

**Ephesians Introduction AND 1:1-14**  
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**Author:** Ephesians is part of a grouping of four letters typically labeled the “Prison Epistles” (Colossians, Philemon, and Phillipians). Although sometimes disputed, the acceptance of Pauline authorship is consistently accepted in orthodox circles.

**Date:** A date of 60-62 A.D. seems to fit the historical timeline recorded in Acts and what we know of Paul’s life and first Roman imprisonment.

**Destination of Letter:**

The destination of the letter is the church of Ephesus in Asia Minor.

**Historical Perspective:**

- Ephesus was one of the largest cities in the Mediterranean world, the third largest in the Roman Empire, during New Testament times (200K-250K population), and it was the capital of Proconsular Asia, located on the Sacred Port and the river Cayster, and it was noted for its theater and its temple (the temple of Artemis/Diana).
  - ***The Temple of Artemis:*** The temple platform was larger than an NFL football field (180’ by 361’).
    - It was built of marble, and had Cyprus wood paneling, and cedar roof beams.
    - It was the largest building known in antiquity and was considered one of the seven wonders of the world.
    - Life in Ephesus revolved around this temple, and the worship of this goddess, so much so that the city was passed over by the Emperor Tiberius in 26 A.D. to be the temple warden of Tiberius – a temple dedicated to emperor worship – because the worship of Artemis permeated the entire city.
- The city’s original founding has an odd and mystical legend associated with it. According to this legend, the founders were having difficulty in selecting a site for the city. They consulted an oracle which told them that they should build a city wherever a fish and a wild boar should point out. Subsequently, while some fishermen were cooking a meal, a fish with a live coal jumped out of the fire, fell into some straw, and ignited a thicket occupied by a wild boar. Frightened, the wild boar fled and was followed to the very site where the temple of Athena was later built. In memory of this remarkable legend, an effigy of a wild boar stood beside the main street of the city as late as 400 A.D.
- During Paul’s day, Ephesus was known as the center for practicing and studying magic. The city was by far the most hospitable to magicians, sorcerers, and charlatans of all sorts.

**Paul’s History In Ephesus:**

- Immediately following Paul’s break-up with Barnabas, he and Silas re-visited the churches of Galatia and then naturally wanted to keep moving west into Asia Minor.
  - However, in Acts 16:6 we learn that the Holy Spirit forbade them to preach the word there at this time.
  - So, God has them bypass Asia Minor, and go to Macedonia and then work their way down through Greece all the way to Corinth (Acts 16-Acts 18:18).

- When Paul left Corinth in Acts 18:18, he briefly visited Ephesus where he reasoned with the Jews in their synagogue. He could not stay long because he wanted to keep a coming feast in Jerusalem, but he did plan on returning (Acts 18:19-21).
- Following Paul's return to Jerusalem, he came back to Ephesus as he had promised. He bumps into a dozen disciples of John the Baptist who had not yet heard of the fulfillment of the "One coming after John" that they needed to believe in. Once Paul shared that the One coming after John was Jesus Christ, they believed on him (Acts 19:1-7).
- Paul then moves into the synagogue where he spoke boldly with the Jews for three months (19:8). However, when the overall response began to turn hostile and negative (19:9), Paul moved his daily teaching to the school of Tyrannus and continued there for two years (19:9-10).
- After his ministry time in Macedonia, Paul wanted to get back to Jerusalem for the Day of Pentecost (20:16) AND he wanted to deliver the financial contributions of the Gentiles churches to the Jerusalem/Judaea saints (Romans 15:26-28).

### **Re-creating Paul's Movements for the Writing of this Letter:**

- While Paul was sitting in prison in Rome, contemplating his upcoming trial and potential work in the west, startling news from the east came: there was a new heresy in Colossae either making inroads with the church there, or about to make inroads with them.
- At about the same time, Onesimus (a runaway slave from Colossae) appeared before Paul with his confession of abandoning and robbing his owner, Philemon.
- At this juncture, Paul decided several things: (1) Write to the Colossians with appropriate warnings; (2) Write to Philemon, urging him to take Onesimus back, as a freeman—and even to prepare a room for the apostle himself; and (3) Finish the letter he had already started to church of Ephesus and have it sent with the other two letters.

