

# Ephesians

## Why an Introduction to a Book of the Bible?

There are several purposes for writing a commentary. One of the primary purposes is to give the student access to information he may not have easy access. Obviously reading the text itself is the safest way to gain the right understanding of its meaning. Yet often, knowledge of other verses, circumstances going on at the time of writing, and the exact meaning of the words, will give any student of the Bible a greater opportunity to understand the meaning of the Holy Spirit when he revealed it. Toward this end, a good writer of a Bible commentary will spend time familiarizing the readers with as much background information as possible that is pertinent to seeing the book in the larger picture.

It takes discretion and judgment on the part of the writer to know what to put in and what to leave out. Some introductions will exceed 100 pages, others will only write a paragraph or two. Although it is interesting to know the historical background of the city from its birth to the time of the conversion of the people living there, in my opinion it is not essential to the proper interpretation of the book. What is important though are the events and circumstances that led to the writing of the book.

## Conversion of the Ephesians

It was late 54 or early 55 AD, when Paul set sail from Cenchreae with Priscilla and Aquila to go to Ephesus. He preached to the Jews in the synagogue, and though they wanted to hear more, Paul left stating that if it was God's will he would return to them (Acts 18:18-21).

He then sailed to Caesarea, made a brief stop at Jerusalem and spent some time with the disciples at Antioch. After this he revisited many of the churches he had helped to begin on his first and second missionary journeys. He then returned to Ephesus and began preaching. First to 12 men who when they heard of Jesus baptism were immediately baptized. Since after laying hands on them, they were able to preach the gospel in other tongues and also prophecy (preach in their own language God's inspired word), Paul had 12 men to help him immediately. He then taught in the synagogue for 3 months. When he saw there was no more fruit to be gained from the Jews, he separated the disciples and moved the church out from among them. For the next two years, Paul was teaching daily in the school of Tyrannus.

*5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. 7 Now the men were about twelve in all. 8 And he went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of God. 9 But when some were hardened and did not believe, but spoke evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them and withdrew the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. 10 And this continued for two years, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks. Acts 19:1-10*

Ephesus then became the base of operations for reaching the entire province of Asia. At the time of the writing of Revelation, there were seven congregations are addressed by Jesus. Also, during this two year period, as he had done on his first Missionary Journey, elders were appointed. Yet, this was not an easy work. Paul spoke of the anxieties he felt "every hour."

*And why do we stand in jeopardy every hour? 31 I affirm, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. 32 If, in the manner of men, I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantage is it to me? If the dead do not rise, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!" 1Cor. 15:30-32*

When Paul wrote the letter to Corinth, after the two years had passed, he told them the work was still going well and he intended to continue to work there.

*But I will tarry in Ephesus until Pentecost. 9 For a great and effective door has opened to me, and there are many adversaries. 1Cor. 16:8-9*

But that was not to be.

And **about that time there arose a great commotion about the Way.** 24 For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Diana, brought no small profit to the craftsmen. ... 26 Moreover you see and hear that not only at Ephesus, but throughout almost all Asia, **this Paul has persuaded and turned away many people, saying that they are not gods which are made with hands.** Acts 19:23-24, 26

After the uproar had ceased, **Paul called the disciples to himself, embraced them, and departed to go to Macedonia.** Acts 20:1

For indeed, **when we came to Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were troubled on every side. Outside were conflicts, inside were fears.** 2 Cor 7:5-6

With the following background, one can see that although Paul did express concern about their future, he had a close relationship with this congregation when he left them.

## **Theme of the Book of Ephesians:**

The second paragraph of the first chapter (1:3-14) is unique in Scripture. The American Standard has only two periods. While the other translations vary in where they place the sentence breaks, God is always to subject, Jesus is always in a prepositional phrase beginning with “in” referring to the spiritual location and relationship, or “through” referring to the means by which it was brought about or accomplished, and those in Christ are always the recipients.

*Grace to you and peace  
blessed us with every spiritual blessing  
He chose us in Him  
holy and without blemish before Him in love:  
having foreordained us unto adoption as sons  
His grace, which He freely bestowed on us  
we have our redemption  
the forgiveness of our trespasses,  
according to the riches of His grace,  
He made to abound in all wisdom and prudence,  
making known unto us the mystery of His will,*

*a dispensation of the fullness of the times,  
to sum up all things in Christ  
things in the heavens, and things on the earth;  
we were made a heritage,  
foreordained according to the purpose of Him  
to the end we should be to the praise of His glory,  
were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,  
an earnest of our inheritance,  
the redemption of (God's) own possession,  
unto the praise of His glory.*

The theme, begun in the first two paragraphs continues throughout the book. Every spiritual blessing is in Christ:

**1:1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful IN CHRIST JESUS:**

**1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places IN CHRIST,**

**1:10 that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things IN CHRIST, both which are in heaven and which are on earth-- IN HIM.**

