

EPHESIANS

I. TO THE SAINTS WHO ARE FAITHFUL EPHESIANS 1:1-2

“To the saints who are in Ephesus, and are faithful in Christ Jesus,” is to whom the letter of Ephesians is addressed. The letter itself is written in a more formal way than some of Paul’s other writings, which tend to have a rapid-fire pace. Ephesians has a trajectory to it that shows us salvation from God’s point of view in Chapter One, salvation from a human point of view in Chapter Two, and how those both come together in Chapter Three.

- ♦ **What does it mean to be “faithful?”**
- ♦ **Who is faithful in your life? How so?**
- ♦ **How would you define salvation?**

Ephesians Chapter Four starts with the word “therefore” and shows that the practical aspects of the book are based on the theology of the first three chapters. Ephesians Chapter One has even confused some people, because it is considered “nosebleed” theology with such a lofty view of God. Paul essentially tells us that our beliefs *will* dictate how we live; they are absolutely practical for our daily living.

- ♦ **What do you believe about Jesus that affects how you live?**
- ♦ **What beliefs do you hold that tend to draw you away from Christ-centered reactions?**
- ♦ **Is there anyone in your life you could encourage today to have a “nosebleed theology” of God?**

Ephesus was one of the leading cities in one of the most prosperous regions of the Roman Empire. Literally all roads led to Ephesus and all geographical markers extended from there. At this time, magic was seen as an extension of spirituality; it was believed the world was filled with good and evil, and a world beyond ours was involved in the affairs of this world—this led to various superstitions and magic. Throughout

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the book of Ephesians, Paul will constantly talk about Christ being over all, the head of all things, and that all things are under His feet. He talks like this because these people live in a world that is not following Jesus but thinks of themselves as “spiritual”.

- ♦ **How does the city of Ephesus resemble our culture today?**
- ♦ **What does it mean that Jesus is “over all”?**
- ♦ **How are spiritual forces involved in this world (good and bad)? What have you been taught on today’s subject? How does that align/not align with Scripture?**

Ephesians will show us:

1. **Christianity is exclusive because of its worship of Christ, but everyone is invited in.**
2. **Christianity is meant to lead us to move the message of the Gospel outward.**
3. **Christianity is centered on God’s work and not ours.**
4. **Christianity is the central announcement of the Gospel.**

Sorcery has its roots in superstition. The central announcement of the Gospel, however, is that God has sent His son to save us. God is good and He sent Jesus to make peace. There is one God who has bent His heart toward us.

Read Ephesians 1:1-2.

- ♦ **For those who center their lives with a focus upon themselves, how would the central announcement of the Gospel change their lives if they believed?**
- ♦ **Does your faith lead you to a place that you long to lift up Christ and not yourself?**
- ♦ **How does/has the peace of Christ transformed how you interact with the world around you?**

Paul teaches in Ephesians a truth that leads to a historical and profound shift in understanding: God does not change, He is not capricious, He is all-powerful, and He came to redeem us.