



Courtesy of D. Osseman Library

Teaching Ephesians

Chapter One

By

Mark McGee

Introduction

The Book of Ephesians has been one of the great treasures of Christianity for almost 2,000 years. The great 19th century English preacher C.H. Spurgeon called Ephesians “a complete Body of Divinity.” Other commentators have called Ephesians the “queen” of the epistles and the “divinest” composition of man.

I first read Ephesians soon after becoming a Christian and knew I had struck gold. Ephesians is a wealth of spiritual revelation and insight given to the Apostle Paul by God for the benefit of every follower of Jesus Christ. Ephesians has been one of my favorite New Testament writings to study and teach. It is amazingly logical and extremely helpful in staying on the path God has established for us.

I invite you to join me in a special journey in learning how to teach Ephesians in small group settings. Let’s begin with the reasons we teach God’s Word.

Basic Premises for Studying Scripture

- God is worth knowing
- His Word is worth learning and obeying
- Because God is worth knowing and His Word is worth learning and obeying, we will follow a proven method of knowing Him and learning His Word.
- Inductive – Methodical – Direct – Independent
- Inductive study – “logical, objective, impartial reasoning” ... examining specifics of Scripture before reaching conclusions
- Methodical study – “a way or path of transit” (Greek – *methodos*) ... focused on taking the proper path to gaining knowledge about God
- Direct study – “relying on Scripture as the primary tool for learning”
- Independent study – “original thinking combined with Spirit insight”
- Observe (See and Record)
- Question (Ask and Answer)
- Interpret (Determine the Holy Spirit’s Intent)
- Apply (How God’s Truth applies to life)

Historical Context



Courtesy BibleScripture.net

Teaching Ephesians begins with historical context. You can include maps, photos and images to help visualize the locations and archaeological discoveries connected to the text. I have included links to some of the maps, photos and images to help you in preparation to teach the historical context of Ephesians. These are just some of the online tools available, so enjoy searching for others that will benefit you and your students.

At the time the Apostle Paul wrote “to the saints who are in Ephesus,” the city was one of the largest in [Asia Minor](#) with a population of more than a quarter-million people. The ruins of the [ancient city of Ephesus](#) are located near the town of [Selcuk](#) in the Izmir Province of Turkey near the Mediterranean Sea. It is a favorite tourist attraction.

Archaeological excavations have revealed that the area around Ephesus was [inhabited thousands of years ago](#). Burial grounds found in the area have been dated from about the 16th Century BC. Much of what historians know about that time comes from the writings of the Greek poet Homer (e.g. Iliad, Odyssey, Trojan War, Nostoi, Cypria, Epigoni) who wrote in the 8th Century BC.

Ephesus was founded as an [Attic-Ionian](#) colony during the 10th Century BC. One legend is that a prince named Androklos was the founder of Ephesus and joined 12 cities together into what was known as the Ionian League. Another legend has Ephos, Queen of the Amazons, as the founder of the city. The legend of the Amazons is based on Greek mythology. They were a nation of all-female warriors.

Ephesus became famous for the [Temple of Artemis](#), the Greek goddess of hunting, the wilderness, wild animals, virginity, fertility and childbirth. Most of the Greek world worshiped Artemis as a secondary deity, but the Greeks in Asia Minor (location of Ephesus) worshiped her as a primary deity. The Temple of Artemis was one of the [Seven Wonders of the World](#) and reportedly the largest building of the ancient world. The building was also known as the Temple of Diana (Diana is the Latin name for Artemis).

The **Cimmerians** attacked Ephesus about 650 BC and destroyed the city, including the Temple of Artemis. The people of Ephesus eventually drove out the Cimmerians and rebuilt the city. The king of the **Lydians** conquered Ephesus about 560 BC, but treated the people well and helped rebuild the Temple of Artemis. Archaeologists found the king's signature on the base of one of the temple's columns. The **Persians defeated the Ephesians** and made the city part of the Achaemenid Empire. The Ephesians were eventually able to remove the Persians from power about 479 BC. The Temple of Artemis was burned down in 356 BC, but the people of Ephesus rebuilt the temple and made it even larger than the one before.

Alexander the Great defeated the Persian forces in 334 BC and all the Greek cities of Asia Minor were freed. Alexander died in 323 BC and one of his generals took over rule of Ephesus many years later. Ephesians moved the city about two miles away from the Cayster River after silting led to marshes, mosquitoes and malaria, killing many people. Ephesus became part of the Seleucid Empire in 281 BC, then came under Egyptian rule in 263 BC and the Attalid Dynasty in 197 BC. Ephesus became part of the Roman Republic in 133 BC.

In 27 BC, Emperor Augustus made Ephesus the capital of proconsular Asia instead of Pergamum, which led Ephesus into a time of great prosperity as a seat of government and center of commerce. Eventually, Ephesus became second only to Rome in size and importance with a population of almost 500,000 people. Ephesus would have been at its peak when Paul visited in the middle of the 1st Century AD.

Through all the centuries of trying times in the life of the Ephesians, they remained committed to the goddess Diana (Artemis) as we see during the [Apostle Paul's visit](#) to Ephesus.

“And about that time there arose a great commotion about the Way. For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Diana, brought no small profit to the craftsmen. He called them together with the workers of similar occupation, and said: ‘Men, you know that we have our prosperity by this trade. Moreover you see and hear that not only at Ephesus, but throughout almost all Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away many people, saying that they are not gods which are made with hands. So not only is this trade of ours in danger of falling into disrepute, but also the temple of the great goddess Diana may be despised and her magnificence destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worship.’ Now when they heard this, they were full of wrath and cried out, saying, ‘Great is Diana of the Ephesians!’ So the whole city was filled with confusion, and rushed into the theater with one accord, having seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians, Paul’s travel companions. And when Paul wanted to go in to the people, the disciples would not allow him. Then some of the officials of Asia, who were his friends, sent to him pleading that he would not venture into the theater. Some therefore cried one thing and some another, for the assembly was confused, and most of them did not know why they had come together. And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander motioned with his hand, and wanted to make his defense to the people. But

when they found out that he was a Jew, all with one voice cried out for about two hours, 'Great is Diana of the Ephesians!' And when the city clerk had quieted the crowd, he said: 'Men of Ephesus, what man is there who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is temple guardian of the great goddess Diana, and of the image which fell down from Zeus? Therefore, since these things cannot be denied, you ought to be quiet and do nothing rashly. For you have brought these men here who are neither robbers of temples nor blasphemers of your goddess. Therefore, if Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen have a case against anyone, the courts are open and there are proconsuls. Let them bring charges against one another. But if you have any other inquiry to make, it shall be determined in the lawful assembly. For we are in danger of being called in question for today's uproar, there being no reason which we may give to account for this disorderly gathering.' And when he had said these things, he dismissed the assembly." Acts 19:23-41

What happened to Ephesus after Paul wrote his letter to the Christians there? The Goths destroyed the Temple of Diana in 263 AD. Roman Emperor Constantine I rebuilt much of the city during the 4th Century and several Christian councils were held in Ephesus during that time. An earthquake destroyed portions of Ephesus in 614 AD and the city's importance declined because of silting in the harbor by the Cayster River, causing it to lose access to trade from the Aegean Sea. People moved to higher ground and used ruins from the temple and other buildings for new houses. Muslims sacked Ephesus in the 7th and 8th centuries AD. Christians and Muslims fought over the city for many more centuries, but

Ephesus eventually became part of the Ottoman Empire and was abandoned after many years.