**1:12 that we who first trusted IN CHRIST should be to the praise of His glory.**

**2:6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places IN CHRIST JESUS,**

**2:7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us IN CHRIST JESUS.**

**2:10 For we are His workmanship, created IN CHRIST JESUS for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. 2:13 But now IN CHRIST JESUS you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.**

**3:6 that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise IN CHRIST through the gospel,**

**3:11 according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished IN CHRIST Jesus our Lord,**

**4:32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God IN CHRIST forgave you.**

## **Outline of the Book.**

### **Doctrinal**

- 1:1-14 Salutation and praise to God for the opportunity to be in Christ.  
1:15-23 A prayer to God for the Ephesians: Give them wisdom to see.  
2:1-10 Praise to God for Christians who are raised from spiritual death.  
2:11-23 The Gentiles brought near by the blood of Christ and peace began  
3:1-21 Paul's praise to God for being an apostle, to know and reveal God's mystery.

### **Practical**

- |           |  |         |                         |
|-----------|--|---------|-------------------------|
| 4:1-16    | Strive with all your being for unity among your brethren.  | 6:1-4   | Parents and children.   |
| 4:17-32   | Putting off the old man and putting on the new man.        | 6:5-9   | Servants and masters.   |
| 5:1-20    | Put off the old man and putting on the new man(Continued). | 6:10-20 | The whole armor of God  |
| 5:21-6:10 | Submitting to one another in the fear of the Lord.         | 6:21-24 | Greetings / conclusions |
| 5:22-33   | Husbands and wives.  |         |                         |

## Eph 1:1-3

### 1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God,

In nearly every book Paul wrote he started with his position as an apostle of Jesus Christ and in the majority of them he also added by or through the will of God.

*Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God Rom. 1:1*

*Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, 1Cor. 1:1*

*Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, 2Cor. 1:1*

*Paul, an apostle (not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father Gal. 1:1*

*Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, Eph. 1:1*

*Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, Col. 1:1*

*Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God our Savior and the Lord Jesus Christ 1Tim. 1:1*

*Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, 2Tim. 1:1*

*Paul, a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, Titus 1:1*

This is the common format of letters written in that age. As Paul told the Thessalonians, his letters needed to be validated in order to avoid forgeries. He started with his position and authority and ended with some type of salutation

*not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or **by letter, as if from us**, 2 Th. 2:2*

*Therefore, brethren, stand fast and **hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle**. 2Th. 2:15*

*The salutation of Paul with my own hand, **which is a sign in every epistle; so I write**. 2Th. 3:17*

The reason for this is simple and clear. Jesus had given to His apostles the authority to make disciples and to teach them all things He had commanded them.

*And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 "**teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.**" Amen. Mt. 28:18-20*

The Holy Spirit knew that because Paul has not been among the original 12, his authority and position might be questioned. Thus by this affirmation, the truth was set forth and the authority of the letter validated.

*After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. 8 Then **last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time**. 9 For **I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God**. 10 But **by the grace of God I am what I am**, 1Cor. 15:7-10*

Since Paul was an apostle, his writings were to be acknowledge as the commandments of the Lord. All of this was well known in the days of the early disciples. It needs to be as well known today. It validates this letter with the stamp of divine authority and nothing in it can be rejected or ignored if one wishes to be pleasing to the Lord.

*If anyone **thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord**. 1Cor. 14:37*

### To the saints who are in Ephesus,

Paul addressed those to whom he wrote in a variety of ways. Saints is

*To all who are in Rome, **beloved of God, called to be saints**: Rom. 1:7*

*To the **church of God** which is at Corinth, to those who are **sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints**, 1Cor. 1:2*

*To the **church of God** which is at Corinth, with **all the saints** who are in all Achaia: 2 Cor. 1:1*

*To the **churches of Galatia**: Gal 1:2*

*To the **saints** who are in Ephesus, and **faithful in Christ Jesus**: Eph. 1:1*

*To **all the saints in Christ Jesus** who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: Phil. 1:1*

*To the **saints and faithful brethren in Christ** who are in Colosse: Col. 1:22*

*To the **church of the Thessalonians** in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: 1Th. 1:1*

*To the **church of the Thessalonians** in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: 2 Th. 1:1*

The term "saint" is not an exclusive term, but is used of all Christians. Everyone who has been made holy by the blood of Jesus Christ used to describe all those who have placed their faith in

Jesus Christ and then been washed in his blood. It is simply the word holy as it is applied to God's servants and Jesus disciples. It refers to those who have "*been made holy.*" When used it is always a term for someone who has been separated to God by cleansing and thus those who consecrated, sanctified and set apart in the eyes of God.

