

EPHESIANS

CHAPTER ONE

1. Who wrote this epistle? Who is the Author?

“Paul” identified himself as the sender in the first word of the first verse (Ephesians 1:1).

Of course, Jesus is the *“Author”* of salvation (Hebrews 5:9) and of our faith (12:2). He sent the Holy Spirit to guide apostles into *“all truth”* (John 16:13), so He is credited, always, as the source of inspiration.

2. What is the writer’s role and how did he obtain that position?

“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God” (Ephesians 1:1). Writing to a church that would need to test false apostles (Revelation 2:2), Paul is quick to assert he is an apostle and the Lord made him so.

An *“apostle”* is *“one sent forth”* (Vine). Jesus said we cannot receive Him if we don’t receive those whom He sent (John 13:20), and He said that Paul was sent (Acts 22:21; 26:17).

3. Who were the recipients?

“To the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 1:1).

4. Which other Scriptures refer to these recipients?

The establishment and early history of the church in Ephesus is recorded (Acts 18:18-21, 24-28; 19:1-20:1; 20:15-38). They had elders. Paul worked among them for three years.

Paul wrote the first Corinthian epistle from Ephesus (1st Corinthians 16:18).

Paul stationed Timothy to preach in the church of Ephesus (1st Timothy 1:3).

The church would eventually fall and need to repent (Revelation 1:11; 2:1-7).

5. Which New Testament book most closely parallels this one?

The book of Colossians, in many parts, matches the content of Ephesians. Colosse was a city not far removed from Ephesus.

6. What has the blessed God blessed His people with?

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 1:3). God does provide many material and physical blessings (Matthew 6:25-34), but those are beside the point (1st Corinthians 15:19)! God intends spiritual blessings for His people.

7. In whom are these blessings to be found?

“In Christ” (Ephesians 1:3). Despite the idea, held by many, that spiritualism is much broader in scope than religion, and so-called Christianity is but one religion among many, the reality is that spiritual blessings are exclusively in Jesus (John 14:6; Acts 4:12). Anything spiritual without Him is from an evil spirit, not a blessed one.

8. Wherein did God choose us?

“He chose us in Him” (Ephesians 1:4).

Access *“into Christ”* is via baptism (Romans 6:3; Galatians 3:27). God chooses those who are in Christ and we choose to be baptized into Him.

The certainty of one’s election is a personal duty (2nd Peter 1:10). God makes His choice through the calling of the gospel (2nd Thessalonians 2:13-14), but that gospel can be disobeyed (2nd Thessalonians 1:8) and its hope can be abandoned (Colossians 1:23). Election is according to grace (Romans 11:5) and grace is universally available (Titus 2:11), thus election by God is based on a response to His offer of grace.

God does elect (Romans 9:10-13), but whom He elects is a people (Genesis 25:20-23; Malachi 1:1-4), not persons, individually.

9. When did God make His choice?

The plan was set in place *“before the foundation of the world”* (Ephesians 1:4). The gospel was not developed by God as a reaction to sin, as depicted by John Milton in Paradise Lost. Rather, God knew before man sinned, even before man existed, that he would sin and need a plan for salvation (Acts 2:23; 2nd Timothy 1:9; 1st Peter 1:20). He created man in full awareness of what it would cost Him. That is love!

10. What is God’s intent for His chosen?

“We should be holy and without blame before Him in love” (Ephesians 1:4). The very purpose of the election by God is that we become what we were not outside of Christ: holy and blameless. This occurs in the church (Ephesians 5:26-27).

11. How do we become God's sons?

"Having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself" (Ephesians 1:5). In other Scriptures, the process is compared to rebirth (John 3:3, 5; 1st Peter 1:23), but here, and in other epistles (Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:5), it is likened to adoption. Either way, it is not through ordinary, natural means that man becomes God's child, for Christ is the *"only begotten"* of the Father (John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; 1st John 4:9). Thus, our entrance into the family must be different than His.

Adoption means we are treated as full members of the family (Ephesians 2:7).

12. With what does adoption accord?

"According to the good pleasure of His will" (Ephesians 1:5). God wills it and it pleases Him. There is no grudging obligation involved.

13. As a result of the adoption, what happens to God and what happens to the elect?

"To the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved" (Ephesians 1:6). His grace is praised and glorified while we gain acceptance. This necessarily implies that prior to adoption through grace, man is not accepted, but rather alienated (Colossians 1:21-23).

14. Define *"redemption."*

It literally means: *"to let one go free on receiving the price"* (Thayer). *"In Him we have redemption"* (Ephesians 1:7). Sin is captivity (John 8:24; 2nd Timothy 2:26), but Christ paid the price to set us free (Acts 20:28).

15. What is the cost of redemption for the elect?

“In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins” (Ephesians 1:7). Blood had to be shed (Hebrews 9:22) and no blood less than His could accomplish this (1st Peter 1:18-19)

16. How have *“the riches of His grace”* been *“made to abound toward us?”*

“According to the riches of His grace which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence” (Ephesians 1:7-8). Intelligence was abundantly involved in the process of human redemption; it is not strictly emotional

17. What has been *“made known?”*

“Having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself” (Ephesians 1:9). What once was a mystery is now a revelation (Colossians 1:26-27). That mystery pertains to the essential facts of the gospel (1st Timothy 3:16).

18. When did the mystery unfold?

“In the dispensation of the fullness of the times” (Ephesians 1:10). God accomplished what needed to be done in His Son at precisely the right moment in history.

The Law identified sin, demonstrating the need for a Savior (Galatians 3:19-25). It foreshadowed the New Testament (Colossians 2:11-17; Hebrews 10:1).

