



Sunday August 28, 2016
Ephesians ch 1 : Blessed With Every Blessing

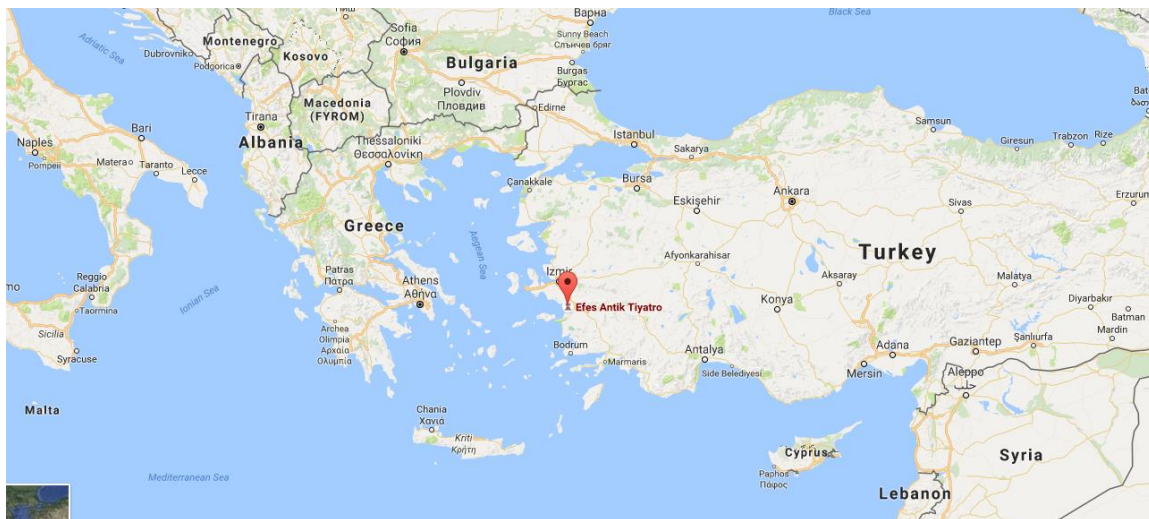
We begin an exciting study through the book of Ephesians

First we will cover a little background to the place, people, their coming to the faith and about Paul's epistle to the Ephesians.

Ephesus

The city of Ephesus was an important city in Asia Minor, one of the first and greatest metropolis in Asia, with an estimated population of about 225,000.

Located on the east coast of modern day Turkey, it was a sea port town. Ephesus was an ancient Greek city, three kilometres southwest of present-day Selçuk in İzmir Province, Turkey.



The temple of Diana in Ephesus, was the largest building in existence at that time, and was one of the seven wonders of the world. The temple was constructed of pure marble, with marble-paved street leading up to it. Its construction took about 220 years. The temple housed the statue of the multi breasted goddess, Diana, whom the Ephesians believed fell from the sky (Acts 19:35).

Paul's ministry at Ephesus



Paul briefly stopped at Ephesus during his second missionary journey (A.D. 49 - A.D. 52; Acts 15:36 – Acts 18:22)

- From Cehchrea Paul sailed across the Aegean Sea to Ephesus (Acts 18:18-10).
- Paul preached in the synagogue at Ephesus (Acts 18:19) but did not stay very long at Ephesus this time because of his plan to reach Jerusalem. He left Aquila and Priscila at Ephesus (Acts 18:19) and moved ahead towards Jerusalem.
- Aquila and Priscilla meet Apollos at Ephesus and taught him the things of the Lord Jesus. They later sent Apollos to Corinth recommending him to the believers there. Apollos was a great blessing to the believers at Corinth (Acts 18:24-28).

On his third missionary journey (A.D. 53 - A.D. 58; Acts 18:23 – Acts 21:15) Paul came back to the city of Ephesus, where **he spent about 3 years**. Paul preached in the synagogue for three months (Acts 19:8), withdrew from there and then reasoned daily in the school of Tyrannus (Acts 19:9) for about two years and the Word spread across all Asia (Acts 19:10).

The "seven churches of Asia" in Revelation 2 and 3 (Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea) were all in this region and may have been established during this time. While Paul taught at the lecture hall of Tyrannus, his coworkers and others would have evangelized and established work in other cities.





A record of what happened during this 3 years is given to us in Acts 19.

Lets read Acts 19:1-41, Acts 20:1

This record gives us insight into how God worked through Paul to establish the work at Ephesus and also about the people and the challenges there in Ephesus.

