

# EPHESIANS - STUDY PART 1

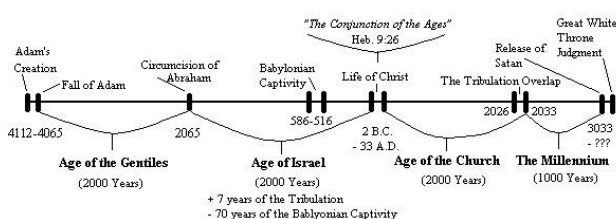
## Our relationship to God in Christ

1:1-2 - Paul, messenger of Jesus Christ by God's choice, to all faithful Christians at Ephesus (and other places where this letter is read): grace and peace be to you from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.

1:3-6 - Praise be to God for giving us through Christ every possible spiritual benefit as citizens of Heaven! For consider what he has done - before the foundation of the world he chose us to become, in Christ, his holy and blameless children living within his constant care. He planned, in his purpose of love, that we should be adopted as his own children through Jesus Christ - that we might learn to praise that glorious generosity of his which has made us welcome in the everlasting love he bears towards the Son.

1:7-10 - It is through the Son, at the cost of his own blood, that we are redeemed, freely forgiven through that full and generous grace which has overflowed into our lives and opened our eyes to the truth. For God had allowed us to know the secret of his plan, and it is this: he purposes in his sovereign will that all human history shall be consummated in Christ, that everything that exists in Heaven or earth shall find its perfection and fulfilment in him.

1:11-14 - And here is the staggering thing - that in all which will one day belong to him we have been promised a share (since we were long ago destined for this by the one who achieves his purposes by his sovereign will), so that we, as the first to put our confidence in Christ, may bring praise to his glory! And you too trusted him, when you heard the message of truth, the Gospel of your salvation. And after you gave your confidence to him you were, so to speak, stamped with the promised Holy Spirit as a guarantee of purchase, until the day when God completes the redemption of what he has paid for as his own; and that will again be to the praise of his glory.



## I thank God for you, and pray for you

1:15-19 - Since, then, I heard of this faith of yours in the Lord Jesus and the practical way in which you are expressing it towards fellow-Christians, I thank God continually for you and I never give up praying for you; and this is my prayer. That God, the God of our Lord Jesus Christ and the all-glorious Father, will give you spiritual wisdom and the insight to know more of him: that you may receive that inner illumination of the spirit which will make you realise how great is the hope to which he is calling you - the magnificence and splendour of the inheritance promised to Christians - and how tremendous is the power available to us who believe in God.

1:20-21 - That power is the same divine power which was demonstrated in Christ when he raised him from the dead and gave him the place of supreme honour in Heaven - a place that is infinitely superior to any conceivable command, authority, power or control, and which carries with it a name far beyond any name that could ever be used in this world or the world to come.

1:22-23 - God has placed everything under the power of Christ and has set him up as head of everything for the Church. for the Church is his body, and in that body lives fully the one who fills the whole wide universe.



The Temple of Artemis (Greek), or Diana (Roman), in Ephesus

## We were all dead: God gave us life through Christ

*2:1-3 - To you, who were spiritually dead all the time that you drifted along on the stream of this world's ideas of living, and obeyed its unseen ruler (who is still operating in those who do not respond to the truth of God), to you Christ has given life! We all lived like that in the past, and followed the impulses and imaginations of our evil nature, being in fact under the wrath of God by nature, like everyone else.*

*2:4-10 - But even though we were dead in our sins God, who is rich in mercy, because of the great love he had for us, gave us life together with Christ - it is, remember, by grace and not by achievement that you are saved - and has lifted us right out of the old life to take our place with him in Christ in the Heavens.*

*Thus he shows for all time the tremendous generosity of the grace and kindness he has expressed towards us in Christ Jesus. It was nothing you could or did achieve - it was God's gift to you. No one can pride himself upon earning the love of God. The fact is that what we are we owe to the hand of God upon us. We are born afresh in Christ, and born to do those good deeds which God planned for us to do.*

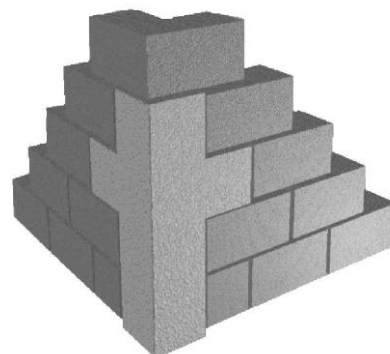


## You were gentiles: we were Jews. God has made us fellow-Christians

*2:11-13 - Do not lose sight of the fact that you were born "Gentiles", known by those whose bodies were circumcised as "the uncircumcised". You were without Christ, you were utter strangers to God's chosen community, the Jews, and you had no knowledge of, or right to, the promised agreements. You had nothing to look forward to and no God to whom you could turn. But now, through the blood of Christ, you who were once outside the pale are with us inside the circle of God's love and purpose.*

