

Studies

In

Ephesians

Lesson 04

Chapter One

Outline Of Chapter One.

I). Greetings vss.1-2.

II). Every spiritual blessing vss.3-14.

- a). The work of the Father vss.3-6.
- b). The work of the Son vss.7-12.
- c). The work of the Spirit vss.13-14.

III). A prayer for knowledge vss.15-23.

- a). Knowledge of Christ's person vss.15-17.
- b). Knowledge of Christ's work vss.18-19a.
- c). Knowledge of Christ's exaltation vss.19b-21.
- d). Knowledge of Christ's headship vss.22-23.

Notes On Chapter One.

I). Greetings vss.1-2.

Verse 1. “*Saints*” (plural adjective; Gk – *hagios*) –
basic meaning : to consecrate or set apart from common use
to sacred use.

Moral usage : to make clean; to render pure; to sanctify; to
make holy.

Key idea : set apart by God, for God.

“*Saints*” are not the spiritual elite in a congregation, a
minority of exceptionally holy Christians.

“*Saints*” are not those who have died and been canonized by the pope.

Saints – the holy ones; the set apart ones, are all God’s people (cf. Psa.16:3; 34:9).

Hodge : “*Saints* are those who are cleansed by the blood of Christ, and by the renewing of the Holy Spirit and thus separated from the world and consecrated to God.”

These “*saints*” lived in the city of Ephesus and were members of the church at Ephesus.

“*Faithful*” (plural adjective). This word does not describe a separate group of people in the Ephesian church. Paul is using both words, “*saints*” & “*faithful*” to describe the members of the Ephesian church.

“*Faithful*” – primary emphasis – belief. These saints are also believers in Christ Jesus. They have put their trust in Him for salvation.

Secondary emphasis – these saints are trustworthy and reliable Christians.

“**In Christ Jesus.**”

The following is the list of the “*in Christ*” appearances in vss.1-14.

1:1 “faithful **in** Christ Jesus.”

1:3 “in the heavenly places **in** Christ.”

1:4 “He chose us **in** Him.

1:6 “freely bestowed on us **in** the Beloved.”

1:7 “**in** Him (lit. Whom) we have redemption.”

1:9 “which He purposed **in** Him.”

1:10 “all things **in** Christ.”

1:10 -11 “**In** Him **in** Whom also we have obtained.” (see your NASB marginal notes.)

1:12 “first to hope **in** Christ.”

1:13 “**In** Him (lit. Whom), you also.”

1:13 “you were sealed **in** Him with.”

1:5 “adoption as sons **through** Jesus Christ.”

1:7 “we have redemption **through** His blood.”

“**In Christ Jesus**”. “This key expression of the letter thus occurs in its very first verse. To be “*in Christ*” is to be personally and vitally united to Christ, as branches are to the vine and members to the body, and thereby also to Christ’s people.” (*Stott*).

“Their relationship with Christ makes [the] difference to their life on earth.” (*Uprichard*).

“*In Christ Jesus* speaks of the One in whom they have been brought **together** into a living relationship.” (*O’Brien*).

“With the expression “*in Christ Jesus*” we encounter one of the most significant and difficult points in Paul’s

writings. Paul is not merely saying that these people believed in Christ; rather, they were *in Christ positionally*. This concept of being in Christ is one of – if not the – most important parts of Paul’s theology, for this is the center from which he understood and explained salvation.... This language expresses the oneness and the identity that a believer shares with Christ. Paul’s gospel is a gospel about union with Christ.” (*Snodgrass*).

“At the outset, then, Paul describes his readers first in terms of their being marked out by God to be His holy people, but also in terms of their believing response to the gospel, a response which is ultimately due to God’s gracious initiative as well.” (*O’Brien*).

