

Ephesians 1:1-2

# Ephesians 1:1-2

James Heffington / General  
Ephesians / Ephesians 1:1-2

## Introduction to the Book of Ephesians

1. Ephesians is considered by many to be Paul's greatest writing of all.
2. With its emphasis on the breaking down of the barriers that divide men and on a reigning God whose purpose for the world must ultimately prevail, surely no book of the New Testament is more relevant to our day. Vaughan, C. (2002). *Ephesians* (p. 9). Cape Coral, FL: Founders Press.
3. Curtis Vaughan said in his commentary, "**The most comprehensive statement of the theme of Ephesians is this: *the eternal purpose of God and the place of Christ and His people in that purpose.* This concept is explained in the first three chapters of Ephesians; the last three chapters show its practical consequences for the Christian life."** Vaughan, C. (2002). *Ephesians* (p. 12). Cape Coral, FL: Founders Press.
4. The letter was written while Paul was imprisoned in Rome, the first time, around AD 63. It was during this time in prison that Paul also wrote the books of

Colossians, Philemon and Philippians.

**5. Covid interrupted our series on Colossians... Ephesians is often seen as a companion epistle to Colossians.** Ephesians seems to be an expansion, by Paul, of ideas presented in compact form in the book of Colossians. So it is a great book to kickoff our new season of life together...in affect, taking up where we left off while also starting fresh.

6. Ultimately what we see in Ephesians is simply this, God is in control. There is never a point when He is surprised by the circumstances of our world. He has seen our entire story from beginning to end. He knew of our existence in eternity past. He knows every single moment of our life here on earth. He has had a plan and purpose for it, always.

7. This is a message we need to hear well and live accordingly. The idea of control, Lordship and sovereignty are incredibly important and entirely liberating concepts if we understand them correctly.

8. At least once in each chapter we are reminded of the Fatherhood of God. At least once in each chapter there is a reminder that Jesus is Lord. God is God and we are not. Jesus is Lord and we are not. He is perfectly holy, loving, full of grace, mercy, power and in control.

9. God created us with this moment in mind. He has a purpose for all of us in this moment. We are meant to be a part of something He is doing in the year 2020, in the middle of the Covid-19 pandemic, civil unrest in our cities, political turmoil of our two political parties, time of backsliding and spiritual lethargy in the church

and utter depravity among the lost of our nation.

10. Paul understood this fact in his own life very well and begins the letter with a statement which proves it...

## **An Apostle By God's Will**

1. **Apostle** — The term *apostle*, a transliteration of the Greek *apostolos*, in its simplest definition means “a person sent,” “a messenger.” In the New Testament, the word *apostle* regularly denotes a person engaged by another to carry out a commission. Vaughan, C. (2002). *Ephesians* (p. 13). Cape Coral, FL: Founders Press. Vaughan, C. (2002). *Ephesians* (p. 13). Cape Coral, FL: Founders Press

2. But in the New Testament we most readily associate the word with the 12 Apostles of Jesus. Those who had a direct commission from Christ and were endued with His power, clothed with His Authority.

3. Paul is letting his readers know that his teaching had divine authority as he had a direct commission from God.

4. This call to apostleship and divine authority came through the will of God. He did not seek this out for himself. He did not desire it, pursue it and take the position as a career choice. His induction into the office of apostleship was not of men...not himself or any other. Galatians 1:1 But was an act of sovereign grace.

### **Galatians 1:1 CSB**

Paul, an apostle—not from men or by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised him from the dead—

5. Paul was humbled and amazed at God's call on his life. He did not feel he deserved it and was constantly reminded of the grace which had saved him in the first place. 1 Timothy 1:15

**1 Timothy 1:15 CSB**

This saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance: "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners"—and I am the worst of them.

6. Paul knew it was by grace that he was saved and that it was this same grace which offered him a place of service on behalf of the Kingdom of God. Ephesians 2:8 and Ephesians 2:10

**Ephesians 2:8 CSB**

For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift—

**Ephesians 2:10 CSB**

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time for us to do.

7. Paul was commissioned to take the gospel of Christ to the Gentile world. He was a missionary, church planter and evangelist. He was a defender of the faith and soldier of the Cross. All of this came to him by grace through faith and not of any work of self. God had sovereignly chosen to save him and call him. His Lord had saved him and chosen to use him for His kingdom purpose.

8. Paul could testify to the grace and truth of God's work in his life just as the prophet Jeremiah did centuries before him Jeremiah 1:5

**Jeremiah 1:5 CSB**

I chose you before I formed you in the womb; I set you apart before you were born. I appointed you a prophet to the nations.

9. And we can say the same thing this morning. Before we were formed in our mother's womb God knew us, set us apart and appointed us for a purpose. Nothing has been left to chance.

**10. In February 1980, the U.S. Olympic hockey team slipped its foot into a glass slipper and walked away with a gold medal at Lake Placid, New York. Those collegians had shocked the world by upsetting the powerful Soviet team, and then they grabbed the championship from Finland while the crowd chanted, "U.S.A.!"**

**11. Before his team's victory over the Soviet Union which advanced them to the finals, the coach of the U.S. hockey team told his players, "You are born to be a player. You are meant to be here at this time. This is your moment." What few people remember about the team or realize when reading of the words the coach spoke before the game was that the United States had played the Soviets just 3 days before the start of the Olympic Games and lost 10-3. The American college students were completely overmatched at every position against the Soviet professional players. But the coach was right....this was their moment, this was their time.**

**12. And God has decreed this our moment...this**

**is our time...Our time to serve and glorify Him. Our time to shine the light of the Gospel to a world living in darkness.**

13. After Paul emphasizes God's plans for himself and the authority upon which his words should be received...He turns to his hearers and the salvation they enjoy in Christ.

