

# Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, January 8, 2025 – First Baptist Church Buda  
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study

T H E B O O K O F

EPHESIANS

*How to live the Christian life*

**EPHESIANS: HOW TO LIVE THE CHRISTIAN LIFE – PART 1**  
*“Spiritual Wisdom for God’s Saints”*  
*Ephesians 1:1-2*

*“<sup>1</sup>Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus: <sup>2</sup>Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” – Ephesians 1:1-2 (NKJV)*

## Application Questions

1. What if a person grew up in the church and has not experienced a dramatic conversion—how can he know that he’s saved?
2. Why does Paul state that he is an apostle by the will of God? Why was this important to emphasize?
3. Why is it important to know that every Christian is a saint? What implications does this have?
4. Why is God’s grace foundational to salvation and the Christian life?

If you could buy a book that contained a concentration of a lifetime of thinking and experience on spiritual matters by one of the greatest Christian leaders of all time, would you do it? Would you read it and study it and try to plumb the depths of its wisdom? What about if you could read aloud all six chapters of the book in only 19 minutes? I’m speaking about Paul’s letter to the Ephesians.

- Even though Ephesians is so short, **Martyn Lloyd-Jones**’ exposition of it takes eight volumes! He has 37 messages on chapter 1 alone!
- **John Calvin**’s 48 sermons on Ephesians take up 705 pages.

- The Puritan William Gurnall in *The Christian in Complete Armor* takes almost 1,200 pages to expound on Ephesians 6:10-20!

So there is far more depth in this short epistle than I can begin to understand or apply to my own life, much less to expound on. So as we come to it, we must pray with the apostle Paul (Ephesians 1:17-19), ... *“<sup>17</sup> 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, <sup>18</sup> 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, <sup>19</sup> and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power.”*

- The English poet, Samuel Coleridge, said that “Ephesians is the divinest composition of man.”
- Another writer refers to it as, “Ephesians is the Grand Canyon of Scripture, because it is breathtakingly beautiful and apparently inexhaustible to the one who wants to take it in” (cited by, James Boice, *Ephesians* [Baker], p. 1).
- Martyn Lloyd-Jones calls Ephesians “Ephesians is the sublimest and the most majestic expression of the gospel.” (*God’s Ultimate Purpose* [Baker], p. 12).



## KEY BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR EPHESIANS

### **Background Information for the Book of Ephesians :**

- (1) **Author: The Apostle Paul** - Ephesians 1:1 identifies the author of the Book of Ephesians as the apostle Paul. Full article: Who wrote the book of Ephesians? Who was the author of Ephesians?
- (2) **Date of Writing: A.D. 60-63** - The Book of Ephesians was very likely written between A.D. 60-63.
- (3) **Place of Writing: Roman prison** -
- (4) **Purpose of Writing: Christian living** - Again, Paul, writing from a Roman prison, intended that all who long for Christlike maturity would receive this writing. Enclosed within the Book of Ephesians is the discipline needed to develop into true children of God. Furthermore, a study in Ephesians will help to fortify and to establish the believer so he can fulfill the purpose and calling God has given. The aim of this epistle is to confirm and to equip a maturing church. It presents a balanced view of the body of Christ and its importance in God's economy.
- (5) **Key Verses:**
  - **Ephesians 1:3**, *"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ."*
  - **Ephesians 2:8-10**, *"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."*
  - **Ephesians 3:20-21**, *"<sup>20</sup> Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, <sup>21</sup> to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen."*
  - **Ephesians 4:4-6**, *"There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called—one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all."*
  - **Ephesians 5:21**, *"Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ."*
  - **Ephesians 6:10-11**, *"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes."*

**Brief book organization summary for the book of Ephesians...** Ephesians is divided into two parts. Doctrine occupies the greatest portion of the Book of Ephesians. Half of the teaching in this epistle relates to our standing in Christ, and the remainder of it affects our condition. All too often those who teach from this book bypass all the foundational instruction and go directly to the closing chapter. It is this chapter that emphasizes the warfare or the struggle of the saints. However, to benefit fully from the contents of this epistle, one must begin at the beginning of Paul's instruction in this letter.

