

BIBLE CORRESPONDENCE FELLOWSHIP

EPHESIANS Lesson One



CHAPTER ONE

“To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved” [Eph. 1:6 (KJV)].

This epistle, written and delivered about the same time as Philippians, Colossians and Philemon, was written by the apostle Paul while he was a prisoner in Rome about AD 60-62. Although it bears the name of the church in Ephesus, it was intended to be circulated among all the churches in Asia. Unlike many of Paul’s letters, Ephesians does not deal with specific problems within a local church or with an individual. Instead it addresses the common needs of all believers and the truths most essential for today’s church, also known as the Body of Christ.

Through this Bible study you will gain a greater understanding of the revelation God gave to Paul concerning the “dispensation of the grace of God” and the “mystery of Christ.” When you are done you should have a better appreciation of your position in Christ and how to live a more Christ-like life.

In preparation for this series of lessons, please prayerfully read through the entire Book of Ephesians. Do not begin the question and answer section until you can answer YES to the following question:

Have you read through the entire Book of Ephesians? _____

REMEMBER to begin in prayer and to reread the chapter before beginning each lesson.

1. (v. 1) How did Paul become an apostle (chosen messenger) of Christ Jesus? _____

2. To whom is this letter written? _____
and to the _____

3. In his greeting verse 2 Paul emphasizes grace and peace. These are two great themes in this book. (See also Eph. 2:8-9, 14.) In your own words, tell what you think these words mean?

Grace: _____

Peace: _____

4. (v. 3) How has God blessed us? _____

5. (v. 4) When were we chosen in Christ? _____

6. (v. 5) What did God predestinate (determine beforehand) us to? _____

7. Who is referred to as “the Beloved”? (v. 6) _____
(If you are unsure, read Matt. 3:17.)
8. (v. 8) According to the riches of God’s grace, we have two things. What are they? _____

NOTE: Paul’s primary purpose in writing Ephesians was to explain his insight into the mystery which had been kept secret since before the world began, but which God had chosen Paul to reveal to the world. Here, in Paul’s writings only, we read about the Church of the Mystery. Some may say, “But there is a church mentioned in early Acts before the apostle Paul was converted.” True, but that was not the church which is Christ’s body, made up of both Jews and Gentiles on an equal basis. The early church was strictly a Jewish church composed only of Jews and proselytes (converts to Judaism). This church was not a mystery at all, for Old Testament prophecy spoke of it frequently (Acts 2:16).

9. In verse 10 mention is made of a “dispensation.” This word means a period, stewardship, or an administration, during which God deals with mankind in a certain way. For example, in the Garden of Eden, before Adam and Eve sinned, we have the first dispensation - Innocence. There was no need of God’s moral law or of judgment because man had not yet sinned. Later we see another period, known as the dispensation of Law. The law was added by God to reveal sin.

Christ was born during the dispensation of Law? True: _____ False: _____

(If unsure, read Galatians 4:4.)

(Note to NIV users: The word “dispensation” was left out by the translators of the NIV Bible. No alternative word was provided.)

10. There is yet to be “a dispensation of the fullness of the times,” according to verse 10.
What is the present-day dispensation, this period in which we are now living? (Read Eph. 3:2.) _____

- Study 1 Corinthians 12:12-13. Is this the dispensation of the ONE BODY? _____
- Study Ephesians 3:8-9. Is this the dispensation of the MYSTERY? _____
11. (v. 10) What is God going to do in the dispensation of the fullness of times? _____

12. (v. 11) What have we obtained as a result of being in Christ? _____

13. (v. 13) What did you have to hear before you believed in Christ? _____

STOP! Take a moment to pray. Ask God to help you think of someone with whom you might share the “gospel of salvation.” Begin praying for that person and look for opportunities to share with him/her what your relationship with Christ has meant to you.

