

EPHESIANS

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Ephesians 1:1–6

1:1–2 *¹From Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by God's will. To God's holy and faithful people who are united with Christ in the city of Ephesus. ²Good will and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ are yours!*

Paul introduced his letter to the Ephesians with a salutation that was common in letters written in his time and culture. However, his address was not given in the language of his day. Rather, it was delivered in the framework of the Christian faith. He unashamedly pointed to God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ His Son, effectively reflecting the Jewish and Christian perspectives of the eternal God and Jesus Christ as complementary aspects of a single expression of faith.

Paul identified himself as an apostle of Jesus Christ. He also told them that his apostleship was established by God's sovereign will. It was not a position he earned or for which he was qualified. Rather, it was God's appointment that was divinely determined even before Paul was born (*Galatians 1:15–17*).

Paul described the Ephesians as God's people, holy, faithful, and

united in Christ. The message God gave to Paul in this letter was presented to believers who were already mature in their faith. They already possessed the grace and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. They had already grown in the faith, and Paul considered them to be holy and faithful people fully united with Jesus Christ. They were holy because they were the temple of God in which His Holy Spirit lived. They were faithful because the faith of Jesus Christ was instilled in them by the power of the Author and Finisher of their faith. In the context of a mature and well-developed faith, God directly and personally sent this message to the believers in Ephesus.

1:3 Praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! Through Christ, God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing that heaven has to offer.

Following his warm salutation, Paul broke into a joyful doxology of praise. He offered this praise to God on behalf of the redeemed, thanking Him for the blessings He gives to His children through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ His Son. God holds nothing back from those whom He chooses to save through Jesus Christ. By receiving the fullness of heaven's spiritual blessings in Jesus Christ, the redeemed came into a heavenly position of becoming joint heirs with Jesus Christ as the recipients of the entirety of God's gift (*Romans 8:17*). Paul wanted the Ephesians to know that they are not only holy, faithful, and united in Christ, but also are divinely favored children of God fully accepted into the heavenly inheritance of God's grace, His good will, the peace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the full measure of God's blessings.

1:4 Before the creation of the world, he chose us through Christ to be holy and perfect in his presence.

God bestowed the fullness of His heavenly riches on the redeemed according to His eternal purpose. God's decision to save sinners was not a reaction to man's sin or because of the death of His Son. God never reacts to any situation or event. He is never surprised by anything that

happens in the world that He has created. Rather, it was a carefully ordained, planned, and accomplished eternal event executed before time began.

Before He created the world, God made a timeless decision to save a people for Himself who would be holy and perfect through the holiness and perfection of His holy and perfect Son, Jesus Christ. Then, at the exact moment God had determined, He executed this plan according to a specific process through which God's eternal will was revealed to the people of the world in time and space (*Galatians 4:4; Hebrews 1:1-3*).

1:5-6 *⁵Because of his love he had already decided to adopt us through Jesus Christ. He freely chose to do this ⁶so that the kindness he had given us in his dear Son would be praised and given glory.*

God's sovereign determination to save a people for Himself is not just a demonstration of His authority. His authority is incontestable. Rather, His redemption is executed in the framework of His love, mercy, and grace. His love, mercy, and grace are marvelously displayed in His decision to adopt those whom He chooses to be His redeemed children in Jesus Christ. He ordained those whom He chose to see His grace revealed in Jesus Christ and praise His Name for the gift of their salvation. God's adopts those whom He chooses simply as an act of His love and His grace, executed freely out of His pleasure. It is just an awesome phenomenon, which He was pleased to do. Amazingly, this was accomplished exactly as He determined. He made those whom He loved and chose to be acceptable to Himself in, through, and for the sake of His own beloved Son, Jesus Christ.

Notes/Applications

Paul's letter to the Ephesians is a type of general circular correspondence sent to show believers the mystery of their salvation in Jesus Christ. Paul, who was God's appointed apostle to the Gentiles, saluted

the Ephesians in the grace and peace of God our Father and His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. He reminded them that they were holy, faithful, and united in Christ because of what God did in their hearts by the power of His Spirit.

Paul wanted the Ephesians to understand their salvation as the outcome of God's sovereign plan. Their salvation was the unavoidable and irresistible essence of God's timeless determination regarding those whom He chose to redeem for Himself. It is the divine expression of God's sovereign will accomplished without any consultation with anyone outside of God Himself. It is a ruling that was pronounced in eternity past before any form of existence other than Himself was ever a reality.

God decided to lavish the riches of His love, grace, and mercy upon those whom He chose to be the objects of His favor.

God's redemption is not confined to the functional rescue of the lost from deserved judgment. But it is God's gift of the full measure of His blessings in Jesus Christ to those who are chosen for such heavenly favor. The gift is not earned. Nor is it merited by an anticipated or foreseen faith or qualification. It is given out of God's pleasure and good will. It is not given as a result of any human effort. It is given only by God through the merit of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. God's redemption is the divine expression of His love, mercy, grace, good will, and peace, effectively generating His holiness, perfection, faith, and unity in the lives of God's redeemed children. The Ephesians were exposed to the truth of their salvation so that they would know and appreciate the inexplicable extent of God's blessings given to them. All believers across the ages join the Ephesian Christians in praise of God's measureless grace.