

Ephesians – week 1

1. Ephesians background

- a. Ephesus was a large trading city located in modern Turkey
 - The temple of Artemis (Diana) was considered the largest building in the world at the time.
- b. Written around 10 years after Galatians, around 60AD. About 10-15 years after Galatians
- c. Written while Paul was in prison in Rome
- d. Paul had visited Ephesus earlier.
 - Acts 18:19-21 (short visit and preached in synagogue)
 - Acts 19:1-41 stayed about 2-3 years (started in synagogue and then preached to the Gentiles in Hall of Tyrannus)
- e. Ephesians has 6 chapters.
 - Chapters 1 – 3 discuss the Gospel – what God has done
 - Chapters 4 – 6 discuss what that means for us, the church. “Therefore ... “

We are going to get deep and discuss metaphysics and existential issues. So ... let's put on our black turtlenecks, our berets and sunglasses. We all need to light a cigarette and get a cup of coffee. Now let's look down on the world with disdain. We are in the 1950s and we are beatniks in New York and Paris coffee houses.

2. Does life have a purpose?

3. If life has no purpose what does that imply?

"... Nature, red in tooth and claw"

--- *Tennyson*

What does the above mean?

Darwinian survival of the fittest. The strong eat the weak and they are right to do so. There is no morality, only survival and reproduction.

Shakespeare said it better ...

**"Life is but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more. It is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing."**

--- *Macbeth* (Act 5, Scene 5)

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4. If life has a purpose, does it mean you have no free will?-

On one side you can see life as being all fate.

Q: What is the story of Oedipus Rex?

On the other you see life as all free will.

Marty McFly and Doc Brown at the end of Back to the Future ...

"Your future is whatever you make it. So make it a good one!"

-- Doc Brown (Back to the Future III)

(Thank goodness you don't get everything you want. That you can't make your future what you want.)

Are we free or is there a plan we follow?

--- YES (The Bible)

Acts 27 - Paul in boat in storm

5. The 1st chapter in Ephesians will discuss predestination.

- a. V4 “ chose us in him before the creation of the world ...”
- b. V5 “ he predestined us to be adopted ...”
- c. V11 “ In him we were also chosen, having been predestined ... “

6. How should we interpret these statements of predestination?

- a. We are each individually predestined by God
- b. Groups are predestined (Jews and Gentiles) << **before creation God has a plan to the Jews and for the Gentiles**
- c. God “foreknew” what would happen, which is different than caused it to happen.
- d. Ephesians chapter 1 talks about predestination, then in the same book, chapters 4 – 6, it discussed how we should live.

Predestination is interesting, but I would categorize it as non-essential. However, there is an item discussed in Ephesians 1 which I do consider essential to understand.

Q: who is Jesus, and what accolades are due him?

- Sone of God
- King of Kings & Lord of Lords
- Worthy of Worship and Glory
- At the Right Hand of God
- Etc., etc.

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Think about all the accolades due Christ. In the first chapter of Ephesians Paul makes the bold statement that these honors are given to us. That all the medals and honors that are due Christ are pinned on our chest!

- V3 “blessed us with every spiritual blessing”
- V5 “adopted as his sons”

Ephesians and elsewhere in the Bible uses language like, “*in Christ*”, “*Adopted sons*”, “*bride of Christ*”, “*clothed in Christ*”

Q: What do these terms mean? What does this imply?

This is key to the Gospel message that Paul lays out in the book of Ephesians! We are truly blessed!

Adopted and heirs – what does this mean?

Analogy of house fire.

Q: what is the one thing you would save? What is the thing of value that you would run back into the house to get?

It seems that the Bible is telling us that if the entire universe were on-fire that God would save us first. That of everything in this world and in the universe God loves us most. Truly that is Amazing good news!

Q: How do we know if we are adopted?

V13 “... you were also included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised **Holy Spirit**, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption ...”

Q: Some may then ask, how do I know if I have the Holy Spirit.

Ben Mehringer, please read 1 Corinthians 12:3 :

"Therefore I want you to know that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, 'Jesus be cursed,' and no one can say, 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit." (NIV)

Q: So, can't you teach a parrot to say “Jesus is Lord?” What does this mean. I think it means this ...

