

Cause & Effect

Long Beach Alliance Church • March 9, 2014 • Pastor Chris Larkford

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints who are in Ephesus, and are faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

~Ephesians 1:1-2 (ESV)

1) From One Who Is Sent To Those Who Are Sent

- A) Written in a style typical of its day, the beginning of Ephesians addresses authorship, recipients, and greeting (Ephesians 1:1-2). The letter is authored by Paul (1:1), the same man saved by Jesus Christ (Acts 9) on the road to Damascus.
- B) Significantly, Paul is an “apostle” (1:1). Apostles were eye-witness of Jesus Christ (cf. 1 Corinthians 9:1), set apart for Gospel work (cf. Romans 1:1), appointed to a location or group of people (cf. Romans 11:13), and authenticated by miraculous works revealing the Gospel of Jesus (cf. 2 Corinthians 12:12).
- C) Gathering these characteristics together, an apostle was a “sent one” an “ambassador,” or “messenger” of the Gospel. The Ephesian letter was apostolic in nature, from one sent by the will of God (Ephesians 1:1), calling others to be sent for the always-expanding purposes of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

2) To Those Set Apart → The Faithful

- A) As with all the apostolic letters of the New Testament, while letters are addressed to a specific group or person (e.g. Romans or Timothy), they were also intended for distribution to other regional churches. Letters often dealt with specific issues, but most issues are characteristic in most churches.

- B) Paul writes to the "saints" ("holy ones," NIV) in Ephesus (1:1). The saints are those "set apart" by God, or simply, the followers of Jesus Christ in Ephesus.
- C) The Bible never associates "saints" with inherent "saintly" behaviors, but is rather more concerned with one's "position." Those who have received grace through faith in Jesus Christ, are in the 'position' of being a 'saint' (1 Corinthians 6:11).
- D) Followers of Christ are "saints" because of Jesus Christ; not personal behavior, sincerity, or hard work (Ephesians 2:8-9). Saints are "set apart" from sin positionally, and we avoid sin actively because we are the location where God dwells, temples of Jesus Christ, places of worship (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).
- E) Ephesians is written to God's people, the saints. The character of the letter is a call to the faithful, to those set apart to live like those set apart. Saints by a grace received in Jesus Christ alone.

3) The Cause & Effect Of God's Great Gospel

- A) Characteristically a mark of all Paul's letters is "grace and peace to you" (Ephesians 1:2). Profound in its simplicity and depth; the greeting captures the whole Gospel message.
- B) Grace is God's unmerited and undeserved favor in lovingly providing salvation for sinners through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ (Romans 3:23-24), and His compassionate power for the saint to actively worship God (Romans 12:1, 1 Corinthians 15:10; Colossians 1:28-29).
- C) In a single word, Grace is the Gospel. The greatness and scope of the Gospel is captured in grace. It is the single most significant word in the New Testament, distinctive in its life-giving impact.
- D) Restoring peace between God and mankind (Shalom) has been God's mission from the beginning. Peace with God is the active result of the Gospel (Ephesians 1:2), leading to peace and unity amongst God's people, the active response to peace with God.
- E) Ephesians is characterized by passion for embracing grace and peace from God through faith in Jesus Christ. Ephesians is apostolic, for saints living by grace, resulting in peace and unity.