Points to ponder :

- 1). These Ephesians were “*saints ... in Christ Jesus.*” They could not be saints apart from Christ Jesus.
- 2). There is no suggestion in Paul that there are “faithful saints” and “unfaithful saints”. This would just be the same as saying there are “believers in Christ Jesus” and “unbelievers in Christ Jesus.” The primary emphasis is that you cannot be a saint unless you are a believer in Christ Jesus, that is, unless by faith, you have become united to Christ Jesus.
- 3). These Christians were united together in Christ because they were believers together in Christ and saints

together in Christ. Their standing in Christ, their commonality in Christ and unity in Christ must be seen and emphasized. The expression of the gospel in our culture must be rooted in and naturally flow from the depth of our relationship with Christ and one another, and not from the use of mere words that we have labeled as “gospel” or “evangelistic”.

- 4). **In Ephesus ... in Christ.** These believers were in two realms :
 - a) they were in Ephesus;
 - b) they were in Christ Jesus.
 In one sense there was nothing special about them. Most likely they looked and dressed as other Ephesians. But what the world did not see, they knew. They were special. They were in Christ Jesus. God had taken them and joined them to Christ and made them into His special people set apart unto Him.
- 5). **“Christ”** is not a surname. At Pentecost Peter emphasized in his sermon to the Jews that Jesus is “*both Lord and Christ*”. (Acts 2:36). Peter was saying that Jesus is their promised Messiah. It was blasphemous to the Jews to identify the crucified Jesus as their promised Messiah. Paul has indeed come a long way, from hating Jesus and violently persecuting those who identified Jesus as their promised Messiah, to declaring that Jesus is the Messiah, not only of the

Jews but of Gentiles also. Paul's letter was addressed to a predominantly Gentile church.

Verse 2. Ancient letters began with the name of the one writing the letter followed by the name of the one the letter was being sent to. Then came the greeting. The normal Greek letter began with the greeting “**rejoice**” (Gk. *chairein*). This greeting was used during Jesus' time.

Matt.26:49 (Gk. *chaire*) Judas greeting Jesus.

Matt.27:49 (Gk. *chaire*) The soldiers' mocking greeting.

Matt.28:9 Literal : “Jesus met them, saying, *chairete.*”

Acts 15:23; 23:26 “Greetings” (Gk. *charein*).

Paul did not adopt this greeting. Paul purposefully chose the radically richer *charis* greeting. Note the closeness of the spelling and sound of both words : *chaire*; *charis*. Paul also chose not to use the Jewish greeting of “**mercy and peace**”. (see Jude 1:2). For the combination of “**grace mercy and peace**”, see 1Tim.1:2; 2Tim.1:2; 2Jn.1:3. “**Grace and peace**” would become the distinctive Christian greeting. (see also : 1Pet.1:2; 2Pet.1:2; Rev.1:4).

“**Grace**” lies at the heart of Paul's theology and speaks of the unmerited or undeserved favor of God. With respect to salvation, grace is God's unmerited or undeserved favor in

providing salvation for sinners through Christ's sacrificial death. (*Hoehner*). *Uprichard* noted, “**Grace** speaks of God's unique favor to which man cannot respond in kind. **Grace** in Paul's theology comes to mean the total involvement of the divine favor in salvation.”

Grace appears **12** times in Ephesians. (1:2, 6, 7; 2:5, 7, 8; 3:2, 7, 8; 4:7, 29; 6:24.) Grace was no mere introductory cliché. It is the gospel in one word. The object of this grace is “**you**”, the recipients of the letter. Paul desires the Ephesians to appreciate, accept, and appropriate God's undeserved favor.

“**Peace**”, in both Hebrew and Greek, has a very broad meaning and its meaning must be determined by its context. The general Hebrew idea is “**well-being**”. “**Peace**” appears **8** times in Ephesians (1:2; 2:14, 15, 17 [x2]; 4:3; 6:15, 23). The predominant ideas are that of the sinner's peace with God (e.g. 2:14, 17) and the believer's peace with one another (e.g. 2:15; 4:3).

Grace expresses the cause, God's gracious work, and *peace*, the effect of God's work. The grace of God that brings salvation to sinners effects peace between them and God,

and that same grace enables believers to live peaceably with one another. (*Hoehner*).

Paul's words of greetings are characteristically followed by the expression, "**from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**" (see Rom.1:7; 1Cor.1:3; 2Cor.1:3; Gal.1:3; Phil.1:2; 2Thess.1:2; Phile.1:3; cf. the variation in 1Tim.1:2; 2Tim.1:2).

