

**UNIT 5 EPHESIANS LESSON 1****"THE SALUTATION"****STUDY PASSAGE: Ephesians 1:1-2.****INTRODUCTION**

Sometime in the years AD 62-63 a man fettered with a chain sat in a house in the Imperial City of Rome composing a letter. This man, the Apostle Paul, was a prolific and gifted writer. Paul had spent much of his Christian life on the move and constantly under attack because of his courageous and uncompromising preaching of the Christian Gospel. Now, at the time of his prison writing, most of his public life lay in the past, and Paul had time on his hands to reflect.

What the Apostle Paul wrote in Ephesians was in one sense his greatest work of literature. A grand summary of all he had ever taught. In it he expresses with almost poetic quality the great theme of the 'Unity of all things in Jesus Christ' and describes how one-time strangers are now invited to live together as one, in God's household.

Many see Ephesians as a "circular letter" or a general letter intended to make the rounds of all the churches in the Roman province of Asia. It was not just specifically for the church at Ephesus. The Epistle to the Ephesians is divided into two broad sections:

**Salutation 1:1-2****1. Doctrine 1:3 – 3:21**

- a) Doxology 1:3-14.
- b) Prayer for Readers' Enlightenment 1:15 - 2:10.
- c) Reconciliation for Jew and Gentile in Christ. 2:11-22.
- d) Paul's commission to the Gentiles 3:1-13.
- e) Paul's prayer for Gentiles' strengthening 3:14-21.

**2. Ethics 4:1-6:20**

- a) First Charge: to Promote Church's Unity 4:1-16.
- b) Second Charge: to Break with Pagan Ways 4:17-5:20.
- c) Third Charge: to Build Christian Homes 5:21 6:9.
- d) Fourth Charge: to Put on the Armour of God 6:10-20.

**Conclusion 6:21-24.**

As you look at all of Paul's epistles you will notice that they commence in much the same way. He says who is sending the letter ("epistle" means the same as "letter") then to whom the letter is sent, and follows this by a greeting.

This was the common form used by all people in the period. However, Paul filled the form with Christian significance.

**NOTICE:**

1. He uses the introduction to the letter to declare the authority by which he writes. His authority depends not on any earned qualifications, or on any position in the Church, but on his special commission to be an apostle received from Christ, which is according to the will of God. "Apostle" derives from the Greek word which means "to send". The accepted N.T. meaning was "a person sent with a particular purpose". As an "Apostle of Jesus Christ" Paul was commissioned by Christ to give the gospel message. The other 12 apostles were commissioned by Jesus himself when he was on earth; Matthias was chosen by the others who were commissioned by Christ, and Paul insists on his direct commission from Christ (Rom. 1:1; 1 Cor. 1:1; Gal. 1:1) through his Damascus Road experience and having seen the Lord then. If you look at 1:3-14, especially verses 5,9 and 11, you will see that the "will of God" was associated with God's plan and purpose for the ages.
2. He uses the traditional form to remind the readers of the deep truth that they are "saints", i.e., people who belong to God, or people who have been "set apart" to God, and that they are "in Christ Jesus". He greets them all as "saints" and makes no distinction between Jews and Gentiles.
3. The term "in Christ" is one of Paul's favourite terms and is a key word in understanding the Epistle. It is Paul's word for a "Christian" or converted regenerate person and points, as Principal Morling said, to "a position, a relation, and a sharing". (G.H. Morling was Principal of Morling College 1923-1960. He was a loved and respected scholar).

"In Christ" is our position in that He becomes the element or the environment in which our real life is lived. True, we still live "in the world", but because of our faith we are also "in Christ", cf. 2 Cor. 5:17. In Christ we are living in a new creation, cf. also Col. 3:1-3.

"In Christ" is our relation to Him. See John 15:1-11. Think of a sponge immersed in water. The sponge is in the water, and the water is in the sponge.

"In Christ" is a sharing with Christ. See Eph. 2:4-6 and cf. Romans 8:17, Romans 6:5-11.

4. He uses the greeting to sum up all that God gives to us in Christ: Grace and Peace;
  - a) Grace: the free undeserved favour of God, active to bring about our reconciliation with Himself and giving us all the spiritual gifts we need. The verb related to "grace" denotes forgiveness. Grace also includes the idea of the divine power which equips a person to live a moral life. Every step in the process of the Christian life is due to grace.
  - b) Peace: complete well being that springs from a right relationship with God and which includes peace in the heart and peace with one another.



**QUESTION 1**

What is an apostle? Why do you think that Paul stresses to his readers that he is an apostle?

**QUESTION 2.**

Briefly summarise Paul's direct experience and commission from Jesus. (e.g. Acts 9:1-20).

**QUESTION 3.**

What is a saint? What was Paul expressing by using this term?

**QUESTION 4.**

Look through Ephesians. Where else does Paul use the term "in Christ" or "in union with Christ"?

**QUESTION 5.**

What is meant by "Grace" and "Peace"?

**QUESTION FOR GROUP STUDY.**

What do you think Paul meant by "in Christ" or "in union with Christ"? What for you personally are the best features of being "in Christ"? How does it work out in practice?