



Women Pursuing Christ Through His Word

## Ephesians Lesson 1 Chapter 1

*After being arrested in Jerusalem, Paul began a journey as a prisoner to Rome. He had written a letter to the church in Rome (Romans) earlier in his ministry and had told them to pray that he would get to come and visit them (Romans 15:30-32). He undoubtedly never dreamed his visit would be in chains under Roman guard. These unusual circumstances would be the way God would fulfill His promise to Paul that not only would he suffer for the name of Jesus, but he would preach the Gospel before kings (Acts 9:13-15) and in Rome (Acts 23:11).*

*While in prison in Rome, Paul wrote four letters: three to churches and one to his friend and co-worker Philemon.*

*Philemon was a prominent person in the church in Colosse. He was sending Philemon's slave, Onesimus, back to Colosse to appeal for forgiveness for Onesimus' running away from his master, Philemon. Onesimus would be traveling with Tychicus who was one of Paul's closest friends. On the way to Colosse, they would deliver Paul's other letters to Ephesus.*

### **EPHESIANS**

*Aquila and Priscilla had established a church in Ephesus. Paul had met Priscilla and Aquila while preaching in Corinth on his second missionary journey. They had come to Corinth from Rome because the ruler, Claudius, had commanded all Jews to leave the city. They were tent makers like Paul and became close co-workers. They traveled with Paul to Ephesus as he was returning from his second missionary journey. He had to leave Ephesus after a short stay but promised to return if God was willing (Acts 18:18-21). He did return to Ephesus on his third missionary journey*

*and stayed 2 ½ to 3 years. During that period he strengthened the existing church, evangelized both Jews and Greeks, and wrote several letters to the other churches he had started in other regions (Galatians and 1 Corinthians).*

*Ephesus was a thriving port city located 3 miles from the coast of Asia Minor. Because of its accessibility, it was a center of political and commercial development. The city was famous for its worship of the goddess Artemis, also called Diana. The temple of Diana was so spectacular it was*

*known as one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Statues of Artemis show her having multiple breasts which were a symbol of her fertility. Worship of her promised long life, sexual fulfillment, and protection during pregnancy and childbirth. She was served by hundreds of religious prostitutes, eunuch priests and virgin priestesses who engaged in erotic rituals. Ephesus experienced great wealth due to the fact that her temple became the world's largest bank during the time of Paul. Those devoted to her came from all over the world and held festivals of celebration and worship which included music, singing, dancing, and dramatic presentations.*

*followtherabbi.com. "Journey through the World"*

*Despite the pagan influence in the city, Paul and his companions were able to evangelize and build up a large Christian following. Unfortunately, toward the end of his time there, a silversmith by the name of Demetrius rose up and gained a following that opposed Paul. Their business' of selling silver idols of the goddess were being threatened by Paul's ministry. Demetrius created an uproar so significant that Paul was forced to leave (Acts 19). He wouldn't go to Ephesus again but was able to secretly meet with several of the church elders on his fateful trip to Jerusalem (Acts 20:17-38). Several years later he would write this letter to the church from his prison cell in Rome.*

#### *Facts about the book of Ephesians*

- Written by Paul to the saints in Ephesus*
- Written around 60-62 A.D.*
- Written to encourage the church to walk in truth and holiness in the midst of a corrupt society surrounded by pagan shrines and temples (4:1-3), and to assure them that his imprisonment was not a deterrent to the ministry of the gospel (3:13).*
- Paul's first experiences at Ephesus are recorded in Acts 18:18-21 & 19-20:2 during his second missionary journey.*

## **READ EPHESIANS CHAPTER 1**

- 1. Paul states in v. 3 that we have been blessed with "every spiritual blessing" in Christ and then he lists some of those in the verses following. Give several of those blessings that Paul mentions in vs. 4-14.*

2. In v. 4, the word “chosen” means “to pick or select, or to choose for oneself.” By whom, and when and why were we “chosen” in Christ? See also Colossians 1:22, 2 Thessalonians 2:13, and 1 Peter 2:9.

“...to the saints who are at Ephesus...”  
is used 15 times in Ephesians

Ephesians 1:1  
Ephesians 1:4  
Ephesians 1:13  
Ephesians 1:15  
Ephesians 1:18  
Ephesians 2:19  
Ephesians 2:21  
Ephesians 3:5  
Ephesians 3:8  
Ephesians 3:18  
Ephesians 4:12  
Ephesians 4:30  
Ephesians 5:3  
Ephesians 5:27  
Ephesians 6:18

3. “Predestined” means “to mark out beforehand, to determine before or to foreordain.” According to vs. 5-6, what motivated God to adopt us? See also 1:12,14.

(NASB)



The present reality of the believer’s adoption into the family of God is release from the slavery of sin and the law, and a new position as a free heir of God. Entering into salvation brings the rights and privileges of free sonship: “For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, ‘Abba, Father’” ( Ro 8:15 ). Paul tells the Galatians that Christians were redeemed from the law so that they might receive adoption as sons. As a result the Holy Spirit comes into the believer’s heart crying, “Abba, Father” ( Gal 4:5 ). The intimacy of a relationship with God the Father in contrast to the ownership of slavery is a remarkable feature of salvation.

Baker’s Evangelical Bible Dictionary

4. Read Ephesians 2:8. How is grace involved in your salvation? Why is it important to know this?



### Word Study

Verse 6 in the literal Greek says, “To the praise of the glory of the grace of Him by which He graced us in the beloved one; in whom we have redemption through the blood of Him, the forgiveness of trespasses, according to the wealth of the grace of Him.” Definition: Grace-charis- favor of God given freely and without merit.



*“The concept of grace is unknown among the pagan gods, idols, cults and false religions invented by man. All those who practice these false religions to some degree are seeking to merit or earn the right to heaven. However, true biblical Christianity is in a class all by itself because salvation is received by FAITH based on solely the GRACE of God.”*

*~Cooper Abrams*

5. *What is the “mystery” that Paul is referring to in v. 9? See Romans 11:25-29; Ephesians 3:1-9 and Colossians 1:25-27.*
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. *Paul is stating that the Gentiles are now heirs to the promise of salvation just as the Jews were.*
  - a) *How is this possible? See Romans 4:9-17.*
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b) *Where would we be if God hadn't done this? See Eph. 2:11-13.*
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. *According to vs. 13-14, what assurance do we have of receiving our inheritance? See also Romans 8:9-17.*

8. *Besides being the seal of our salvation, what work does the Spirit do? 1 Peter 1:2; 1 Corinthians 12:1-13; Galatians 5:16-17. List others with verses.*

9. *In vs. 15-19, list Paul's prayer requests for the Ephesians. In your group, discuss what you think each one means.*

a) *vs. 17-*

b) *vs. 18-*

c) *vs. 19-*

10. *From vs. 20-23, describe Christ's position since the resurrection*

***Prayer requests:***

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***Group time notes:***

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