### **2 Parts in Ephesians:**

1. **Doctrinal Truth** - First, as followers of Christ, we must fully understand who God declares us to be. We must also become grounded in the knowledge of God's accomplishment for all humanity.
2. **Practical Living** - Next, our present existence and walk must become exercised and strengthened. This must continue until we no longer totter or stagger back and forth with every spirit of teaching and subtlety of men.

Paul's writing in Ephesians, may also be broken down into three main segments.

### **Outline of Ephesians:**

1. **Ephesians 1-3 = God's accomplishment(s)** - Chapters one through three introduce principles with respect to God's accomplishment.
2. **Ephesians 4-5 = The Believer's present existence** - Chapters four and five put forth principles regarding our present existence.
3. **Ephesians 6 = The Christian's daily struggle** - Chapter six presents principles concerning our daily struggle.

### **2 Important Distinguishing Notes on Ephesians:**

- (1) **The connection between the Old Testament and New Testament concept of God's people** - The primary link to the Old Testament in Ephesians is in the startling (to the Jews) concept of the church as the body of Christ (Ephesians 5:32). This amazing mystery (a truth not previously revealed) of the church, is that "the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 3:6). This was a mystery completely hidden from the Old Testament saints (Ephesians 3:5, 9). The Israelites who were true followers of God always believed they alone were God's chosen people (Deuteronomy 7:6). Accepting Gentiles on an equal status in this new paradigm was extremely difficult and caused many disputes among Jewish believers and Gentile converts. Paul also speaks of the mystery of the church as the "bride of Christ," a previously unheard-of concept in the Old Testament.
- (2) **The connection between sound doctrine and practical living** - Perhaps more than any other book of the Bible, the Book of Ephesians emphasizes the connection between sound doctrine and right practice in the Christian life. Far too many people ignore "theology" and instead want to only discuss things that are "practical." In Ephesians, Paul argues that theology is practical. In order to live out God's will for us in our lives practically, we must first understand who we are in Christ doctrinally. In a sense you can't live like what you don't know to live like

With that as a general overview and background, let's spend the rest of our time on the introduction in **Ephesians 1:1-2**.



*<sup>1</sup>Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus: <sup>2</sup>Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” – Ephesians 1:1-2 (NKJV)*

We can sum it up with this thought...

**KEY THOUGHT:** *God wants us to know who we are in Christ and how we came to be in Christ.*

### **3 Key Parts in the Introduction of Ephesians:**

- (1) **Paul’s description of himself** - First, there is Paul, the author of this letter. His description of himself tells us some things about who he was and how he came to be that way.
- (2) **Paul’s designation of believers** - Then, there are the believers. His designation of them also tells us much about who we are and how we came to be this way.
- (3) **Paul’s detail of how believers come to experience salvation** - Finally, his greeting sums up both how Paul and all believers came to experience this great salvation in which we now stand.

### **PAUL’S SELF-DESCRIPTION TELLS US WHO HE WAS IN CHRIST AND HOW HE CAME TO BE THAT WAY (Ephesians 1:1a)**

*<sup>1</sup>Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus: <sup>2</sup>Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” – Ephesians 1:1-2 (NKJV)*

*“Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God...” (1:1a)* As you know, Paul’s given name was Saul. He was a Jew, born into the tribe of Benjamin, whose namesake was the first king of Israel. Paul was trained as a Pharisee under the famous rabbi, Gamaliel (Acts 22:3). He was advancing in Judaism beyond many of his countrymen, being more extremely zealous for his ancestral traditions (Gal. 1:14). He heartily approved and assisted when the Jewish leaders stoned Stephen to death. After that, Paul had ravaged the church, entering homes and dragging off both men and women to put in prison and put to death (Acts 8:3; 9:1).

