

## *EPHESIANS CHAPTER 1*

Hetty Green died in 1916 as was the greatest miser to have ever lived in America – she died with an estate valued over 100 million dollars. She ate cold oatmeal because it cost money to heat it. Her son had to suffer a leg amputation because she delayed so long in looking for a *free clinic* that her son's leg was incurable. She was wealthy, yet she chose to live like a pauper/beggar. Believe it or not, Hetty Green is an illustration of too many Christian believers today. They have limitless wealth at their disposal, and yet they live like paupers. We are rich beyond measure in Christ Jesus and it was to this kind of Christian that Paul wrote this epistle to the Ephesians and churches of all eras.

### *Unity in Christ (vs. 1-2)*

*Vs. 1-2* – Like Romans, Ephesians was not written so much to address problems in a particular church; more so, it was written to explain some of the great themes and doctrines of Christianity. Paul writes to the believers (*the saints*) to give them in depth teaching about how to nurture and maintain the unity of the church. To say to the “*saints*” was a major statement because to be a *saint* at Ephesus was to be a lovely lily in a stagnant pond. Ephesus rivaled Corinth as the “*filth capital*” of the Roman world. People from all over the world came to Ephesus to see the temple of Artemis and to patronize its temple prostitutes whose services was considered the consummation of their worship. Paul wants to put this teaching in writing because he was in prison (*Acts 28:16*); this epistle is one of the *4 prison epistles* - *Philippians*, *Colossians*, and *Philemon* are the other 3). Ephesus was a commercial,

political, and religious center for all of Asia Minor – present day Turkey.

When the text in **vs. 1** says “*faithful in Christ Jesus*” what an excellent reputation to have. And being **faithful** does not mean you will not sin; being faithful means you will stand on the **word of God** not if, but when you fall short and it speaks of your commitment to the Lord. **Vs. 2** are frequent greeting statements by Paul – “*grace and peace.*” And it is not by accident Paul mentions first grace and then peace; Paul knew that receiving God’s grace comes before a walk in peace with Him. You can’t have the peace of God until you have peace with God that comes when we stop being at enmity with God and we accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior by grace through faith...Do you know something about God’s grace and peace?

**(Spiritual Blessings vs. 3-14)**

**Vs. 3** – The paragraph of **vs. 3-14** is considered by theologians to be the longest single sentence of unbroken discourse in ancient literature – **vs. 3-14** is actually one sentence in the Greek. The phrase “*who has blessed us*” means this blessing is ours. God’s resources are there for us always. This speaks of an attitude of certainty and assurance. So what are these blessings...the phrase, “*who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ*” means that in Christ we have all the benefits of knowing God like: being chosen for salvation, being adopted as His children, forgiveness, wisdom

from God's word, discernment, at least one spiritual gift, power to do what God is calling you to do when we yield to the Holy Spirit's leading, and blessed hope of living with Jesus and seeing all saved loved ones in heaven is what this segment of this verse is saying. Because we have an intimate relationship with Christ, we can enjoy these blessings now (*someone read 1 Corinthians 2:9*). The phrase "heavenly realms" means that these blessings are eternal not temporal. The blessings come from Christ's spiritual realm, not the earthly realm of the false goddess of their time of Artemis. And when you receive a blessing from the Lord (*someone read Proverbs 10:22*).

Vs. 4 – Paul says God "chose us" to emphasize that salvation depends totally on God. We are not saved because we deserve it but because God is gracious and freely gives salvation. We did not influence God's decision to save us; He saved us before the foundations of the world (*Romans 5:8*)...He saved us according to His plan that included the fact He was going to give man freewill to respond to His choosing of us...but because God is all-knowing; He knows who would respond to His gift of salvation when He revealed to them who Jesus is. This is called *predestination* and it is a concept the Bible teaches but it is still very hard to comprehend. God saved us this way because there is no way man can take credit for his salvation or to allow room for pride. The mystery of salvation originated in the timeless mind of God long before we

existed. It is hard to understand how God could accept us. But because of Christ, we are holy and blameless in His sight. God chose us, and when we belong to Him through Jesus Christ, God looks at us as if we had never sinned. All we can do is express our thanks for His wonderful love. That phrase *“that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love”* – means *we are chosen not only for salvation, but also for holiness* - read [\(1 Peter 1:16\)](#). We cannot respond to God’s *high calling* on our life with *low living*.

[Vs. 5](#) – The phrase *“Having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself”* means this is the Father’s destiny for His chosen – that they would enjoy adoption as sons. God’s unfolding plan for us not only includes salvation and personal transformation, but also a warm, confident relationship with the Father. Through Jesus’ sacrifice, He has brought us into His family and made us heirs along with Jesus (read [Romans 8:17](#)). In Roman law, adopted children, had the same rights and privileges as biological children, even if they had been slaves. Paul uses this term to show how strong our relationship to God is. As adopted children of God, we share with Jesus all rights to God’s resources. As God’s heirs we can claim what He has provided for us – our full identity as His children. This does not mean we can ask God for anything and expect God to answer it we must ask for things that are of kingdom advancement and within the permissive will of God (read [John 15:7 and 1](#)

**John 1:14-15**). As adopted children in God we share with Christ all rights to God's resources and God promises to provide for all our need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus (***Philippians 4:19***).