*hagios* (NT:40): holy, pure; *hagiazō* (NT:37): **make holy, consecrate**; *hagiasmos* (NT:38) consecration; *hagiotēs*; (NT:41) holiness; *hagiosune* (NT:42) holiness; ... This word group occurs with relative frequency in the NT: *hagios* occurs 230 times ... 90 of 230 cases in the combination *pneuma hagion*, **The verb *hagiazō* is used 17 times in the passive and 11 times in the active. The following are made holy or are holy** (passive): the name of God (Matt 6:9 ...); those who believe (John 17:19; Acts 20:32;... ) who are all consecrated through the one Son (Heb 2:11 ... ) everything which God has created (1Tim 4:5); and, finally, Christ himself, who is consecrated through the blood of the covenant (Heb 10:29 [referring to Ex 24:8]). ..." (Greek-English Lexicon NT:37)

*hagios*, *hagnos* have been often considered different forms of one and the same word. At all events, they have in common that **root "HAG," reappearing as the Latin 'sac' in 'sacer,' 'sancio,'** and many other words... **fundamental idea is separation, and, so to speak, consecration and devotion ...**" (Trench's Synonyms NT:40)

This is more however than a simple title of honor. It is also a life to be lived. Saints are sanctified for the use of God and are therefore consecrated and devoted to him in every facet of their lives. They do what God tells them to do, believe the doctrines God tells them to believe, talk as God asks them to talk, and perform the duties and obligations God asks them to do. Many passages in the Scriptures stress both the privilege and the obligation that being a saint conveys.

*Or do you not know that **your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit** who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? 20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's. 1Cor. 6:19-20*

*as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; 15 **but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, 16 because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy."** 17 And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear; 1Pet. 1:14-17*

*But you are **a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people**, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who **called you out of darkness into His marvelous light**; 10 who were once not a people but are **now the people of God**, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy. 1Pet. 2:9-10*

## **and faithful in Christ Jesus:**

Faithful sums up a different characteristic of these people. The term "faithful" is defined:

*pistos* (*peithō*) ... A. passive **to be trusted or believed**: ... I. of persons, **faithful, trusty, true**, ... 2. **trustworthy**, worthy of credit, II. of things, trustworthy, sure, of oaths, 2. **deserving belief, credible**, probable, Hdt., Plat., etc. (Liddell and Scott, Abridged Greek Lexicon. NT:4103).

These saints are worthy of trust and can be relied on to do what God desires of them. Everything in this epistle will take on the highest of value and importance to the saint who desires to be faithful to his Lord. All who want God to be able to depend on them will desire to carefully assess everything in this letter and fulfill it as exactly as possible. This is what distinguishes them from those who are in the world.

As was noted in the introduction, the term "in Christ" or "in Christ Jesus" is one of the most comprehensive in the book. Since it is used again in verse three, we will wait until then to discuss it more fully.

## **2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

The greetings are also the same as was common in the letters written in those days. The common greeting among the Jews was peace (*shalom*) as an expression of good wishes that they would have a day of peace. Very similar to our "good morning" and our expression of hope that they were having one. The Greeks used grace (*charis*) to convey the hope of a day where favors and blessings they did not expect or deserve would come upon them.

Although it was the common greeting this one is elevated in nearly every letter in the NT. This is a letter wishing grace and peace from God the father and from our Lord Jesus Christ. Although wrath must come in the end for those who do not avail themselves of the opportunity, as long as

life lasts, God wishes grace and peace upon all men, but has given it to the saints and faithful in Christ.

<b>Grace to you and peace</b>	from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.	<u>Rom. 1:7</u>
<b>Grace to you and peace</b>	from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.	<u>1Cor. 1:3</u>
<b>Grace to you and peace</b>	from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.	<u>2Cor. 1:2</u>
<b>Grace to you and peace</b>	from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ,	<u>Gal. 1:3</u>
<b>Grace to you and peace</b>	from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.	<u>Eph. 1:2</u>
<b>Grace to you and peace</b>	from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.	<u>Phil. 1:2</u>
<b>Grace to you and peace</b>	from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.	<u>Col. 1:2</u>
<b>Grace to you and peace</b>	from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.	<u>1Th. 1:1</u>
<b>Grace to you and peace</b>	from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.	<u>2Th. 1:2</u>
<b>Grace, mercy, and peace</b>	from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.	<u>1Tim. 1:2</u>
<b>Grace, mercy, and peace</b>	from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.	<u>2Tim. 1:2</u>
<b>Grace, mercy, and peace</b>	from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior.	<u>Titus 1:4</u>
<b>Grace to you and peace</b>	from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.	<u>Philem. 3</u>

## A Eulogy of Praise to God

### 3 Blessed be

"*eulogeo* lit., **to speak well** of (*eu*, well, *logos*, a word), signifies, (a) **to praise, to celebrate with praises**, of that which is addressed to God, acknowledging His goodness, with desire for His glory, ... (b) **to invoke blessings upon a person**... c. to consecrate a thing with solemn prayers, to ask God's blessing on a thing... (d) to cause to prosper, to make happy, to bestow blessings on, ..." (Vine's expository Dictionary, NT:2128)

God is worthy of the highest words of honor, praise, glory and thanksgiving that we are capable of producing. What follows are all the things God has done for fallen man in order to give him a second chance. The good things that God planned and brought into reality for those who had sinned and rebelled against Him are so amazing and majestic that word fail to praise Him as much as should be done. Only the limits of our own understanding of what this means holds us back from giving the quality of praise glory and honor that is due Him. God is worthy to be well spoken of and praised!