### **Main Purpose for Writing:**

In a similar way to the Book of Romans, Ephesians was designed to be a brief summary of Paul's theology.

### **Main Themes:**

1. Believers need to know the value of the position that God has placed them in – IN CHRIST! – Our identification with Jesus Christ is emphasized close to 30 times in this epistle.
2. Believers need to understand and utilize the resources they have in Jesus Christ to live out their daily lives. – Watchman Nee artfully summarized the book of Ephesians through the phrase SIT, WALK, STAND.

### **V1-V2--Greetings**

### **V3-V14 – Our Riches IN Christ**

- ✚ (V3): "Blessed" means to speak well of, or worthy of praise. This word ends in *tos* emphasizing that God is "inherently worthy to be praised."

- This is **WHY** I believe that v3-v14 is one run on sentence – Paul took one breath and got out everything he could without stopping! He was so \_\_\_\_\_ by God.
- “Who has blessed us...” - The blessed God has blessed us! Because of the context, and the aorist participle, this reflects an action that has \_\_\_\_\_ been done! There are three prepositional phrases used to further explain this blessing of God:
  - **1<sup>st</sup> Phrase:** “Who has blessed us...*with* every spiritual blessing” – This describes the \_\_\_\_\_ God has blessed us with. This is a simple, but profound statement that believers presently possess \_\_\_\_\_ spiritual blessing that they can possess because of God’s doing.
    - Part of this package of spiritual blessings will be detailed in the following eleven verses. – It is safe to say that you possess more than you probably will ever realize or ever consistently \_\_\_\_\_ of!
  - **2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Phrase:** “Who has blessed us...*in* the heavenly places *in* Christ” – These two phrases describe the \_\_\_\_\_ God has blessed us.
    - The **WHERE** is the \_\_\_\_\_ to the whole section that follows as it describes the behind-the-scenes mechanism by which God poured out His blessings on each believer.
    - All of this is only possible, because God placed us IN Christ! We are in \_\_\_\_\_ with Him (1 Corinthians 1:30).
- ✚ (V4): “Just as” (kathos) – This conjunction is a compound word in the Greek implying manner, which describes a way in which something is \_\_\_\_\_ or happens.
  - In this case the “just as” is describing the \_\_\_\_\_ in which God has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places.
  - God accomplished this through a \_\_\_\_\_, through a position or location – IN Christ!
  - Notice a couple of things that the text DOES NOT SAY:
    - It DOES NOT SAY God chose us before the foundation of the world! It SAYS God chose us \_\_\_\_\_ HIM before the foundation of the world.
    - It DOES NOT SAY God chose us \_\_\_\_\_ Adam before the foundation of the world! It SAYS God chose us IN HIM (i.e., Christ) before the foundation of the world.
  - The choice is the \_\_\_\_\_ – IN Him! The choice is WHERE would God **secure** AND be able to **guarantee** the blessings He desired to bestow on believers. This is the manner or means by which God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing.
    - “Before the foundation of the world” - God in His infinite wisdom, knew this was exactly \_\_\_\_\_ He was going to do it, even before the foundation of the world.
    - “That we should be holy and without blame before Him in love” – This phrase describes the overarching \_\_\_\_\_ why God chose us IN Christ.