**Vs. 6** – the phrase “*to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved*” – reflects the relational aspect is emphasized again as Paul describes the status of accepted – this word derives from the ***Greek*** word ***charito***, which means “highly favored” or “full of grace” as in (**Luke 1:28**) that is granted to every believer because of God's grace. Jesus was completely accepted by the Father. All His character, all His words, all His work was acceptable to God the Father. At His baptism **Mark 1:11** says, “*Then a voice came from heaven, “You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*” And now we are accepted in the Beloved category once we accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior.

**Vs. 7-8** – To speak of Jesus' blood was an important first century way of speaking of Christ's death. His death points to two wonderful truths: (1) ***Redemption*** and (2) ***Forgiveness***. ***Redemption*** was the price paid to gain freedom for a slave as stated in ***Leviticus 25:47-54***. Through Christ's death, burial, and Resurrection Jesus paid the price in full to release man from slavery to sin. His atoning death and blood paid for every sin past, present, and future for mankind. ***Forgiveness*** was granted in the Old Testament of the

shedding of animals' blood as stated in [Leviticus 17:11](#). Now we are forgiven on the basis of Jesus' shed blood on Calvary's Cross because Jesus died as the perfect and final sacrifice ([2 Corinthians 5:21](#) says, "*For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him*"). Now [vs. 8](#) reflects God showered us with His kindness – this is also called God's grace – God's Riches At Christ's Expense. We cannot earn salvation, nor do we deserve it. When you really understand salvation, I cannot understand how you can be silent during worship most, if not all the time. When you understand salvation, you want to share Jesus with the unsaved because [Romans 10:13](#) affirms, "*All who call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.*"

[Vs. 9](#) - God's great plan and purpose which was once hidden but is now revealed to us in Jesus. Through the Apostle Paul, God called us to consider the greatness of God's great plan for the ages and our place in that plan. Now God was not intentionally keeping His plan a secret, but His plan for the world could not be fully understood until Christ rose from the dead. God's purpose for sending Jesus was to unite the Jews and Gentiles into one body called the church with Christ as the head. Paul goes into detail of exactly what is the "mystery" – which means that which has not been revealed yet" in [Ephesians 3:1-7](#) – the church was the mystery. Many people do not

understand God’s plans especially as we live in the season of this pandemic. But all that God does in the form of judgment on earth prior to Jesus coming back for His church is to draw us back to Him – to help reveal to us our tailored made plan from God – to prepare us for our next assignment and even for our next blessing. Always ask God what is He trying to show you in the midst of your trials. Rest assured as grandma used to say, “*we’ll understand Him better by and by.*”

**Vs. 10** – The idea behind the word **dispensation** also reflects a plan or a strategy. “The plan which the leader of a family, or his steward, has established for the management of the family...it signifies also, a plan for the management of any sort of business.” When the verse talks about God gathering together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth; in Him; Paul is saying it is God’s ultimate plan to bring together – to ultimately resolve – all things in Christ, ***through Jesus as a Savior*** and ***through Jesus as a Judge (for those who reject Jesus)***. This will happen in the fullness of the times – everyone will meet Jesus for themselves and give an account of the life they lived in between their dash. This is the great resolution and deliverance that even creation groans for as stated in **Romans 8:18-22**, the day when every wrong will be righted and every matter resolved according to God’s holy love and justice. The phrase “*in the fullness of the*

*times*” refers to when the time is ripe for the consummation of God’s purpose, in His providential overruling of the course of the world, that consummation will be realized.” Always realize what God said through Isaiah in [Isaiah 40:8](#) – *“The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever.”*

[Vs. 11-12](#) – In [vs. 7](#) Paul says in Him we have redemption...and here in [vs. 11](#) he adds in Him we have *obtained an inheritance* as a reference read [1 Peter 1:1-4](#). Since we have been redeemed, in Christ we are valuable to Him. For the believer we have an inheritance awaiting us, for the unsaved person they have judgment and life sentence to Hell for eternity awaiting them. When you think of that fact, it should be something that propels us to witness to the unsaved; especially our unsaved loved ones. Believers have an inheritance because we have been redeemed and as grandma used to we are *“sending up our timber.”* God paid the ultimate price for our redemption; just think of the price God paid to purchase us and make us part of His inheritance.

According to [Romans 8:17](#) we are *“joint heirs Christ’s with Christ.”* Regarding the phrase *“Being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will”* we see various aspects of God’s plan working together. It begins with His [purpose](#), then the [counsel of His will](#), and finally results in [His work](#). God made His plan carefully according to an eternal purpose, taking counsel within the Godhead, and then He works with



all wisdom. Our God is a God who not only wills; He works; and He works according to His will...The word counsel stands for deliberate planning and arranging, in which the ways and means of carrying out the will are considered and provided for.”