Although similar to some found in the Psalms, this is far more comprehensive.

*Bless the Lord, O my soul; And all that is within me, bless His holy name! 2 Bless the Lord, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits: 3 Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, 4 Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies, 5 Who satisfies your mouth with good things, So that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. Ps. 103:1-5*

### the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

There is a great deal of question as to how God the Father is the God of Jesus and how he is the father of Jesus. Some consider him as the God in the sense of his humanity and the father in the sense of his deity. Others maintain that it is just the opposite. He is the father in the sense of his humanity and God in the sense of his deity. Yet it could just as easily be that it is in His humanity that God is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Deut 29:29 keeps us from going any further.

### who has blessed us

The Holy Spirit used the same root word as an adjective, verb, and noun. We bless Him with our lips (as it is all we have). Because He blessed us (

**Blessed** God (adjective) who has **blessed** us (verb) with every spiritual **blessing** (noun).

Characteristic

Action

The Undeserved gift

As we hear this for the first time, we cannot fully comprehend the fulness of these blessings. When asked, most Christians would speak of God's forgiveness, the blood of Christ, the hope of heaven

and maybe a few more blessings. Our problem is that we can only walk by faith and see only the seen until we begin to look at the unseen and walk by faith. We had no way of fully understanding the terrible circumstances we were living under because of sin. We knew of physical death, but the terrors and anguish of what lies beyond was unknown until it was revealed.

*For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2Cor. 5:7*

*Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. 17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, 18 while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen.*

*For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal. 2Cor. 4:16-18*

The same is true of the blessings. There are two sides to them. The value of what we are receiving on the one hand. The costs God was willing to pay and the efforts God put forth to bring it about.

### **with every spiritual blessing in**

Each term in this phrase has great significance. Each needs to be defined carefully weighed and understood if God is ever to get the quality of praise and honor that is due to him from each of us. "Every" a word used when the fulness and completeness of whatever is being discussed is set forth. is defined:

*"pas,... I. adjectivally, and 1. with anarthrous nouns; a. any, every one(sc. of the class denoted by the noun annexed to PAS);... all or any of the class indicated... b. any and every, of every kind, ... (Thayer, NT:3956).*

From the definition above, it is easily seen that when this word is used nothing is overlooked or missed. With no point of reference we simply have to trust these words. There are no spiritual blessings that have been overlooked and there are not spiritual blessings that can be found outside of Christ

*He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. 17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. 18 And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. 19 For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, 20 and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross. Col. 1:15-20*

There is nothing outside of Christ. The next fourteen verses have been designed for two purposes.

1. To understand the greatness of the blessings that only God could bestow.
2. To emphasize over and over again that all these blessings are in Christ exclusively.

GOD is mentioned at least 16 times  
**JESUS** is mentioned at least 14 times.  
The spiritual blessings at least 16 times

3 Blessed (be) THE GOD AND FATHER of **OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST**,  
WHO hath **blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly (places) IN CHRIST**:  
4 even as HE chose us IN HIM before the foundation of the world,  
that we should be holy and without blemish before HIM in love:  
5 having foreordained us unto adoption as sons **THROUGH JESUS CHRIST UNTO HIMSELF**,  
according to the good pleasure OF HIS WILL,  
6 to the praise of the glory of HIS grace, which HE freely bestowed on us **IN THE BELOVED**:  
7 **IN WHOM** we have our redemption **THROUGH HIS BLOOD**,  
the forgiveness of our trespasses,  
according to the riches of HIS grace,  
8 which HE made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence,  
9 making known unto us the mystery of HIS will, according to HIS good pleasure  
which HE purposed IN HIM  
10 unto a dispensation of the fulness of the times, to sum up all things **IN CHRIST**,

the things in the heavens, and the things upon the earth; **IN HIM**, (I say,)

11 **IN WHOM** also we were made a heritage,

having been **foreordained** according to the purpose of HIM

who worketh all things after the counsel of HIS will;

12 to the end that we should be unto the praise of his glory, we who had before hoped **IN CHRIST**:

13 **IN WHOM** ye also, having heard the word of the truth, the gospel of your salvation,--

**IN WHOM**, having also believed, ye were **sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise**,

14 which is **an earnest of our inheritance**,

unto **the redemption of (GOD'S) own possession**,

unto the praise of **HIS glory**. Eph 1:1-14

The term in Christ is used many times in many different ways to describe our relationship in Christ.