The preposition "**from**" indicates the source of the **grace** and **peace** as being from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. "**God our Father**" carries the idea, "*God who is our Father*". **Hoehner** tells us that the concept of God as Father is found only **15** times in the O.T. and over **260** times in the N.T. The concept of God as Father appears **45** times in Paul's letters. This shows us the prominence of the doctrine of God as Father in N.T. times.

Jesus used the most endearing term "**Abba! Father!**" (gk. *abba ho pater*) in Mark 14:36. Later on Paul used this expression, *abba ho pater*, to indicate that Christians were truly the children of God their Father. (Rom.8:15; Gal.4:6). Paul's emphasis is that grace and peace come to us from God who is not only called Father but "**our Father**". This points to the personal relationship we have with God. In emphasizing the above, we must not miss the fact that "**from**" tells us that the source of this grace and peace is from both the Father and the Son.

The Son is the **Lord Jesus Christ**. "**Lord**" (*kurios*) appears 26 times in Ephesians. In Eph.6:5, 9 *kurios* refers to "**masters**". In its secular usage *kurios* meant

"owner; master; political leader". In its religious usage *kurios* refers to God and is the Greek translation for the Hebrew *Yahweh*. Jesus is *kurios*. Peter put it well when he declared in his Pentecost sermon, "**Let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord (kurios) and Christ (Messiah) – this Jesus whom you crucified.**" (Acts 2:36).

II). Every spiritual blessing vs.3-14.

There are eight long Greek sentences in the epistle to the Ephesians. They are as follows : 1 : 3 – 14; 1 : 15 – 23; 2 : 1 – 7; 3 : 2 – 13; 3 : 14 – 19; 4 : 1 – 6; 4 : 11 – 16; 6 : 14 – 20.

1 : 3 – 14; 1 : 15 – 23; 3 : 14 – 19 are items of praise & prayer.

1 : 3 – 14. (see outline above).

First long sentence : **202** words.

Paul's opening paragraph is an outburst of praise to "*the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" (vs.3).

The ground for giving praise : "*who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in Christ.*" (vs.3).

These wide-ranging blessings are "**in Christ**" and received "**in Him**" (because of Him; through Him).

The thoroughly Christian dimension of this expression of praise is evident in the constant repetition of the phrase *“in Christ”*. All that God has done for His people, and for which He is praised, has been effected in and through Christ. (*O’Brien*).

Paul began to amplify on these blessings from vs.4 with the words *“just as”* (“even as”). The list of blessings then comes pouring out from Paul. In his list Paul referred to : election (vs.4); adoption (vs.5); God’s will (vs.5); His grace (vs.6); redemption (vs.7); wisdom (vs.8); the mystery (vs.9).

Three perspectives on time :

- 1). God’s activity in eternity (vss.3-5, 9, 11).
- 2). God’s activity in human history in Christ and in those who believe (vss.6-8, 11-14).
- 3). The end of history, when all is summed up in Christ (vs.10).

Christians are people who live in the present, founded on the past, and pulled by the future.

Three key participles :

- 1). *“Blessed us”* (lit. “having blessed us”) (vs.3).
- 2). *“Predestined us”* (lit. “having predestined us”) (vs.5).

- 3). *“Made known to us”* (lit. “having made known to us”) (vs.9).

These participles emphasize one major point : the goodness of God revealed in His desire to choose a people for Himself and represent significant steps in the movement of the paragraph.

Emphasis on the Triune God.

