

Handout 1: Ephesians Lesson 1

These things, brethren, concerning righteousness, I write to you not at my own instance, but because you first invited me. For nether can I nor anyone like me match the wisdom of the blessed and glorious Paul. When he was among you, face to face with the men of that time, he expounded the word of truth accurately and authoritatively, and when he was absent he wrote letters to you, the study of which will enable you to build yourselves up in faith which was given to you.

St. Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna (AD 69/70-155/156), disciple of St. John the Apostle, *Second Letter to the Philippians*, 3.1

Paul was a man of low statue, bald (or shaved on the head), crooked thighs, handsome legs, hollow eyed; had a crooked nose; full of grace; for sometimes he appeared as a man, and sometimes he had the countenance of an angel.

The Acts of Paul and Thecla, 1.7

SUMMARY OF ST. PAUL’S LETTER TO THE EPHESIANS

Biblical Period	#12 The Kingdom of the Church				
Covenant	The New Covenant in Christ Jesus				
Focus	The Mystery of Salvation and the Church		Exhortation on Christian Living		
Scripture	1:1-----1:15-----3:1-----4:25-----6:21-----6:24				
Division	Greeting and Opening address	Unity of the Church	World Mission of the Church	Daily Conduct and Unity of the Church	Conclusion
Topic	Faith Expressed in Belief		Belief Expressed in Behavior		
	Privileges of the Christian		Responsibilities of the Christian		
Location	Theory #1: written from prison in Rome Theory #2: written from prison in Caesarea				
Time	Theory # 1: 61-63 AD Theory #2: 58-60 AD				
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Chart inspired by Nelson’s Complete Book of Bible Maps and Charts page 400

The major themes of St. Paul’s Letter to the Ephesians:

1. Mankind’s redemption is rooted in the divine plan and accomplishment of the Triune God.
2. God’s saving love through Jesus Christ is the foundation of God’s divine plan.
3. The Church is the instrument for making God’s plan of salvation known throughout the world.
4. The mission of the world-wide Church whose head is Christ.

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The three parts of Paul's hymn of thanksgiving in 1:3-14:

1. God the Father's plan of salvation (verses 3-6)
2. fulfillment through God the Son (verses 7-10)
3. inheritance through God the Holy Spirit (verses 11-14)

Paul lists five spiritual blessings Christians have received through the sacrifice of Christ Jesus in 1:4-13:

1. the call to holiness (verse 4)
2. the gift of divine adoption that establishes a unique spiritual relationship with the Father through the Son (verse 5)
3. the liberation from sin through Jesus' sacrificial death (verse 7)
4. the revelation of God's divine plan of salvation in Christ Jesus (verses 9-10)
5. the gift of divine election and faith in Christ for "we who first hoped in Christ" = Jewish Christians (verse 12), and the same gift of divine election extended to "you also" = Gentiles Christians (verse 13)

In 1:17-20 Paul asks God to give to the readers of his letter:

1. a Spirit of wisdom
2. a revelation of true knowledge of God
3. an assurance of the hope of God's call to salvation and the inheritance of eternal life
4. an appreciation of the greatness of God's power in His gift of salvation to believers in Christ Jesus

In Chapter 2 St. Paul explains how God's intervention in human history through God the Son and "the surpassing greatness of his power" in raising Jesus to glory has affected "us who believe" (Eph 1:19). Paul's explanation can be divided into two parts:

1. It was God's plan that Christ should reconcile mankind with God (2:1-10).
2. It was God's plan that Christ should also reconcile all peoples and nations to one another in His Kingdom of the Church (2:11-22).

St. Paul writes in 2:8, *For by grace you have been saved through faith...* As in Colossians 2:12 and 3:1-4, the use of the past tense shows that the resurrection and glory of Christians in heaven is considered as actually existing as an accomplished event.

Ephesians 2:12, *were at that time without Christ, alienated from the community of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise...* There were seven Old Testament covenants that looked forward to the messianic promise—an understanding that the Gentiles did not have. See handout 2 for the list of Biblical covenants.

Yahweh's Eight Covenants

But Yahweh's faithful love for those who fear Him is from eternity and forever; and His saving justice to their children's children; as long as they keep His covenant, and carefully obey his precepts. Palms 103:17-18

COVENANT	SIGN	SCRIPTURE
1. Adam -fertility -dominion over the earth	Tree of Life	Genesis 1:28-30; Genesis 2:15-17; Hosea 6:7 can be translated <i>they have broken their covenant like Adam</i>
2. Noah and the earth -The earth will never be destroyed by flood waters again (water will become a sign of salvation)	Rainbow	Genesis 6:18; 9:9-17; Sirach 44:17-18.
3. Abraham = 3-fold, (continues with Isaac, Jacob & descendants) -Land, nation (descendants) & world-wide blessing	Circumcision on the 8th day	Genesis 12:3; 15:1-18; 17: 1-27; 18:18 & 22:13-18; 26:3-5; 28:10-14; Exodus 2:24; Psalm 105:8-11; Sirach 44:19-20
4. Moses & Israel -Sinai Covenant: divine liturgy & covenant sacraments	Tabernacle & Sabbath obligation (sacred time and space)	Exodus 19-24; 31:13, 17; 34:10, 27-28; Deuteronomy 5:2-3; 29:12.
5. Aaron & Sons -Perpetual ministerial priesthood of the Levites	Salt	Exodus 40:15; Leviticus 2:13; Numbers 18:19; Jeremiah 33:21; Sirach 45:7; Mal 2:4-5.
6. Phinehas -Perpetual priesthood in Covenant of Peace	Seamless robe & miter	Numbers 25:11-15; Sirach 45:24.
7. David & descendants -Dynasty and throne forever secure	Throne/ Temple	2 Samuel 7:11-17; 23:5; 2 Chronicles 31:5; Psalms 132:11-12; Sirach 45:25.
8. Jesus (Hebrew = <i>Yah-shua</i> = "Yahweh saves" or "I save," also in Aramaic, Yehosua = Joshua). Jesus is the fulfillment of all the covenantal promises.	The Cross (the true "Tree of Life") & the Eucharist	Isaiah 55:3; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Matthew 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20; 1 Corinthians 11:25; Hebrews 12:24.
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There are more Scripture passages referring to Yahweh's 8 Covenants than those listed in the chart. In addition, some covenants have conditions while others have no conditions. Please visit www.AgapeBibleStudy.com for additional information and details.