

General Study Of Ephesians – Part 1

Ancient letters typically had a prescript and blessing at the beginning.

Ephesians 1:1-2 [New King James] *“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus: grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”*

Paul identifies himself as the author and to whom it is written.

Although the prescript identifies Paul and the saints [believers] he is writing to, the words *“in Ephesus”* are missing in the best ancient manuscripts.

Paul was in prison, [**Ephesians 3:1**] most likely in Rome, when he wrote this letter. **Several scholars believe that Paul wrote this letter as a follow-up to the letter sent to Colossians. However, instead of sending it to any specific local church, Paul sent it as a circular letter, to be read by all the churches under his apostolic jurisdiction.**

Sometime after Paul’s death, when his letters were all collected, this circular letter somehow became associated with the church at Ephesus.

Perhaps their copy, with *“in Ephesus”* inserted, was one of the surviving copies used among the early collections.

In any case, scholars have viewed Ephesians as *“Queen of the Pauline epistles”* for its all-encompassing presentation of Jesus Christ’s relationship to the universal church and His purpose for it.

In the blessing section [Ephesians 1:3-14] are presented golden nuggets of blessings from God to His people in Christ.

We also find the praises or blessing from believers to God in response to those spiritual benefits.

The unveiling of God’s mystery is that from all eternity God has known the solution to humanity’s predicament with its cosmic consequences on account of sin.

God’s remedy is not something new or novel, it has always existed!

What is new is only its disclosure in time, space and history.

The heavenly disclosure is the *“good news”* that salvation is the gift of God in and through Christ alone.

Jesus Christ is the very centre of God’s divine purpose in bringing universal reconciliation in every sphere of life in heaven and earth.

In Him alone we have been chosen, adopted, redeemed, forgiven, sealed and consequently glorified.

Let us all humbly praise and thank God the Father for this.

Ephesians 1:15-23 [New King James] *“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, 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, 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. 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.”

As Paul continues with his letter, he pauses to give thanks to God and to intercede in prayer on behalf of all who will read or hear his letter read, [verses 15-16].

In the cosmic battle between forces of good and evil, a line must be drawn and allegiances chosen.

Paul knows all too well that believers can sometimes be lulled to sleep, let their guard down and take their faith in God for granted, which can lead to dire consequences.

It is easy to fall into the trap of giving only lip service to God while our heart drifts away.

The sure antidote for this malady is to come to know God in Christ more fully in a personal and loving way, [verses 15-17].

Paul then points all Christians towards the greatness of their Saviour Jesus Christ, who as the Word created all that exists in the universe, [verses 18-23].

Satan seeks to blind even Christians to the fact that it was through Jesus Christ that all things came to exist in the universe, by teaching the theory of evolution in all the educational system and trying to base all science on this false foundation.

John 1:1-5, 14 [New King James] *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.” ... “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”*

The Holy Spirit inspired teaching of John states the truth of how the universe came into existence.

Hebrews 11:1-3 [New King James] *“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good testimony. By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.”*

Our faith in God is founded on this fact of Jesus Christ creating all things out of nothing.

Romans 1:18-22 [New King James] *“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools,”*

The wrath of God is directed against all who teach the false concept of evolution.

[Please download and study the articles on this website under the main heading ‘*Evolution – The Delusion Of.*’ You will be eternally grateful that you did.]

To know the power of Jesus Christ is to know God!

Paul's thanksgiving and prayer is urgently needed in the Christian fellowship today.

The knowledge of what God has done and is doing for us in Christ is vital for a correct Christian worldview.

At some point in the beginning of human history sin entered into the world and with it physical death, [Genesis 3:1-6]. The result was humanity being cut off from their Creator, [Genesis 3:23-24].

Isaiah 59:2-4 [New King James] *“But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear. For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue has muttered perversity. No one calls for justice, nor does any plead for truth. They trust in empty words and speak lies; they conceive evil and bring forth iniquity.”*

All our sins, rebellion against the way of life that God expressed in His Commandments and expanded throughout His Word, the Christian Bible.

Ephesians 2:1-3 [New King James] *“And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.”*

Both Jews and Gentiles [those without the true God in their lives] are legally and spiritually dead as far as God is concerned.

However, God's love for humanity planned a way to save humanity from the end result of their sin, eternal death.

Ephesians 2:4-10 [New King James] *“But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”*

God freely gives salvation as a gift to all who have faith in what He has done for all humanity through the life, death and resurrection of His Son Jesus Christ, [John 3:16-17; Acts 4:12; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, 21-23].

God provides the content of our faith, that is, what we are to believe [Christ's death and resurrection], but we do the actual believing [no-one else can believe for you.] Faith is **not** a work, but the God-sought response of accepting and receiving what God provides, such faith is more than enough for our salvation, without the need to add religious rituals.

Abraham was justified, made right in the eyes of God, through faith in God's promises; we can also receive the same imputed righteousness through faith, [Romans 4:1-5, 23-25; Romans 5:1-5].

This new relationship with God produces a new creation in us, that is, new life in Jesus Christ, [Ephesians 2:10].

Our old sinful nature has been crucified, [Romans 6:6-8] our new life is centred on Jesus Christ working in and through us by the active presence of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ,

[Romans 8:9] creating in us the very character of Jesus Christ as we follow the Holy Spirit's lead.

Galatians 5:22-25 [NIV] *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.”*

This is how the original plan for all humanity is fulfilled in us personally.

Genesis 1:26-27 [New King James] *“Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’ So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.”*

The two different Hebrew words used opens up this original plan of God to our understanding.

The Hebrew word translated “*image*” is “*tselem*” meaning resemblance, shadow, outward form, material representation.

Note that in the original creation **only** the “*image*” was created.

The Hebrew word translated “*likeness*” is “*demûwth*” meaning manner, attributes, character.

As we know, character is **only** formed over a period of time in the presence of the One whose character we wish to reflect.

God has given every human being a period of physical life, with the ability to choose how we respond to events in order to take on the character of the Holy Spirit, who is One person of the Triune God, as we follow His lead.

This world seems to be spinning as fast as it can away from the One true Creator God and towards its own destruction.

Nevertheless, God's love has found a way each human can overcome the despair of evil, violence and death to the joy of the gift of eternal life in Jesus Christ, **[Romans 6:23]**.

Saved by divine grace and experience the joy of eternal life now.

1 John 5:11-12 [New King James] *“And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.”*

As we experience now the very reason for the gift of eternal life, [John 17:3] an ever-closer relationship with Jesus Christ and God the Father.