“The Epistle to the Ephesians is a complete Body of Divinity. In the first chapter you have the doctrines of the gospel; in the next, you have the experience of the Christians; and before the Epistle is finished, you have the precepts of the Christian faith. Whosoever would see Christianity in on treatise, let him ‘read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest’ the Epistle to the Ephesians.” C. H. Spurgeon

Scripture taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Paul the Apostle

Paul was a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, which is now part of Turkey. His Hebrew name was Saul, but because he was a Roman citizen he was also known as Paul (Latin transliteration of the name 'Saul'). We see his name change from Saul to Paul in Acts 13. The Holy Spirit spoke to the prophets and teachers at the Antioch church and said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." (vs 2) It was after Barnabas and Saul obeyed the Holy Spirit and began their first missionary journey to preach the Gospel to the Roman world that we see Saul called Paul – "Then Saul, who also is called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him ..." (vs. 9) Paul is referred to as 'Paul' from that point on in Acts, except for when he shared his testimony about Jesus speaking to him on the road to Damascus (Acts 22:7).

Paul's father was a Pharisee from the tribe of Benjamin and Paul was also a Pharisee. He studied at the prestigious School of Hillel in Jerusalem at the feet of Gamaliel, the grandson of the founder of the rabbinical school. Paul was taught according to the strictness of the Mosaic Law and was zealous toward God. He persecuted followers of Christ to the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women.

Paul was on his way to Damascus to arrest disciples of Christ there to return them to Jerusalem to be punished, when Christ blinded Paul and spoke to him. Jesus called Paul to preach the Gospel to Gentiles, kings and Jews. Paul believed, was baptized, began preaching, and became an apostle to the Gentiles (Romans 11:13).

We learn in Acts 9 that Jesus sent Ananias to lay his hands on Paul (Saul) so that he would receive his sight and “be filled with the Holy Spirit.” Paul spent several days with the disciples at Damascus, then preached in synagogues that Jesus Christ was the Son of God. (Acts 9:17-20)

Here is Paul’s account of Christ’s call in his own words to King Agrippa.

“While thus occupied, as I journeyed to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, at midday, O king, along the road I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and those who journeyed with me. And when we all had fallen to the ground, I heard a voice speaking to me and saying in the Hebrew language, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’ So I said, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ And He said, ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you. I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to

God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.” Acts 26:12-18

Paul returned to Tarsus for his own safety and was there for several years. What he did while home in Tarsus is not recorded for us in Acts or Paul's letters, but it was probably a time of study and reflection for the apostle along with preaching the Gospel in Tarsus and surrounding towns in the region of Cilicia (Galatians 1:21). Based on the time frame Paul revealed in his second letter to the Corinthians, it would have also been when he received visions of Paradise and special knowledge God wanted him to know for his ministry to the Gentiles (2 Corinthians 12:1-7).

We know that when the apostles in Jerusalem sent Barnabas to Antioch, Syria to see what God was doing there, Barnabas traveled north to Tarsus to get Paul and return with him to Antioch. They spent a year teaching the believers there and the disciples were first called “Christians in Antioch.” (Acts 11:25-26)

Based on a prophecy from Agabus, “that there was going to be a great famine throughout all the world,” Barnabas and Saul (Paul) took an offering to the disciples in Jerusalem to help meet their needs. (Acts 11:27-30) Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem to Antioch and took John Mark with them. (Acts 12:25)

Paul and Barnabas continued their teaching ministry in Antioch until the Holy Spirit led the prophets and teachers of the church to “separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” The prophets and teachers fasted and prayed, laid hands on Barnabas and Saul and sent them away. (Acts 13:1-3) That was the beginning of what we know as Paul’s first missionary journey.

Paul shared more specifics about the history of his ministry to Gentiles in his letter to the churches in Galatia.

“But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb and called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord’s brother. (Now concerning the things which I write to you, indeed, before God, I do not lie.) Afterward I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. And I was unknown by face to the churches of Judea which were in Christ. But they were hearing only, He who formerly persecuted us now preaches the faith which he once tried to destroy.’ And they glorified God in me. Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and also took Titus with me. And I went up by revelation, and communicated to them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to those who were of

reputation, lest by any means I might run, or had run, in vain.”

Galatians 1:17 – 2:2

Paul and the Churches



Courtesy BibleScripture.net

Paul established churches in many cities across the Roman Empire. One of those cities was Ephesus, located in Asia Minor near the Mediterranean Sea. Paul wrote letters to many of the churches to help them grow in Christ and deal with problems and challenges. Ephesians is one of those letters.

The most likely place for Paul to have written Ephesians is during the two years he spent in Rome under house arrest (Acts 28), though some scholars believe he may have written Ephesians during his earlier imprisonment in Caesarea (Acts 23–26).

Paul wrote several letters during his imprisonment: Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon and Philippians. They are known as Paul's 'Prison Epistles'. If he wrote them from Rome, the dating would be during the early part of the 7th decade of the 1st century AD (60-62 AD). If Paul wrote them from Caesarea, the dating would be during the last part of the 6th decade of the 1st century AD (57-59 AD).

The words "in Ephesus" in 1:1 are in some ancient manuscripts, but not in others. Ephesians also does not include personal references, which is unusual given Paul's close relationship with the believers at Ephesus (Acts 19-20). This has led some New Testament scholars to consider that Paul's letter to the Ephesians may have been a general letter meant to be read by all of the Gentile churches. The manuscripts with the words "in Ephesus" may be there because leaders in the Ephesian church added the words for when it was read to the saints at Ephesus. Other churches receiving the same letter may have done something similar.

Paul was an apostle of Jesus Christ "by the will of God." He responded positively to God's call and spent the rest of his life preaching the Gospel of Salvation to Gentiles and Jews.

Basic Premises for Studying Scripture

- God is worth knowing
- His Word is worth learning and obeying
- Because God is worth knowing and His Word is worth learning, we will follow a proven method of knowing Him and learning His Word.
- We will use the I – M – D – I method of Bible study:
- Inductive – Methodical – Direct – Independent
- Inductive study – “logical, objective, impartial reasoning” ... examining specifics of Scripture before reaching conclusions
- Methodical study – “a way or path of transit” (Greek – methodos) ... focused on taking the proper path to gaining knowledge about God
- Direct study – “relying on Scripture as the primary tool for learning”
- Independent study – “original thinking combined with Spirit insight”
- Observe (See and Record)
- Question (Ask and Answer)
- Interpret (Determine the Holy Spirit’s Intent)
- Apply (How God’s Truth applies to your life)

Bible Study – The Group Process

You may want to begin your small group study of the Book of Ephesians by modeling the process of **observing, asking questions for interpretation, interpreting for meaning, and applying for discipleship**. This process may be new to some of the people in your group, so going through it with them for awhile may help them feel comfortable with how to do it.

One of the biggest mistakes people make in reading the Bible is trying to interpret the meaning of individual verses before observing everything in the verses. Studying in context also helps keep us from making incorrect interpretations. That means starting the observation process at the beginning of each Bible book.

The challenge in studying alone or with the group is trying to determine the meaning of passages in the Bible before assuring that we've observed everything in the passages and asked every possible question. We carefully answer all of the questions before reaching a conclusion to the meaning.

Read the Scripture and go through each step with your group. You may be able to cover observation, questions, interpretation and application in one meeting, but don't rush the process. It takes time to see everything in a text, ask good questions, get good answers to those good questions, interpret the meaning of the text and apply the meaning to life. If it takes

two or three meetings to do that for each text, that's fine! The goal is to rightly divide God's Word, not finish by a certain date.

Are you ready? Let's begin!

[You may want to print this guide for each member of your group.]

