

# EPHESIANS 1

By Charles Dailey © 2014 NLT  
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## THE BIG PICTURE

This *Google Earth* satellite photo shows Rome and Ephesus in actual perspective. Paul, the writer (speaker), was in Rome writing to his friends of former years in Ephesus. It can be seen in about the center of the map.

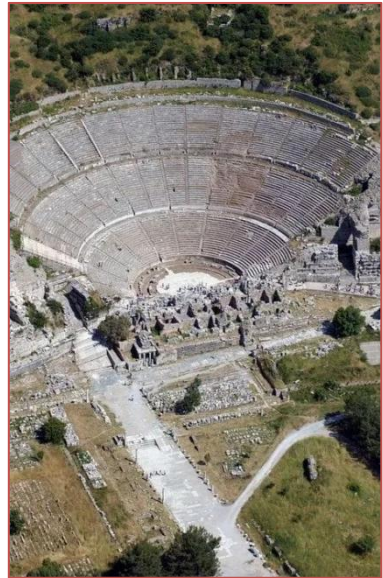


## EPHESUS WAS REMARKABLE

1. Ephesus had an artificial seaport, making it accessible for even the largest ships. As ships came up the channel, the city could be seen spread out before them with the theater on the hillside and the gigantic Temple of Diana

in the low lands. The city was among the most accessible in Asia, both from land and sea.

2. The town was moved several times. The site shown is number three of five locations. A tour guide said the town was moved because of mosquitoes.
3. The events of the New Testament connect with Ephesus location 3. Its population was above 250,000, making it the fourth largest city in the Roman Empire, after Rome, Alexandria and Antioch.
4. After New Testament times, the harbor silted and ships could no longer use the port. Even in ancient times, engineers had difficulty keeping the river and harbor free of silt. Ephesus is now six miles from the sea.
5. Among the best-known sites at Ephesus is the theater. It seats about 24,000 people. A whisper on the platform can be heard on the top row of seats. This is the same theater in the story of Acts 19:29. A patron sitting in the rows could see the harbor.
6. Ephesus is now considered one of the great outdoor museums of Turkey.
7. Four reasons for the town's prominence.



- a) At the height of its popularity, the port had an economic impact on the rest of Asia. This began to decline as the silting progressed.
  - b) Though it was not the capital city, its size made it the largest city in the province.
  - c) Ephesus was a city of advanced culture. This was reinforced by its great theater, its wide streets, its gymnasiums, its buildings, its shopping center (agora) and the world-class *Celsus Library*.
- a) **Wilbur Fields** believed that the priests were the bankers of the area, controlling the wealth and savings of the worshipers.
  - b) The town also abounded with smaller temples and statues of deities. Because their worship did not require people to gather for teaching or any group activities, the temples could be small.
2. The church at Ephesus began probably about A. D. 50, perhaps as a result of the efforts of Priscilla and Aquila (Acts 18:18). Paul came to Ephesus in about A. D. 52 and stayed for the better part of three years (Acts 20:31).

## THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS

1. The author of Ephesians is Paul. The claim is clear in the first sentence. **Wilbur Fields** says that all of the Christian writers of the early centuries agree to this. Further evidence of Paul's authorship is in 3:1. To deny his authorship is to deny the accuracy of Scripture.
2. Paul wrote (probably dictated) while imprisoned at Rome in his rented quarters. He was chained to a Roman

guard at all times. This would place the writing of Ephesians at about A.D. 60 to 62.


3. The destination for the letter is the Ephesian church, at least to begin with. All known manuscripts except five have “Ephesus” in verse one. Perhaps the words at Ephesus were deleted in some manuscripts in order to adapt the epistle for use in other churches.
  - a) Though Paul knew many of the members of the church at Ephesus, he made little reference to individual names in contrast with his other letters. He may have intended this letter for a broader circulation.
  - b) The letter seems less personable than some of Paul’s other letters and this would be accounted for if he intended the letter to be circular in distribution.

## Overview of the Letter to the Ephesians

	Our Inheritance in Christ			Our Life in Christ		
Introduction 1:1-2	1:3	2:1	3:1	4:1	6:10	Conclusion 6:21-24
	Blessings in Christ	Experience of Salvation	Growing, Knowledge and Strength	Christian Conduct	Christian Armor	
	WORK of God			WALK of Christian		

## GREETINGS FROM PAUL

**(New Living Translation 1:1) This letter is from Paul, chosen by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus. I am writing to God's holy people in Ephesus, who are faithful followers of Christ Jesus. (2) May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.**

- Because this was written on a scroll, the author's name was at the beginning so it could be seen instead of at the end where it would need to be unrolled to read it.
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- As an **apostle of Christ, Paul** has his power of attorney. It was **God** who gave it to him.
  - He is dictating this letter while under house arrest and chained to a Praetorian guard so the guards heard every word. They had never had guard duty like this assignment! God is at work, infiltrating the elite Roman guards with the gospel.
  - **The faithful followers** included both Jews and Gentiles and were part of the local church, not simply visitors or observers.
  - **Grace** was a greeting used by Gentiles and **peace** was a Jewish greeting. Both words will be seen the development of the book of Ephesians. **Our Father** shows that Jews and Gentiles were brothers. Jews had been raised to view Gentiles as second-class people.