- Paul began work with a few disciples of John the Baptist. They had not heard of what the Lord Jesus had done. So Paul ministered to them, got them baptized in water and also prayed for them and they were baptized in the Holy Spirit speaking in other tongues and prophesying.
- Unusual miracles took place through Paul at Ephesus (Acts 19:11-12). There was a great turning to the Lord when news of the failed exorcism attempt by the seven sons of Sceva spread. People repented and turned away from witchcraft and black magic (Acts 19:17-20). A strong work was established in Ephesus.
- At Ephesus he trained many young leaders, **Sopater** of Berea, **Aristarchus** and **Secundus** of the Thessalonians, and **Gaius** of Derbe, and **Timothy** from Lystra, and **Tychicus** and **Trophimus** of Asia (Acts 20:4) and **Erastus** from Corinth (Acts 19:22, Romans 16:23). He also met **Philemon** and **Epaphras**, both from the city of Colossae, about 100 miles East of Ephesus. The church in Colossae was established by Epaphras. **Titus** was also part of this team that worked with Paul at Ephesus during this time.
- Paul also raised up **leaders at Ephesus**, later referred to as Elders or spiritual overseers to shepherd the believers at Ephesus.
- While at Ephesus Paul wrote the epistle to the **Galatians**. He also wrote **1 Corinthians** to address the problems in the Corinthian church, which he had been informed about. Paul informed the Corinthians that he had a great opportunity to preach at Ephesus, although there was much opposition. (1 Corinthians 16:8,9).

Later on the same third missionary journey, Paul came to Miletus (Acts 20:15). Miletus was approximately 28 miles south of Ephesus. Paul called the elders from the Church at Ephesus to Miletus and delivered a powerful message to the elders of the church (Acts 20:17-38). From this passage, it appears that Paul worked and ministered while at Ephesus.

Lets read Acts 20:17-38, as this gives us Paul's review of his nearly three years of ministry at Ephesus.

Paul's letter to Ephesus



Paul journeyed to Rome and was in Roman imprisonment (A.D. 60 - A.D. 63; Acts 27:1 - Acts 28:31).

Luke and Aristarchus travelled with Paul from Jerusalem to Rome. Timothy was also with Paul during his time of Roman imprisonment.

Imprisoned in Rome (Acts 28:16-30), Paul wrote Colossians, Philemon, **Ephesians**, Philippians (called the 'prison epistles').

Paul's epistle to the Ephesians is somewhere about 3 years since he had last been with them. It is a powerful revelation of what God has done for us in Christ, and how we have to live as believers.

Ephesus in later years

Timothy appointed to pastor the church at Ephesus

Following Paul's release from his first Roman imprisonment (A.D. 63 - A.D. 67), it is likely that Paul may have travelled with Timothy to Ephesus at this time and left Timothy to oversee the work at Ephesus, while Paul went on into Macedonia (1 Timothy 1:3).

Paul wrote 1 Timothy, most likely from Macedonia to encourage Timothy at Ephesus (A.D. 67).

Once Paul returned to Rome, he was imprisoned. Paul wrote his last epistle, 2 Timothy (A.D. 68).

1 and 2 Timothy also bring to us understanding about the life of the Ephesian church and Paul's direction to Timothy on how to take care of the local church at Ephesus.

Revelation chapter 2

The Lord Jesus speaks to the church at Ephesus (A.D. 90)

BEFORE WE BEGIN

What if someone put Rs. 10 million into your bank account?

The cash is not in your hand. It is in your bank account.

When you login to your bank account you see the balance amount displayed?

When you get your bank statement, you see the amount in print.

But the cash is not in your hand.

Will you be happy?

What if the person who gave you the money, said :

1, that you had to follow a certain process to withdraw the money

2, that you can use about 5 million now and 5 million out in the future
would you still be happy?

Ephesians Chapter 1



So with this background, let's begin our study of Paul's letter to the Ephesian church where he shares powerful revelation of what God has done for us as believers in Christ, and how we are to live as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let's read through the entire Chapter 1, first.

Ephesians 1:1 Paul, **an apostle** of Jesus Christ **by the will of God**, To the saints who are in Ephesus, and **faithful** in Christ Jesus:

An apostle by the will of God - an apostle is a sent one. There are apostles in the Church today, as we will see later in chapter 4.

Believers are called saints meaning "sanctified, set apart or holy" ones. Do you live as a "saint", a sanctified, set apart, holy one to the Lord.

The believers in Ephesus were also "faithful" toward the Lord, and hence Paul recognizes this character. Are you "faithful" to the Lord?

Ephesians 1:2 **Grace** to you and **peace** from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Grace and peace is extended to us from God our Father and our Lord Jesus.

We also need to pray, bless and release grace and peace to one another.

Ephesians 1:3 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**,

We have been blessed with every blessing that comes from God. All blessings that God releases is given to all of us as believers. This is our inheritance which we have received in the heavenly realms - meaning part of what is ours in the spiritual life we have in Christ. God intends for us to walk in these blessings in the natural world.

"in Christ", through our union with Christ. This is an important revelation in the New Testament describing what God has done for the believer.

Ephesians 1:4 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**,

Even before the foundation of the world God knew us and hence "chose" us. He did not choose us in the making of our choice, but chose us, in the sense that He knew who would make what choice, and He determined that those who made the choice to believe in Jesus would be the once "chosen in Him"...for these people He declared that they would be "holy and without blame" in His eyes because of His love.

We are holy and without blame before Him. Hence we are free, confident and full of joy and liberty in our relationship with Him. This is a work of His grace. Something He planned even before the foundation of the world.