Observe – Write what you see

“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” Ephesians 1:1-2

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.
- 13.
- 14.
- 15.
- 16.

Question – Ask and answer questions based on observations

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

11.

12.

13.

14.

15.

16.

17.

18.

19.

Ephesians 1:3-6

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.”

Ephesians 1:3-14 is one continuous thought. It's one of the longest in the Bible (more than 200 words in Greek, more than 250 words in English) with a number of clauses making up this one, great sentence. How great is this sentence? It is among the richest, deepest and most important sentences in the Word of God. Paul reveals God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit in these verses.

You will be laying the theological groundwork for your group in verses 3-14, so we'll share some thoughts to help you in the process.

First, we see the “will” of the Father, then the “work” of the Son, and the “witness” of the Spirit.

Paul began and ended this amazing sentence praising God – “Blessed be the God” (vs. 3) and “to the praise of His glory” (vs. 14). As we will see in our study of Paul’s Epistle to the Ephesians, the glory of God is utmost on the apostle’s mind and heart; as it should be to every child of God.

Invite your group members to use their study guide to record all the words they believe are important to understanding Paul’s greeting.

Some of the important words are:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ – two Greek words are translated “blessed” in the New Testament ... *makarismos* and *eulogia* ... *makarismos* is the idea of being “happy” about something ... *eulogia* means “good speaking, praise, spoken well of” (our English word “eulogy” comes from *eulogia*) ... the Greek word in Ephesians 1:3 is the adjective *eulogetos* and is always used in the New Testament to describe God ... “Praise be to God”

Father of our Lord Jesus Christ – Paul further describes God as the “Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” ... He quickly defines God (*theos*) for his readers and introduces a special relationship between God the “Father” (*pater*) and “our Lord Jesus Christ” (*kuriou hemon Iesou Christou*) ... We will see that the relationship between God the Father and God the Son plays an important role in the general and specific doctrines Paul taught the church through this letter.

who has blessed us – “who” is *ho* (the one) and points back to God as being the actor of the verb ... *eulogesas*, the verb, is active voice, aorist tense in the Greek, meaning something God completed in the past and something we can look at and admire, like a photograph of an important event in our lives. It happened at a past time and had a huge impact on our lives. Christians are not waiting “to be” blessed. We are “already” blessed. We “were” blessed. We “have been” blessed. Our blessings going forward are based on the blessings God has already given us. We bless Him with words because of His gift of blessings. God always acts first. Our act of blessing (praising) God is always in response to His blessings (action).

With every spiritual blessing – *pase* (every) means “all, every kind” ... *eulogia pneumatike* (blessing spiritual) is about “blessings” (noun) that come from the “spiritual,” which imply the work of the Holy Spirit in a believer, which Paul addresses later in this same sentence. The blessings are more than merely spiritual. They are “of and from” the spiritual (Spirit). The “kind” of blessings we have are only limited to the limits of the Holy Spirit. As we will see throughout Ephesians, Paul emphasizes the work of the Holy Spirit on the human spirit ... Paul uses an interesting literary technique here by using one word in three methodologies in the same clause of a lengthy sentence. The words are *eulogetos* (adjective), *eulogesas* (verb), and *eulogia* (noun). God who is blessed (praised) blessed us (gave to us) with every spiritual blessing (every kind of blessing from God’s Spirit) in the heavenly places – *en tois epouraviois*, “in the heavenlies,” pertains to those things that occur in Heaven ... the work of God’s Spirit in blessings us was done in the sphere of “heavenly

places,” far above the natural and petty things of this physical world in Christ – these blessings in the heavenly places are “in Christ,” meaning in the sphere of Christ, from Christ, because of Christ ... just as He chose us in Him – *kathos exelexato humas en auto* ... the word *kathos* means “even as, in conformity with the fact” ... God’s blessing us is in conformity with the fact that He chose us ... *exelaxato* (chosen, picked out, selected out of) is aorist tense, middle voice, indicative mood, which means God made a choice “for Himself” at a past time. Indicative mood presents God’s action of choosing as real and certain. His choice is an objective fact. It also carries the idea of choosing certain ones out of group, which means not choosing others in the same group. Think about what that meant to the Greek-speaking Christians who read Paul’s letter. What God did in choosing them was not because He had to do it. There was no outside force making God Him choose us. He chose because He wanted to for His own reasons. That precludes any idea that something about the Ephesians or us caused God to choose. He chose us because He wanted us for Himself without any pressure or purpose other than His own will ... God’s choice was “in Him,” being in the context of “in Christ.” God the Father chose us for Himself in the sphere of God the Son.

Before the foundation of the world – God chose us for Himself in the sphere of His Son at a past time that Paul described as “before the foundation of the world” ... *pro kataboles kosmou* ... the word “foundation” comes from *kataboles*, which means “casting down, throwing down, laying down” ... *kosmou* means “world” ... “throwing down” the world is a description of God creating the world ... God’s choosing us for Himself happened “before” (*pro*) He “threw down” the world. This is the

idea of God choosing from eternity past, not just moments before He created. What a remarkable truth that God “chose” us before time and space. Think about this. Doesn’t the fact that God “chose” us before He created mean that He “knew” us before creation? Wouldn’t God choose what He knew? Think about how God knew you and chose you before He created the heavens and the earth. That fact should play a major role in shaping our faith and trust in God Who has known us from eternity.

That we should be – The present infinitive (einai) expresses purpose on God’s part, not obligation on ours. God had a wonderful purpose in choosing us in Christ “before the foundation of the world.” His purpose was that we would be “holy and without blame.” Paul presents the doctrine of God’s purpose first, then our responsibility for living out the doctrine later in this epistle.

Holy and without blame – holy is *hagious* and means “separated.” Ancient Greeks understood the word to be used as something that was sacred and “dedicated to the gods.” Once chosen and dedicated to the gods, the thing was not to be used again for secular or common purposes. God’s purpose in choosing us from eternity past was that we should be dedicated to Him. We are a separated people, dedicated to worship God and serve Him forever. God also purposed before the creation of the world that we should be “without blame.” The Greek word is *amomous* and means “without blemish.” The translators of the Hebrew Bible into Greek (Septuagint) used the word *amoumous* to describe animals that were without blemish and therefore acceptable as sacrifices to God. That is our standing before God because of Christ. Humans are

not able to make themselves acceptable to God. He chose us before the creation of the world for the purpose of accepting us through the perfection of His Son.

Before Him in love – *katenopion* means “to see down in.” It is the idea of a deep and penetrating gaze into something. That is how God sees us. Hagar called God, *El Roi*, “You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees.” When Samuel was searching for the young man God would make the new king of Israel, the Lord said to him, “For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.” (1 Samuel 16:7) To stand “before” God is for Him to see deep down into the heart of our intent. He knows us better than we know ourselves. God chose us before Him “in love.” The word for love is *agape*. It is one of several Greek words translated “love,” but the noun *agape* and verb *agapao* are the dominant words for love used in the New Testament. In fact, Greeks in the ancient world rarely used the words *agape* and *agapao*. They are found primarily in the New Testament, leading some Greek scholars to think that Christians may have coined the word. *Agape* and *agapao* have the idea of “unconditional” love, which focuses on the one who loves rather than the one who is loved. It is not necessary for the one being loved to be worthy of that love. God loves the unlovely. *Agape* is primarily a “spiritual” love, rather than physical/lust (*eros*), mental/emotional (*phileo*), natural affection (*storge*), or deep desire (*thelema*). God was not under any “condition” to love us. His love is truly “unconditional.” Paul will explain this beautiful truth in more depth later in this epistle.