- It was in this \_\_\_\_\_ that God could solve our sin debt and righteousness problems – We could literally be holy and without blame before Him **ONLY** because He placed us IN Christ.
- ✚ (V5): “Having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself” – “Predestined” is a compound word (*proorizo*) meaning “to determine or decree beforehand.”
  - God determined \_\_\_\_\_ beforehand for those IN Christ. What specifically was it?
  - Notice the text – He predestined *US* to \_\_\_\_\_ *as sons* by Jesus Christ to Himself.
    - Now, what did “adoption” mean and what did it look like in Paul’s day? (Galatians 4:1-7)
    - In the Roman culture of Paul’s day, you adopted your OWN \_\_\_\_\_ children NOT someone else’s biological child.
      - You did NOT adopt someone \_\_\_\_\_ the family, you adopted someone ALREADY IN the family.
      - Adoption was the way you officially conferred an \_\_\_\_\_ upon one of your own children.
      - It generally happened after a “probationary” time which included observation of the child’s life, and an arbitrary decision by the Father – It was NEVER \_\_\_\_\_!
      - This is something God has pre-determined for every believer in Jesus Christ – How can He do this? – Notice the phrase “by Jesus Christ to Himself,” it is \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus Christ.
      - Paul says in Galatians 3:26 we are ALL “sons (*huios* and NOT just *teknon* – full heirs) of God through \_\_\_\_\_ in Christ Jesus.”
      - Paul also says in Romans 8:17 that if we are children (*teknon* – i.e., born into the family) then we are \_\_\_\_\_ with a full inheritance (this is a *huios* or son)!
  - So, if God is pre-determining that each believer will receive the adoption, i.e. their inheritance, what phase of our one salvation is He speaking of here? It is the \_\_\_\_\_ phase of our salvation, i.e., our glorification NOT our justification.
- ✚ (V6): Why did God do this? – “(V5b) According to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace,”
  - “Good pleasure” means a gracious purpose. God’s gracious purpose was to take unworthy, undeserving sinners, and put them in a spot (i.e., IN Christ) where they could experience \_\_\_\_\_ salvation and pure unmerited favor and blessing.
  - God’s favorable disposition is TOWARDS you and \_\_\_\_\_ you (Romans 8:31).
  - “By which” referring to God’s grace. God’s grace is what \_\_\_\_\_ the next phrase – “He made us accepted in the Beloved.”
    - Literally the phrase “made us accepted” means “God graced us” – He highly honored or greatly \_\_\_\_\_ us. Again, how? – IN the Beloved, i.e., IN Christ!

- ✚ (V7-V8): “IN Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins” – “We have” is a present, active, indicative meaning this is something that we presently and continuously \_\_\_\_\_!
- “Redemption” means to let go free for a \_\_\_\_\_, and the ransom paid was Jesus Christ’s blood.
  - Jesus Christ paid the exact price needed to free us from sin’s penalty, and thus we were provided the forgiveness of sins. Redemption is the cause, and forgiveness is the effect.
  - Notice, that IN Christ, we have the forgiveness of sins – this is NOT something that we have to continually \_\_\_\_\_ for, it is something we presently possess.
- Again, how could God do this? – “According to the riches of His grace” – The depths of God’s grace is \_\_\_\_\_.
- It is this very \_\_\_\_\_, in its limitless wealth, that God “made abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence.”
  - “Made abound” means to be in excess, or to exceed in number or measure. It literally means “so much that there are \_\_\_\_\_!”
  - And NOTICE how God did it – “in all wisdom” meaning with skillfully applied \_\_\_\_\_ and “in all prudence” meaning “good judgment as it relates to dealing with one’s own resources.”
- ✚ (V9-V10): “Having made known to us the mystery of His will” – God in His wisdom and prudence, made known or \_\_\_\_\_ something to us. He literally brought us into the know on something. What was it?
  - It was the “mystery of His will” – The word mystery (*mysterion*) as used in the New Testament, does not refer to something spooky or scary, but rather something that has been \_\_\_\_\_ in the present, which was NOT revealed in the past.
  - Making known this particular “mystery” was done according to God’s good \_\_\_\_\_ or His gracious purpose which He “purposed” in Himself.
    - The word “purposed” is a compound word in the Greek from “pro” meaning ‘before,’ and “*tithemi*” meaning ‘to place.’ Together, the word meant to set before someone, to set forth or before the eyes, or to \_\_\_\_\_ beforehand.
    - God designed *beforehand* this great plan of putting believers IN Christ, and He Himself executed the plan, and then \_\_\_\_\_ it with those who might benefit from it!
  - (V10): What specifically was God’s mystery that He made known? – “that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things IN Christ.”
    - At just the right time in human history, God sent forth His Son to do what only He could do – \_\_\_\_\_ the sin problem for all of mankind (Galatians 4:4).
    - The heretofore unrevealed truth (i.e., the mystery) is the \_\_\_\_\_ by which God would effect the salvation of those who would put their faith in God’s solution for sin. God would place those individuals in \_\_\_\_\_ with His Son to secure every blessing promised to them.

