

## Ephesians 1:1-2 Introduction to Ephesians Part 1

(Ephesians 1:1-2) "Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints who are at Ephesus, and who are faithful in Christ Jesus: {2} Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

What are the three parts to Paul's greeting to the saints in Ephesus?

1. Paul introduces himself as the author.
  - a. Paul is an apostle of Christ Jesus.
  - b. Paul's calling is by the will of God.
2. Paul states who he is writing to.
  - a. Paul is writing to the saints in Ephesus.
  - b. Paul is writing to those who are faithful in Christ Jesus.
3. Paul gives a greeting.
  - a. Paul blesses them with grace and peace.
    - i. This grace and peace comes from God our Father.
    - ii. This grace and peace comes through the Lord Jesus Christ.

I have divided up the introduction into two parts. In this first message, we are going to look at the author of the letter – the Apostle Paul. Next week, we will look at the second part of the introduction, the recipients of the letter and the greeting.

### **The author of the letter – Paul**

In this letter to the Ephesians, Paul first introduces himself as the writer of the letter. When I receive mail, the first thing that I do is look at the outside of the envelope to see who it is from. If it is a piece of junk mail, I do not give it the time of day. It goes straight to the trash can. If the letter was from my tenant, I look to see how much he has paid. Then, I put it in my briefcase so that I have it with me to make a deposit in the bank.

The author of a letter is very important. Theologians argue about who wrote this book or that book of the Bible. Many of them do not accept the fact that the introduction clearly states that Paul wrote the letter. If we accept God's word as the inerrant word of God, we must accept the fact that Paul wrote the letter.

Who was Paul? I thought it would be helpful to look at Paul's resume today. We will look at his personal life, his education, his calling, his career objective, and his work history. This is not the order that most resumes will be put in; it is simply the order that I wanted to use for this message.

### **1. Paul's Personal Life**

We do not have the exact dates of Paul's birth and death, but theologians place his birth around 3 A.D., about the same time as Christ. His death took place between 64 A.D. and 68 A.D. We have much more accurate records of other details of his personal life.

Paul grew up in the town of Tarsus in Cilicia (Acts 9:11). He was an Israelite of the tribe of Benjamin (Philippians 3:5-6). He was circumcised on the eighth day and describes himself as a "Hebrew of Hebrews." Paul was a Pharisee and a son of Pharisees (Acts 23:6).

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(Acts 9:11) "And the Lord said to him, "Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying,"

(Philippians 3:5-6) "circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; {6} as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless."

(Acts 23:6) "But perceiving that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, Paul began crying out in the Council, "Brethren, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees; I am on trial for the hope and resurrection of the dead!""

Paul was a single man. In 1 Corinthians 7, he addresses the widows and unmarried folks. He tells them that he wishes all men were like him, i.e. single. Later on in 1 Corinthians 9 when he defends his apostleship to the Corinthians, he asks some rhetorical questions, including the question about having the right to take along a believing wife, as the rest of the apostles.

(1 Corinthians 7:7-8) "Yet I wish that all men were even as I myself am. However, each man has his own gift from God, one in this manner, and another in that. {8} But I say to the unmarried and to widows that it is good for them if they remain even as I."

(1 Corinthians 9:1-5) "Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord? {2} If to others I am not an apostle, at least I am to you; for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord. {3} My defense to those who examine me is this: {4} Do we not have a right to eat and drink? {5} Do we not have a right to take along a believing wife, even as the rest of the apostles, and the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas?"

We can learn something from Paul. He wanted people to be free to serve Christ freely. He says that the married are concerned about how to please his wife and his interests are divided. An unmarried person is free to secure undistracted devotion to the Lord. I have seen many married people who had more undistracted devotion to the Lord than single people. Many single people are looking at how they can find a wife or husband. They are more concerned about finding a relationship than serving God in an undistracted manner. Being single does not automatically mean that you are going to have undistracted devotion to the Lord. Our goal, whether married or single, is to please the Lord. Are you single, focus on serving the Lord. Are you married, both of you should encourage one another in your devotion to the Lord.

