

Paul's Letter to the *EPHESIANS*

CHAPTERS 1, 2, 3: *God's Plan for Everyone Who is In Christ*

Introduction and Greetings (1:1-2)

1:1-2 Paul, an apostle ¹ of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints ² in Ephesus, the faithful ³ in Christ Jesus: Grace ⁴ and peace ⁵ to you from God our Father and the Lord ⁶ Jesus Christ.

[¹*apostolos*: one sent, ambassador, ²*hagios*: set apart, consecrated, ³*pistos*: worthy to be believed, ⁴*charis*: a favor done without expectation of return, ⁵*eirene*: absence of strife, ⁶*kurios*: wielding authority for good] The opening of Paul's letter to Ephesus has 3 elements common in the initial verses of all of Paul's letters e.g., Romans 1:1,7, Colossians 1:1-2, 2 Timothy 1:1-2; (1) introduction of Paul as one sent by God and the letter's author, (2) a recognition of who (church/individual) the letter was written to and (3) a blessing of grace ^{Romans 3:24, Titus 2:11} and peace ^{Psalm 85:8, John 14:27} for those who receive and read the letter.

Paul (*Paulos*: small) was born Saul ^{Acts 7:58, 8:1} of Tarsus of Cilicia, a Jew ^{Acts 22:2} and a Roman citizen ^{Acts 16:38} who became a Pharisee ^{Acts 23:6} after studying under Gamaliel ^{Acts 22:3}.

Paul did not choose to be an apostle ^{Acts 9:1-2}; he was chosen "by the [sovereign] will of God". However, once chosen, Paul carried out his responsibilities as an apostle with great success.

Saint ^{Ephesians 1:15,18,3:18,6:18} is equivalent to a believer: a sinner saved by the grace of God.

These verses have the first of 21 uses of the phrase "in Christ" ^{1 Corinthians 12:12-13} in Ephesians.

The Grace of God must always precede the Peace with God. ^{Romans 5:1-2}

The phrase "Lord Jesus Christ" reflects His Title, His Name and His Mission (Savior).

A Discussion of God's Sovereignty / Man's Sovereignty

The mystery of the Gospel (salvation) ^{Ephesians 6:19}:

Ephesians 6:19-20 Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.

Paul states very clearly in Romans ^{Romans 8:29-30}:

God foreknew ⇒ predestined ⇒ called ⇒ justified ⇒ glorified.

Romans 8:29-30 For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

God is Sovereign

Psalms 68:19-20 Praise be to the Lord, to God our Savior, who daily bears our burdens. Our God is a God who saves; from the Sovereign LORD comes escape from death.

Psalms 115:3 Our God is in heaven; he does whatever pleases him.

John 6:44 "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him..."

Acts 4:24 They raised their voices together in prayer to God. "Sovereign Lord," they said, "you made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and everything in them.

Romans 9:10-15, 19-21 Rebekah's children had one and the same father, our father Isaac. Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad - in order that God's purpose in election might stand: not by works but by him who calls - she was told, "The older will serve the younger." Just as it is written: "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated." What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all! For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion. ... One of you will say to me: "Then why does God still blame us? For who resists his will?" But who are you, O man, to talk back to God? "Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, 'Why did you make me like this?'" Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for noble purposes and some for common use?

Predestination is Biblical

Acts 13:48 When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord; and all who were appointed for eternal life believed.

Ephesians 1:11 In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will.

2 Timothy 1:8b-9 Join with [Paul] in suffering for the gospel, by the power of, God, who has saved us and called us to a holy life - not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time...

Titus 1:1-2 Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ for the faith of God's elect and the knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness - a faith and knowledge resting on the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time.

Free Will (Man's Sovereignty) is Biblical

Deuteronomy 30:19 I call heaven and the earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live.

Joshua 24:14-15 "Now fear the LORD and serve him with all faithfulness. ... But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD."

Isaiah 55:7 Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the LORD, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon.

Jeremiah 17:10 "I the LORD search the heart and examine the mind, to reward a man according to his conduct, according to what his deeds deserve."

John 3:16-18 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son."

John 7:17 "If anyone chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own."

2 Timothy 2:24-26 And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.

Hebrews 4:11 Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by following their example of disobedience.

Revelation 16:8-11 The fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and the sun was given power to scorch people with fire. They were seared by the intense heat and they cursed the name of God, who had control over these plagues, but they refused to repent and glorify him. The fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom was plunged into darkness. Men gnawed their tongues in agony and cursed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, but they refused to repent of what they had done.

Revelation 20:11-15 Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

Who/What Does God Love?

Genesis 1:31a God saw all that he had made, and it was very good...

Psalms 139:13-14 For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful...

Ezekiel 28:12b-15a This is what the Sovereign LORD says: "You were the model of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone adorned you: ruby, topaz and emerald, chrysolite, onyx and jasper, sapphire, turquoise and beryl. Your settings and mountings were made of gold; on the day you were created they were prepared. You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. You were on the holy mount of God; you walked among the fiery stones. You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created.

Who Does God Want to be Saved?

Ezekiel 18:32 I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Sovereign LORD. Repent & live!

Romans 10:12-13 For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile - the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

1 Timothy 2:1-4 I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone - for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

Revelation 2:20b-21 I have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols. I have given her time to repent of her immorality, but she is unwilling.

Whose Sins did Jesus Pay For?

Leviticus 9:7 Moses said to Aaron, "Come to the altar and sacrifice your sin offering and your burnt offering and make atonement for yourself and the people; sacrifice the offering that is for the people and make atonement for them, as the LORD has commanded."

Romans 6:10 The death [Christ] died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

Hebrews 7:27 Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself.

Hebrews 9:11-12, 26b-28 When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of this creation. He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption. ... [Christ] has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

Hebrews 10:8-10 First he said, "Sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire, nor were you pleased with them" (although the law required them to be made). Then he said, "Here I am, I have come to do your will." He sets aside the first to establish the second. And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

1 Peter 3:18 For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit...

Who Has God Chosen?

John 8:39-44 "Abraham is our father," they [said]. "If you were Abraham's children," said Jesus, "then you would do the things Abraham did. As it is, you are determined to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. Abraham did not do such things. You are doing the things your own father does." "We are not illegitimate children," they protested. "The only Father we have is God himself." Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and now am here. I have not come on my own; but he sent me. Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies."

John 6:70 Then Jesus replied, "Have I not chosen you, the Twelve? Yet one of you is a devil!"

John 15:5-8 "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples."