



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

**Introduction:** Ephesians has been given such titles as the believer's bank, the Christian's checkbook, and the treasure house of the Bible. This beautiful letter tells Christians of their great riches, inheritances, and fullness in Jesus Christ and in His church. It tells them what they possess and how they can claim and enjoy their possessions. In this book the word *riches* is used five times; *grace* twelve times; **glory** eight times; *fulness*, *filled up*, or *fills* six times; and the key phrase *in Christ* (or *in Him*) fifteen times. **Christ is the source, the sphere, and the guarantee of every spiritual blessing and of all spiritual riches, and those who are in Him have access to all that He is and has.**

**Our riches are based on Christ's grace** (1:2, 6-7; 2:7), His peace (1:2), His will (1:5), His kind intention (1:9), His purpose (1:9, 11), His glory (1:12, 14), His calling (1:18), His inheritance (1:18), His power (1:19), His love (2:4), His workmanship (2:10), His Spirit (3:16), His gifts (4:11), His sacrifice (5:2), His strength (6:10), and His armor (6:11, 13).

Several years ago the *Los Angeles Times* reported the story of an elderly man and wife who were found dead in their apartment. Autopsies revealed that both had died of severe malnutrition, although investigators found a total of \$40,000 stored in paper bags in a closet.

For many years Hetty Green was called America's greatest miser. When she died in 1916, she left an estate valued at \$100 million, an especially vast fortune for that day. But she was so miserly that she ate cold oatmeal in order to save the expense of heating the water. When her son had a severe leg injury, she took so long trying to find a free clinic to treat him that his leg had to be amputated because of advanced infection. It has been said that she hastened her own death by bringing on a fit of apoplexy while arguing the merits of skim milk because it was cheaper than whole milk.

The book of Ephesians is written to Christians who might be prone to treat their spiritual resources much like that miserly couple and Hetty Green treated their financial resources. Such believers are in danger of suffering from spiritual malnutrition, because they do not take advantage of the great storehouse of spiritual nourishment and resources that is at their disposal.

Paul, whose original name was Saul, was of the tribe of Benjamin and probably was named after Israel's first king and her most prominent Benjamite. Saul was well educated in what today are called the humanities, but his most extensive training was in rabbinic studies under the famous Gamaliel (Acts 22:3). He became an outstanding rabbi in his own right and was a member of the Sanhedrin, the ruling Jewish council at Jerusalem. He also became probably the most ardent anti-Christian leader in Judaism (Acts 22:4–5). He passionately hated the followers of Jesus Christ and was on his way to arrest some of them in Damascus when the Lord miraculously and dramatically stopped him in his tracks and brought him to Himself (Acts 9:1–8).

After spending three years in the desert of Nabataean Arabia, Paul jointly pastored a church in Antioch of Syria with Barnabas, Simeon, Lucius, and Manaen (Acts 13:1). During this earlier ministry Saul came to be known as Paul (Acts 13:9). **The new man took on a new name.** *Illus: When I was doing missions on the island of Dominica, the men who became Christians changed their name. I remember well swimming in the Carribean Seas with John the Baptist.*

From Antioch the Holy Spirit sent him out with Barnabas to begin the greatest missionary enterprise in the history of the church. At that point Paul began his work as God's unique apostle to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15; Rom. 11:13).

Sometime between 60 and 62 AD, Paul wrote this letter from prison in Rome (see 3:1) to the believers whom he had pastored. Because the phrase *who are at Ephesus* is not in many early manuscripts, and because there is no mention of a local situation or individual believer, **many scholars think this letter was an encyclical, intended to be circulated among all the churches in Asia Minor (including those in Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, and Sardis, as well as Ephesus).** **It may be that the letter was sent first to Ephesus and therefore became especially associated with that church.**

**The first three chapters of Ephesians emphasize doctrine, and the last three chapters emphasize behavior. The first half is theological, and the second half is practical.**

## I. A Double Authority.

**Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, (1:1a)**

Paul wrote with the authority of an apostle. *Apostolos* means "sent one" and in the New Testament is used as an official title of the men God uniquely chose to be the foundation layers of the church and the receivers, teachers, and writers of His final revelation—the New Testament. The apostolic duties were to:

- preach the gospel (1 Cor. 1:17),
- teach and pray (Acts 6:4),
- work miracles (2 Cor. 12:12),
- build up other leaders of the church (Acts 14:23), and
- write the Word of God (Eph. 1:1; etc.).

Besides the original twelve and Matthias (Acts 1:26), who replaced Judas, Paul was the only other apostle, "as it were ... one untimely born" (1 Cor. 15:8). Yet he was not inferior to the other apostles, having met all the requirements for that office (1 Cor. 9:1).

Paul's credentials were not his academic training or his rabbinical leadership but his being an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God. Paul did not teach and write by his own authority but by the dual yet totally unified authority of the Son (Christ Jesus) and of

the Father (**God**). In stating that truth Paul was not boasting of personal merit or elevating himself above other believers. He well remembered that he had been a blasphemer, a violent persecutor of the church, and an unworthy and ignorant unbeliever; and he still considered himself the foremost of sinners (1 Tim. 1:13, 15). Like every Christian, he was first of all “a bond-servant of Christ Jesus” his Lord (Rom. 1:1). By mentioning his apostleship, Paul simply established his undeserved but divinely-bestowed authority to speak in God’s behalf—which he states at the beginning of each of his epistles except Philipians and 1 and 2 Thessalonians.

## II. A Double Designation.

**to the saints who are at Ephesus, and who are faithful in Christ Jesus: (1:1b)**

**From God’s side** believers are those whom He has made holy, which is the meaning of saints. **From man’s side** believers are those who are **faithful**, those who have trusted in **Christ Jesus** as their Lord and Savior.

Every Christian is a saint, because every Christian has been set apart and made holy through the perfect righteousness of Christ that has been placed to his account (Rom. 3:21–22; 1 Cor. 1:30; Phil. 3:9; etc.). **When a person acts in faith to receive Christ, God acts in grace to give that person Christ’s own righteousness.** It is Christ’s perfect righteousness—not a person’s own character or accomplishments, no matter how great they may seem in men’s eyes—that establishes every believer as one of God’s **saints** through saving faith.

## III. A Double Blessing.

**Grace to you and peace (1:2a)**

This was a common greeting among Christians in the early church. *Charis (grace)* is God’s great kindness toward those who are undeserving of His favor but who have placed their faith in His Son, Jesus Christ. To greet a Christian brother or sister in this way is much more than a wish for their general well-being. It is also an acknowledgment of the divine grace in which we stand and which has made us mutual members of Christ’s Body and of God’s divine family.

**Grace is the fountain of which peace (*eirēnē*) is the stream.**

**Because we have grace from God we have peace with God and the peace of God, “which surpasses all comprehension” (Phil. 4:7).**

**Peace** is the equivalent of the Hebrew *shālôm*, which, in its highest connotation, **signifies spiritual prosperity and completeness.**

## IV. A Double Source.

from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. (1:2b)

The double source of blessing is the same as the double source of authority—**God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

Those are not separate and distinct sources but two manifestations of the same Source, as indicated by the connective *kai (and)*, which can indicate equivalence, and here indicates that the **Lord Jesus Christ** is deity just like **God our Father.**

Paul's message throughout this epistle is that believers might understand and experience more fully all of the blessings granted by their heavenly Father and His Son and their Savior, Jesus Christ.