Rom 8:2 law of the Spirit of life **in Christ Jesus**  
Rom 12:5 one body **in Christ**,  
Rom 16:3 my fellow-workers **in Christ Jesus**,  
Rom 16:7 who also were **in Christ** before me.  
1 Cor 3:1 to babes **in Christ**.  
1 Cor 4:15 **in Christ Jesus** I begot you through the gospel.  
1 Cor 15:18 they also that are fallen asleep **in Christ**  
1 Cor 15:19 If we have only hoped **in Christ** in this life,  
1 Cor 15:22 also **in Christ** shall all be made alive.  
2 Cor 1:21 he that establisheth us with you **in Christ**,  
2 Cor 5:19 God was **in Christ** reconciling the world to himself  
2 Cor 12:2 I know a man **in Christ**,  
Gal 1:22 the churches of Judea which were **in Christ**.  
Gal 3:28 for you are all one **in Christ Jesus**.  
Gal 5:6 **in Christ Jesus** neither circumcision avails anything;  
Eph 1:1 saints ... in Ephesus, and faithful **in Christ Jesus**;  
Eph 1:10 He might gather together in one all things **in Christ**,  
Eph 2:6 raised us and made us to sit with him... **in Christ Jesus**;

Eph 2:10 created **in Christ Jesus** for good works,  
Eph 2:13 **in Christ Jesus** you ... far off have been brought near  
Eph 3:6 partakers of His promise **in Christ** through the gospel,  
Eph 3:11 the eternal purpose which he purposed **in Christ Jesus**  
Eph 3:21 to him (be) the glory in the church and **in Christ Jesus**;  
Phil 1:1 To all the saints **in Christ Jesus** who are in Philippi,  
Phil 3:14 the prize of the upward call of God **in Christ Jesus**  
Phil 4:21 Salute every saint **in Christ Jesus**.  
Col 1:2 To the saints and faithful brethren **in Christ**  
Col 1:28 that we may present every man perfect **in Christ**;  
1 Th 2:14 churches of God which are in Judea **in Christ Jesus**.  
1 Th 4:16 the dead **in Christ** will rise first.  
1 Tim 1:14 with faith and love which is **in Christ Jesus**.  
2 Tim 1:13 in faith and love which is **in Christ Jesus**.  
2 Tim 3:12 all who desire to live godly **in Christ Jesus** will suffer  
Philm 1:23 Epaphras, my fellow-prisoner **in Christ Jesus**,  
1 Pet 5:10 God of all grace...called ...to his eternal glory **in Christ**  
1 Pet 5:14 Peace to you all who are **in Christ**.

As we seek to grasp the awesome depths of these revelations, we fall short because this is all we have and with Deut 29:29 warning us not to go any further we must be content. Yet, as we look at the details of all that is revealed here in the first chapter of Ephesians, our amazement simply continues to grow.

#### 4 just as

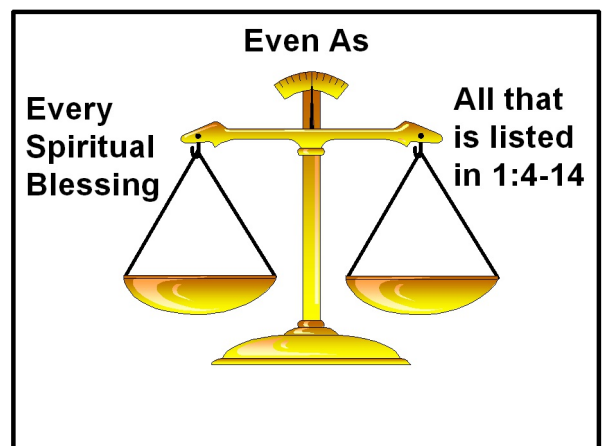
With these words an elaboration and further explanations of these things begin. God is worthy of praise and He did bless us with every spiritual blessing in Christ. truly with Thus the Although Paul has left the thought of God being worthy or praise because he has blessed us with every spiritual blessing behind at the end of verse three, these first two words of verse four bring us right back to it again. "just as" is a preposition of proportion and equality.

It is defined:

"*kathos*,...1. **according as, just as, even as**: in the first member of a comparison:...2. **according as** i.e. **in proportion as, in the degree that**...3. **since, seeing that, agreeably to the fact that**." (Thayer, p. 314; 2531).

"*kathōs*; adv. from *katá* (2596), **according to, and hōs** (5613), **as. According as, equivalent to ...**" (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:2531)

What now follows and carries all the way down to the end of verse 14 is an elaboration of some of the specific spiritual blessings given to us "in Christ." As we add on on top of the other, we see just how much God is worthy to be praised! He is worthy of our honor, gratitude and appreciation from





all his saints because as we look at the magnitude and value of these spiritual blessings He has blessed us with every spiritual blessing. In 1:3-14 some of the greatest of these blessings will be mentioned. But in the following chart it becomes clear that the blessings in Christ are far more abundant than those that are mentioned here.