## BLESSINGS FROM THE FATHER

**(3) All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ. (4) Even before He made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in His eyes. (5)**

**God decided in advance to adopt us into His own family by bringing us to Himself through Jesus Christ. This is what He wanted to do, and it gave Him great pleasure. (6) So we praise God for the glorious grace He has poured out on us who belong to His dear Son.**

- **Jesus** is **Lord** (Master) (vs.3) to the Gentiles and **Christ** (Messiah) to the Jews.
- **Blessings** to Israel in the Old Testament were largely material blessings such as land, crops, flocks, herds and children. Now God's **blessings** to His people are primarily (but not exclusively) in the realm of the **spiritual**.
- Verse 4 has remarkable information. Before **God** made the world, He **loved** us and had a plan to remove our **faults**. So **God** didn't begin work in Genesis chapter 1. **God** was working in His realm prior to the creation that we know about.
- **Chose us**—ultra-long-range planning by God for the group spoken of as **in Christ**.
- But *being* in the group is *our personal* choice, but we know the outcome of the *group*.
- His goal is for us to become **holy and without fault**. Learning from this book of Ephesians is a step towards that goal. We can take steps based on Scripture.
- Because of Jesus we are sons of God by **adoption**. No one **EARNs** the right to **adoption**. It is based on the **love** of the parents.
- Believers have been **adopted** and **adopted** children have the same rights as those who are born into the **family**. None of us are second-class members of the **family** of God. None. Not even Gentiles.



**Summary:** Blessings from the Father include:

1. He chose us. 1:4
2. He loved us. 1:4
3. He adopted us. 1:5
2. He destined us. 1:5-6
3. He poured grace on us. 1:6

### **BLESSINGS FROM THE SON**

**(7) He is so rich in kindness and grace that He purchased our freedom with the blood of His Son and forgave our sins. (8) He has showered His kindness on us, along with all wisdom and understanding. (9) God has now revealed to us His mysterious plan regarding Christ, a plan to fulfill His own good pleasure.**

- We as outlaws and slaves to **sin have our freedom purchased** by the **blood** of Jesus (vs.7). This is *redemption*.
- The Jewish readers were familiar with redemption because their nation had been redeemed from Egypt. Exodus 15:13 That release was connected with the **blood of a lamb**.
- The Gentile readers were acquainted with redemption from the slave market place where at times a slave would be purchased and freed.
- As lawbreakers, we have forgiveness based on the **grace** of God. The **grace** was beyond adequate—it was lavished **on us**.
- The One who was *not adopted* shed **His blood** for those who are *adopted*.
- Mystery religions were common in the first century and they claimed to disclose great truths only to the initiated, like *Scientology* in our day. Paul says that God's will is **now revealed** to those in **Christ**.
- The hymn *I will Sing of My Redeemer* by P. J. Bliss fits here. Also, *The Wonderful Grace of Jesus* by Haldor Lillenas.

**(10) And this is the plan: At the right time He will bring everything together under the authority of Christ -- everything in heaven and on earth. (11) Furthermore, because we are united with Christ, we have received an inheritance from God, for He chose us in advance, and He makes everything work out according to His plan. (12) God's purpose was that we Jews who were the first to trust in Christ would bring praise and glory to God.**

- This lets Him become the center of the universe, both the **heaven** (vs.10) and our planet.
- Maybe we had no net-worth, but in Christ we have an **inheritance** beyond belief, not limited like an *Amazon Gift Card*.
- Each member of the body receiving Paul's letter had already **chosen Christ** just as God has **chosen** the group for His **inheritance**.
- **Jewish** believers were **first**. They bring **praise** (vs.12) to God and **glory** to His name.



**Summary:** Blessings from the Son include:

1. Being redeemed by His blood - His death. 7a
2. Being forgiven through grace. 7b - 8
3. Christ is to become supreme. 9 - 10
4. We have a heritage in **Christ**. 11 - 12

### **THE SEAL IS THE HOLY SPIRIT**

**(13) And now you Gentiles have also heard the truth, the Good News that God saves you. And when you believed in Christ, He identified you as His own by giving you the Holy Spirit, whom He promised long ago. (14) The Spirit is God's guarantee that He will give us the inheritance He promised and that He has purchased us to be His own people. He did this so we would praise and glorify Him.**



- Gentiles **also** are receiving the **Holy Spirit**. Acts 2:38-39 and Ephesians 3:16.
- Each of the sections:
  - about the Father,
  - about the Son and
  - about the Spirit
 ends with a call to **praise God**.