Person’s Name: _____

14. Observe also in this verse that we are “sealed” into Christ. Who does this sealing? _____

15. According to verse 14, why was the Holy Spirit given to us? _____

16. Who is God’s possession? _____ (See 1 Cor. 6:20)

17. If you are God’s possession, sealed by the Holy Spirit until the day of redemption and guaranteed an inheritance, can you lose your salvation? Yes _____ No _____

NOTE: Pastor H. B. Prince of Minneapolis, in a volume titled, Saved, Sealed, Seated, Sanctified, has written as follows: “We have received the Holy Spirit and the new nature as an earnest of our inheritance. Now the seal is God’s guarantee that we are going to realize all the blessings of God. You have God’s down payment and He cannot go back on His deal. He cannot go back on His contract....”

18. (v. 17) What did Paul pray that God would give the believers? _____

19. Paul’s prayer continues in verses 18 and 19. The prayer concerns three things “that you may know”:

1. (v. 18) _____

2. (v. 18) _____

3. (v. 19) _____

20. (v. 20) How was God’s power demonstrated? _____

21. Where is Christ Jesus right now? _____

22. (v. 21) Over what has Christ been given authority by the Father? _____

23. When does Christ have this authority? _____ and _____

**This current age is the church age, the dispensation of grace (Eph. 3:1-10).
The age to come is the kingdom (Acts 1:6; Rev. 20:4).**

24. (v. 22) What position does Christ have over the Church? _____

25. (v. 23) What is the church called? _____

CHAPTER TWO

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that, not of yourselves, it is the gift of God -- not of works, lest any man should boast” [Eph 2:8 (KJV)].

This is one of the most important chapters of the Bible. It focuses upon the Christian believer’s life, past, present, and future. It shows what your condition was before you accepted Christ and what your life has become as a result of Christ’s work. This chapter also emphasizes the importance of salvation by grace through faith, plus nothing, and establishes the foundation upon which the church, the Body of Christ, is built.

Take time to read through this chapter and pray that God would open your eyes to the truths contained therein.

1. Verses 1-3 characterize your spiritual condition before you accepted Christ. In your own words describe what that condition was, according to each of these verses. (Note to KJV users: The word “quicken” means *made alive*.)

Verse 1: _____

Verse 2: _____

Verse 3: _____

2. (v. 2) Who is the prince/ruler? _____ (See Matt. 12:26; Acts 26:18; Eph. 6:12.)
3. Where does the prince/ruler work? _____
4. (v. 4) Why did God show us mercy? _____
5. (v. 5) What did God do for us even though we were dead in sin? _____
6. (v. 6) What is our position in Christ now? _____
7. (v. 7) What will be made known in the ages to come? _____

Ephesians 2:8-9 are important salvation verses. Take time now to memorize them. Be prepared to write them out at the end of this lesson.

8. (v. 8-9) “Grace” means *a free gift*. If salvation is a free gift, what can we do to earn it? _____

Note: It is because of God’s grace in sending Jesus to die in our place that we have an opportunity to receive salvation from the penalty of sin. According to Romans 6:23 that penalty is death, separation from God. It is by faith in Christ Jesus, not anything we might do, that we receive that free gift and will never be separated from God again.

9. (v. 10) "Good works" are the result of salvation ,not the cause. What are you in Christ? _____

For what purpose were you created? _____

10. (v. 12) List four aspects of the Gentile condition indicating their utter helplessness before Christ.
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

11. (v. 13) How were these "far off" Gentiles brought near to God? _____

12. (v. 14) In this dispensation of grace is there any distinction made between Jews and Gentiles? _____

13. How did Christ make peace between these two groups? _____

14. (v. 15) Verses 14 and 15 refer to the Old Testament commandments and ordinances that separated Israel from the Gentiles. Having torn down this barrier, what did Christ make of Jew and Gentile believers?

15. (v. 16) By what means did God make "one body" out of Jew and Gentile believers?

16. (v. 17) Who were those who were far off from God? _____
Who were those that were near to God? _____
(If you are not sure, please reread verses 11-13.)

Verse 18 refers to all three members of the Trinity: the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It was Christ's death in our place, paying the penalty for our sin that allowed us the possibility of salvation. It was the work of the Holy Spirit which drew us to Christ, gave us saving faith, and baptized us into the "one body" (1 Cor. 12:13). By this work we are drawn close to God and rest assured in the knowledge that we will spend eternity with Him.

