

Ephesians 1:1-2

“1 Paul, (What do we learn about Paul in this salutation?)

an apostle (*messenger*) of Christ Jesus (*Paul is not the focus.*) *Who do we represent?*

by the will of God, (*not Paul's will*) *Are we self appointed*) (*Note how often God's will is mentioned in this chapter.*)

to the saints (What does this tell us about Christians?)

who are at Ephesus, (*How is this contrasted with the spiritual home of these people?*)

and {who are} faithful in Christ Jesus: (*What does it mean to be faithful in light of the short comings mentioned later in the letter?*)

2 Grace to you and peace (What do these words suggest about Paul's ministry goals?)

from God our (*not "the"*) Father (*The source of these gifts tell us where to look to experience them.*)

and the Lord Jesus Christ. (*How is Lordship related to "grace and peace?"*)

Introduction

1. There is little question that Jesus Christ is one of the most influential figures in all human history. He is respected and even loved by nearly everyone on the planet. Who hates Jesus?
 2. The debate however is over the nature of his significance - moral example, revolutionary leader, visionary teacher, atoning sacrifice?
 3. And equally important is the question of how he relates to you and me or how we relate to him.
 4. Paul wrote a number of letters to Christ's followers in the 1st century. These letters give us great insight into the nature of who Christ is and his significance for us.
 5. As we begin to read Ephesians we make a simple observation from the first 2 verses. There are three spiritual postures that we can have.
- A. Those who are “of Christ” like Paul the Apostle.
1. Paul understood that he was on a mission from Jesus as a representative Apostle (one who is sent out).
 2. He understood his role as an expression of God's gracious will.
 3. Paul is not calling his readers to follow him as apostles but he is going to challenge his readers to, like him, be “of Christ” in their commitment to mission.
- B. Those who are “in Christ” like the Ephesian church.
1. There is a second posture pictured in these verses. It is described as being “in Christ.”
 2. As Paul will make clear, all who have received Christ by faith are “in Christ.” This includes Paul, the Christians in Ephesus, and all Christians today.
 3. Not everyone who claims to be a part of the church culture is “in Christ” but only those whom, as Paul will explain, are called of God and who have placed their faith in Christ.
- C. Those who are “outside Christ” in the world of Ephesus.

1. Paul does not directly mention those who are outside the Christian faith but they are in view by way of contrast because that is where his readers at one time were.
 2. Much of their present position will be in contrast to where they were.
- D. We might note the distinctiveness of these three postures in the following way.
1. Those “outside Christ” are **spectators** to the faith, they may be ignorant of the Gospel message, **skeptics** of the Christian faith, or even **hostile** to it.
 - a. There is good reason for some people to reject Christianity. In many cases, the only exposure they may have had is to a church, which is dysfunctional or even abusive.
 - b. As Bill Bright has noted. Most people have not rejected Jesus Christ but rather a distorted image of him from hypocritical believers and a dysfunctional church culture.
 - c. A “T” shirt read, “Jesus Save Me” and then in the fine print “from your followers.”
 - d. Paul is not directly addressing the people in this position but they can learn a lot by listening to what he says to those “in Christ.”
 2. Those “in Christ” are those who have received Christ by placing their personal trust in him as their savior from sin’s curse and as lord of their lives.
 - a. Paul wants to remind his readers who are “in Christ” of who they are and where God wants them to be.
 - b. He realizes that the greatest need that those “in Christ” have is to understand and appreciate what it means to be “in Christ.”
 - c. Paul wants to bring all Christians to the place where they are engaged in the mission of Christ’s Kingdom as he was. This posture is the third one we will look at.
 3. Those “of Christ” are engaged in Christ’s mission and are not just recipients of God’s blessing, they are dispensers of it.

APOSTLE

Introduction

The early church recognized certain leaders as apostles with special authority. While the original 12 occupied a role that can not be replicated to day, there are examples in the early church of those who bore the title and shared an important role that may be needed in the church of every age.

A. What was an Apostle?

1. “The one commissioned or sent out” is the basic meaning of the Greek word APOSTOLOS.
2. **Jesus** was called an Apostle in **Heb.3:1** “consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession.”
3. **The 12 (with Paul)** made up a special group of Apostles. The term is used most often in the NT in reference to this group.
 - a. They were called by Jesus **Lk.6:13** “He called His disciples to him; and chose twelve of them, whom He also named as apostles.”
 - b. They were eyewitnesses to the resurrected Jesus **Acts.1:21-22** “It is therefore necessary that of the men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and

out among us - beginning with the baptism of John until the day that He was taken up from us - one of these should become a witness with us of His resurrection.”, (2:32, 3:15 13:31)

- c. They were anointed to work signs and wonders **II Cor.12:12** “The signs of a true apostle were performed among you”
- d. They became the Foundation of the church. **Eph.2:20** “having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone.”
- e. They defined the doctrines of the Gospel. **Jn.20:23** “If you forgive the sins of any, their sins have been forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any they have been retained.” (Matt.18:18)
- f. Paul was numbered with the 12 **I Cor.15:9** “For I am the least of the apostles, who am not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.” **II Cor.11:5** “For I consider myself not in the least inferior to the most eminent apostles.” **Gal.1:17** “nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went away to Arabia,” **I Thess.2:6** “as apostles of Christ we might have asserted our authority.”
- g. They were sent by God. **Lk.11:49** “For this reason also the wisdom of God said, ‘I will send to them prophets and apostles, and some of them they will kill and some they will persecute.’”