(1 Corinthians 7:32-35) "But I want you to be free from concern. One who is unmarried is concerned about the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord; {33} but one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how he may please his wife, {34} and his interests are divided. And the woman who is unmarried, and the virgin, is concerned about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and spirit; but one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how she may please her husband. {35} And this I say for your own benefit; not to put a restraint upon you, but to promote what is seemly, and to secure undistracted devotion to the Lord."

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Paul's personal appearance was not impressive. Here is a description of Paul given by someone in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. "...a man small in size, bald-headed, bandy-legged, well-built, with eyebrows meeting, rather long-nosed, full of grace. For sometimes he seemed like a man, and sometimes he had the countenance of an angel."

Paul's speech was contemptible (2 Corinthians 10:10). Despite this, Paul did not consider himself inferior in any way to the other apostles (2 Corinthians 11:5-6). He states, "but even if I am unskilled in speech, yet I am not so in knowledge."

(2 Corinthians 10:10) "For they say, "His letters are weighty and strong, but his personal presence is unimpressive, and his speech contemptible.""

(2 Corinthians 11:5-6) "For I consider myself not in the least inferior to the most eminent apostles. {6} But even if I am unskilled in speech, yet I am not so in knowledge; in fact, in every way we have made this evident to you in all things."

Many Bible scholars believe that Paul had very poor eyesight. In Galatians 6, Paul says, "see what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand." People who have poor eyesight would probably write in large letters so that they could read what they had written. In two of his letters, he writes that he signed them with his own hand. His writing and greeting were a distinguishing mark in his letters.

(Galatians 6:11) "See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand."

(Colossians 4:18) "I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. Remember my imprisonment. Grace be with you."

(2 Thessalonians 3:17) "I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand, and this is a distinguishing mark in every letter; this is the way I write."

Paul demonstrated characteristics of a "Type A" or choleric personality. He was a very focused man. He was a man who lived by principle and did not waver from his convictions. He planned his ministry trips. He uses phrases like "striving according to His power which mightily works within me." A person who strives is not a laid back phlegmatic personality. This is a person who is driven by goals and a mission to accomplish. He expected people that traveled and ministered with him to have the same focus and zeal. When John Mark deserted Barnabas and Paul on their first missionary journey, Paul was unwilling to take him along on the second trip.

(Acts 15:37-40) "And Barnabas was desirous of taking John, called Mark, along with them also. {38} But Paul kept insisting that they should not take him along who had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work. {39} And there arose such a sharp disagreement that they separated from one another, and Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus. {40} But Paul chose Silas and departed, being committed by the brethren to the grace of the Lord."

## 2. Paul's Education

Paul grew up the son of a Pharisee. He was brought up in strict accordance with the law. His father taught him the law from an early age. He was given a strong Scriptural background by his father. Then, at the age of thirteen, the Bar-Mitzvah or the coming of age occurs for Jewish boys. Bar Mitzvah literally means "son of the commandment." "Bar" is "son" in Aramaic, which used to be the vernacular of the Jewish people. "Mitzvah" is "commandment" in both Hebrew and Aramaic. "Bat" is daughter in Hebrew and Aramaic. (The Ashkenazic pronunciation is "bas"). Technically, the term refers to the child who is coming of age, and it is strictly correct to refer to someone as "becoming a bar (or bat) mitzvah." However, the term is more commonly used to refer to the coming of age ceremony itself, and you are more likely to hear that someone is "having a bar mitzvah."

H4687. mitsvah, mits-vaw'; from H6680; a command, whether human or divine (collect. the Law):--(which was) commanded (-ment), law, ordinance, precept.

Under Jewish Law, children are not obligated to observe the commandments, although they are encouraged to do so as much as possible to learn the obligations they will have as adults. At the age of 13 (12 for girls), children become obligated to observe the commandments. The bar mitzvah ceremony formally marks the assumption of that obligation, along with the corresponding right to take part in leading religious services, to count in a minyan (the minimum number of people needed to perform certain parts of religious services), to form binding contracts, to testify before religious courts and to marry.

