

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

Ephesians 1–3

Greeting

1:1 From Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus.

2 Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ!

Praise to God for Our Spiritual Blessings in Christ

3 Blessed is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms in Christ.

4 For he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world that we may be holy and unblemished in his sight in love.

5 He did this by predestining us to adoption as his sons through Jesus Christ, according to the pleasure of his will—

6 to the praise of the glory of his grace that he has freely bestowed on us in his dearly loved Son.

7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace

8 that he lavished on us in all wisdom and insight.

9 He did this when he revealed to us the secret of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ,

10 toward the administration of the fullness of the times, to head up all things in Christ—the things in heaven and the things on earth.

11 In Christ we too have been claimed as God's own possession, since we were predestined according to the one purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to the counsel of his will

12 so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, would be to the praise of his glory.

13 And when you heard the word of truth (the gospel of your salvation)—when you believed in Christ—you were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit,

14 who is the down payment of our inheritance, until 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, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints,

16 I do not cease to give thanks for you when I remember you in my prayers.

17 I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you spiritual wisdom and revelation in your growing knowledge of him,

18 —since the eyes of your heart have been enlightened—so that you may know what is the hope of his calling, what is the wealth of his glorious inheritance in the saints,

19 and what is the incomparable greatness of his power toward us who believe, as displayed in the exercise of his immense strength.

20 This power he exercised in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms

21 far above every 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 God *put all things under Christ's feet*, [Ps 8:6] and he gave him to the church as head over all things.

23 Now the church is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

New Life in Christ—Salvation By Grace Through Faith

2:1 And although you were dead in your transgressions and sins,

2 in which you formerly lived according to this world's present path, according to the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the ruler of the spirit that is now energizing the sons of disobedience,

3 among whom all of us also formerly lived out our lives in the cravings of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and 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 though we were dead in transgressions, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you are saved!—

6 and he raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus,

7 to demonstrate in the coming ages the surpassing wealth of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

God's New Creation—A Call to Good Works

8 For by grace you are saved through faith, and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God;

9 it is not from works, so that no one can boast.

10 For we are his workmanship, having been created in Christ Jesus for good works that God prepared beforehand so we may do 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” that is performed on the body by human hands—

12 that you were at that time without the Messiah, alienated from the citizenship 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 used to be far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

14 For he is our peace, the one who made both groups into one and who destroyed the middle wall of partition, the hostility,

15 when he nullified in his flesh the law of commandments in decrees. He did this to create in himself one new man out of two, thus making peace,

16 and to reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by which the hostility has been killed.

17 And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near,

18 so that through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.

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

20 because you have been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone.

21 In him the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord,

22 in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place 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 that was given to me for you,

3 that by revelation the divine secret was made known to me, as I wrote before briefly.

4 When reading this, you will be able to understand my insight into this secret of Christ.

5 Now this secret was not disclosed to people in former generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit,

6 namely, that through the gospel the Gentiles are fellow heirs, fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus.

7 I became a servant of this gospel according to the gift of God’s grace that was given to me by the exercise of his power.

8 To me—less than the least of all the saints—this grace was given, to proclaim to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ

9 and to enlighten everyone about God’s secret plan—a secret that has been hidden for ages in God who has created all things.

10 The purpose of this enlightenment is that through the church the multifaceted wisdom of God should now be disclosed to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly realms.

11 This was according to the eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord,

12 in whom we have boldness and confident access to God because of Christ’s faithfulness.

13 For this reason I ask you not to lose heart because of what I am suffering for you, which is your glory.

Intercessory Prayer for Power, Love and Spiritual Maturity

14 For this reason I kneel before the Father,

15 from whom every family in heaven and on the earth is named.

16 I pray that according to the wealth of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inner person,

17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, so that, because you have been rooted and grounded in love,

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

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

20 Now to him who by the power that is working within us is able to do far beyond all that we ask or think,

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.