*“The divine saving purposes from eternity to eternity which are celebrated in Ephesians 1:3-14 are clearly set forth as the work of the Triune God. **First,** the origin and source of ‘every spiritual blessing’ which believers enjoy is ‘the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ’ (vs.3), who is also ‘our Father’ (vs.2). His initiative is seen at every point : it is He who has ‘blessed us’ (vs.3), ‘chosen us’ (vs.4), ‘destined us to be His sons and daughters’ (vs.5), ‘lavished His grace upon us’ (vss.6, 8), made known to us His plan and purposes for the world (vss.9-10), and accomplishes all things in accordance with His will (vs.11). There is also significant mention of God’s love, grace, will, purpose, and plan.*

*“**Secondly,** the sphere within which the divine blessing is given and received is God the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. In the first fourteen verses of this letter the name or title ‘Christ’ (or its equivalent or a*

personal pronoun) occurs no fewer than fifteen times. The phrase 'in Christ', 'in whom', or 'in Him' appears eleven times. It is in Christ, that is, because of our incorporation in Him, that God has blessed us. It is in Him that both Jewish believers, who have become God's people, and Gentile Christians, who have been sealed as belonging to God, now belong to the redeemed humanity. In Christ it is God's intention to bring everything back into unity under His rule (1:9,10).

“Thirdly, the Spirit's presence is in view at both the beginning and ending of the paragraph. He stamps His character on every blessing (they are 'spiritual', vs3), and He marks God's ownership and serves as the guarantee of the fulfillment of His purposes (vs.14).

“Within this framework of the Triune God's activity, however, there is a threefold emphasis in the eulogy. The theocentric thrust is dominant throughout the passage. God is the origin and source of salvation as well as its goal. As we have seen, His initiative is evident throughout the eulogy. His gracious electing plan shapes past, present, and future. The ultimate goal is that God Himself may be glorified – hence the refrain 'to the praise of His glory' (vss.6, 12, 14).

“There is an important Christological dimension to the paragraph as well. Christ, who is the mediator and 'sphere' of divine blessing, has the Father's glory as His goal.

“Finally, there is a stress on believers as undeserving beneficiaries of God's gracious saving work. Again and again Paul speaks of 'us' and 'we' as the people of God who have been 'blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ'.... Paul includes himself along with his readers within the first person plurals. At the same time, the apostle has all of God's people in mind, both corporately and individually. God as the origin and goal of salvation, Christ as its mediator, and believers as its recipients – these themes give the passage a threefold theocentric, Christological, and ecclesiological focus.” (O'Brien).

Points to ponder :

Reality & Worship. “Why do people fail to live in relation to God and to serve Him? Is it not because most of the time we view God as a remote Being, cut off from us and not involved with us – a Being whose expectations are not important, at least not in the reality we know. Ephesians more than any other book seeks to show that God is not remote, that He has been and is active for us, and that He will affect both individuals and the church by what He does.

“The gospel is an expression of reality, actually an assault on the reality we know. Reality is not just this world, but includes God’s purpose in this world and the next. As Walter Wink reminds us, *“To worship is to remember Who own the house.”* If we have some perspective that the “real reality” in which we live has to do with a God who values us and has been active for us, our lives by necessity change. Suddenly, what God expects becomes important.

“This is the reason why worship and praise are so crucial. They give opportunity for us to tell the truth about ourselves and God. In worship a community recreates its own soul; it reestablishes who it really is. In worship we reject what is pseudo-real and inadequate to define us, and we affirm the “real reality” of God, His salvation, and human responsibility. [Unfortunately, in actuality too many communities only mirror themselves in worship and do not encounter God].

“Our prayer and worship must always have a theological character, reminding us who God is. [In prayer we convey our understanding of God back to God]. Rather than prayer being our list of needs for this pseudo-reality, it must describe God and His reality and thereby draw us closer to God. The God

we worship is not a remote God. He is a Father to us (vs.3), and we are His children (vs.5). Life is lived before Him (vs.4), and His Spirit has been given to us (vss.13-14). Life is relational, both in relation to God and in relation to other people. This passage focuses on life as relation with God. People often fear they will miss something in life if they live in relation to God. What they will miss is the distortion and perversion of life without God and the heart-break that results. Life with God is not some minimalist approach to life; rather, God’s Spirit has brought every privilege. I am convinced that the key to worship is ... in experiencing God ... [with] eyes sensitive enough to discern God and His work. Knowledge of God leads to wonder and worship.” (Snodgrass).

Homework :

Memorization : Review verses 1-4.

Memorize verses 5-8a

Textbook : Read again pages 5-11.