

**The Epistle to the Ephesians**  
**(Special English Edition)**

Prepared by William S.H. Piper, D.D.  
For Rogma International, Inc.

Copyright 2001 by Rogma International, Inc. All rights reserved.

---

**THE DOOR TO THE HEAVENLIES**

Ephesians 1: 1-3

**INTRODUCTION**

In Lesson 1, we placed the emphasis on the fact that Ephesians was by far the least personal of Paul's letters. Because of this fact, many people think, and I agree, that Paul intended the Epistle to have a much wider influence. Perhaps he wanted it to have an influence over the whole world as they knew it.

Lesson 1 showed us that Paul had a double purpose in writing this unequalled and powerful letter. First, God gave Paul a special responsibility to preach about the doctrine of grace (Ephesians 3:2). His earnest desire was to make that grace known to everyone (Ephesians 3:7-8). That is why the word "grace" is used so many times in the Epistle.

Paul's second purpose was just as important. He wanted people to know about the mystery of the Church. In the Old Testament people did not know about this mystery. This mystery was that Gentiles and Jews who believed in Jesus Christ form one body. This body was called THE CHURCH (Ephesians 2:14-17).

Lesson 2 will be devoted entirely to Ephesians 1:1-3. Topics for discussion include:

1. a close look at Paul's claim to be an Apostle.
2. the word "saints" – defined and discussed.
3. Paul's standard greeting – all of his epistles contain the words "grace" and "peace." We will try to see why these words are of such importance.
4. Paul's presentation of the two main phrases of this epistle: "in Christ" and "in the heavens." We will say much more about these phrases in later lessons.
5. Paul's presentation of the absolute truth that Christ is God. This means that Christ is equal with God the Father.

**IMPORTANCE OF THIS LESSON**

It is important to see that these three remarkable verses hold the key that opens the door to the abundant riches of God's grace. God shows His grace in seven matchless gifts. God gives these gifts freely by Christ to all who believe. It is important to recognize:

- nothing in the Bible happens by chance. God plans everything.
- the depth of truth even in the short greeting.
- that Christ is absolute God.
- all believers are blessed with all spiritual blessings "in the heavens" "in Christ."

---

**THE LESSON**

**I. Ephesians 1:1 – "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints who are in Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus"**

- A. "Paul, an apostle..." – Let's stop right there. Can you say, "I know what an apostle is?" There is good reason for such a question. There are churches today that have the word "apostolic" in their names. Their leaders say that they have the authority of an apostle. They say they received this authority through others who received it from the apostles. I assure you, there are no biblical apostles today.

Qualifications of an apostle: **(MEMORIZE ALL THREE QUALIFICATIONS)**

1. The word *apostle* means *messenger*. An apostle in Scripture means a special messenger chosen and sent out by Christ with special orders and responsibilities (Matthew 10:6-14).

