

Ephesians: Message 1 (Introduction to Ephesians)

Water of Life

Dr. John H. Niemelä

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Author: Paul (1:1; 3:1)**Recipients:** The church at Ephesus (1:1)

Paul had been in Ephesus (Acts 18:19-21: mid-Sept, 52); (Acts 19:1–20:1: Sept 53–May 56, note Act 19:10); and met Ephesian elders overnight in Miletus (Act 20:17-38: early May 57).

Some question if Ephesus was the destination, because (1) a few manuscripts omit “in Ephesus” in 1:1 and (2) the book lacks personal greetings, despite Paul being there almost three years.

Answer (1): I do not regard the manuscript evidence against “in Ephesus” as strong.

[[Not even the N-A²⁸ text is confident about excluding it. They bracket it]]

Answer (2): David A. Black made a significant observation: Paul’s books with the most extensive greetings (Romans and Colossians) are both to churches where he had never been. The suggestion is that he wove greeting *into* letters to such groups, but appended greetings separately—in order not to risk breaking confidences.

Date: Late within Paul’s first Roman imprisonment (February 60–March 62): Probably 61.

It is possible to narrow the date somewhat: Tychicus took Ephesians to Ephesus (Eph 6:21); and (accompanied by Onesimus) he took Colossians to Colossae (Col 4:7). Although Philemon does not mention Tychicus, it does name Onesimus as returning to Philemon (who was part of the Colossian church). The long distances suggest, then that Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon were delivered on the same trip. In this light, Philemon 1:22 is significant. Paul told Philemon to prepare a guest room for him, since he expected to come soon.

Why would Paul expect to be released shortly? If accusers did not come for a trial within 18 months, Rome would dismiss charges. Paul appealed to Casar in early July 59, but was not released until March 62, so he expected release sometime during 61. I date Ephesians in 61.

Structure of Ephesians 1:1-14 (Q-T) and messages of Ephesians 1:1-2 and of 1:3-14

Ephesians 1:1-2 is a greeting

Ephesians 1:3-14 is the longest Greek sentence in the NT. I punctuate it as one sentence.

It has 4 parts, 1 independent & 3 dependent clauses: 1:3 (Q), 1:4-6 (R), 1:7-12 (S), & 1:13-14 (T)

Note the repeated phrase "to the praise of. . ." within one sentence (1:3-14)

(Q)_____ Believers ought to bless the Father who richly blessed _____ believers _____ (1:3);

(R) by Father's praiseworthy work: preparing inheritance of _____ believers _____ (1:4-6);

(S) by Christ's praiseworthy work: procuring inheritance of _____ believers _____ (1:7-12);

(T) by Spirit's praiseworthy work: protecting inheritance of _____ believers _____ (1:13-f);

Ephesians mentions the Trinity in one sentence in other passages, too: e.g., 2:18, 22; 3:14-16; 4:4-6.

Defining *We* versus *You* in Ephesians (a huge interpretive issue in any book). Two options:

Inclusive *We*: "We (Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah) are brothers; you (Levi and Judah) have the same parents as we (Reuben and Simeon) do. [Note that we includes all four or less than four in the same sentence]."

Exclusive *We*: We (Jews) want to say something to you (Gentiles).

As the bride comes up the aisle, the groom says, "My family is on my left, yours is on the right."

As they walk down the aisle together, he says, "My family and your family is on both sides."

In Ephesians, Gentile unbelievers or Gentile believers = you.

Jewish unbelievers, Jewish believers, or mixed believers = we.

Paul greets Ephesian believers with grace and peace from the Father and from Christ (1:1f)

(P) ¹ Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ through God's will, [*writes*] to the saints and faithful ones in Christ Jesus who are in Ephesus: ² "Grace [*be*] to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." [JHN translation of *MajT* throughout]

(Q) _____ **Believers ought to bless the Father who richly blessed _____ believers _____ (1:3);**

(R) **by Father's praiseworthy work: preparing inheritance of _____ believers _____ (1:4-6);**

(S) **by Christ's praiseworthy work: procuring inheritance of _____ believers _____ (1:7-12);**

(T) **by Spirit's praiseworthy work: protecting inheritance of _____ believers _____ (1:13-f);**

(Q) ¹³ Blessed [*be*] the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ (1:3),

(FATHERS'S PRAISEWORTHY WORK)

(R) ⁴ just as He chose us in Him before the founding of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him in love, ⁵ having predestined us to sonship-
placement by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind-intent of His will, ⁶ to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He graciously bestowed on us in the Beloved (1:4-6);

(SON'S PRAISEWORTHY WORK)

(S) ⁷ in Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of transgressions, according to the wealth of His grace ⁸ which He lavished unto us in all wisdom and understanding, ⁹ [*by*] making known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind-intent which He purposed in Himself, ¹⁰ that in the dispensation that fulfills the times He might put under [*Jesus Christ's*] headship all things in Christ, both things in heaven and things on earth—in Him. ¹¹ In Him also we have obtained an allotment, being predestined [*to sonship-placement*] according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the decision of His will, ¹² that we who first hoped in Christ should be to the praise of His glory (1:7-12);

(SPIRIT'S PRAISEWORTHY WORK)

(T) ¹³ in Him you also [*hoped*], when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed by the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory (1:13-14).

We versus You in Ephesians:

First Person (*We/Us/Our*) versus Second Person (*You/Your*)

U ¹³ Blessed [*be*] the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ, ⁴ just as He chose us in Him before the founding of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him in love, ⁵ having predestined us to sonship-placement by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind-intent of His will, ⁶ to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He graciously bestowed on us in the Beloved; ⁷ in Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of transgressions, according to the wealth of His grace ⁸ which He lavished unto us in all wisdom and understanding, ⁹ [*by*] making known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind-intent which He purposed in Himself, ¹⁰ that in the dispensation that fulfills the times He might put under [*Jesus Christ's*] headship all things in Christ, both things in heaven and things on earth—in Him. ¹¹ In Him also we have obtained an allotment, being predestined [*to sonship-placement*] according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the decision of His will, ¹² that **we who first hoped in Christ** should be to the praise of His glory; ¹³ **in Him you also [hoped]**, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed by the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

1-P	2-P
a__	__
b__	__
c__	__
d__	__
e__	__
f__	__
g__	__
h__	__
i__	__
j__	__
k__	__
l__	__

V ²¹¹ Thus, remember that you, formerly Gentiles in the flesh—called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision done in the flesh by hands—^{12a} that you formerly were without Christ, being aliens from the nation of Israel. . .

W ²¹⁴ For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has fractured the middle dividing-wall, ¹⁵ having abolished in His flesh the animosity, *that is*, the law of commandments in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶ and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the animosity. ¹⁷ And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to [*us*] those who were near. ¹⁸ For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.

X ³¹ For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles—

Y ⁴¹⁷ This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind

Z ²¹ You were dead in sins and trespasses. . . ²⁵ and we were dead in trespasses. . .
 [[We lack space and time this week to explore *we* and *you* in Ephesians 2:1-10]]