Having predestined us – It was in that unconditional love that God “predestined us” before the creation of the world. The word *proorisas* is aorist tense, active voice, nominative case, participle, which means that God determined, ordained in the past that He would do something to or for us. It is different than foreknowledge (knowing something beforehand). It is descriptive of God’s choice. Many Christians shy away from the doctrine of predestination because it has been so misunderstood and maligned through the centuries. *Proorisas* comes from the preposition *pro* and the verb *horizo*, which means “to mark out a boundary, define a limit.” When the preposition and verb are connected it means “before.” Predestination is something someone does “before” something else. In the case of God choosing us from before the foundation of the world, predestination is a type of decree. In the process of choosing us beforehand, God pre-determined something about us beforehand – thus the predestination or foreordination. In other places where the word *proorisas* or *proorizo* is used in the New Testament, it is used of God determining from eternity past.

To adoption as sons – What God determined in the past (before the creation of the world) was to “adopt” us “as sons.” The preposition *eis* is often translated as “with a view to” and signifies purpose or result. The act of God predestinating (foreordaining) is to the “adoption as sons.” The Greek word is *hiothesian*. Only the Apostle Paul uses it in the New Testament. He alone speaks of the adoption of sons. We will see later in Ephesians why he uses that specific word when speaking to Christians. Paul also uses the term in Romans 8 and Galatians 4. *Hiothesian* comes from *huios*, “a son,” and *thesis*, “a placing.” The Greeks understood

huiiothesian as a legal term, which meant “a placing in the condition of a son.” A child who did not have natural placement in a family would be adopted by the legal head of the family and placed into a legal position equal to that of a natural-born child. Under Roman law, the adopted son became a legal heir entitled to both property and the rights and burdens of civil status. The process of adoption was as real and as legally secure as the process of birth. That is what God chose to do to us from before the foundation of the world. He placed us into a real and legally secure position as “sons.”

By Jesus Christ to Himself – This adoption is “by” or “through” Jesus Christ to Himself – *dia Iesou Christou eis auton*. The preposition *dia* with the genitive case means “through, by means of.” It is often used with the genitive as the instrument used to accomplish something. God’s adoption of us as sons is “through, by means of” Jesus Christ. God “accomplished” His intent from before the creation of the world that we should be holy and without blemish before Him in love having predestined us to adoption as sons “by means of” His Son, Jesus Christ. The words *eis auton*, “to Himself,” speaks to the fact that the adoption of sons by Jesus Christ is to the God who predestined. How marvelous is that!

According to the good pleasure Of His will – “good pleasure” is *eudokian*. The Greek word comes from *eu* (well) and *dokeo* (to seem) and carries the idea of “gracious purpose, satisfaction with a good object in view, pleased with a choice.” God’s choice from before the foundation of the world to adopt us as sons was according to His gracious purpose- a purpose with which He was satisfied – as it came from “His will” (*tou*

thelematos autou). The word *thelematos* speaks objectively to that which is willed. The Greeks also understood it be a desire which came from a person's heart/emotions. God has deep feelings about His choosing us in Christ from before the foundation of the world. It is dominated by a sense of satisfaction based on what God willed to do based on His personal purposes. If someone asks why God chose them from eternity past to adopt them as sons, the answer is simple: it pleased Him to do so.

To the praise – *eis epainon* ... this is the strengthened form of *ainos* (a tale, narration), which developed in ancient Greece into the idea of praise, commendation. What is it that is to be praised and commended?

Of the glory of His grace – *doxes tes charitos autou* ... The word *doxes* (*doxa*) comes from *dokeo* (to seem). That makes *doxes* and *eudokian* (good pleasure) closely aligned. *Doxes* signifies the honor that results from a high opinion of someone or something. Paul and the other apostles use the word many times in their epistles to describe God, His Words and His Works. In the context of Ephesians 1:6, it is the glory of God's "grace." *Charitous* means "favor, kindness, gift, blessing, goodwill" and speaks of God's Divine Character. The glory of God's grace is what is to be praised and commended.

Look at what He has done for us! He chose us "in Him" before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will." Is it any wonder that He should be praised and commended?

By which He made us accepted in the Beloved – *es echaritosen humas en to egapameno* ... “by which” refers to God’s “grace,” which He freely bestowed on those He chose. The word translated as “accepted” is *echaritosen*. It also comes from the root word for “grace” and carries the idea of receiving blessings because of favor. God’s acceptance of us is based on His “grace.” The words *en to egapameno* are translated “in the Beloved.” *Egapameno* comes from *agapao* and is a participle in the perfect tense, which speaks of an action completed in the past that has present and, in this context, permanent results. It also demonstrates the degree of love that God has for “the Beloved.” Who is the “Beloved?” It is God’s Son, Jesus Christ. We are graciously favored and accepted by God in Jesus.

Observe – Write what you see

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.” Ephesians 1:3-6

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.
- 13.
- 14.
- 15.
- 16.

Question – Ask and answer questions based on observations

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

11.

12.

13.

14.

15.

16.

17.

18.

19.

Ephesians 1:7-10

“In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him.”

It’s important to remember that these verses are part of the same sentence Paul started in verse 3. There is no change to the context or thought pattern. Verse 7 is simply a continuation of what Paul was saying in verse 6. As we saw in Part 2 of our study, we are graciously favored and accepted by God in “the Beloved,” Christ Jesus.

In Him – this connects directly to “the Beloved” at the end of verse 6. In the sphere of the Beloved ...

We have redemption – *echomen ten apolutrosin* ... verb is present tense, durative in action – “we are having redemption”... “redemption” comes from the word *apoluo*, “set free, send away, send off” ... the Greek idea of redemption here is of “deliverance, release, setting free.” It was used for letting someone or something go free for ransom paid. The word *ten* is the definite article in the Greek, which points to the specific “redemption” that the writer and reader understand and the concept of

ownership. The person who paid the price for redeeming something could claim legitimate ownership of that something. Christians have their “redemption” (freedom paid by ransom) “In Him,” in Christ the Beloved.

Through His blood – *dia tou aimatos* ... the word “blood” comes from *aima*, “blood, death, murder” ... Jesus was murdered and His blood was the price paid to ransom us ... *dia* (through) is the preposition of intermediate agency ... “redemption” comes “through” the blood of Jesus Christ.

The forgiveness of sins – *ten aphasin ton paraptomaton* ... “forgiveness” comes from the root words *apo*, “from,” and *hiemi*, “to send” ... *aphasin* denotes a dismissal, release, cancellation, and is used for the remission of sins ... it was used during Bible times for things like releasing a prisoner and letting go of a debt ... “forgiveness” specifies the particular quality of “redemption” (Vincent) ... this word reminds us of the goat in the Old Testament that was offered as a sin offering on the Day of Atonement. The priest placed the sins of the Israelites on the goat (symbolically), then released the goat into the wilderness never to be seen by Israel again (Leviticus 16) ... “sins” is *paraptomaton* and means “a falling aside, transgression, wrongdoing, misdeed, deviation from truth and uprightness.” It speaks to results of our sinful nature.

according to the riches of His grace – *kata to ploutos tes charitos autou* ... the word *kata* is a preposition with the meaning of “down,” and is understood by the idea of “domination” and “control” ... the word *ploutos* means “wealth, abundance, preeminent, plentitude, riches” ... *charitos* is “grace, kindness, favor, benefit, blessing” ... it is the opposite of *krisis* and *krima*, “judgment” and “condemnation” ... though we are deserving of God’s judgment and condemnation, He forgives us completely dominated/controlled by His grace based on the redemption we have in the Blood of Jesus Christ. (Hallelujah!)