- Some in this room have had a doctor diagnose them with cancer. That is a gut punch. In the midst of that worry and uncertainty can you say – “**Jesus is Lord**”?
- Some in this room have lost their spouse. In that pain, and sorrow, and loneliness can you say “**Jesus is Lord**”?
- And some here have held grandchildren in their arms and felt such joy and love. And at these times can you also say “**Jesus is Lord**”?

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V10 “ ... when times have reached their fulfillment ... to bring all things in heaven and earth together under one head”

Now, because of the fall, things on earth are screwed up. But understand this, things in the heavenly realm are also not right. There are spiritual battles going on that we can't see. There is Satan and there are demons.

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When Paul refers to himself as an "**apostle**" (Ephesians 1:1), he is claiming a specific role and authority given to him by Jesus Christ. The word **apostle** comes from the Greek word *apostolos*, meaning "**one who is sent**" or "**a messenger**."

What Paul Means by "Apostle":

1. **Divinely Appointed** – Paul was not chosen by men but by **Jesus Christ Himself** (Galatians 1:1). He had a direct encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus (Acts 9), where he was commissioned to spread the gospel.
2. **A Special Witness of Christ** – Apostles were personally sent to proclaim the message of Jesus. Though Paul was not one of the original Twelve, he was called specifically to be the apostle to the **Gentiles** (Romans 11:13).
3. **Authority in the Church** – As an apostle, Paul had the authority to teach, correct, and establish churches. His letters (like Ephesians) carried **divine authority** as Scripture.

In short, when Paul says he is an **apostle**, he is emphasizing that his mission and message come directly from **God, not from human decision**.

Let's take a deeper look at **apostleship in the early church**, especially in relation to Paul.

1. What Is an Apostle?

The term "**apostle**" (*apostolos* in Greek) means "**one who is sent**" or "**a messenger with authority**." In the New Testament, apostles were specifically chosen by Christ to spread the gospel and establish the church.

2. Two Categories of Apostles

There were **two main types** of apostles in the early church:

A. The Twelve Apostles

- Originally chosen by Jesus (Matthew 10:1-4; Mark 3:13-19).
- Witnesses to Jesus' life, death, and resurrection.
- Given **authority to perform miracles** (Luke 9:1-2).
- Example: Peter, James, John, and the other disciples.
- After Judas' betrayal, **Matthias** was chosen to replace him (Acts 1:26).

B. Other Apostles (Including Paul)

- Paul refers to himself as an **apostle "born out of due time"** (1 Corinthians 15:8-9).
- He was uniquely called by Christ **on the road to Damascus** (Acts 9:3-6).
- Others, like **Barnabas** (Acts 14:14) and **James (the Lord's brother)** (Galatians 1:19), were also recognized as apostles.

3. The Authority of Apostles

Apostles in the early church had **unique authority** given by Christ:

- **Preached the gospel** with divine authority (Galatians 1:11-12).
- **Established churches** and appointed leaders (Titus 1:5).
- **Wrote Scripture**, as Paul did in his letters.

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- **Performed miracles** as confirmation of their calling (2 Corinthians 12:12).

4. Paul's Unique Role as an Apostle

Paul was different from the Twelve because:

- He was **not part of Jesus' earthly ministry** but was called directly by the risen Christ.
- His primary mission was to **preach to the Gentiles** (Romans 11:13, Galatians 2:8).
- He defended his apostleship, saying it was **not from men but from Jesus** (Galatians 1:1).

5. Are There Apostles Today?

In the strict **New Testament sense**, apostles were **eyewitnesses of the risen Christ** (Acts 1:21-22). Since that's no longer possible, most Christians believe that the **office of apostle ended** after the first century.

However, some churches today use the term "apostle" more loosely to refer to **missionary leaders, church planters, or those with strong spiritual authority**—but they do not have the same **Scripture-writing** authority as Paul and the Twelve.

Summary

Paul, as an apostle, was directly sent by Jesus to establish the church, especially among the Gentiles. Apostles in the early church had **unique authority** to spread the gospel, write Scripture, and perform miracles. While some churches use the term "apostle" today, the **New Testament role of apostle no longer exists** in the same way.

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