2. Christ Himself chose each apostle and gave them power (Matthew 10:1). In the case of Barnabas, he was chosen by the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:2-4).
    - a. Christ chose 12 men, gave them power, and sent them out to preach to Israel only (Matthew 10:5-6).
    - b. God chose and called Paul and after that God gave him the power to preach to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15). The apostles were messengers of the Kingdom of Heaven and God gave them special powers by which people knew that God made them apostles (Matthew 10:7-8).
  3. To be an apostle it was necessary for a person to see Christ after the resurrection. Paul also saw Christ after the resurrection (1 Corinthians 9:1).
- B. “of Jesus Christ” – Paul wanted everyone to know that God called him. Christ Himself chose Paul and gave him power. Paul possessed all that God required for a person to be an apostle. Paul had complete authority to serve and to speak as an apostle (Acts 9:15-23).
- C. “By the will of God” – We cannot overemphasize the importance of this statement. The phrase “by the will of God” indicates that God Himself called Paul to the apostolic ministry; therefore, Paul desired that every place he visited, everything he did, and every message he preached must be in the will of God. Paul was a great example as he tried to be like Christ. Christ came into the world to do the will of God (Hebrews 10:7). He said, “My meat is to do the will of Him who sent me” (John 4:34). In the garden He prayed “...not my will but thine be done...” (Luke 22:42). Christ was obedient to God’s will unto death.
- ◆ *Every follower of Christ should make the will of God his first and unchanging purpose and desire.*
- D. “To the saints” – Due to your failures and weaknesses as a Christian, you may not consider yourself a saint, but if you have received Christ as your Lord and Savior that is exactly what you are!
  1. In the New Testament the word “*saint*” always refers to one who is set apart in Christ Jesus, and that includes every believer. See 1 Corinthians 1:2 and Hebrews 2:11.
  2. Saints are believers in Christ. God “set them apart” forever for His glory and work.
- E. The small words “to be” in Romans 1:1 and 7 were inserted by the editors. Paul was not “called to be an apostle” sometime, somewhere, somehow. NO! He WAS an apostle by God’s call and so it is with you and every believer. You are not “to be a saint” – you ARE a saint already by God’s call (Romans 1:7).
- F. “To the faithful” – This phrase does not refer to a different group of believers but is only a word that was chosen by Paul to describe the saints.
- G. “In Christ Jesus” – Here is the wonderful position of all believers. There are no words to describe this position completely. The phrase is found many times in this epistle and is one of the great keys to understanding Paul’s letter. I will refer to this phrase quite often in these lessons, therefore I’ll just say here that every believer is, by the grace of God, “in Christ Jesus.”

## II. Ephesians 1:2 – “Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ”

- A. “Grace be to you, and peace from God” – For Paul, grace and peace were inseparable twins. They were so precious to him, that he used them in every greeting in his Epistles. Let us see if we can put them together and learn why they were so precious to Paul.
1. Grace – the meaning of grace is so rich and deep that it is impossible to explain completely. I present two rather simple definitions:
    - a. Grace is the love of God, which He pours out on the believer in many and endless ways. We cannot measure this kind of love. God does not give His grace according to what we deserve, but according to His heart of love. A love we cannot measure. Note the first verse of the hymn, *AT CALVARY*:

“O the love that prepared the plan of salvation,  
O the grace that brought it down to man,  
O the great distance God closed at Calvary.”
    - b. Grace is the favor of God in Christ Jesus. God gives it to the believer without cost. A person cannot earn this grace.

- 1) Grace is free – If we can give something in exchange for grace, it is no longer grace. It becomes an exchange or trade (Romans 4:4,11:6; Galatians 2:21; 5:4).
  - 2) Grace is not deserved – God gives His grace without any thought of how great the sin is or what kind of sin a person committed. You cannot earn God’s grace. If God can accept works or a gift then grace is no longer grace. It is an award (Romans 11:6; Galatians 2:21).
  - 3) Grace is the favor of God – God is a God of grace. All blessings flow from Him. Grace is the outflow of God’s love. “God so loved... that He gave...” (John 3:16).
  - 4) In Christ Jesus – Christ is the person through whom we receive God’s grace. He is the One who brought grace down to man (Titus 2:11). In Christ the believer receives all of the benefits of God’s grace.
2. “and peace from God...” Whether it is “peace with God” (Romans 5:1), or the “peace of God” (Philippians 4:7), both are the fruit that comes from grace.
- a. Peace WITH God: Christ made it possible for us to have peace with God.
    - 1) Christ became our substitute, who was “made to be sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Corinthians 5:21).
    - 2) God brought us back to Himself through Christ. He brought us back to Himself by Jesus Christ. He did not charge our sins to us (2 Corinthians 5:19). Because of the work of Christ God does not charge our sins to us.
  - b. The peace OF God is ours to enjoy. We can receive this peace because we have believed.
    - 1) The Lord Jesus Christ promised it to us and gave it to us (John 14:27).
    - 2) We have the peace of God through the fruit of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit makes the Christian life a reality in our daily walk with God (Galatians 5:22; Isaiah 26:3; Philippians 4:7).
- B. “From God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.”  
I think what Paul wanted you to see here is that Jesus Christ is God totally and completely.
1. Remember that Christ existed from eternity, and that He is equal with God the Father (John 1:1,14).
  2. Jesus said, “I and my Father are one” (John 10:30).
  3. God the Father and God the Son worked in perfect agreement to accomplish our salvation.