EVERY SPIRITUAL BLESSING IN THE HEAVENLY PLACES IN CHRIST		<i>Eph. 1:3</i>
<i>Rom 3:24</i>	the <b>REDEMPTION</b> that is <b>in Christ Jesus</b>	<i>2 Cor 5:17</i> <b>A NEW CREATION;</b>
<i>Rom 6:11</i>	<b>ALIVE TO GOD in Christ Jesus</b>	<i>2 Cor 5:19</i> <b>RECONCILING THE WORLD</b>
<i>Rom 6:23</i>	<b>ETERNAL LIFE in Christ Jesus</b>	<i>Gal 2:4</i> our <b>LIBERTY</b> which we have <b>in Christ Jesus</b>
<i>Rom 8:1</i>	<b>NO CONDEMNATION in Christ Jesus</b>	<i>Gal 3:14</i> the <b>BLESSING OF ABRAHAM in Christ Jesus</b>
<i>Rom 8:39</i>	<b>THE LOVE OF GOD in Christ Jesus</b>	<i>Eph 1:3</i> <b>EVERY SPIRITUAL BLESSING</b>
<i>1 Cor 1:2</i>	<b>SANCTIFIED in Christ Jesus</b>	<i>Eph 2:6</i> <b>RAISED US UP TOGETHER</b> , made us <b>SIT TOGETHER</b>
<i>Col 1:28</i>	present every man <b>PERFECT in Christ Jesus.</b>	<i>Eph 2:7</i> His <b>GRACE AND KINDNESS</b> toward us <b>in Christ Jesus</b>
<i>1 Cor 1:4</i>	grace of God given you <b>in Christ Jesus</b>	<i>Eph 4:32</i> God also <b>in Christ</b> also <b>FORGAVE YOU</b>
<i>1 Cor 15:22</i>	so <b>in Christ</b> all shall <b>BE MADE ALIVE</b>	<i>2 Tim 1:1</i> the <b>PROMISE OF LIFE</b> which is <b>in Christ Jesus</b>
<i>2 Cor 1:21</i>	He <b>ESTABLISHES US</b>	<i>2 Tim 1:9</i> <b>PURPOSE AND GRACE</b> was given us <b>in Christ Jesus</b>
<i>2 Cor 2:14</i>	<b>LEADS US IN TRIUMPH</b>	<i>2 Tim 2:1</i> the <b>GRACE</b> that is <b>in Christ Jesus</b>
<i>2 Cor 3:14</i>	the <b>VEIL IS TAKEN AWAY</b>	<i>2 Tim 2:10</i> <b>SALVATION</b> which is <b>in Christ Jesus</b> with eternal glory

### He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world,

With this phrase one of the greatest mysteries and complexities of God's ways is revealed. Looking at the entire sentence gives us the amazing scope of this revelation.

*just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, 5 having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, Eph 1:4-5*

The complexities of God "election," "foresight," and "predestination," are introduced, but nowhere fully elaborated upon. For this reason the differences of opinion on this passage are vast and there is a great chasm between these opinions.

Because we are created in the image and likeness of God, we can do many of the things He can do yet with far less power and ability. Our ability to see the future and make plans came from God. Yet for us the future is so murky and uncertain, that James warned: "you ought to say, 'If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.'" (Jas. 4:15). disrupted by something we did not foresee.

**For God, the future is crystal clear.** He can see the future as easily as we see the past. He knows exactly what is going to happen. He is never wrong and nothing unforeseen can ever occur. The Scriptures reveal this in many different ways. One of the most powerful is His plan of salvation. As God weighed the future and how things would unfold: He purposed to create male and female, "in His image and likeness," giving us freewill and the right to choose to serve or to rebel. God created all material things, giving man complete dominion and "saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good." (Gen. 1:31). He created the world fully prepared for man, but in His foresight, He knew it was possible that man would choose sin. I say possible because when God's foresight meets man's freewill, God has not revealed whether He knew man would sin even with freewill, or whether He was prepared for either outcome.

**God knew that man could choose to sin and enter into open rebellion against Him.** Even with that knowledge, God still chose to make man, but had already devised the plan of salvation to deal with the terrible consequences of sin. He tells us the NT is the "revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began." Even our "hope of eternal life" was "promised before time began," and we will "inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." As God foresaw the future, He devised an "eternal purpose" which included Christ and the church. He foreordained that our salvation would be "according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began." (Rom. 16:25; Mt. 25:34; Eph. 3:10-11; Titus 1:2; 2Tim. 1:9). When they sinned, the plan for Jesus to die for them was already in place: "the precious blood of Christ," "was foreordained before the foundation of the world." (1Pet. 1:19-20).

**God's thoughts about seeing the future are beyond our comprehension.** He warned that *"as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts,"* (Isa. 55:9). How can we possibly explain or expound on an ability that is higher than the heavens above our own? We can only rely on what He has revealed and fully trust Him that *"the secret things belong to God."* (Deut. 29:29). When we speculate on *"things hard to understand,"* we will place ourselves among the *"untaught and unstable people"* who *"twist to their own destruction,"* the Scriptures. (2Pet. 3:16).

**God has told us about His foreknowledge, but very little about how.** Those who twist the Scriptures directly contradict what He has told us about His character. If we don't understand God's character and abilities, we can only attribute to Him how we might do it. We know God saw the future and made choices in eternity. Those who assume that the only way God could accomplish this is to force men to do His will, have gone far beyond what the Scriptures reveal and have entered into the secret things that belong only to God.

