

OUR RICHES IN CHRIST: EPHESIANS 1:1-3 STUDY IN THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS

Dr. Ché Ahn

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TEXT: Ephesians 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God. To the saints who are at Ephesus and *who are* faithful in Christ Jesus: 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 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.

INTRODUCTION: Most evangelical scholars agree that this was not to the Ephesian church. Early manuscripts do not include the phrase “who are at Ephesus.” Some scholars say it is a circular letter; others say this is the letter to the Laodicean church. God’s word for the church. For our purposes it doesn’t matter if it was specifically for the church at Ephesus. This is part of the Bible, and it is for every believer in every local church around the world.

One of the key verses is **Ephesians 3:1 For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles.** I believe that: 1) Paul wrote this (Ephesians 1:1), 2) He was in prison when he wrote this, 3) He was writing to the Gentiles and not to Jewish believers.

- I. THE APOSTLE: Ephesians 1:1a Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God...**
 - A. PAUL**
 - 1. His radical conversion: Acts 9:3ff.26**
 - 2. His calling: Acts 9:15 But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel.”**
 3. Paul’s first ministry to Ephesus (Acts 18:19-21)
 4. Paul returns to Ephesus and spends three years there (Acts 20:31). It was the greatest revival and the greatest apostolic center he had established (Acts 19:1-20).
 5. Apostles are to be revivalists and reformers.
 6. Ten years later (A.D. 63), Paul is a prisoner in Rome (Ephesians 3:1; 4:1; 6:20) when he writes to the church in Ephesus. This is his first trial in Rome after appealing to Caesar when he was in Caesarea in Acts 25:11-12.

B. WHAT IS AN APOSTLE?

1. **Ephesians 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus.** He introduces himself to establish his authority by saying this phrase in: **Colossians 1:1, 1 Corinthians 1:1, 2 Corinthians 1:1, and Romans 1:1.**
2. He uses the term apostle two other times: **Ephesians 2:20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone**
3. And in **Ephesians 4:11 And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.**
4. An important verse on Paul's view of the apostolic is **1 Corinthians 12:28 And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers...**
5. **Roman Culture: An apostle was a government official who was sent by the Roman government, with the authority of Caesar, to ensure that the Roman law and culture was inculcated into the conquered territory.**
6. **Kingdom Culture: "An apostle is a servant leader sent out by Jesus with His authority and His power to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom with signs and wonders following and with the purpose of seeing nations disciplined and transformed to reflect heaven on earth. To be apostolic is to be people who bring revival and reformation to our world."**

II. THE AUDIENCE: Ephesians 1:1b To the saints who are at Ephesus and who are faithful in Christ Jesus.**A. SAINTS**

1. The Greek word *hagios* means to be set apart or holy.
2. **"The holy people whom God has set apart for Himself." (Word Biblical Commentary, A.T. Lincoln)**
3. God calls you holy. You are a saint. Positionally, you are righteous (2 Corinthians 5:21).
4. He expects us to practice righteous. Paul emphasizes this truth in **Ephesians 1:4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him.**