### PAUL'S THANKSGIVING AND PRAYER

**(15) Ever since I first heard of your strong faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for God's people everywhere, (16) I have not stopped thanking God for you. I pray for you constantly, (17) asking God, the glorious Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to give you spiritual wisdom and insight so that you might grow in your knowledge of God.**

- Even imprisoned, Paul knew of their **faith**. News got around (vs.15). It had been about six years since Paul had been among the Ephesians and he was still **praying** for them.
- Their brotherly **love** crossed racial barriers. They had a **love** (vs.15) that crossed the deep racial divide that existed between Jewish and Gentile Christians. Some of the barriers included choice of foods, non-Jewish customs and more. Imagine the social problems of marriages and the events leading up to Jewish/Gentile marriages.
- He **prayed** for them **earnestly** (vs.16). He had these concerns:
  - That they would receive a **spiritual wisdom** (vs.17). **Wisdom** was probably the process of using the information that they already had about Jesus. Processing what we already know into what we are doing takes **wisdom**.
  - That they would have an increased **insight** from the **Lord** (vs.17). They needed to acquire more

information about the **Lord**, perhaps from the prophets.

- In our day of the completed revelation, we call it Bible study.

**(18) I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you can understand the confident hope He has given to those He called -- His holy people who are His rich and glorious inheritance. (19) I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God's power for us who believe Him. This is the same mighty power**

- He **prays** for **light** for them to understand their **hope** (vs.18) and riches of **glory of their inheritance**. The **riches** of the **glory** in what God inherits: **holy people**. What does the Father get out of all of this? Saints who love Him.
- God has incredible **power** to help each **believer** (vs.9). This all fits in with the **power** seen in raising Jesus from the grave (vs. 20) and raising the Son to sit beside Him.

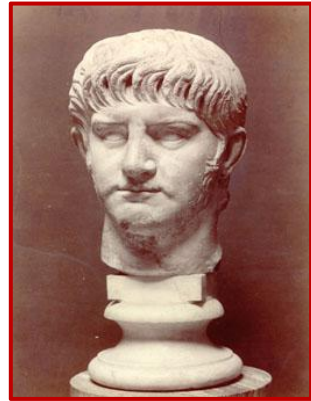
### **THE GREATNESS OF CHRIST**

**(20) that raised Christ from the dead and seated Him in the place of honor at God's right hand in the heavenly realms. (21) Now He is far above any ruler or authority or power or leader or anything else -- not only in this world but also in the world to come.**

- This fulfills Psalm 110:

**The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit in the place of honor at My right hand until I humble Your enemies, making them a footstool under Your feet." Psalm 110:1 NLT**

- Christ ranks above (vs. 21) the deities at the Temple of Diana or at any of the little temples on Harbor Street in Ephesus. God has made Him infinitely superior in the realm of the spirit. Yet Paul does not attack the Harbor Street deities, either. This might have been counterproductive.
- It is wise not to directly attack a deity loved by the listener. Rather, show that Christ is *superior* to all others. Jesus himself said, **“I am the way, the truth and the life.”** John 14:6.
- No emperor (guard, are you listening?), no proconsul, no premier, and no president is above Jesus. Emperor Nero is pictured.



**(22) God has put all things under the authority of Christ and has made Him head over all things for the benefit of the church. (23) And the church is His body; it is made full and complete by Christ, who fills all things every- where with Himself.**

- The lofty role of **Christ** is more than ceremonial. He is in charge of everything (vs. 22) and actually **head** of the **church**. While most of humanity may not acknowledge His headship now, the **church** must or it ceases to be the body of **Christ**
- The presence of **Christ** on earth is in His **church**. Note the reading of Acts 9 where Saul was persecuting the **church**, but Jesus said that Saul was persecuting Jesus.

**Meanwhile, Saul was uttering threats with every breath and was eager to kill the Lord's followers. So he went to the high priest. He requested letters addressed to the synagogues in Damascus, asking**

for their cooperation in the arrest of any followers of the Way he found there. He wanted to bring them -- both men and women -- back to Jerusalem in chains. As he was approaching Damascus on this mission, a light from heaven suddenly shone down around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul! Saul! Why are you persecuting Me?" (Acts 9:1-4 NLT)

Saul was persecuting the **church** and Jesus said that Saul was persecuting Him. Christ is the head, the **church** is His body.

- **Hendriksen** has an interesting comment here:
  - “As to his divine essence, Christ is in no sense whatever dependent on or capable of being completed by the church. But...
    - 1) as a bridegroom he is incomplete without the bride
    - 2) as a vine he cannot be thought of without the branches
    - 3) as shepherd he is not seen without his sheep
    - 4) and so also as head he finds his full expression in his body, the church”

(New Testament Commentary, Exposition of Ephesians, William Hendriksen, p. 104)