve His purposes.