which He made to abound toward us – *hes eperisseusen eis hemas* ... the word “which” (*hes*) refers to God’s Grace (“riches of His grace”) ... “which He” (God) “made to abound” toward us ... the words “He made abound” comes from the single Greek word *eperisseusen* ... it means “to exceed a fixed number or measure, to cause to overflow in abundance, to be more abundant, to be in greater abundance” ... another way of understanding the use of the word is to say something is “more than enough” ... God has made “the riches of His grace” to “overflow in abundance” toward us ... “toward us” is *eis hemas* and means that the overflowing abundance of the riches of God’s Grace is aimed specifically at us. God manifested, or made known, His Grace to us in superabundance. We are the goal of God’s Grace!

in all wisdom and prudence – *en pase sophia kai phronesei* ... *sophia*, which translates as “wisdom,” was a very important word to the ancient Greeks ... it included the ideas of intelligence, ability to learn, practical and speculative wisdom, sound philosophical thinking, sound judgment in all matters of life, cleverness and skill in the arts and handicrafts, and unique abilities in mathematics and the sciences ... Greeks viewed *sophia* as the most noble wisdom ... *phronesei* comes from the word *phren* (the mind) and *phroneo* (to think with the mind, have a mindset) and means “to have understanding” ... the word was used by the ancient Greeks for both prudence in governing one’s personal life wisely and for practical wisdom ... Paul’s use of *sophia* and *phronesei* here in Ephesians speaks to both the ability to think wisely and the skill to use wisdom in the challenges and demands of life.

having made known to us the mystery of His will – *gnorisas hemin to musterion tou thelematos autou* ... the word *gnorisas* comes from the root *ginosko* and means “to come to know, to take in knowledge, to recognize, to understand” ... *musterion* comes from the root word *mueo*, “to initiate into the mysteries,” which comes from *muo* (to shut the mouth) ... it means “hidden thing, secret” ... Paul uses the word *musterion* six times in Ephesians, five times in 1 Corinthians, four times in Colossians, two times in Romans, two times in 1 Timothy and one time in 1 Thessalonians. The only other writer who used *musterion* multiple times was the Apostle John in Revelation ... the word has a different meaning in the Greek than the English word “mystery.”

Mysterion was used for something that was unavailable to people through natural means and could only be revealed through Divine revelation and illumination (thus the idea of information known by an initiate). Once revealed and illumined, the information was relatively easy to understand ... the “mystery” Paul wrote about here is the “mystery of His will” ... the word “will” is *thelematos* from the root word *thelo*, “to will, have in mind, intend, to purpose” ... the idea here is that God had a secret intention at a past time that He revealed at this time.

according to His good pleasure – *kata ten eudokian autou* ... this is the second time Paul has used the word *eudokian* (good pleasure) in context of what God does ... the first usage was in verse 5: “according to the good pleasure of His will” ... as a reminder, the Greek word comes from *eu* (well) and *dokeo* (to seem) and carries the idea of “gracious purpose, satisfaction with a good object in view, pleased with a choice.” In verse 5 and verse 9, the context is tied to God’s will. Verse 5 dealt with God’s choice from before the foundation of world to adopt us as sons. Verse 9 deals with the redemption we have through the Blood of Jesus, and the resulting forgiveness of sin, that is according to the riches of His Grace which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known to us the mystery of His will, which is dominated by “His good pleasure.” Isn’t that amazing! The will (desire, purpose) of God was dominated by His good pleasure. God’s decisions are not based on a “whim” of a sovereign, but are instead the reasoned intention of the loving God to bless us. God does what is good for us; that’s what drives His purpose and intent.

which He purposed in Himself – *hen proetheto en auto* ... the word *proetheto* comes from *pro* (before) and *tithemi* (to set, put, place) and means “a setting forth, to place before, to set before one’s self, to purpose, determine.” God purposed this good pleasure “in Himself.”

that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times – *eis oikonomian tou pleromatos ton kairon* ... the word “dispensation” is *oikonomian* and comes from the words *oikos*, which translates as “house,” and *nomos*, which translates as “a law.” *Oikonomian* is used nine times in the New Testament: six times by the Apostle Paul and three times by Luke in his Gospel account. Paul used the word three times in Ephesians. The literal translation of *oikonomian* is “house law.” Greeks in the 1st century AD understood the word to signify the management of a household. English translators have chosen to use “dispensation” and “stewardship” to explain its meaning. Though some people have understood the word to mean a period of time or era, the idea is how someone manages and administers a household. That includes purpose and planning on the part of the manager.

This “household management” is “of the fullness of the times.” The word “fullness” (*pleromatos*) is used 17 times in the New Testament: 12 times by Paul and 5 times in the Gospels (Matthew, Mark and John). *Pleromatos* is a singular noun in the genitive case. The idea of both fullness and fulfillment. It comes from the root word *pleroo*, “to make full, to fill up.” This particular “fullness” is “of the times” (*ton kairon*). The word *kairon* is a singular noun in the accusative case and means “a measure of time, a larger or smaller portion of time.” When used for time, *kairon*

signified a fixed or definite period, an epoch time, a season or opportune season. Paul wrote that God manages His household “of the fullness of the times.” For what purpose?

He might gather together in one all things in Christ – *anakepsalaivosasthai ta panta en to Christo* ... God’s purpose for managing His household of the fullness of times is so that He “might gather together ...” The word *anakepsalaivosasthai* is a combination of the words *ana* (an emphatic meaning “again”) and *kephalaioo* (“to sum up, gather together in one”). A key here is the word *ana*, since it speaks of gathering “again.” It is in the middle voice and means “to gather together in one, to reunite under one head.” God is going to gather again in one “all things in Christ.” What are those “all things”?

both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him – *ta epi tois ouranois kai ta epi tes ges en auto* ... God will gather together “again” in one all things in Christ “both which are in heaven and which are on earth” in Him. The word “heaven” is *ouranois* and was understood by Greeks of the 1st century AD to mean the visible heavens (e.g. blue sky, sun, moon, stars), the air (atmosphere), and the peculiar seat and abode of God (gods), of angels, and glorified spirits. The earth (*ges*) was used by Greeks for the planet, the land, country, region, soil, ground and mankind. God, in His household management of the fullness of times, will gather together again in one all things in Christ, which includes those things “in heaven” and “which are on earth” and He will do that “in Him.” God will do all of this “in” Christ. The Father does everything for His Son and The Son does all things for The Father. What this means is that all things in heaven

and on earth were once “together” in Christ and in the management of the “fullness of times” God will “again” gather together all things in heaven and on earth in Christ.

Observe – Write what you see

“In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him.” Ephesians 1:7-10

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.
- 13.
- 14.
- 15.
- 16.

Question – Ask and answer questions based on observations

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

11.

12.

13.

14.

15.

16.

17.

18.

19.

Ephesians 1:11-14

“In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.”

In Him also we have obtained an inheritance – *en ho kai eklerothemen*

... It's important to remember that we're studying one long sentence – one continual thought. The words “In Him” flow from “that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth” to “also we have obtained an inheritance.” Jesus Christ is the “in Him” that connects both the idea of all things being gathered again in Him to our having obtained an inheritance.

The Greek word *eklerothemen* is used only one time in the New Testament – here in Ephesians 1:11. It is a verb in the aorist tense, indicative mood, passive voice, which means we did nothing in the process of obtaining an inheritance at a past time. Watch how the Greek plays out.