However, it does not mean that if we sin, do something wrong, God does not see the wrong we do. (Remember, the Lord Jesus rebuked the Ephesian church and told them to



repent in Revelation 2). If we sin, we confess and get it cleansed by the blood according to 1 John 1:9.

Ephesians 1:5 having **predestined us to adoption** as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,
*Predestination is not pre-determination.
Predestination is foreknowledge of our choice.
Romans 8:29-30 reveals what God purposed before hand for those who would believe.*

Ephesians 1:6 to the praise of **the glory of His grace**, by which **He made us accepted in the Beloved**.

*His grace is an expression of His glory -the nature and works of God.
We are "accepted in the Beloved" , in Jesus. We do not work to be "accepted" by God.
We are already "accepted", welcomed into His family, presence and into everything He has!*

Ephesians 1:7 In Him **we have redemption through His blood**, the forgiveness of sins, according to **the riches of His grace**

Ephesians 1:8 which He made to abound toward us **in all wisdom and prudence**,
We now have redemption. We are now the redeemed of the Lord through the blood of Jesus.

We see another aspect of God's grace - the riches, immeasurability - of His grace. His grace is abundant.

All that God did in redeeming us and extending grace to us, is really a work of His wisdom. This is God's wisdom at work.

Ephesians 1:9 having **made known to us the mystery of His will**, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself,

God has revealed His will and the glorious plan that He is working out for the human race. This was a mystery (hidden) in times past, but now has been revealed to us.

Ephesians 1:10 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.

We see that God works with a "time" in mind. At the right time He will bring all things back to Himself and the way He wanted it to be. Just as we know that God sent Jesus in the "fullness of time" (Galatians 4:4) - not too early, not too late.

Ephesians 1:11 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,



We have obtained, all of us have received an inheritance - a wealth of spiritual blessings that he mentioned already in 1:3

Here again we have the word predestined - something God purposed before hand for all who will choose to believe in Him

God works with purpose.

Ephesians 1:12 that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

Ephesians 1:13 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,**

Ephesians 1:14 who is **the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession,** to the praise of His glory.

As believers we are sealed with the Holy Spirit. The seal is a "mark of ownership". We are His. The Holy Spirit is a guarantee of our inheritance - a guarantee of all that we will receive in the future. Part of our inheritance and redemption we enjoy now. Part of our inheritance and redemption we will enjoy in the future. The Holy Spirit is our guarantee.

Ephesians 1:15 Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints,

Ephesians 1:16 do not cease to give thanks for you, **making mention of you in my prayers:**

Paul prays for the Ephesian believers. This is a prayer we can pray for ourselves as individuals and also pray for our local church.

Ephesians 1:17 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,**

Ephesians 1:18 **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 saints,**

Ephesians 1:19 and what is **the exceeding greatness of His power** toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power

Ephesians 1:20 which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,

Paul prays for the Holy Spirit to bring wisdom, revelation, understanding and enlightening to the believers in 4 things:

1, to know Him

2, to know the hope (purpose) to which we have been called

3, to know the immense ("riches of the glory", glorious wealth) inheritance - blessings - He has for the saints [Note: some may also present this as the saints being His inheritance]. Other translations:



*"the blessings God has promised his holy people are rich and glorious" (ESV)
"you will discover the glorious blessings that will be yours together with all of God's people." (CEV)
4, to know that the power available to all believers is the same resurrection power that overcame all of death and hell*

Ephesians 1:21 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.
Ephesians 1:22 And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church,
*This is where our Lord Jesus is, in the highest place.
He is head over all things "to" or "for" the church. The church derives and walks in the same authority as the head, here on earth.*

Ephesians 1:23 which is **His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.**
*The body is the completeness of Him
The Lord fills every part of His body with Himself. All of us are filled with Him.*

SUMMARY

In Chapter 1, Paul introduces us to the amazing spiritual inheritance we have as believers in Christ.
We are called saints
We are blessed with every spiritual blessing
We are chosen in Him
We are holy and without blame, always covered with His love
We are redeemed
We have an inheritance (abundant blessings)
We are accepted in the Beloved
We are recipients of His abundant grace and glory
We are sealed by the Holy Spirit
We have the guarantee of future inheritance and redemption
We belong to the One who is above all, and hence we draw our authority from Him
We are filled with Himself

We learn what to pray for believers, four important revelation that we need to keep growing in.

This chapter is like that 10 million in our bank account.
It tells us what God has "deposited into our account" in Christ.
There is a way to walk in this inheritance.



Part of this inheritance we enjoy here and now. Part of it will be given to us later, but we have the guarantee of our inheritance.

WHAT IS YOUR PRISON EPISTLE

As a side note keep in mind that Paul wrote Ephesians while in prison.

He could have spoken of how bad things were for him personally, and imprisoned everyone else in his own prison.

Instead we see him write about the glorious inheritance we have in Christ and the wonderful things God has done for us in Christ.

If you were to write an epistle while in prison what would it be? What would your prison epistle be?