**We know *"God is love,"* and everything He has done is not only in His best interests but also in the best interests of ALL who are created in His image.** Out of this love, God *"desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."* God's justice and righteousness treats everyone fairly. He would never force anyone to sin or compel anyone to do what they don't want to do in order to bring about His goals. God is *"longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."* (1Jn. 4:8; 1;Tim. 2:4; 2Pet. 3:9). Any explanation of foreknowledge that impugns God's character or twists these Scriptures is false.

**God's foreknowledge is based on an omniscient intelligence beyond our comprehension.** The Holy Spirit revealed just how far about us are His thoughts: *"O Lord, You have searched me and known me," "You understand my thought afar off," "comprehend my path," "and are acquainted with all my ways." "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is high, I cannot attain it." "Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, The days fashioned for me, When as yet there were none of them."* (Ps. 139:1-16). God can read the thoughts of each man and woman so fully, that He already knows our decisions before we make them. He comprehends our path so fully, that He already knows the outcome of our lives before we live it. Every decision we make is already known by God, not because He forces or compels it, but because He knows us so well He can see exactly what we will do before we do it.

**Thus, God's eternal purpose, set forth in eternity is fixed, but those who are chosen to bring it about are based on their character.** When it came time to send the flood, He chose Noah to build the ark, because he was righteous. He chose Abraham to become the great nation, through whom He would bring His Christ, because of Abraham's faith. There are always men and women God can select who want to do what He needs to be done. He did not force Moses to make the decision to *"suffer ill treatment with the people of God."* He knew that was exactly what Moses would want to do and that is why God chose him.

**God doesn't need to force anyone to bring His plans into fruition.** He only needs to choose those who want to do His will and allow them through their own freewill, to do exactly what He wants done. It is exactly the same with the wicked. He knows the hearts of the wicked who will never repent no matter what He does. He doesn't have to force them to rebel. He only has to choose those who want to rebel. This is exactly what He told Pharaoh. (Ex. 9:16-17). His pride, rebellion and stubborn heart were well known by God. God raised up the man who became Pharaoh because he already had a hard heart and nothing God could do would soften it. God did not harden Pharaoh's heart by force. He chose a man who would rebel at anything God asked him to do. God knew even before it happened that the ten plagues, would not soften his heart.

Once we understand that God can make His choices based on how we will respond to them of our own freewill. This is an election and predestination beyond our ability to grasp. Since we can't read thoughts, it is impossible for us to even imagine how to use that ability in a loving and compassionate way. Yet we see hints of it throughout the Scriptures. God crafted the gospel to draw the humble and

repel the proud and haughty. These were choices He made and left to us to make the choice as to which side of humanity we would place ourselves up. We must love the truth, we must seek righteousness and holiness and draw near to God. All of these decisions were made before the foundation of the world and we are all now working out our own salvation with fear and trembling.

This is why many passages must be compared with other passages. It is too easy to substitute our own thoughts and our own ways

*eklēgō* ... from *ek* (1537), out, and *lēgō* (3004), to select, choose. To choose, select, choose for oneself, not necessarily implying the rejection of what is not chosen, but giving favor to the chosen subject, keeping in view a relationship to be established between the one choosing and the object chosen. It involves preference and selection from among many choices. In the NT found only in the middle *eklēgomai* (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:1586)

*eklēgomai* ... 1. The verb appears 11 times in the Lukan literature and 5 times in John; it appears also in 1 Cor 1:27 (bis), 28; Eph 1:4; James 2:5; ... *eklēgomai* occurs with the general meaning choose (something) only in Luke 10:42 and 14:7; elsewhere it denotes the election by God ..." (Exegetical Dictionary, NT:1586)

*eklego* "to pick out, select," means, in the middle voice, "to choose for oneself," not necessarily implying the rejection of what is not chosen, but "choosing" with the subsidiary ideas of kindness or favor or love, Mark 13:20; Luke 6:13; 9:35 (RV); 10:42; 14:7; 6:70; 13:18; 15:16,19; 1:2,24; 6:5; 13:17; 15:22,25; in 15:7 it is rendered "made choice"; 1 Cor 12:28; Eph 1:4; James 2:5 (from *Vine's Expository Dictionary*, NT:1586); *eklego* pick out, choose, in the NT... always mid, *eklegomai* to pick or choose out for oneself (Thayer, p 197, 1586)

God did some picking out and choosing for Himself. He made some decisions regarding those in humanity who would be selected for himself. Those who would spend eternity with him.

At this point we need to be very cautious and walk warily. This is one of those verses Peter was speaking of when he spoke of the difficult things Paul writes sometimes which are hard to be understood:

*our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, 16 as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures. 2Pet. 3:15-17*

Predestination and foreordination are two doctrines that have come down through the centuries. Multitudes have believed that in eternity God hand picked each individual. This had nothing to do with freewill, but only with God's sovereign right to choose. Thus the few that are saved is only because God only choose a few. Although this *could* be what the Holy Spirit is saying through Paul, it is impossible in light of other Scriptures. What does the verse actually say?