A Jewish boy automatically becomes a bar mitzvah upon reaching the age of 13 years, and a girl upon reaching the age of 12 years. No ceremony is needed to confer these rights and obligations. The popular bar mitzvah ceremony is not required, and does not fulfill any commandment. It is certainly not, as one episode of the Simpsons would have you believe, necessary to have a bar mitzvah in order to be considered a Jew! The bar or bat mitzvah is a relatively modern innovation, not mentioned in the Talmud, and the elaborate ceremonies and receptions that are commonplace today were unheard of as recently as a century ago.

At the age of thirteen, Paul's education went to a higher level. He was sent to Jerusalem to study under Gamaliel. When Paul is giving his testimony to the commander and the people in Jerusalem, he tells them in Hebrew that he was a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in Jerusalem. He goes on to say that he was educated under Gamaliel, strictly according to law of their fathers.

(Acts 22:3) ""I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated under Gamaliel, strictly according to the law of our fathers, being zealous for God, just as you all are today."

Gamaliel was very well respected by the Jews. We find out more about Gamaliel in Acts 5, when Peter and John are arrested. Gamaliel had Peter and John removed from the room and spoke privately with the Council. He tells them to be careful about what they propose to do with these men. He tells them to stay away from these men and leave them alone. He also tells them that if Peter and John are from God, they will not be able to overthrow them and will be found to be

fighting against God. The Council greatly respected him and took his advice.

(Acts 5:34-40) "But a certain Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the Law, respected by all the people, stood up in the Council and gave orders to put the men outside for a short time. {35} And he said to them, "Men of Israel, take care what you propose to do with these men....{38} And so in the present case, I say to you, stay away from these men and let them alone, for if this plan or action should be of men, it will be overthrown; {39} but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them; or else you may even be found fighting against God." {40} And they took his advice; and after calling the apostles in, they flogged them and ordered them to speak no more in the name of Jesus, and then released them."

Paul's strong religious training and background were no mistake. God chose to use Paul to write half of the books of the New Testament. Much of our doctrine for the New Testament was given through Paul. His thorough understanding of both Hebrew and Greek gave him a unique ability to transition us from the Hebrew Old Testament to the Greek New Testament. The following thirteen books of the Bible were written by Paul. Some theologians also attribute Hebrews to him.

1. Romans	8. 1 Thessalonians
2. 1 Corinthians	9. 2 Thessalonians
3. 2 Corinthians	10. 1 Timothy
4. Galatians	11. 2 Timothy
5. Ephesians	12. Titus
6. Philippians	13. Philemon
7. Colossians	

### 3. Paul's Calling

In addition to our family history, background, upbringing, education, personalities, strengths and our weaknesses, God also has a unique call and purpose for our lives. Notice what the Lord tells Jeremiah. He knew Jeremiah before He formed him in the womb. He consecrated and appointed Jeremiah as a prophet to the nations before he was even born. Like Paul, Jeremiah was not particularly skilled in speech. It was so that men like Jeremiah and Paul would speak forth the words that God would give them.

(Jeremiah 1:4-7) "Now the word of the LORD came to me saying, {5} "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, And before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations." {6} Then I said, "Alas, Lord GOD! Behold, I do not know how to speak, Because I am a youth." {7} But the LORD said to me, "Do not say, 'I am a youth,' Because everywhere I send you, you shall go, And all that I command you, you shall speak."

Notice what Paul tells the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 2. His message and preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and power. Why? God want our faith to rest on the power of God, not the wisdom of men. It is good to teach our mouth wisdom.

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It is good to learn persuasion. Solomon imparts much wisdom to us about having sweetness of speech so that we can persuade people. Paul tells us to have our speech seasoned with grace so that we can make the most of opportunities. But, far too often, our preaching today is in persuasive words of wisdom and not in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. Father, I pray that we would see more and more demonstration of Your Spirit and power in the East Mountains. I pray that this generation would see, hear, and experience Your power to heal and deliver people, so that their faith would rest in You.