A generation was anticipating His coming (Matthew 2:1-2; Luke 3:15; John 4:25; 6:14; 11:27) because prophecies pointed to an imminent fulfillment (Daniel 2:26-45).

The Roman Empire ruled the majority of the occupied world (Luke 2:1) enabling ease of travel across maintained roads, while crossing borders would not have invited suspicion, and in which a common language was often spoken.

19. In the *“fullness of the times,”* what is God accomplishing in Christ?

“He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth — in Him” (Ephesians 1:10). Everything earthly and heavenly is brought together under Jesus’ authority (Matthew 28:18; Colossians 1:15-20).

20. Discuss the *“inheritance.”*

“In Him also we have obtained an inheritance” (Ephesians 1:11 NKJV). Most translations render the text similarly to this, but accuracy demands something else: *“In whom also we were made a heritage”* (Ephesians 1:11 ASV). Although many passages refer to the inheritance we obtain in Christ (Acts 20:32; Hebrews 6:11-12; 1st Peter 1:3-4), this is not one of them. Rather, this speaks of ourselves as being God’s own heritage, like the Israelites of old used to be (Deuteronomy 32:9; Psalm 4:3), and as we ought to perceive our own children (Psalm 127:3). Being his *“heritage”* means that we are *“His own special people”* (1st Peter 2:9-10).

21. With what does predestination accord?

“Being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will” (Ephesians 1:11). God has a *“purpose”* and a *“will”* that will,

inevitably, be satisfied (Isaiah 46:9-10; Psalm 135:6). His will is accomplished with our cooperation (Philippians 2:12-13).

Remember what was discussed earlier regarding election – that He chooses a people, not the persons who compose that people, which would undermine our free will. Predestination is the same – what He has determined aforetime concerns His people, no matter which individuals opt into that group.

22. Who *“trusted in Christ?”*

“That we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation” (Ephesians 1:12-13). Two groups are identified: *“We who first trusted”* and *“You who also trusted.”* These are the Jews and the Gentiles because the gospel went to the Jews first and later to everyone else (Romans 1:16; 2:2-10).

23. What preceded believing?

“You heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed” (Ephesians 1:13). Belief must always follow hearing (Romans 10:14, 17)!

24. What became of those who believed?

“Having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise” (Ephesians 1:13). To be sealed is to be completed and confirmed (Jeremiah 32:9-12; Esther 8:8; Daniel 6:17). God sealed those under the former covenant with circumcision (Romans 4:11), and His seal continues to confirm that God possesses His people (2nd Timothy 2:19). Being sealed with the Holy Spirit means that inspiration, Scripture, which is the

product of the Holy Spirit (2nd Peter 1:20-22; 2nd Timothy 3:16-17) guides us into behavior that conforms to God's will (Ephesians 4:30-32; Romans 8:14-17; Galatians 5:16-26)

25. What is the Holy Spirit doing for the believer's inheritance?

"Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory" (Ephesians 1:13-14). Being sealed with the Holy Spirit, meaning that we are receiving the words inspired of God's spirit and obeying them, is a guarantee, earnest, deposit, or down payment on our inheritance (2nd Corinthians 1:20-22; 5:1-6). Just as a down payment is offered in pledge that the balance will be paid (Genesis 38:17-20), so God sets His seal, His own Spirit, on those who will be ultimately redeemed in glory.

26. Reconcile these phrases: *"We have redemption"* (7) and *"until the redemption"* (14).

There is a sense in which God's people have already been redeemed, insofar as He has reconciled us to Himself through Christ's blood (Hebrews 9:12-15; 1st Peter 1:18-19), but there is another sense of future redemption in that we have not yet received our inheritance in the heavenly kingdom (Romans 8:23; Ephesians 4:30)

27. Whose *"possession"* are we?

"The redemption of the purchased possession" (Ephesians 1:14) refers to the church and everyone in it as belonging, possessively, to the Lord who redeemed us (Romans 14:7-9; 1st Corinthians 6:19; 2nd Corinthians 5:15; Galatians 2:20).

28. Why did Paul give thanks?

“Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, do not cease to give thanks for you” (Ephesians 1:15-16). Paul was writing them from prison (Ephesians 3:1; 4:1; 6:20), so he could not visit the Ephesians in person, but was gratified to receive reports of their faith and love. Those who preach and teach only want to know that those they’ve ministered to are progressing in grace (3rd John 4).

29. What requests did he petition God for on their behalf?

“Making mention of you in my prayers: 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, 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, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe” (Ephesians 1:16-19). He asked for their wisdom, revelation, knowledge, understanding, and enlightenment for, essentially, one object: to know the hope! That hope pertains to riches, glory, inheritance, and the Lord’s great power.

30. What “mighty power” has God “worked in Christ?”

“According to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, 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 1:19-21). God resurrected His Son and enthroned Him in heaven. No other work could ever excel this, so we can have confidence that the one who so worked will follow through on our hope!

31. How is the church depicted in relation to Christ?

“And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all” (Ephesians 1:22-23).

First, the church is the body to Christ as Head, and, second, it is His fullness.

The body/head analogy should arouse our suspicion against any church whose governance acknowledges a head of the church other than Jesus, such as in Catholicism. Moreover, it should trouble us that anyone would believe in more than one church pleasing the Lord since a Head would never have more than one body. Finally, it should impress upon us the submission owed by the church to Jesus.

That the church is the fullness of Jesus who fills everything should cause us to recognize its tremendous worth to the Lord. We must never minimize the value of the church.