

Blessings In Christ

Lesson 1

Ephesians 1:1-14

Background

Arrested in Jerusalem in A.D. 57 on the false charge of bringing a Gentile into the Temple courts (Acts 21:27-29), Paul spent two years in Caesarea in Roman custody. When he realized that the Romans were more interested in pleasing the Jewish leaders than in justice, Paul took matters into his own hands. He made an appeal to Caesar (Acts 25:11) which was accepted. Paul was sent to Rome where he was placed under house arrest in his own rented house, but still chained to a soldier. At the end of Acts (28:30, 31) Dr. Luke writes that Paul was allowed to preach the Gospel unhindered to all who came to him. During those years, Paul wrote letters, four of which have survived and are part of our New Testament.

The letter Paul wrote to the Ephesians has been dated between A.D. 60 - 61. Paul had founded the church in A.D. 53 - 54. He spent three years in the city of Ephesus and from there "*the whole province of Asia heard the gospel.*" (Acts 19:8-10)

Greetings - Ephesians 1:1, 2

Ancient letters began with the name of the sender followed by the name of the recipient(s) and a greeting.

1. In this letter, how did Paul identify himself? (Ephesians 1:1a)
2. What did he say about those to whom this letter was addressed? (Ephesians 1:1b)

Note: Look at the text note in your Bible regarding the words "in Ephesus." In some ancient manuscripts those words are not in the text. This will be discussed during lecture time.

3. Paul's standard greeting was grace (Gk. charis) and peace (Hb. shalom.) How did Paul say that grace and peace are brought together? (Ephesians 1:2)

Thanksgiving and Blessing - Ephesians 1:3-14

4. Why was Paul giving praise to God in verse 3?

The phrase "*in Christ*" is so important for the saints (believers) to understand that Paul used it 90 times in this short letter. This letter begins in the style of a Jewish blessing. "³*Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.* ⁴*For he chose us in him before the creation of the world....*"

5. What do you think Paul wanted to emphasize with this blessing?
6. As he continued this blessing, Paul was teaching what the believer has in Christ. Using verses 4b and 5:
 - What was God's plan for the believer?
 - What was God's motivation?
 - What did God predestine for the believer?
 - How is that accomplished?
 - What did Paul say regarding this plan?
7. Paul praised God's glorious grace that made all this possible. How did God extend that grace? (Ephesians 1:6)
8. Using verses 7 and 8, make a list of what the believer has in Christ.
9. Paul said that in the past God's will was a mystery, but now, in His time, God has revealed His purpose in Christ. What is that purpose? (Ephesians 1:9, 10)

Note: In verses 11 - 13 Paul used the words "we," referring to Jewish believers and the word "you," to referring to Gentile believers.

10. In writing how God's plan is being worked out according to His will, what did Paul say: (Ephesians 1:12 & 13a)
 - We were:

- For:
- You were:

11. What happens when someone believes the Gospel? (Ephesians 1:13b)

12. What promise was Paul referring to? (Acts 1:1-8)

13. In Ephesians 1:14 Paul described the work of the Holy Spirit for those who are in Christ.

- How did he describe the presence of the Holy Spirit?
- What does the Holy Spirit guarantee?
- For how long?

Paul ended his blessing with the words, "*to the praise of His glory.*"

Reflect:

14. Reread the spiritual blessings in verses 3-14 that belong to all who are in Christ. As you reflect on all these wonderful blessings, is there something that stands out to you? And if so, why?

Take a few minutes and write out a prayer from your heart thanking the Lord for these blessings.

Blessings In Christ

Handout for Lesson 1

Ephesians 1:1-14

Paul's Definitions

Word order is important because it shows what Paul was emphasizing.

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| Jesus Christ | Jesus first emphasizes His humanity and His sacrificial death on the cross. |
| Christ Jesus | Christ first emphasizes His deity , the Messiah, the anointed One of God. |
| Lord | Emphasizes His role of master in the believer's life. |
| In Christ | Position of the believer, it is not just a belief but a relationship. It refers to our salvation and all its benefits because of our relationship. |