(1 Corinthians 2:4-5) "And my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, {5} that your faith should not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God."

(Proverbs 16:21) "The wise in heart will be called discerning, And sweetness of speech increases persuasiveness."

(Proverbs 16:23) "The heart of the wise teaches his mouth, And adds persuasiveness to his lips."

Like Jeremiah, Paul was a chosen instrument. In Luke's account of Paul's conversion, the Lord tells Ananias that Paul is a chosen instrument. God tells him that Paul is to bear His name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel. God had a plan and a purpose for Paul. His family, his upbringing, his education, his personality, and his strengths and weaknesses were not happenstance or a mistake. They were orchestrated by God to achieve His purposes.

(Acts 9:15-16) "But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; {16} for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name's sake.""

What kind of chosen instrument was Paul? What was his ministry calling? Paul was first called as a teacher. When the church in Antioch was planted, Barnabas sought out Paul and brought him there to help teach and equip the body.

(Acts 11:25-26) "And he left for Tarsus to look for Saul; {26} and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. And it came about that for an entire year they met with the church, and taught considerable numbers; and the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch."

In Acts 13, while the church leadership was fasting and ministering to the Lord, the Holy Spirit tells them to set aside Barnabas and Paul for the work. The leadership then fasted about the word that they had heard. After fasting and praying about it, they laid their hands on them, and sent them away. It goes on to say that they were sent out by the Holy Spirit.

(Acts 13:1-4) "Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers: Barnabas, and Simeon who was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. {2} And while they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." {3} Then, when they had fasted and

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prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. {4} So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia and from there they sailed to Cyprus."

The Greek for sent in verse three is apoluo. Apo means away and luo means to loosen. They were literally loosened away, freed, or released from their pastoral responsibilities at Antioch.

G630. apoluo; from G575 and G3089; to free fully, i.e. (lit.) relieve, release, dismiss (reflex. depart), or (fig.) let die, pardon, or (spec.) divorce:--(let) depart, dismiss, divorce, forgive, let go, loose, put (send) away, release, set at liberty.

From this point on, Barnabas is no longer referred to as a prophet and Paul is not referred to as a teacher. Scripture refers to them as apostles. The Greek word for apostle is apostello. Our English word is what we call a transliteration. The word apostello comes from apo, which means away and stello which means to set apart. The combination means one who is sent out or set apart. When the leaders and the Holy Spirit sent out Barnabas and Paul, they were "sent ones" or apostles.

(Acts 14:14) "But when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of it, they tore their robes and rushed out into the crowd, crying out"

G652. apostolos, ap-os'-tol-os; from G649; a delegate; spec. an ambassador of the Gospel; officially a commissioner of Christ ["apostle"] (with miraculous powers):--apostle, messenger, he that is sent.

G649. apostello, ap-os-tel'-lo; from G575 and G4724; set apart, i.e. (by impl.) to send out (prop. on a mission) lit. or fig.:--put in, send (away, forth, out), set [at liberty].

When Paul writes to Timothy, he states that he was appointed as a preacher, apostle, and teacher. He still has the gifting of a teacher, but he also has a ministry calling of an apostle.

(1 Timothy 2:7) "And for this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying) as a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth."

(2 Timothy 1:11) "for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher."

There is much misunderstanding and false teaching about apostles today. For example, last week two young people mentioned to me that they were apostles. Just because someone fills out a spiritual gift test and they answer particular questions about missions or the church at large does not make them an apostle. Apostles are men of God who have been sent out by the Holy Spirit to do a particular work. Apostles are servants of God who have been given authority to carry out a special work. Apostles are a five fold gift given to the church to equip the church for the work of service. Apostles are not just a ministry gift, they are the first or proton gift that God has appointed to the church. The church is encouraged to earnestly desire the greater gifts, which would be the apostolic, prophetic, and teaching gifts. Today, much of the church has bought into the lie that there are no more apostles and prophets. They invent a doctrine of men that says that since we have the canonized Scripture, there is no longer a need for apostles and that apostles ceased in the 1<sup>st</sup> century. There is no supporting evidence or Scripture for this false teaching.