Eklerothemen comes from the words *kleros* (to assign by lot) and *nemomai* (to possess) and carries the idea of being chosen by someone to be their possession (property). The word *eklerothemen* translates literally as “we were lot cast as [His] inheritance.” Another way of understanding this concept is that we were designated as a “heritage.” The idea in the Greek language is not that we did something to obtain an inheritance, but that we were made an inheritance, designated as a heritage. We are God’s heritage, His possession through the work of Jesus Christ on the Cross.

Everything Paul has shared with us so far about receiving all spiritual blessings is that it is what we have is all from God. He is the Actor and we are the receiver in all these blessings. He chose us by lot (*kleros*) out of (*ek*) to become His possession (*nemomai*). Why would God do such a thing? Remember what Paul wrote a few clauses before – “having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself ...” God’s Will is mysterious and His choosing us is according to HIS good pleasure which HE purposed in HIMSELF. We members of the Body of Christ are the Lord’s prized possession. All glory to God!

being predestined according to the purpose of Him – *prooristhentes kata prothesin tou* ... Paul’s not done yet. He next tells us we were “predestined according to the purpose of Him.” The word “predestined” is *prooristhentes*, which comes from the words *pro* (before) and *horizo* (establish boundaries, limits). Greeks in the 1st century AD understood the word to mean pre-determining boundaries and limits and marking

them out. The word is a participle in the nominative case, aorist tense and passive voice. Someone else marked us out beforehand, establishing boundaries and limits, for the purpose of the One Who marked out the boundaries.

Paul used the word earlier in verse 5 – “having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will ...”

Paul used the words “predestined” and “purpose” twice in this long sentence and both of them in the same context. In verse 5, God pre-determined us to adoption as “sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will.” In verse 11, God chose us to be His inheritance “being predestined according to the purpose of Him.”

Another way of looking at this is that God chose us beforehand and did something about it. It reminds us of what Paul wrote in verse 4 – “just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world ...” What we are witnessing here is the great plan and purpose of Almighty God carried out in the heavens and on the earth with us – you and me – being His prized possession. We have a unique relationship with God through the Redemptive Work of Jesus Christ on the Cross – “In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.”

who works all things according to the counsel of His will – *ta panta energountos kata ten boulen tou thelematos autou* ... Paul continues the theme of what God does. He “works all things according to the counsel of His will.” The word *energountos* comes from *energes*, an adjective meaning “energized, full of energy,” and has the idea of being successful at accomplishing a work goal. Ancient Greeks understood the word to carry the idea of someone successfully carrying out a plan from one stage of the work phase to the next.

God is successful at working out “all things” (*panta* – every conceivable thing) “according to” (*kata ten* – dominated by) the “counsel of His will.” The word “counsel” is *boulen*, which has in it the idea of both intelligence and deliberation. It is intention as the result of reflection that speaks to the plan of God. *Boulen* is the counsel of God preceding His decision (Zodhiates) It speaks to a deliberate design. God had a plan to redeem a particular people as a prized possession even before He created the first person.

Note that this is the counsel of “His will.” *Thelematos* is used most often for the Will of God in the New Testament and means “that which is desired.” Greeks of the 1st century AD understood that *thelematos* was an expression of pleasure toward something. It’s important in understanding the “will” of God to see that His Will is part of His “desire.” God does all that He does according to the counsel of “His desire, His will.” God’s desire for us led Him to express His pleasure toward us in Christ redeeming us on the Cross from sin and death.

that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory – *eis to einai hemas eis epainon doxes autou tous proelpikotas en to Christo* ... “that” (*eis*) is a preposition often used to show a result. The word “trust” is *proelpikotas*, which comes from the words *pro* (before) and *elpizo* (hope for). This is another word that is found only once in the New Testament. It is a “hoped for before” (trust) in Christ. This “trust” is not the same word Paul will use later in Ephesians for “faith” and “believe” (*pisteuo*). Paul is addressing something else that was a part of God’s plan – “we,” a group of people who “hoped before” – possibly Jewish Christians, like Paul who hoped for Israel’s promised Messiah (*en to Christo* – in the Christ), who discovered God true plan in Christ as Lord and Savior of both Jews and Gentiles (a major theme in Ephesians as we will see later).

These “hoped before” people had a purpose – “should be to the praise of His glory.” *Epainon* comes from the Greek words *epi* (on, fitting) and *ainos* (praise). It means praise that is fitting, appropriate. It carries the idea of having an accurate recognition of something. *Doxes* comes from the Greek word *dokeo* (to seem) and means “opinion, judgment, view.” It is always used in the positive sense in the New Testament of having a “good opinion,” thus praise, honor and glory. Paul wrote that he along with others who had hoped before for the Christ had the purpose of being to the praise of God’s Glory.

In Him you also trusted – *en ho kai humeis* ... Paul is writing to a church (or churches) in Asia Minor made up of mostly Gentiles. That makes the words, “In Him you also trusted,” a contrastive comparison to his earlier words, “we who first trusted in Christ.” The word “also” (*kai*) supports the idea that Paul is presenting two groups here – one being Jewish believers who had hoped before for the promised Messiah and the other being Gentile believers. The Greek word for “trusted” is not repeated in verse 13 – *en ho kai humeis* translates as “in the ones also yes.” The idea of “trust” is understood in the context, though not repeated. after you heard the word of truth – *akousantes ton logon tes aletheias* ... The Gentiles were included as ones who “hoped” in the Christ “after” they “heard the word of truth.” Gentiles did not “hope before” for the Messiah because they had no part in the Messianic promise God made to Israel (more on that in chapter 2). They were included *akousantes ton logon tes aletheias*. The word *akousantes* (participle, nominative case, aorist tense, active voice) comes from *akouo* (to hear) and means “to pay attention, understand, perceive the sense of what is said, comprehend.” What they “heard” was “the word of truth” – *ton logon tes aletheias*. *Logon* (word) is more than just the name of a word. Ancient Greeks understood it to mean the “expression of thought.” The expression of thought the Gentile Christians had heard was “of truth” (*tes aletheias*). Greeks understood the word *aletheias* to be objectively what is true in anything being considered. It is “the reality lying at the basis of an appearance; the manifested, veritable essence of a matter” (Cremer); “truth as evidenced in relation to facts” (Zodhiates).

the gospel of your salvation – *to euaggelion tes soterias humon* ... Paul further defined the “word of truth” the Gentiles had as “the gospel of your salvation.” The Gospel (*to euaggelion*) means “good news” and Paul adds that it is the good news of *soterias humon* (salvation of you). Greeks in the 1st century AD understood *soterias* to mean “deliverance, preservation, safety, salvation” from physical dangers. *Soterias* comes from the word *soter*, which translates as “savior, deliverer, preserver.” Ancient Greeks and Romans were familiar with “saviors” in their mythologies, but there are many differences between those mythological saviors and the True Savior, Jesus Christ. The mythological saviors were personally flawed and often petty and selfish. Jesus Christ was/is personally Perfect and always serious and magnanimous. The differences between Christ and the mythological “saviors” of Greece and Rome would have been obvious from the teaching and preaching ministries of Christians in the 1st century.

in whom also, having believed – *en ho kai pisteusantes* ... Paul wrote that having believed in Jesus Christ for salvation, a major aspect of the “good news” of the Gospel is that Christians received “every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.” That included the Blessings from the Ministry of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise – *esphragisthete to pneumatic tes epaggelias to hagio* ... Ephesians is not the first time Paul taught or wrote about the Ministry of the Holy Spirit in the lives of Christians. In fact, Paul is not the first person to teach about the Holy Spirit. The doctrine (teaching) of the Holy Spirit began in Genesis 1:2

where He was “hovering over the face of the waters” of Creation. Jesus revealed His purpose for sending the Holy Spirit to the disciples (John 16:5-15), then sent Him on Pentecost to empower the disciples for their great ministry (Acts 2). Peter preached about the power of the Holy Spirit and warned disciples about the consequences of lying to Him (Acts 5). The apostles knew the importance of Christians being filled with the Holy Spirit for service (Acts 6) and Stephen spoke harshly to his enemies about their resistance of the Holy Spirit (Acts 7). The Holy Spirit demonstrated God’s decision to save Gentiles (Acts 10) and called Paul and Barnabas for the special mission of opening the door of faith for Gentiles (Acts 13).