- Every saved person in any age of human history has their sins paid for in the \_\_\_\_\_ exact way – Jesus Christ died for their sins and paid their penalty!
- But WHEN will this dispensation be fully realized? – During the Millennial \_\_\_\_\_ beginning at Christ’s Second Coming.
  - Although God promised a Kingdom to the Jews in the Old Testament, the mystery is the way God would go about \_\_\_\_\_ this in bringing everything together in complete dependence upon the finished work of His Son, AND that His name is Jesus Christ – an identifiable man who lived in human history!
- ✚ (VII): “In Him also we have obtained an inheritance” – Again, notice the emphasis upon this blessing also found IN Christ.
  - “Obtaining an inheritance” means to cast lots, and the “lot” fell to believers. This is in the passive voice indicating that believers do not *earn* or *merit* this, but that God cast the lot for these believers by \_\_\_\_\_ them IN Christ.
    - Believers obtain an inheritance and they are spoken of as God’s inheritance at the same time.
  - Also, notice that “obtaining the inheritance” is spoken of in the past tense (aorist tense) and is something that the believer already possesses and/or something that God already possesses in the believer, although they are waiting for the actual fulfillment (i.e., during the Millennial Kingdom).
  - “Being predestined” – This is the second use of this word (*proorizo*) in this passage (see V5), and again it speaks of God predestining the inheritance (i.e., \_\_\_\_\_) of the believer, NOT their justification!
- ✚ (VI2): “That we who first trusted in Christ” – Paul uses a compound word here (*pro* + *elpizo*) meaning to hope in advance or to hope in before. He is speaking specifically about those men and women who believed the gospel \_\_\_\_\_ the Ephesian believers.
  - The fact that God predestined this group to obtain an inheritance and/or to be God’s \_\_\_\_\_ is the “thing” that is to the praise of His glory.
- ✚ (VI3-VI4): Notice, Paul gives the order here – hearing the gospel, \_\_\_\_\_ believing.
  - “Having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise” - Faith in Christ is the \_\_\_\_\_ prerequisite for being sealed by the Holy Spirit.
    - “You were sealed” means to seal, or close up and make fast with a seal signet such as letters or books that they may not be read.
      - Sealing of a package in Paul’s day, \_\_\_\_\_ or validated the contents and identified a package’s contents as coming from someone specific.
      - Putting one’s seal on an object indicated \_\_\_\_\_ of that object as well, so the Spirit’s seal on the believer indicates: (1) God’s ownership, (2) Security and Permanence (i.e., a done deal), and (3) God’s authority.
      - Because of the context in this passage, the believer, by being baptized into Christ, is safe and secure IN Christ, having been sealed \_\_\_\_\_ Him.

- (VI4): “Who (the Holy Spirit) is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession” – The Holy Spirit \_\_\_\_\_ is our seal and He remains (present tense) the guarantee of our inheritance (i.e. our new glorified bodies).
  - “Guarantee” means a down payment or \_\_\_\_\_ money. It stood for part of the price paid beforehand to confirm the surety of the future finalized transaction.
  - This gives great assurance to the believer that if God has given the Holy Spirit as an earnest money deposit, He will \_\_\_\_\_ and could never take Him away and send an unfaithful believer to hell.