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(1 Corinthians 12:28-31) "And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues. {29} All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not workers of miracles, are they? {30} All do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they? {31} But earnestly desire the greater gifts. And I show you a still more excellent way."

Churches are built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets. We find in Ephesians two that the church, God's household, is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Apostles and prophets are not the foundation. Paul made it very clear in 1 Corinthians that Jesus Christ is the foundation. Jesus is the cornerstone. But, the foundation is laid by apostles and prophets. The New Testament pattern is to plant churches with apostles and prophets. There is still a tremendous need for churches in 2011. There is still a tremendous need for good foundations to be laid in churches in 2011. There is still a tremendous need for the doctrine and equipping given by apostles.

(Ephesians 2:19-20) "So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, {20} having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone,"

We do not have time today to fully look at the office of apostle. I just wanted to mention just a few things about apostles. First, there are more than twelve apostles. Some theologians say that Paul was the 12<sup>th</sup> and that Matthias was a mistake. That is a false teaching. Matthias was added to the other eleven after the resurrection of Christ.

(Acts 1:24-26) "And they prayed, and said, "Thou, Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men, show which one of these two Thou hast chosen {25} to occupy this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place." {26} And they drew lots for them, and the lot fell to Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles."

Scripture is inerrant. Just because it does not match our desired doctrinal position, it is still inerrant and our plumb line for all doctrinal beliefs and practices. We must change our doctrine to agree with the Word of God. In areas that we lack understanding, we should seek God for wisdom and understanding.

Let's look at Revelation 21:14 for just a moment. The heavenly Jerusalem has twelve foundation stones, and on them are the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. This is significant. There are two types of apostles. There are the twelve apostles of the Lamb, and then there are many other regular apostles. The qualifications for apostles in Acts 1 is different than the qualifications given for the rest of the apostles. Later apostles did not have to have been with Jesus, but the apostles of the Lamb had to come out of those who were with Jesus. In my studies, there are about twenty-eight (28) apostles mentioned in the New Testament. Barnabas and Paul are just two of many that are named.

(Revelation 21:14) "And the wall of the city had twelve foundation stones, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb."



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(Acts 1:21-26) ""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-- {22} 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." {23} And they put forward two men, Joseph called Barsabbas (who was also called Justus), and Matthias. {24} And they prayed, and said, "Thou, Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men, show which one of these two Thou hast chosen {25} to occupy this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place." {26} And they drew lots for them, and the lot fell to Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles."

Paul would not have qualified as an apostle under these requirements. It is very clear in Scripture that Paul was an apostle. Therefore, the qualifications for Paul and Barnabas were clearly different than those for the apostles of the Lamb. One of the arguments used by cessationists today is that there is no one today that meets those qualifications given in Acts 1. They are partially correct, in that no one meets those qualifications. However, they are wrong to use this list of qualifications for apostles thereafter.

In the book of Revelations, Jesus commended the church at Ephesus for discerning between genuine apostles and false apostles. There are false prophets today, false teachers today, and false apostles today. There are also true prophets, true teachers, and true apostles today. As a church we want to be able to discern the difference. Therefore, we will look more at the work and qualifications of a true apostle at a later time.

Here is a list of apostles mentioned in Scripture:

<b>Apostles of the Lamb</b>	<b>Other Apostles</b>	<b>Probable Apostles</b>
1. Simon Peter (Matt 10:2, Lk 6:13, Gal 2:8-9, 1 Pet 1:1, 2 Pet 1:1)	1. Paul (Ac 14:14, Rom 1:1, Rom 11:13, 1 Cor 1:1, 2 Cor 1:1, Gal 1:1, Gal 2:8-9, Eph 1:1, Col 1:1, 1 Th 1:1-2:7, 1 Tim 1:1, 2 Tim 1:1, Titus 1:1)	1. Titus (Titus 1:4-5) (did the work and ministry of an apostle)
2. Andrew (Matt 10:2, Lk 6:13)	2. Barnabas (Ac 14:14, Gal 2:8-9)	2. Jude (Jude 1:1) (wrote book of Jude, which many consider the work of an apostle)
3. James, son of Zebedee (Matt 10:2, Lk 6:14)	3. Apollos (1 Cor 4:6-9)	3. Aquila (Prisca is his wife, the use of fellow workers implies work of apostle, and their work was unto all the churches of the Gentiles) (Rom 16:3-4)
4. John, son of Zebedee, brother of John (Matt 10:2, Lk 6:14)	4. Andronicus (Rom 16:7)	4. Urbanus (the use of fellow worker implies work of apostle) (Rom 16:9)
5. Philip (Matt 10:3, Lk 6:14)	5. Junias (Rom 16:7)	5. Apelles (the use of the approved implies approved as a worker (2 Tim 2:15)) (Rom 16:10)
6. Bartholomew (Matt 10:3, Lk 6:14)	6. James, the Lord's brother (Gal 1:19)	6. Stephanas (Ministered to body of Christ, not just to local church) (1 Cor 16:15-18)
7. Thomas (Matt 10:3, Lk 6:15)	7. Silvanus (1 Th 1:1-2:7)	7. Fortunatus (Ministered to body of Christ, not just to local church) (1 Cor 16:15-18)
8. Matthew, the tax-gatherer (Matt 10:3, Lk 6:15)	8. Timothy (1 Th 1:1-2:7)	8. Achaicus (Ministered to body of Christ, not just to local church) (1 Cor 16:15-18)
9. James, son of Alphaeus (Matt 10:3, Lk 6:15)	9. Jesus Christ, the Apostle and High Priest (Heb 3:1)	
10. Thaddaeus or Judas, son of James (Matt 10:3, Lk 6:16)		
11. Simon, the Zealot (Matt 10:4, Lk 6:15)		
12. <del>Judas Iscariot</del> , the one who betrayed Jesus (Matt 10:4, Lk 6:15)		
13. Matthias (Acts 1:26)		

In the past few months we have been looking at who we are in Christ. We saw that we are the body and each of us is a unique part of the body. Each of us have unique gifts and abilities that the rest of the body needs. It is God who has distributed gifts to each of us. Each of us have a purpose and a calling. Like Paul, we need to discover our purpose and our gifts so that we can employ our gifts in serving one another, build the body, and glorify God.

#### 4. Career objective

Paul's career objective is tied in with his calling. Below is a composite statement of Paul's career objective based on the following Scriptures: Acts 13:47, 20:24, 26:16-18, Rom 11:13, Gal 1:15-16, Col 1:28-29, 1 Tim 2:7, 2 Tim 4:17.

*"My goal was to take the gospel where no man had taken it. I was called to be an apostle to the Gentiles in the same way that Peter was called to the Jews. I proclaimed Christ, admonished and taught every man so that I could present every man complete. For this purpose I strive according to His power, which mightily works within me."*

(Acts 13:47) ""For thus the Lord has commanded us, 'I HAVE PLACED YOU AS A LIGHT FOR THE GENTILES, THAT YOU SHOULD BRING SALVATION TO THE END OF THE EARTH.'""

(Acts 20:24) ""But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, in order that I may finish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God."

(Acts 26:16-18) ""But arise, and stand on your feet; for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a minister and a witness not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things in which I will appear to you; {17} delivering you from the Jewish people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you, {18} to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, in order that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.""

(Romans 11:13) "But I am speaking to you who are Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle of Gentiles, I magnify my ministry,"

(Galatians 1:15-16) "But when He who had set me apart, even from my mother's womb, and called me through His grace, was pleased {16} to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood,"

(Colossians 1:28-29) "And we proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, that we may present every man complete in Christ. {29} And for this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me."

(1 Timothy 2:7) "And for this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying) as a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth."