One of the primary Ministries of the Holy Spirit is to “seal” believers. The word “sealed” is *esphragisthete* and comes from *sphragis* (a seal or signet). It is the first aorist passive indicative, which means believers were “sealed” by someone else at a past time. In this case, God sealed believers with His Holy Spirit. The seal or signet ring was used to signify ownership and security in the 1st century world. It had been done for centuries before and is still used today in many types of personal and legal situations. It also confirmed, proved and authenticated documents sent from one individual to another. The Holy Spirit residing in a believer is proof that the believer belongs to God.

Believers are sealed by “the Holy Spirit of promise” (*to pneumatic tes epaggelias to hagio*). The word “promise” (*epaggelia*) is another legal term and was understood as a summons or a promise to give something or do something. It comes from the words *epi* (upon) and *angello*

(announce, proclaim, messenger – as in an “angel”) and speaks to a fitting or appropriate message. The Holy Spirit is what was promised to believers. Remember what Jesus said in John 16: “Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.” And in Acts 1: “And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, ‘which,’ He said, ‘you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” Jesus promised He would send the “Promise of the Father” and He did what He promised. The Holy Spirit living in believers is the Lord’s “seal” of ownership and security.

who is the guarantee of our inheritance – *hos estin arrabon tes kleronomias* ... The Holy Spirit of God is “the guarantee of our inheritance.” The word “guarantee” in Koine Greek is *arrabon*. It is a very old word which may have come into use by the Greeks from the Phoenicians. It was originally earnest money that a purchaser would deposit as a promise that they would complete the purchase. If they did not complete the purchase, the purchaser would forfeit the earnest money to the seller. It is a type of “downpayment, pledge.” The modern Greek word *arrabona* is used for an engagement ring. It is the promise of a groom that he will complete the marriage promise and marry the bride.

What does the Holy Spirit guarantee? “our inheritance” (*tes kleronomias*) Paul used a similar word translated “inheritance” in verse 11 where he said that Christians are God’s inheritance, His heritage. The word he used here, *kleronomias*, means “inherited property, an inheritance.” The word is used 14 times in the New Testament – once each by Matthew and Mark, four times by Luke (2 in Luke and 2 in Acts) and nine times by Paul. Three of those uses are in Ephesians. The idea of Christians being “an inheritance” of God is an important theme of the epistle. The word was also used to designate someone as “an heir” of the inheritance.

until the redemption of the purchased possession – *eis apolutrosin tes peripoieseos* ... Paul said that the Holy Spirit is God’s guarantee that He will complete the purchase. The Spirit of God lives in the bodies of believers, and as such is a promise that God will complete the purchase and take them to be with Him forever. That’s why Paul wrote that the Holy Spirit is the guarantee of our inheritance “until the redemption of the purchased possession.” Christians are called “the redeemed” many times in Paul’s letters, but the fulfillment of our redemption is still future. The word “redemption” is *apolutrosin*, which comes from the words *apo* (from) and *lutroo* (to redeem). It means “to let go free for a ransom.”

Paul wrote that the Holy Spirit is the “guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession.” The words “purchased possession” are the one Greek word *peripoieseos*. Christians are the “purchased possession.” Jesus purchased us by redeeming us “through His blood” (verse 7). Our Lord’s Sacrifice on the Cross paid the price in full. This is another primary theme of Ephesians.

to the praise of His glory – *eis epainon tes doxes autou* ... The Work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Christian is “to the praise of His glory.” These are the same words Paul used in verse 12 when he wrote about those who were first to hope in Christ “should be to the praise of His glory.”

Observe – Write what you see

“In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.” Ephesians 1:11-14

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.
- 13.
- 14.
- 15.
- 16.

Question – Ask and answer questions based on observations

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

11.

12.

13.

14.

15.

16.

17.

18.

19.

Ephesians 1:15-18

Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints ... δια τουτο καγω ακουσας την καθ υμας πιστιν εν τω κυριω ιησου και την αγαπην την εις παντας τους αγιους

The Apostle Paul noted that he had heard of both the Christians' "faith (*pistin*)" in the Lord Jesus Christ and their "love" (*agapēn*) for all the saints. That is certainly the goal every pastor should have for members of their local church, the goal every parent should have for their children, and the goal every Christian should have for themselves and those believers with whom they fellowship. There is a special connection between our 'faith' in Christ and our 'love' for fellow believers. We are part of a unique family.

do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers ... ου παυομαι ευχαριστων υπερ υμων μνειαν υμων ποιουμενος επι των προσευχων μου

Paul wrote that he did not "cease" (*pauomai*) to give thanks for the Christians at Ephesus (and other churches). He mentioned those Christians (probably by name) in his prayers (*proseuchōn*).

that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory ... ινα ο θεος του κυριου ημων ιησου χριστου ο πατηρ της δοξης

Paul prayed to God the Father, who is the God of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Father of glory.

may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him ... δωη υμιν πνευμα σοφιας και αποκαλυψεως εν επιγνωσει αυτου

Paul prayed that God the Father would give Christians “the spirit of wisdom and revelation” in the “knowledge of Him.” The word “wisdom” is *sophias* and means “clarity, insight, skill.” The word “revelation” is *apokalypseōs* and means “uncovering, unveiling.”

the eyes of your understanding being enlightened ... πεφωτισμενους τους οφθαλμους της διανοιας υμων

Paul asked God to ‘enlighten’ (*pephōtismenous*) the ‘eyes’ (*ophthalmous*) of the Christians’ ‘understanding’ (*kardias*). This is a prayer for internal understanding that will lead to an improvement of the inner self. The word *kardias* addresses the mind, character, will and intention of an individual. That’s where Paul wants Christians to be enlightened.

that you may know what is the hope of His calling ... εις το ειδεναι υμας τις εστιν η ελπις της κλησεως

One purpose of that ‘enlightenment’ was that Christians would know what is the ‘hope’ (*elpis*) of God’s ‘calling’ (*klēseōs*). The word *elpis* means “confident expectation.” The word *klēseōs* means “invitation” and is always used for a divine calling in the New Testament.

what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints ...

αυτου και τις ο πλουτος της δοξης της κληρονομιας αυτου εν τοις αγιοις

Another purpose was that Christians would know what are the ‘riches of the glory’ of God’s inheritance in the saints. The word ‘riches’ is from the Greek word *ploutos*. It means ‘wealth, abundance.’ The word ‘glory’ is *doxēs* – ‘praise, honor, glory.’ ‘Inheritance’ is *klēronomias* and means ‘an apportioned inheritance based on being an heir.’

Observe – Write what you see

“Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saint” Ephesians 1:15-18

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.
- 13.
- 14.
- 15.
- 16.

Question – Ask and answer questions based on observations

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

11.

12.

13.

14.

15.

16.

17.

18.

19.

Ephesians 1:19-23

“... and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His 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 age but also in that which is to come. And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.”