As he was on his way to Damascus to bring any Christians from that city bound to Jerusalem, God sovereignly intervened in Paul’s life. A bright light from heaven suddenly blinded him. He fell to the ground and heard the Lord say (Acts 9:4), *“Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?”* When Paul responded, *“Lord, who are You?”* the Lord said (9:5-6), *“I am Jesus whom you are persecuting, but get up and enter the city, and it will be told you what you must do.”* Paul was not dissatisfied with Judaism. He wasn’t considering various religious alternatives. Rather, he was militantly opposed to Jesus Christ and the gospel when (as he

puts it in Gal. 1:15-16), *“God, who had set me apart even from my mother’s womb and called me through His grace, was pleased to reveal His Son in me so that I might preach Him among the Gentiles....”*

In other words, Paul did not have anything to do with his dramatic conversion and his appointment as an apostle. Rather, it all happened by the sovereign will of God. Paul was fiercely opposing God at the very moment that God literally stopped him in his tracks, blinded him physically, but opened his eyes spiritually to see the risen Savior. As an apostle, Paul was appointed and sent by God to preach the gospel especially to the Gentiles, whom he formerly despised with a passion.

While perhaps none of us have had such a dramatic conversion as Paul had, if we know Christ as Savior we know that it was not our doing. We were spiritually dead in our sins (Eph. 2:1), living in futility, darkened in our understanding, excluded from the life of God because of our ignorance and hardness of heart, given over to sensuality and impurity with greediness (4:17-19). While we were in that condition, the glorious words of **Ephesians 2:4-5** broke into our lives: *“But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)....”* It was all because of *“His kind intention which He purposed in Him” (1:9)!*

## **PAUL’S DESCRIPTION OF BELIEVERS TELLS US MUCH ABOUT WHO WE ARE AND HOW WE CAME TO BE THIS WAY (Ephesians 1:1b)**

*“<sup>1</sup>Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus: <sup>2</sup>Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” – Ephesians 1:1-2 (NKJV)*

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

### **2 Ways Paul Describes Believers: (Ephesian Christians, you and I as believers)**

- (1) **SAINTS** - First, we are *“saints.”* Contrary to popular usage, “saints” is not a term describing extraordinary believers, who stand a notch above the rest of us. Rather, in the Bible, all believers are saints and all saints are believers. The word means, *“set apart ones,” “holy ones,”* or *“sanctified ones.”* It means that we have been cleansed from all our guilt by Christ’s sacrifice on our behalf (Heb. 10:10, 14). Thus we are separated from this evil world and set apart unto God for His holy purposes. There is only one way to be cleansed from your sin and guilt, and that is through faith in the blood of Jesus, who offered Himself as the substitute for sinners.
- (2) **FAITHFUL** - Paul’s second phrase to describe believers is that they are *“faithful in Christ Jesus.”* *“Faithful”* may mean that they are reliable or obedient, but here it probably has the meaning, “believers.” No one is saved apart from believing personally

in the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the object of our faith, and so we must understand something of who He is and what He did when He died on the cross. While saving faith is a gift from God (Eph. 2:8-9; Phil. 1:29), it is at the same time something that we must exercise. When God opens our blind eyes to see our own guilty condition and also the beauty and glory of the person of Jesus Christ and His sacrifice on the cross, we cease from our efforts to save ourselves. We cast ourselves totally on Christ. God places us “*in Christ Jesus,*” so that all that is true of Him becomes true of us. As Paul puts it (1 Cor. 1:30-31), “But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, so that, just as it is written, ‘Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord.’” Finally,

## **PAUL’S GREETING SUMS UP HOW WE CAME TO EXPERIENCE THIS GREAT SALVATION IN WHICH WE NOW STAND (Ephesians 1:2)**

*“<sup>1</sup> Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus: <sup>2</sup> Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” – Ephesians 1:1-2 (NKJV)*

### **2 Characteristics of this great salvation in which believers now stand:**

- (1) **GRACE** - Grace is God’s unmerited favor. We deserved His judgment, but He saved us and blessed us.
- (2) **PEACE** - Peace with the holy God is the basic need of every sinner. We cannot appease Him by our own sacrifices or good deeds, because these cannot erase the stain of our sin. But, as Paul puts it in 2:14, “*He Himself is our peace.*” Christ reconciled us to God; He gives us peace within our hearts, even in the midst of trials; and, He reconciles us to one another.