(2 Timothy 4:17) "But the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me, in order that through

## Ephesians 1:1-2 Introduction to Ephesians Part 1

me the proclamation might be fully accomplished, and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was delivered out of the lion's mouth."

A career objective is important for several reasons. First, it keeps you on course. When you drive your car, you keep your eyes on the road in front of you. The only way that you are able to keep your car on the road is by keeping your eyes on where you are going. The same is true in all areas of our lives. We must watch the path of our feet. That will keep us from departing to the left or to the right.

(Proverbs 4:25-27) "Let your eyes look directly ahead, And let your gaze be fixed straight in front of you. {26} Watch the path of your feet, And all your ways will be established. {27} Do not turn to the right nor to the left; Turn your foot from evil."

A second reason for having a career objective is to help evaluate if you are accomplishing or have accomplished what God has called you to do. At the end of Paul's ministry, he makes a significant statement to Timothy. He says that he has finished the course and that there is a crown of righteousness awaiting him. Paul knows that he has accomplished the work that God gave him to do. How did he know this? He had a mission statement for his life that was based on the calling that God had given him.

(2 Timothy 4:6-8) "For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. {7} I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; {8} in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing."

Early in my life the Lord gave me some mission statements. One of my life verses is Ezra 7:10 which tells me to do three things: Prepare, Practice and Preach. Therefore, no matter what church I am involved in, my life is being spent on studying, applying the Scriptures to my life, and teaching God's word to His people. That is what my life is about.

(Ezra 7:10) "For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the LORD, and to practice it, and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel."

Another mission statement that the Lord gave me is in Ephesians. I am a five-fold teacher in the body of Christ that is to equip the saints for the work of service. I am to build up the body of Christ to help bring unity of the faith, knowledge of the Son of God, and to help bring the body to maturity. This is not different from the first verse; it merely clarifies my mission.

(Ephesians 4:11-13) "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 fulness of Christ."

## 5. Work history

The final area on this resume is Paul's work history. You will see that Paul started out by just serving faithfully in the local church. His faithfulness and gifting was observed by many, including Barnabas. When Barnabas was sent to Antioch to see about the report about the Gentiles receiving the gospel, he assesses the situation and searches for Paul. Paul becomes a pastor at Antioch, but not the Senior Pastor. This church plant was led by Barnabas.

After serving Barnabas and the church faithfully for several years, Barnabas and Paul are sent out as apostles to the church at large. Barnabas leads the apostolic team on the first missionary trip. Again, Paul faithfully serves Barnabas on the apostolic team.

Finally, the Lord raises up Paul to lead the apostolic team. Both Paul and Barnabas are leaders and both have their own philosophy of ministry. In Acts 15 they part company. Paul takes Silas and Barnabas takes John Mark. Both apostolic teams are successful and bear much fruit.

The only point that I want to make here is that there should be a progression for most people in the church. There is a process of maturity in character and gifting. Paul spent fourteen years of development time before being raised up in leadership. He kept growing and maturing in his relationship with the Lord and in his ministry. When Paul gave Timothy the qualifications of an elder in 1 Timothy 3, he tells him that the pastor should not be a new convert, lest he become conceited and fall into condemnation. This is something that he found useful in his own experience and was directed by the Lord to teach others.

(1 Timothy 3:6) "and not a new convert, lest he become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil."

In the military, there is an established track for people to follow. They come in as boots. They become a private. After much training and some time, they become a private first class. After more training and experience, they become a lance corporal. There is a clearly established pathway to career development.

In the church, there is not a clear development track for people. Many Christians do not have a clear sense of what their spiritual gifts are. They do not have a job description in the body. They do not have a career objective or mission statement. They have not been trained (discipled) in the use of their gifting. The church does lots of preaching, but not much training and equipping. The church does not offer many promotions. Church members as a whole are on the sidelines, waiting to be activated. Many of the ones that are involved either get spiritual burnout from doing too much or they get bored doing the same thing over and over again. Eventually, without any career advancement, they too join the fellowship of the unemployed.

