

Paul's Letter to the Church in Ephesus – Part 1 (c. 60)

Ephesians 1–3

Greeting

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

Praise to God for Our Spiritual Blessings in Christ

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,
4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love
5 He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will,
6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.
7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace
8 which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight
9 He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him
10 with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, *that is*, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him
11 also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will,
12 to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory.
13 In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise,
14 who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of *God's own* possession, to the praise of His glory.

Thanksgiving for the Ephesians' Faith and Intercessory Prayer for Their Increase in Knowledge

15 For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which *exists* among you and your love for all the saints,
16 do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention *of you* in my prayers;
17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him.
18 *I pray that* the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,
19 and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. *These are* in accordance with the working of the strength of His might
20 which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly *places*,
21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.
22 And He put all things in subjection under His feet, [Ps 8:6] and gave Him as head over all things to the church,
23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

New Life in Christ—Salvation By Grace Through Faith

2:1 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins,
2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.
3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.
4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,
5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),
6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus,
7 so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

God's New Creation—A Call to Good Works

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God;
9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.
10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

The Inclusion of the Gentiles in the Promised Blessing

11 Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called “Uncircumcision” by the so-called “Circumcision,” *which is performed in the flesh by human hands*—

12 *remember* that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

13 But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

14 For He Himself is our peace, who made both *groups into* one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall,

15 by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, *which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances*, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, *thus* establishing peace,

16 and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity.

17 AND HE CAME AND PREACHED PEACE TO YOU WHO WERE FAR AWAY, AND PEACE TO THOSE WHO WERE NEAR; [Isa 57:19]

18 for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father.

19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God’s household,

20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner *stone*,

21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord,

22 in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

The Divine Mystery and Paul’s Stewardship

3:1 For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—

2 if indeed you have heard of the stewardship of God’s grace which was given to me for you;

3 that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief.

4 By referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ,

5 which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit;

6 *to be specific*, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel,

7 of which I was made a minister, according to the gift of God’s grace which was given to me according to the working of His power.

8 To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ,

9 and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things;

10 so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly *places*.

11 *This was* in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord,

12 in whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him.

13 Therefore I ask you not to lose heart at my tribulations on your behalf, for they are your glory.

Intercessory Prayer for Power, Love and Spiritual Maturity

14 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father,

15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name,

16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man,

17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; *and* that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,

19 and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.

20 Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us,

21 to Him *be* the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.

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Chronological Notes

1) Date.¹

- A) “The date for Ephesians depends on complex questions concerning authorship and provenance. If the letter was written during Paul’s Roman imprisonment, then it dates to 58–60. Since Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon appear to have been

¹ Andreas J. Kostenberger, L. Scott Kellum, Charles L. Quarles, *The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown*, (B&H Academic, 2009), p. 585.

written at approximately the same time and since Philemon belongs to the final phase of Paul's imprisonment (Phlm 1:22), a date of around the year 60 is reasonable."

2) Provenance.²

- A) See Kostenberger's extended discussion of the provenance of Philippians (pp. 563–565) for more details. I will be following a Roman provenance for the Prison Epistles.

² Kostenberger, pp. 563–565.