*2:14-18 - For Christ is our living peace. He has made a unity of the conflicting elements of Jew and Gentile by breaking down the barrier which lay between us. By his sacrifice he removed the hostility of the Law, with all its commandments and rules, and made in himself out of the two, Jew and Gentile, one new man, thus producing peace. For he reconciled both to God by the sacrifice of one body on the cross, and by this act made utterly irrelevant the antagonism between them. Then he came and told both you who were far from God and us who were near that the war was over. And it is through him that both of us now can approach the Father in the one Spirit.*

*2:19-22 - So you are no longer outsiders or aliens, but fellow-citizens with every other Christian - you belong now to the household of God. Firmly beneath you in the foundation, God's messengers and prophets, the actual foundation-stone being Jesus Christ himself. In him each separate piece of building, properly fitting into its neighbour, grows together into a temple consecrated to God. You are all part of this building in which God himself lives by his spirit.*



## God has made a minister to you Gentiles

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*3:1 - It is in this great cause that I, Paul, have become Christ's prisoner for you Gentiles.*

*3:2-6 - For you must have heard how God gave me grace to become your minister, and how he allowed me to understand his secret by giving me a direct Revelation. (What I have written briefly of this above will explain to you my knowledge of the mystery of Christ.) This secret was hidden to past generations of mankind, but it has now, by the spirit, been made plain to God's consecrated messengers and prophets. It is simply this: that the Gentiles, who were previously excluded from God's agreements, are to be equal heirs with his chosen people, equal members and equal partners in God's promise given by Christ through the Gospel.*

*3:7-13 - And I was made a minister of that Gospel by the grace he gave me, and by the power with which he equipped me. Yes, to me, less than the least of all Christians, has God given this grace, to enable me to proclaim to the Gentiles the incalculable riches of Christ, and to make plain to all men the meaning of that secret which he who created everything in Christ has kept hidden from the creation until now. The purpose is that all the angelic powers should now see the complex wisdom of God's plan being worked out through the Church, in conformity to that timeless purpose which he centred in Jesus, our Lord. It is in this same Jesus, because we have faith in him, that we dare, even with confidence, to approach God. In view of these tremendous issues, I beg you not to lose heart because I am now suffering for my part in bringing you the Gospel. Indeed, you should be honoured.*

NB Ephesians 3:2-13 is a single sentence in the original Greek text in which Paul digresses to explain the origin of the Church composed of believing Jew and Gentile, who are now one body in Christ.

## I pray that you may know God's power in practice

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*3:14-19 - When I think of the greatness of this great plan I fall on my knees before God the Father (from whom all fatherhood, earthly or heavenly, derives its name), and I pray that out of the glorious richness of his resources he will enable you to know the strength of the spirit's inner reinforcement - that Christ may actually live in your hearts by your faith. And I pray that you, firmly fixed in love yourselves, may be able to grasp (with all Christians) how wide and deep and long and high is the love of Christ - and to know for yourselves that love so far beyond our comprehension. May you be filled though all your being with God himself!*

*3:20-21 - Now to him who by his power within us is able to do far more than we ever dare to ask or imagine - to him be glory in the Church through Jesus Christ for ever and ever, amen!*



## Christians should be at one, as God is one

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*4:1-6 - As God's prisoner, then, I beg you to live lives worthy of your high calling. Accept life with humility and patience, making allowances for each other because you love each other. Make it your aim to be at one in the Spirit, and you will inevitably be at peace with one another. You all belong to one body, of which there is one Spirit, just as you all experienced one calling to one hope. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God, one Father of us all, who is the one over all, the one working through all and the one living in all.*



## God's gifts vary, but it is the same God who gives

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*4:7-8 - Naturally there are different gifts and functions; individually grace is given to us in different ways out of the rich diversity of Christ's giving. As the scripture says: 'When he ascended on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men'.*

*4:9-10 - (Note the implication here - to say that Christ "ascended" means that he must previously have "descended", that is from the height of Heaven to the depth of this world. The one who made this descent is identically the same person as he who has now ascended high above the very Heavens - that the whole universe from lowest to highest might know his presence.)*

*4:11-13 - His "gifts to men" were varied. Some he made his messengers, some prophets, some preachers of the Gospel; to some he gave the power to guide and teach his people. His gifts were made that Christians might be properly equipped for their service, that the whole body might be built up until the time comes when, in the unity of the common faith and common knowledge of the Son of God, we arrive at real maturity - that measure of development which is meant by the "fullness of Christ".*