I believe that Scripture tells us something very different. We are to make disciples. We are to train up others and help them grow in their faith and in their ministry gifts. We are to equip the saints for the work of ministry. In Ephesians 4 there are two distinct responsibilities in building up the body of Christ. The leaders need to equip and the body needs to do the work of service. Unless both of these are in place, churches will have a difficult time growing.

## Conclusion

This morning we have looked at Paul's personal life, his education, his calling, his career objective, and his work history. The point to all of this is that God's hand was in all of this. Paul was a chosen instrument of God to accomplish a certain task for the kingdom of God.

But, this is not just a history lesson. This is an example for all of us to pattern our lives after. God has a plan for each one of us. He has given each one of us a special family, unique background and education, special gifts and abilities, experiences, and calling. Each one of us is a letter that is being written to a group of people like Ephesus. Look what Paul tells the Corinthians. You are our letter, written in our hearts, known and read by all men."

(2 Corinthians 3:1-3) "Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, as some, letters of commendation to you or from you? {2} You are our letter, written in our hearts, known and read by all men; {3} being manifested that you are a letter of Christ, cared for by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone, but on tablets of human hearts."

The people of the East Mountains need a letter from God. The people of the East Mountains have been sent a letter from God. You and I are the letter from God to a people that desperately need to hear the gospel. You and I are to be known and read by all men. You and I have a message that needs to be circulated in the East Mountains. This is a message of good news. This is a message of hope. This is a message of purpose and fulfillment. This is a message of God's great love for you and I.

Let's pray.

Introduction: Three Parts To Paul's Greeting (Eph 1:1-2)

1. Paul introduces himself as the author.
2. Paul identifies his audience – Church in Ephesus.
3. Paul gives a greeting of grace and peace.

Part I – The author of the letter – Paul

Part II – Paul's greeting to the saints in Ephesus

### 1. Paul's Personal Life

- Born in Tarsus in Cilicia (Acts 9:11)
- An Israelite, tribe of Benjamin (Phil 3:5-6)
- Son of a Pharisee (Acts 23:6).
- Single man (1 Cor 7:7-8, 9:1-5)
- We should have \_\_\_\_\_ devotion to the Lord. (1 Cor 7:32-35)
- Paul's speech was contemptible (2 Cor 10:10, 11:5-6)
- Paul's eyesight may have been bad. (Gal 6:11, Col 4:18, 2 Thess 3:17)
- Paul probably had a Type A personality. (Ac 15:37-40)

### 2. Paul's Education

- Paul was educated under Gamaliel in Jerusalem. (Ac 22:3, 5:34-40)

### 3. Paul's Calling

- God knew Jeremiah before he was \_\_\_\_\_ in the womb. (Jer 1:4-7, 1 Cor 2:4-5, Pr 16:21, 23)
- Paul was a \_\_\_\_\_ instrument of God. (Ac 9:15-16, 11:25-26)
- Paul was called as a preacher, teacher, and \_\_\_\_\_. (Ac 13:1-4, 14:14, 1 Tim 2:7, 2 Tim 1:11, 1 Cor 12:28-31)
- Apostles and prophets lay \_\_\_\_\_ in the church. (Eph 2:19-20)
- There are \_\_\_\_\_ kinds of apostles. (Acts 1:24-26, Rev 21:14)

### 4. Paul's Career objective (Acts 13:47, 20:24, 26:16-18, Rom 11:13, Gal 1:15-16, Col 1:28-29, 1 Tim 2:7, 2 Tim 4:17)

- A career objective keeps you on \_\_\_\_\_. (Pr 4:25-27)
- A career objective help in \_\_\_\_\_. (2 Tim 4:6-8)

### 5. Paul's Work history (1 Tim 3:6)

- The leadership needs to \_\_\_\_\_ the saints (Eph 4:11-13).
- The saints need to do the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_. (Eph 4:12-16)

### Conclusion

- Our lives are to be a \_\_\_\_\_ to the East Mountains. (2 Cor 3:1-3)

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