

# Ephesians 1

## Background

Ephesus was once considered the most important city and the most important trading center in the Mediterranean region. It is located along the western coast of modern day Turkey. Along with being an important trade city, Ephesus was also very influential in other ways. First of all, it was heavily influenced by Greek mythology. One of the pinnacle sites at the time was the temple of Diana/Artemis. Cultic beliefs were very prominent in Paul's days and this is something he battled constantly during his time there. In fact, Paul's ministry efforts in Ephesus actually caused a riot and led him to flee to Macedonia as a result. You can read about this in Acts 19. If you remember from our studies through 1 Corinthians, you can draw some parallels here between Ephesus and Corinth. Heavy Greek influence, trade city, and cultic activities. It was a church surrounded on all sides.

As for why the letter was written, this is up for debate although there are some pretty good guesses. As mentioned earlier, these prison epistles were written around the same time. If we zero in on the three we are covering (which are Asia Minor bound), then we can start to get a sense of why Paul might have written this letter. Paul knew the proximity between Colossae and Ephesus and knew the false teaching and other influences making their ways to the churches. He knew this both firsthand from his own experiences and also from the likes of Epaphras who visited him in jail and reported about Colossae.

Tradition suggests that Paul wrote the letter to the Ephesians as a circulatory letter. Early manuscripts do not show Ephesus as part of this letter's recipient list. Due to this, scholars believe that Paul wrote this letter with the intent it would be circulated around Asia Minor and Ephesus would happen to be the first city to receive it based on it being at the gateway of Asia Minor as the westernmost city. It is due to this thought that some believe good ole' Tychicus delivered this letter as well. What other background information have you gleaned? Share it with your group.

## Day 1 - Read and Memorize

1. Read the chapter at least twice. If possible, use different translations. Optionally, have the passage read to you. Many apps, including the Blue Letter Bible, have a feature that will read the Bible to you. Meditate and pray on the passage.
2. Consider and start memorizing the verse below:

### **Ephesians 1:7:**

*"In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace..."*

## Day 2 - Observations

3. According to Ephesians 1:1, **who** wrote the letter? **What** title does the author identify with? **Who** is the letter addressed to?

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4. In verses 3-6, Paul praises the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. **Why?**

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5. Read verses 7-10 in the ESV translation. You can use this translation free at [blueletterbible.org](http://blueletterbible.org). **What** is God's ultimate plan for Christ's blood as mentioned in verse 10?

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6. In verses 11-14, **what** have we obtained? **Who** were we sealed with? **Who** is our guarantee?

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7. Verse 20 talks about Christ being raised and being seated at the right hand of the Father in the heavenly places. In verse 21, **what** things are the heavenly places "far above"? In verse 22, **where** does God put all things? In verse 22-23, **who** is head over the church?

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8. **(Optional)** Write down any **additional** observations from your study time this week not covered in the observation questions above. This is the 'who, what, when, where, why, and how' of the passage.

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### Day 3 - Additional Observations

9. Take note of any repeated words, thoughts, or phrases in our passage this week. Write those down below.

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10. Did any parts of the passage you read make you think about other stories in the Bible? This includes similar narratives, but could also include similarity in lessons being learned by different people at different times. We call these links “purposeful parallels.” If so, write those down below.

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11. **Word Studies:** Use the “Blue Letter Bible” or your favorite word study method to look up the word listed below: Ephesians 1:14 (NKJV), “...**who (which) is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.**” - This week’s word from the passage above: “**guarantee**”

Write out the Greek word phonetically so you can learn how to pronounce it. What are some definitions of the word provided by the Greek dictionary? How does understanding the Greek word help you in understanding this passage more fully?

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12. **Optional Word Studies:** Look up words you are curious about in the passage in a Greek dictionary. Write the word out phonetically and how understanding the Greek word helps you understand the passage more fully.

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#### **Day 4 - Interpret**

Now that we have determined what the text says, move into interpretation. The meaning of the text is not subjective. The goal of interpretation is to discover God’s intended meaning for the text we just read and provided observations for.

13. In verses 11-14, Paul is concluding this section talking about God’s redemption for the Ephesian church (and beyond). The term inheritance is used a few times in this passage. Using what you learned from your word study above and by reading this passage a few times, what promise does Paul spell out to the Ephesians in this passage?

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14. **Optional:** Write down additional interpretations from your study time down below.

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**Day 5 - Life Application**

Reading the Bible should change you! The purpose of reading any passage or passages is to gain life changing applications you must consider for your own life.

15. God has provided me with an inheritance, paid the down payment on it, and will redeem me (the purchased possession) once I'm done here on earth. How does this wonderful action and promise change the way I live today? How can I show my gratitude towards a God that loves me so much to give me an inheritance I don't deserve?

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16. **Optional:** Write down any additional life applications from your study time this week down below.

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**Day 6 - Closing Thoughts and Memory Verse**

As you've had time to meditate on this week's passage, write down any closing thoughts and/or list ways this passage has challenged you. How are you going to take the application from Day 5 and make it a tangible application for you? What are some additional things that you'd like to share with your group? These are just a few ideas to jot down as you close out this week.

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**Notes from Teaching**

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_