5. Also, **Ephesians 5:27** that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.
 6. **Ephesians 4:12** “A mature man”, not a perfect person.
 7. A saint is a person who is recognized by his or her holiness of life. All saints go to heaven.
 8. How does one become a saint? **Ephesians 1:1b** “**who are faithful in Christ Jesus.**” The word “faithful” is the Greek word *pistos*, which is an adjective and can be translated “who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ.”
 9. Those who put their faith in Christ and those who have been faithful to Jesus, this letter is for you.
 10. This is the way God sees you. Your identity is not as a sinner but as righteous before God with a propensity to obey and love God.
 11. **Ezekiel 11:19** “**And I will give them one heart and put a new spirit within them. And I will take the heart of stone out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, 20 that they may walk in My statutes and keep My ordinances and do them. Then they will be My people, and I shall be their God.**”
 12. The letter is addressed to the saints in Ephesus, but it is regarded as a circular letter. Earlier manuscripts don’t have Ephesians mentioned, and there are no personal greetings at the end like his other letters.
- B. GREETINGS: Ephesians 1:2** **Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**
1. Exact same wording as **Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:3; 2 Corinthians 1:2; Philippians 1:2; Philemon 3**
 2. **Grace of *charis***: favor, grace. “**Grace to you and peace from God our Father...**” The wording is unique to Pauline writing (*Word Biblical Commentary*, A.T. Lincoln)
 3. By grace you have been saved. By grace you have been made saints. It is a free gift of God. The word grace is used 12 times in this letter—a major theme not only in this letter but all of Paul’s letters.
 4. **Peace – *eirené* – Shalom in the Old Testament.** It means the absence of evil and the presence of everything good from a good heavenly Father. Six times in this letter (Ephesians 2:14, 15, 17; 4:3; 6:15).

III. THE AIM: Ephesians 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.**



A. THE SOURCE OF OUR BLESSING: Ephesians 1:3a Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ...

1. He is a good Heavenly Father. He is a God of love! He is kindness and goodness personified. He wants to give you His Kingdom! (Luke 12:32)
2. The Holy Spirit, The Helper is the greatest gift God has given to us after the death and resurrection of Jesus!

B. THE SCOPE OF OUR BLESSING: Ephesians 1:3b who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing...

1. Every or all spiritual blessings.
2. This blessing comes from the Father through the Holy Spirit.
3. We are going to look at and examine the riches of these spiritual blessings in the weeks ahead like: **Riches of God's grace (Ephesians 1:7, 2:7); Riches of God's glory (Ephesians 1:18); Riches of God's mercy (Ephesians 2:4); The unsearchable riches of Christ (Ephesians 3:8). Not just spiritual but material.** But let me give you one of the "riches" in Christ that is in the context of our text.

C. THE SPIRIT OF WISDOM... EPHESIANS 1:17

1. The Holy Spirit is the means of manifesting the blessing from the Father.
2. One of the major manifestations from the Holy Spirit is wisdom.
3. **Isaiah 11:2 The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him; The spirit of wisdom and understanding, The spirit of counsel and strength, The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.**
4. **Proverbs 3:13 How blessed is the man who finds wisdom And the man who gains understanding. 14 For her profit is better than the profit of silver And her gain better than fine gold. 15 She is more precious than jewels; And nothing you desire compares with her. 16 Long life is in her right hand; In her left hand are riches and honor. 17 Her ways are pleasant ways And all her paths are peace. 18 She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her, And happy are all who hold her fast.**
5. **"IF YOU DON'T HAVE THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, YOU CANNOT DRAW ON THE WEALTH OF THE SPIRIT."**
6. **Be baptized in the Holy Spirit.**

D. THE SPHERE OF OUR BLESSINGS: Ephesians 1:3c in the heavenly *places* in Christ.

1. Our blessing is in the heavenly realm that manifests on earth.
2. The world lives in the earthly realm, but as Christians we must be heavenly minded.
3. **Our citizenship is in heaven (Philippians 3:20).**

4. **Our names are written in heaven (Luke 10:20).**
5. **Our attention should be on things in heaven (Colossians 3:1ff).**
6. **We are seated with Christ in the heavenly places (Ephesians 1:22-23, 2:6).**
7. What does that mean? We are seated in a position of authority.
8. The President is the only one who can sit at the President’s Desk at the White House. He is the chief executive. So, we are to rule and reign with Christ.
9. I know that D.L. Moody said that we Christians are so heavenly minded that we are no longer earthly good. We have dual citizenship.
10. Our job is to bring heaven to earth through our prayers.
11. Matthew 6:10 “Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven!”

CONCLUSION: Lead people to the Lord and pray for people who have not been baptized in the Holy Spirit or who have never prayed in tongues.