### **III. Ephesians 1:3 – “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”**

- A. Note here again, the apostle calls attention to the fact that Christ is God. He emphasizes that both the Father and the Son share equally in fully accomplishing our salvation.
- B. Now we arrive at the most remarkable part of this lesson.  
Here Paul mentions, for the first time in this Epistle, the key phrase, “in heavenly places” We can also translate it “in the heavnlies.” We can describe the heavnlies as the environment in which the believer shares with Christ all that Christ is, all that He has, and all that He will possess in the future. For example, we share His joy (John 15:11), His peace (John 14:27), His wisdom (1 Corinthians 1:30), His life (1 John 5:12), His nature (2 Peter 1:4), His grace and strength (2 Corinthians 12:9), His relationships (John 20:17) and His future inheritance and glory (Romans 8:16-21).  
**(Memorize what the believer shares with Christ.)**
- C. “In Christ”  
The moment you receive Christ as your Savior, the Holy Spirit baptizes you into Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13). From that moment on God sees you as living “in Christ.” God accepts us, not because of what we are, but where we are (Ephesians 1:6).

**Ephesians**  
**Exam – Lesson 2**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Multiple Choice – Circle the letter in front of the correct answer. Only one answer is correct unless otherwise stated.

1. Two facts that make Ephesians 1:1-3 so important are: (**Circle two.**) (Value 10 points)
  - a. nothing in the Bible is accidental.
  - b. all believers are blessed with all spiritual blessings.
  - c. the omniscience of God the Father.
  - d. all believers have peace with God.
  
2. Paul uses the words “an apostle of Jesus Christ” because: (Value 5 points)
  - a. he had a false pride.
  - b. some people questioned his apostleship.
  - c. he wanted everyone to know that he was called by Christ.
  
3. The fact that Paul was an apostle “by the will of God” tells us: (Value 5 points)
  - a. that God gave him a special call to the apostolic office.
  - b. that Paul obeyed the Lord in everything.
  - c. that Paul was a very spiritual man.
  
4. The word “saint” in verse 1 refers to: (Value 5 points)
  - a. the believer.
  - b. preachers.
  - c. people who have been canonized.
  
5. A person becomes a saint by: (Value 5 points)
  - a. the Pope making him one.
  - b. doing many good deeds.
  - c. being born again.
  
6. The believer being “in Christ” refers to: (Value 5 points)
  - a. the believer’s position.
  - b. the believer’s privilege.
  - c. the believer’s future blessing.
  
7. Two definitions of God’s grace are: (**Circle two.**) (Value 10 points)
  - a. the love of God given to the believer without measure.
  - b. saying a prayer before eating.
  - c. the mercy of God given to the believer without measure.
  - d. the unmerited favor of God to the believer.

8. Peace WITH God is established: (Value 5 points)
  - a. through reconciliation with God.
  - b. by practicing the fruit of the Holy Spirit.
  - c. through obedience to the Word of God.
  
9. The peace OF God is established: (Value 5 points)
  - a. through reconciliation with God.
  - b. by practicing the fruit of the Holy Spirit.
  - c. through obedience to the Word of God.
  
10. What happens the moment a person receives Christ as Savior? (Value 5 points)
  - a. The Holy Spirit baptizes him into Christ.
  - b. The Holy Spirit enables the person to speak in an unknown tongue.
  - c. The person loses all desire to sin.
  
11. By “in heavenly places” Paul means: (Value 5 points)
  - a. the position in which the believer shares with Christ all that Christ is.
  - b. this is another name for heaven where believers will be with Christ.
  - c. simply the sky.
  
12. What phrase in Ephesians 1:1-3 shows us that Paul believed that Christ was God? (Open Bible)  
(Value 5 points)

---

13. Name three qualifications of an apostle. (Value 15 points)

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
  
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
  
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

14. Mark all the things that the believer shares with Christ as mentioned in this lesson by circling the letter in front of the items that apply. (Value 15 points)
  - a. His joy
  - b. His righteousness
  - c. His love
  - d. His peace
  - e. His personality
  - f. His justice
  - g. His future inheritance