17. (v. 19) What are we no longer? _____

18. What are we now? _____

19. (v. 20) Who is the chief cornerstone of God's church today? _____

20. (v. 21) What kind of building does Paul call the church, the body of Christ? _____

21. What does 2 Corinthians 6:16 say about this temple? _____

22. (v. 22) God is dwelling in this temple today through the _____

Write out Eph. 2:8-9 from memory:

CHAPTER THREE

“And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery . . .” [Eph. 3:9 (KJV)].

This chapter has some very important statements concerning the mystery (truths about the Body of Christ) that God revealed through the apostle Paul. Paul is the only one whom the Scriptures tell us received this information directly from Christ Jesus. Our Lord revealed these truths to him over a period of time (Acts 26:16), as His plan for the Church of this dispensation began to unfold.

Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer, founder of the Dallas Theological Seminary, a great scholar and teacher of the Bible, wrote concerning the ministry given to the apostle Paul, as follows:

“To the Apostle (Paul) were given two distinct revelations: (1) that of the way of salvation and life under grace (Galatians 1:11-12), and (2) that of the doctrine of the Church which is Christ’s body (Ephesians 3:1-6). These two bodies of truth include the great New Testament message which is Christianity, something Paul termed ‘my gospel’ (Rom. 2:16). For a time he stood alone in the defense of the new system of Christianity (Gal. 2:11-14).”

As God chose Moses to be the master-builder of the tabernacle in the wilderness (for Israel), so He chose Paul to be the master-builder of the church in this dispensation of grace. In Paul’s epistles alone do we find truths specifically concerning the Body of Christ. In his writings only do we find the doctrine, position, walk, and destiny of the church of today.

1. (v. 1) Whose prisoner did Paul say he was? _____ For whose benefit was he a prisoner? _____

2. (v. 2) What is our present dispensation called? _____

Remember: The word “dispensation” comes from the Greek word *oikonomia* (economy) which means house law. It is sometimes translated as administration or stewardship. It refers to the set of rules by which God governs His household during a given period in history. These rules have changed from time to time, but God has always announced these changes through a key figure, in this case, the apostle Paul.

3. (v. 3) How was the mystery of the body of Christ made known to Paul? _____

NOTE: The word “revelation” is defined as God’s disclosure of Himself and of His will to His creatures.

4. (v. 4) In whose writings will you gain information about the “mystery”? _____

5. (v. 5) Concerning the mystery, what does Paul say about prior ages and generations? _____

6. (v. 6) What was the message of this mystery? _____

7. In another letter Paul mentions the subject of the mystery. Read Colossians 1:19-29. _____ (check)
8. (v. 7) How did Paul become a minister of the “mystery message”? _____

9. (v. 8) What did Paul preach among the Gentiles? _____

NOTE: The word “unreachable” means not traceable. The mystery concerning Jews and Gentiles being joined together in one body is not part of Old Testament prophecy. It is not even the message which Peter and the disciples preached on the day of Pentecost, for they offered the kingdom to Israel (Acts 1:6; 3:19-21) in accordance with prophecy (Acts 2:16). Paul’s message was entirely new.

10. (v. 9) How long had the mystery been kept secret? _____
11. (v. 10) How is the “manifold wisdom of God” to be made known? _____
12. If this was a commission or a ministry given of God to the apostle Paul, are we to accept it as also given to us? (Read 1 Cor. 11:1; then Phil. 3:17, 4:9; and 2 Tim. 2:2.) Yes _____ No _____
13. (v. 11) With what does this secret plan agree? _____
14. (vv. 11-12) In whom do we have boldness and access to God? _____
15. We know from the Book of Acts that Paul suffered greatly in taking this message to the Gentiles. When he wrote Ephesians he was in a Roman prison. What was he concerned about in verse 13?

16. Paul was more concerned about others than he was his own circumstances. The next few verses contain his prayer for believers:
- (v. 16) How is your inner man to be strengthened? _____
- (v. 17a) How is Christ to dwell in your heart? _____
- (v. 17b) How are you to be rooted and grounded? _____
17. (vv. 18-19) What goes well beyond mere knowledge? _____
 With what may you be filled? _____
18. (v. 20) What is God able to do for you? _____

- Where is God’s power at work? _____

Use the space below for any questions or comments:

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