*“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”* This is Paul’s common greeting, but it is more than just a greeting. As Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones puts it (p. 36), “No two words are more important in the whole of our faith than ‘grace’ and ‘peace.’ Yet how lightly we tend to drop them off our tongues without stopping to consider what they mean. Grace is the beginning of our faith; peace is the end of our faith.”

When we experience God’s grace at the cross, instead of being our Judge, God becomes our Father and Jesus Christ becomes our Lord. Rather than running from God because we wanted to hide our sins and because we feared His judgment, we can draw near to God with hearts washed clean (Heb. 10:22). Instead of proudly running our own lives to promote our own interests, we now submit gladly to Jesus as Lord and Master, seeking to do His will.

## **CONCLUSION**

Do you know personally what I’ve been talking about? Has God intervened in your life and rescued you from your sins? Has He opened your eyes to see the beauty of the One who offered Himself on the cross to be the substitute for your sins? If so, now you are a saint, a

holy one, set apart to God from this evil world. You are a believer in Christ Jesus. You revel in His grace and abide in His peace. In the next few weeks, we will begin to explore the treasures... riches of this great salvation.

The Los Angeles Times reported several years ago the story of a man and wife who died in their 50s, and they found them dead in their apartment, and the autopsy revealed they had both died of malnutrition. What was interesting was that when the police found their bodies, which had already begun to decay by the time they were discovered, they searched the apartment and found in the closet a whole pile of little paper bags. And they opened the little paper bags and found a total of \$40,000.00. It's a little ridiculous to die of malnutrition and have \$40,000.00 in paper bags in your closet. There was a lady in American history known as Hetty Green. Hetty Green was called America's greatest miser. When she died in 1916 – this is a long time ago – when she died in 1916, she left an estate valued at \$100 million. That's a lot of money in 1916. But Hetty Green was so miserly that she said she ate cold oatmeal because it was too expensive to heat the water to warm it. Her son had a severe leg injury, and it was so severe that she was delaying trying to find a free clinic where it could be treated, and she delayed so long it had to be amputated. Now, that's a strange lady, folks. To die with \$100 million in your estate, and your son loses his leg – that's really no understanding how to use your resources. Now, the book of Ephesians is written to Christians like that. You say, "Well, what do you mean? What kind of Christian is like that?" The kind of Christian who doesn't understand the riches that he/she has in Christ. The kind of Christian who wanders through life with a case of spiritual malnutrition, who doesn't know where the feast is. The kind of Christian who doesn't know how to tap his resources maybe because he doesn't know what they are, and so he never really finds out how rich he is. "If you get a handle on the book of Ephesians, you – some people have called it the bank of the believer. This is your spiritual checkbook, and every time you write a check out of this bank, your funds are non-diminished. In other words, you can write checks on all the riches of God as often as you want, for as much as you want and never diminish the account. Isn't that nice? That's the book of Ephesians. It's a book about riches. It's a book about fullnesses. It's a book about being filled with things. It's a book about inheritance. It's a book that just tells us what we own in Christ. Some have called it the treasure house of the Bible."

"Get (into) the book of Ephesians and get it down good. It'll absolutely revolutionize your life. And I think it will revolutionize your church by the time you're through with this book because of its incredible riches. It will teach you who you are, how rich you are, and how you are to use those riches for God's glory." – Dr. John MacArthur