## **We are Faithful Saints in Christ Jesus**

1. Every believer in Christ who has ever read this letter could say these words about him or herself...we are faithful saints.

2. Before we were in our mother's womb God's most wonderful plan for us was that we would know Him; that we would be faithful to Him, that we would be a saint.

3. **Saint** — From the Greek word, whose root meaning is "separation" or "consecration," means "holy ones." The suggestion is that they are people set apart for the worship and service of God. Vaughan, C. (2002).

*Ephesians* (p. 14). Cape Coral, FL: Founders Press.

4. We are set apart for the worship and service of God. The specific of this for Paul was apostleship but we each of us begin at the same starting point — We are saved by grace, set apart as God's own people for the purpose of His work and glory.

5. **Faithful** — Means they were loyal, consistent and intentional about their relationship with and service to

Christ.

**6. In Christ Jesus** — They had faith in Jesus and a relationship with Him. This relationship was the reason they were who they were. Their life was completely found in Christ and His work on their behalf. They were saints and faithful because of Jesus not anything that had to do with them.

7. Their holiness, faithfulness and ability to bring glory to God was found in and through their relationship with Christ.

**8. A holy life will make the deepest impression. Lighthouses blow no horns, they just shine.**

**9. Glaucus, falsely charged with the crime of murder, was condemned to fight with a lion in the arena. He was led to the revolving door under the temple of Jupiter, and through the narrow opening thrust into the dungeon. A pitcher of water and a loaf of bread were placed before him; the door closed, and he was left in darkness.**

**10. As the handsome young Athenian, suddenly thrust down to the lowest abyss of ignominy and horror, realized his plight, the bitterness of his soul gave vent to a groan of anguish. With that, a voice from the recess of the darkness answered his groan: "Who is my companion in this awful hour? Athenian Glaucus, is it thou?" The speaker was Olynthus, only yesterday converted to Christianity and now condemned as an atheist to fight with a tiger.**

**11. Now near to death, the Christian ex-gladiator and prizefighter crept in the darkness to the side of the cultivated Greek pagan and hurried to tell him of his Christian faith: how his God was with him in the dungeon, how God's smile penetrated the darkness, and how on the eve of death his heart whispered of immortality and earth receded from him but to bring his weary soul nearer to heaven. "And there, as oft in the early ages of the Christian creed, it was in the darkness of the dungeon, and over the approach of death, that the dawning Gospel shed its soft and consecrating rays."**

**12. Like Paul, all saints have a unique call and purpose...our relationship with Christ and purpose for this life was known before we were in the womb! Let's trust God for not only His salvation but His purpose and live our life in Him!**

13. Paul concludes his introduction with a prayer for those who would read this letter...a prayer that spans the centuries and even includes us today as well...

## **Grace and Peace to You**

1. Grace is God's free, loving favor lavished on the undeserving. "Peace," which is a consequence of experiencing God's favor, signified not simply the absence of strife but the presence of positive blessings.

The word denotes wholeness, soundness, or prosperity, especially in spiritual things Vaughan, C. (2002).

*Ephesians* (p. 16). Cape Coral, FL: Founders Press.

2. Paul desires the greater realization and enjoyment of the grace of God that has been lavished upon them. It is as we do this that we experience God's peace in a fuller and richer way.

**3. A little boy, one of seven children, met with an accident, and was taken to the hospital. He came from a lowly home where hunger was seldom quite satisfied. The glass of milk was only part full, or, if full, shared by two of the children. After the lad was made comfortable as possible in his hospital bed, a nurse brought him a large glass of milk. He looked at it longingly and then, with the memory of many experiences of sharing with the other children, said, "How deep shall I drink?" The nurse with her eyes shining and a lump in her throat said, "Drink it all." Oh, hungry and thirsty soul, how deep shall you drink of the love and goodness of God? There is no limit! Drink it all, drink it again and again! The supply is inexhaustible.**

**4. Drink it all! The more we experience God's grace the more peace we have in life.**

5. The more we understand God loves us because He has chosen to do so...in spite of us...in spite of how undeserving we are...the more we are filled with wonder, awe, appreciation and love for Christ...the

more we see everything is dependent upon Him and not us...the more secure we are in Him.

6. In fact the more we see ourselves as undeserving of God's grace the more peace we have...because we realize things are not dependent upon us!

## Conclusion

1. **“The most comprehensive statement of the theme of Ephesians is this: *the eternal purpose of God and the place of Christ and His people in that purpose.***

2. God has a purpose for the world, all of mankind and us. That purpose is that we would know Him through His Son Jesus Christ and glorify Him.

3. Before we were in your mother's womb this was God's purpose for us. The specifics of this plan is played out differently among each of us but our life as followers of Jesus is lived to the same goal through our service to His Kingdom...that we might glorify God.

4. Ephesians will show us more deeply what it means to be called, saved and serve God for His glory. It will be an incredible journey through this book.

5. But this morning enjoy the introduction; **God has an eternal purpose and because we are in Christ we have a part to play in it.**

6. God isn't surprised by the tumult of our world or even your life. God knew you and I would be here and He had a plan and purpose for our life in a moment such as this.

**7. Riots, Covid, economic distress, etc**

8. God is in control, completely so. He saved us, made us holy and keeps us faithful. He is getting glory from our life. We can rest, have faith, enjoy His grace and find peace in Him along the way.