4. **The Apostles of the church**

- a. Apostles “of the churches” in general. **II Cor.8:23** “As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker among you; as for our brethren, they are messengers (apostles) of the churches, a glory to Christ.” **Phil.2:25** “But I thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger (apostle) and minister to my need;”
- b. It is implied that James was an apostle. **Gal.1:19** “But I did not see any other of the apostles except James, the Lord’s brother.”
- c. It is suggested that there is a larger body of men called apostles that are distinct from the 12. **I Cor.15:5,7**”and then He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. . . . then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles.”

- 5. **False apostles. Rev.2:2** “I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot endure evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false.”

B. The Role of the Apostles

- 1. **Eph.4:10-16** “¹⁰ He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.) ¹¹ **And He gave some {as} apostles**, and some {as} prophets, and some {as} evangelists, and some {as} pastors and teachers, ¹² **for the equipping of the saints for the work of service**, to the building up of the body of Christ; ¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. ¹⁴ As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; ¹⁵ but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all {aspects} into Him, who is the head, {even} Christ, ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.”

The Acts of the Apostles: Luke begins the Book of Acts where he left off in his gospel. Acts records the initial fulfillment of the Great Commission of Matthew 28:19-20 as it traces the beginning and growth of the New Testament church. Christ's last words before His ascension were so perfectly realized in the Book of Acts that they effectively and concisely outline its contents: "*You shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem (ch.1-7), and in all Judea (ch.8-12), and to the end of the earth (ch.13-28)*" - Acts 1:8. Thus, Acts traces the rapid expansion of the gospel, beginning in Jerusalem and spreading throughout the Roman Empire. It centers its attention upon three Apostles - Peter (1-7), Philip (8-12) & Paul (13-28) with a conspicuous parallel of events in Peter's and Paul's ministries.

	PETER	PAUL
Heals a lame man	3:2-	14:8
His shadow heals	5:15	19:12
Exorcized demons	5:16	16:18
Victory over Sorcerer	8:18	13:6
Raise the dead	9:36-	20:9
Gentile vision	10:9	22:17-
Deliverance from prison	12:7-	16:25-

Calling

Introduction

1. **Calling:** There are two kinds of calling with respect to our salvation.
 - a. A **general calling** of all to repent.
 - Matt.11:28 "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest."
 - Isa.45:22 "Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth!"
 - Matt.22:14 "Many are called, but few are chosen"
 - b. An **efficacious calling** of the elect to believe.
 - **I Cor.2:6-16** "6 Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away; 7 but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden {wisdom,} which God predestined before the ages to our glory; 8 {the wisdom} which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory; 9 but just as it is written, "*Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, And {which} have not entered the heart of man, All that God has prepared for those who love Him.*" 10 For to us God revealed {them} through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. 11 For who among men knows the {thoughts} of a man except the spirit of the man, which is in him? Even so the {thoughts} of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God, 13 which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual {thoughts} with spiritual {words.} 14 But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit

of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. ¹⁵ But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no man. ¹⁶ *For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct Him?* But we have the mind of Christ.”

- Rom.8:30 “And those whom he predestined he also called; and whom he called, these he also justified.”
- I Cor.1:9 “God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.”
- a. I Cor.1:23-26 “²³ But we preach Christ crucified. To Jews a stumbling block, and to Gentiles foolishness, ²⁴ but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.”
- Lk.14:23; Rom.1:7; 11:29; Eph.1:18; Phil.3:14; I Thess.2:12; II Thess.2:14; II Tim.1:9; Heb.3:1; II Pet.1:10

2. **The logical order** - effectual calling, conversion, regeneration (the temporal order = simultaneous)

- **Acts 16:31** “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.”
- **Acts 2:38** “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

General Versus Effectual Calling

	General Calling	Effectual Calling
Definition	It involves the presentation of the Gospel in which the individual is offered the promise of salvation in Christ and invited to accept Christ by faith in order to receive the forgiveness of sins and eternal life.	It involves the general calling of God in the Gospel made effective in an individual as he or she believes the Gospel and accepts Christ as Savior and Lord.
Agent	Issued by the Father to all who hear the Gospel; mediated especially through believers empowered by the Holy Spirit of God as they communicate the Gospel as revealed in the Word of God.	It is issued by the Father and made effective by the work of the Holy Spirit as he illuminates and enables the individual to understand and respond positively to the Gospel of the Lord Jesus as contained in the Word of God.
Subjects & Examples	It is for all people but heard only by those who hear the Gospel “Many are called but few are chosen” (Matt. 22:14).	It is given only to all of the elect. Saul - Acts 9:1-19; Lydia - Acts 16:14; Romans 8:30
Purpose	It reveals the great love of God to sinners in general. It reveals God’s holiness and righteousness.	Because of man’s total depravity, it is absolutely necessary in order to bring the elect to faith and conversion.
Results	It does not necessarily result in salvation. It can be rejected, resulting in the sinner’s condemnation.	Since it is effectual and irrevocable, it necessarily results in salvation. It is impossible to reject.
Timing	It is prior to conversion and may or may not lead to it.	It is logically prior to conversion and necessarily leads to it.