Ephesians is known as one of the great “theological” writings of Scripture and is often given this general outline:

- Chapters 1 – 3 ... Doctrinal
- Chapters 4 – 6 ... Practical

In the first half of Ephesians, Paul explained the great “teachings” he received directly from God for the Church. In the second half of Ephesians, Paul explained the great “actions” God expects from His people.

It’s important to remember that good Theology is both “doctrinal” and “practical” at the same time. Wrong doctrine leads to wrong practice. Wrong practice often leads to wrong doctrine.

A church that emphasizes doctrine without practice can become a “dead” group of people accomplishing almost nothing good for God. A church that emphasizes practice without doctrine can become a “dangerous” group of people accomplishing the wrong things in the Name of God.

The best churches are those that emphasize both “doctrine” and “practice,” in balance. May we be that kind of church.

Ephesians 1:19-23

and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe ... και τι το υπερβαλλον μεγαθος της δυναμεως αυτου εις ημας ΤΟΥΣ ΠΙΣΤΕΥΟΝΤΑΣ

exceeding is a translation of the word υπερβαλλον (*hyperballon*) and means “to surpass, exceed, excel, transcend”

greatness is a translation of the word μεγαθος (*megethos*) and means “greatness, vastness”

power is a translation of the word δυναμεως (*dynameōs*) and means “strength, ability to perform, might”

believe is a translation of the word πιστευοντας (*pisteuontas*) and means “be persuaded, trust in, have faith in”

Paul’s point to the believing Ephesians was that God’s power is exceedingly great toward those who are persuaded to trust in Him.

according to the working of His mighty power ... κατα την ενεργειαν του κρατους της ισχυος αυτου

working is a translation of the word ενεργειαν (*energeian*) and means “action, productive work”

mighty is a translation of the word κρατους (*kratous*) and means “strength, might” .. comes from a root meaning of “to perfect, complete”

power is a translation of the word ισχυος (*ischuos*) and means “force to overcome, might, strength”

which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead ... ην ενηργησεν εν τω χριστω εγχειρας αυτον εκ νεκρων

worked is a translation of the word ενηργησεν (*enērgēken*) and means “accomplish, engaged in, energized, made to work”

raised is a translation of the word εγχειρα (*egeira*) and means “to waken, raise up”

dead is a translation of the word νεκρων (*nekrōn*) and means “lifeless, corpse, dead body”

and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places ... και εκαθισεν εν δεξια αυτου εν τοις επουρανοις

seated is a translation of the word εκαθισεν (*ekathisen*) and means “to make to sit down, to sit down”

right hand is a translation of the word δεξια (*dexia*) and means “right hand or side”

heavenly places is a translation of the word *επουρανιοις* (*epouraniois*) and means “heavenly realm, heavenly sphere”

Paul wrote that he wanted Christians to have their spiritual eyes enlightened so that they might “know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe.” Paul continued that these truths that he wanted Christians to “know” were according to God’s mighty power “which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places.”

It’s important to carefully review the context in ongoing Bible studies so Scripture is not seen as disconnected thoughts.

far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named not only in this age but also in that which is to come ... υπερανω πασης αρχης και εξουσιας και δυναμεως και κυριοτητος και παντος ονοματος ονομαζομενου ου μονον εν τω αιωνι τουτω αλλα και εν τω μελλοντι

far above all principality and power and might and dominion ... υπερανω πασης αρχης και εξουσιας και δυναμεως και κυριοτητος

far above is a translation of the word *υπερανω* (*huperanō*) and means “high above, far above”

all principality is a translation of the words πασης αρχης (*pasēs archēs*) and means “every kind of preeminent rule”

power is a translation of the word εξουσιας (*exousias*) and means “authority, delegated power”

might is a translation of the word δυναμεως (*dunameōs*) and means “ability to perform, might, strength, power”

dominion is a translation of the word κυριοτητος (*kuriotētos*) and means “lordship” .. used in the sense of divine or angelic lordship or domination

Paul introduced Christian readers to a hierarchy of angelic power by naming four tiers in the early part of his letter to the Ephesians. He returned to that hierarchal description at the end of his letter (Ephesians 6:12).

The conjunction και (*kai*) between each description demonstrates that supernatural connection:

- all principality and
- power and
- might and
- dominion

and every name that is named ... και παντος ονοματος ονομαζομενου

every name is a translation of the words παντος ονοματος (*pantos onomatos*) which means “every kind of authoritative name, character”

that is named is a translation of the word ονομαζομενου (*onomazomenou*) which means “calling upon the name of”

not only in this age but also in that which is to come ... ου μονον εν τω αιωνι τουτω αλλα και εν τω μελλοντι

this age is a translation of the words τω αιωνι τουτω (*tō aiōni toutō*) which means “era, the space of time this, perpetual”

that which is to come is a translation of the words τω μελλοντι (*tō mellonti*) which means “the one about to happen”

Paul used the word *aiōni* many times in his letters. He used the word to describe periods of time that were marked by spiritual or moral characteristics (W.E. Vine). The Greeks understood it to reference endless duration (Spiros Zodhiates) in the future or in the past (Strong's). Paul's reference to “this age” concerns the “present age.” His reference to “the one about to happen” concerns the “future age.” That's important to remember during your study.

- past age
- present age
- future age

And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church ... και παντα υπεταξεν υπο τους ποδας αυτου και αυτον εδωκεν κεφαλην υπερ παντα τη εκκλησια

And He put all things under His feet ... και παντα υπεταξεν υπο τους ποδας αυτου

put under is a translation of the words υπεταξεν υπο (*hupetaxen hupo*) which means “to place or rank under, arrange under”

all things is a translation of the word παντα (*panta*) which means “the whole, every kind of”

and gave Him to be head over all things to the church ... και αυτον εδωκεν κεφαλην υπερ παντα τη εκκλησια

gave Him is a translation of the words αυτον εδωκεν (*auton edōken*) which means “bestowed on Him, placed on Him”

to be head is a translation of the word κεφαλην (*kephalēn*) which means “to be the head, cornerstone, ruler”

over all things is a translation of the words υπερ παντα (*huper panta*) which means “beyond, above, every kind of, the whole”

to the church is a translation of the words τη εκκλησια (*tē ekklēsia*) which means “to the called-out assembly”

Paul wrote that God put everything, all things, under Christ’s feet and bestowed on Him the position of being the Head, the Ruler, over every kind of thing to His called-out assembly, the Church.

which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all ... ητις εστιν το σωμα αυτου το πληρωμα του παντα εν πασιν πληρουμενου

which is His body is a translation of the words ητις εστιν το σωμα αυτου (*hētis estin to sōma autou*) which means “which is the body of Him” .. the word σωμα can mean physical or figurative

the fullness of Him is a translation of the words το πληρωμα του (*to plērōma tou*) which means “the sum total, completion of Him”

who fills all in all is a translation of the words εν πασιν πληρουμενου (*en pasin plēroumenou*) which means “all in all filling, completing”

The Church is the Body of Christ, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.
Amazing!

Observe – Write what you see

“... and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His 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 age but also in that which is to come. And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.”

Ephesians 1:15-18

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.
- 13.
- 14.
- 15.

Question – Ask and answer questions based on observations

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

11.

12.

13.

14.

15.

16.

17.

18.

19.

Ephesians Chapter Two

We will look at Ephesians Chapter Two in the next part of our series, *Teaching Ephesians*.

Thank you for your interest in teaching the Book of Ephesians to your study group. Please contact us at gracelifethoughts@gmail.com if we can be of any help to you and members of your group.

Scripture taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

GraceLife © 1990-2019

The logo for GraceLife, featuring the word "GraceLife" in a bold, dark red, serif font with a slight shadow effect.