Vs. 13-14 – The phrase, *“In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth”* - God’s sovereignly choose us to be redeemed but it does not exclude human cooperation. Those who are sovereignly chosen were also the same ones who trusted, heard the word of truth, and believed. The *Holy Spirit* is the *seal* and *guarantee* (*the word also means down payment*) of the redemption of our mortal bodies. The *Holy Spirit* is a guarantee that we belong to God, He is like a deposit, a validating signature on the contract. The presence of the *Holy Spirit* in us demonstrates the genuineness of our faith, proves that we are God’s children, and secures eternal life for us. The *Holy Spirit’s* power works in us to transform us now, and what we experience now is a taste of the total change we will experience in eternity. We have a glorified body awaiting us, we have an eternal inheritance awaiting us – we will see Jesus for ourselves – we will see all other saved loved ones again in heaven...the Holy Spirit is a guarantee of something far greater will be coming later.

Vs. 15-16 – When Paul heard of the faith and love of the Ephesians, he could do nothing else but give thanks for them. This was because their faith and love

were evidence of their participation in this great work of God. *Faith* finds its focus in Christ Jesus and then expresses itself in *love* to others. Such love is the evidence of genuine faith like stated in *Galatians 5:6*. And this leads Paul to pray for the believers.

*Vs. 17* – Paul not only gave thanks for God’s work among the Ephesians; he also prayed that it would continue with greater strength, as the prayer in *Ephesians 1:17-23* makes clear. Paul shows us that pastors must do more than preach to their audience – we must also pray for them (*the reason we have deacons is so the pastor can commit to the word and prayer*). These verses are the reason after I was called by God and then voted on by TMFBC to be the pastor that the first ministry God lead me to start was a *prayer ministry* – (corporate prayer we affectionately call S.H.O.P.) at a time and date whereby nothing else was scheduled to emphasize its importance. And while reading the book of Joel the *Holy Spirit* inspired me to pray for each member by name (individually). *Read Joel 2:17*....Additionally, this verse highlights the more we know Jesus, the more we can model Christ in this dark world we live in. The word “*revelation*” refers to the insight and the discernment the Holy Spirit brings to the mysteries of the divine truth.

*Vs. 18-19* – Paul prays that the Ephesians and Believers in general would understand everything God gave them in Jesus Christ. If the Ephesians will

know all God has given them in Jesus, it will take a supernatural work. It will require the eyes of the believer's understanding be enlightened by God (*vs. 18a*). Now when Paul speaks of the "*hope of His calling*" – that primarily refers to the assurance of eternal life guaranteed by the possession of the Holy Spirit. Few things should give us a more secure and enduring hope in life than simply knowing that God has called us and has a specific calling for us to fulfill. And when you think of your inheritance in heaven, think of it in terms of *1 Corinthians 2:9* and *1 Peter 1:3-9* (*our sermon text for 9/13*). *Vs. 19* – God's power alone can bring believers safely to the riches of the final glory that will be made available in heaven. The extraordinary divine power by which Christ was raised from the dead is the same power at work in and through believers. Many Christians do not know this power – or they only know it from a distance. A great preacher back in Louisiana once said, "*As Christians, we've all gone to Calvary for pardon, but not everyone has gone to Pentecost for power.*" But God want us to be aware when we share the gospel the very same power which raised Jesus from the dead is the same "power" that can raise the *drunkard from his drunkenness*, to raise the *thief from his dishonesty*, to raise the *sexually immoral to one who live a holy life* – *it's the same power that can call a rebellious child back on the path of righteousness.* There is nothing too hard for God.

**Vs. 20-23** – The resurrection of Jesus the Christ was the driving force in Paul’s life...**1 Corinthians 15:3-4** is like commentary to these verses. Jesus was raised to a completely new life and given a resurrected body and then after He ascended back to the Father in **Acts 1:9** Jesus was then seated at the right hand of the Father – the place of authority from which Christ now reigns and makes intercession for us. When the text says in **vs. 21** Christ is far above all that indicates Jesus is infinitely superior to man. Jesus’ death, burial, resurrection, and ascension completed the resurrection event providing man with the hope for the present and the future. Man does not have to fear any president, dictator, physical death, or even Satan because Jesus defeated them all and He is in total control. The contract for man’s eternal life has been signed in blood and sealed by the Holy Spirit; we are just simply “waiting” (in similar fashion as a good waiter at the fancy restaurant) for our one way ticket to get stamped when our mission is complete on this earth. **Vs. 22** is saying, since Jesus is the head, then the community of Christians make up His body. The idea of the *fullness of Him* here is probably connected to the manner in which Jesus fills His church with His presence and spiritual gifts and blessings. Christ is the head and we are the body.