*He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world.*

*having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ.*

There are two ways to understand this verse. Either Paul is stating that before the foundation of the world God chose the individuals who would be allowed to be in Him that they might be holy and without blemish, or God chose that all those who entered Christ would be chosen and predestined. If it is the former, then everyone would be saved and not one lost.

*For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who **desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.** 1Tim. 2:3*

*But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, **not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance** 2Pet. 3:8*

If God desires all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth and is not willing that any should perish, how could the present state of affairs in the church exist? If God wanted all then all would be!

What did God choose then before the foundation of the world? He chose that all who would be saved would be saved in Christ.

*Nor is there salvation in any other, for **there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.**" Acts 4:12*

He chose that the only way anyone can become holy and without blemish is by entering Christ. It was

the method by which a man might be cleansed that God chose before the foundation of the world. It was HOW man might be saved that God chose, not WHO.

Paul spoke of the time when God made the choice that Christ would be the central theme of all that he would do for man. This was done before the "foundation" of the world.

"*katabole*... 1. a throwing or laying down... 2. a founding (laying down a foundation..." (Thayer, p. 330; 2602)

Hence this occurred before the events in Genesis 1 took place. Before God said "let there be light," before He began any activities of the creation of the universe, He had already made up His plans. This is affirmed in other places as well.

*Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, **according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began** 26 but now has been made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures has been made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith-- Rom. 16:25-26*

*to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, 11 **according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord,** Eph. 3:10-11*

God knew Jesus would have to die for the sins of man before He began to lay the foundation of the material creation and thus before Adam and Eve made their choice to rebel against God. This puts an entirely different light on the gospel. These decisions were made before God chose to make man. God knew before he ever created man that it would cost him the life of his Son. Jesus knew before the foundation of the world that He would have to die for man. Once again, the thoughts that this creates cannot be answered. We have to be so careful not to speculate.

*Lord, my heart is not haughty, Nor my eyes lofty. Neither do I concern myself with great matters, Nor with things too profound for me. 2 Surely I have calmed and quieted my soul, Like a weaned child with his mother; Like a weaned child is my soul within me. Ps 131:1-2*

*You comprehend my path and my lying down, And are acquainted with all my ways. 4 For **there is not a word on my tongue**, But behold, O Lord, **You know it altogether**. 5 You have hedged me behind and before, And laid Your hand upon me. 6 **Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is high, I cannot attain it.** ... 14 And that my soul knows very well. 15 My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. 16 **Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, The days fashioned for me, When as yet there were none of them.** 17 **How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them!** Ps. 139:3-5*

### that we should be holy

God saw the damage of sin as it was revealed in Romans 5. Death would pass to all men for all sinned. We would all be children of wrath. None righteous no not one. All that was necessary to remove that sin and make us holy again was all considered, planned and prepared. The term "holy" is the identical word as that in 1:2 and translated "saint."

*"For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. Deut. 7:6*

### and without blame

This too is an Old Covenant idea. The term "blame" is defined:

*amōmētos ... adjective from a (1), without, and mōmáomai (3469), to censure, blame. Irreproachable, one who cannot be blamed because he is amōmos (299), without blame (Phil 2:15; 2 Peter 3:14). (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:298)*

*"amomos... without blemish, free from faultiness, as a victim without spot or blemish... ethically, without blemish, faultless, unblamable..." (Thayer, p. 33; 299)*

In the Old Covenant it denoted the acceptability of a sacrifice. In order to offer something to God in sacrifice it had to be without any blemish or physical deformity.

*"you shall offer of your own free will a male without blemish from the cattle, from the sheep, or from the goats. 20 **Whatever has a defect, you shall not offer**, for it shall not be acceptable on your behalf. 21 "And whoever offers a sacrifice of a peace offering to the LORD, to fulfill his vow, or a freewill offering from the cattle or the sheep, **it must be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no defect in it.** 22 "Those that are **blind or broken or maimed, or have***

***an ulcer or eczema or scabs, you shall not offer to the LORD, nor make an offering by fire of them on the altar to the LORD. 23 "Either a bull or a lamb that has any limb too long or too short you may offer as a freewill offering, but for a vow it shall not be accepted. (Lev. 22:19-23).***

This means that when God looks upon those in Christ, He sees individuals cleansed and pure of all fault and the damage that was caused by sin. Not just those committed before we entered Christ, but all of those committed after.

*how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? Heb 9:14*

Those in Christ are both morally and spiritually perfect. Not because of their own lives but by God's sovereign will and plan. Our conscience and our souls have been cleansed by the blood of the lamb of God. We have no filth, no scabs, no scars from sin. We are clean and new, new born babes with absolute perfection.

*Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, To God our Savior, who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen. Jude 1:24*

God is to be thanked and praised now in time and throughout eternity for the wonderful, magnificent, loving, merciful plan that he made in eternity which would blot out our sins and imperfections and place us elect holy and without blemish.

**before Him in love,**

The last thing Paul mentions before leaving this thought is the fact that this was all done in love. John 3:16 would fit in well here.