

Ephesians—The Epistle of Christian Maturity

*This is a self-study course
designed to help you discover
for yourself, from the Bible,
some important basic truths about
living the Christian life.*

how to study the lesson

1. Try to find a quiet spot free from distractions and noise.
2. Read the entire Scripture lesson; read it several times to help you absorb its content.
3. Read each question carefully. Then look up the Scripture reference given after each question. Make sure you have found the correct Scripture passage. For example, sometimes you may find yourself looking up JOHN 1:1 instead of I JOHN 1:1.
4. Answer the question from the appropriate Bible passage. Write, in your own words, a phrase or sentence to answer the question. In questions that can be answered with a “yes” or “no” always give the reason for your answer . . . “Yes, because. . . .”
5. If possible, keep a dictionary handy in order to look up words you don’t understand.

6. Pray for God's help. You *need* God's help in order to understand what you study in the Bible. Psalm 119:18 would be an appropriate verse for you to take to God in prayer.

7. Class teachers using this course for group study will find some helpful suggestions on page 63.

how to take the self-check tests

Each lesson is concluded with a test designed to help you evaluate what you have learned.

1. Review the lesson carefully in the light of the self-check test questions.

2. If there are any questions in the self-check test you cannot answer, perhaps you have written into your lesson the wrong answer from your Bible. Go over your work carefully to make sure you have filled in the blanks correctly.

3. When you think you are ready to take the self-check test, do so without looking up the answers.

4. Check your answers to the self-check test carefully with the answer key given on page 48.

5. If you have any questions wrong, your answer key will tell you where to find the correct answer in your lesson. Go back and locate the right answers. Learn by your mistakes!

apply what you have learned to your own life

In this connection, read carefully JAMES 1:22-25. It is only as you apply your lessons to your own life that you will really grow in grace and increase in the knowledge of God.

Introduction to Ephesians

Coleridge called the epistle to the Ephesians “the divinest composition of man.” It was written by the apostle Paul about A.D. 62. He had been a prisoner at Rome at least a year. Paul’s remarkable labors at Ephesus are recorded in Acts 18 and 19.

The subject of the epistle is the believer’s place in Christ and Christ’s place in the believer. God’s highest thought for His Church will be found in this letter.

If you try to read a letter that was written to someone else, sometimes it will make very little sense. If you are one of those to whom this epistle was written, it will mean much to you, otherwise you will need to accept Christ as Saviour before you can fully comprehend it.

The epistle is divided into two parts: (1) Doctrinal—chapters 1-3, and (2) Practical—chapters 4-6. The key statement for the first section is, “That ye may know what is the hope of his calling” (1:18). The key statement for the second section is, “That ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called” (4:1).

Outline of the Book

LESSON

- 1 The Mystery of the Church 1:1-14
- 2 A Prayer for the Church 1:15-23
- 3 The Creation of the Church 2:1-22
- 4 The Heavenly Calling of the Church 3:1-21
- 5 The Unity of the Church 4:1-16
- 6 The Standard of the Church 4:17–5:21
- 7 The Conduct of the Church 5:22–6:9
- 8 The Weapons of the Church 6:10-24



The Mystery of the Church

1:1-14

1. To whom is this letter addressed?

1:1 _____

2. According to the wonderful doxology of verse 3, what has been given to every true Christian?

1:3 _____

3. As Christians, what do we need to know most of all?

I CORINTHIANS 2:12 _____

4. From what can all our needs be supplied?

PHILIPPIANS 4:19 _____

5. How are all spiritual blessings to be found?

1:3; compare COLOSSIANS 2:10 _____

The expression “heavenly places” is found five times in Ephesians, so that some refer to this epistle as “the Alps of the New Testament.” This is quite in contrast with the book of Ecclesiastes in the Old Testament, the key phrase of which is “under the sun.” Paul takes us to the heights for our spiritual outlook.

The “spiritual blessings” are now enumerated in verses 4-14 and they are threefold:

Verses 4-6 *Predestinated*—grace originating in the Father’s love before the foundation of the world.

Verses 7-12 *Purchased*—grace wrought out by the suffering of the Son.

Verses 13, 14 *Preserved*—grace confirmed by the operation of the Holy Spirit.

Note how each section ends with praise to God, His grace and His glory.

A divine plan of salvation

6. Why have we been chosen in Christ?

1:4 _____

7. How far back does this plan of perfecting a peculiar people unto Himself go?

1:4 _____

8. What else is said to have been before the foundation of the world?

JOHN 1:1, 2 _____

9. What else was foreordained before the world?

I PETER 1:19, 20 _____

10. What does John tell us about the pre-existence of the divine Son?

JOHN 1:2 _____

11. How were true believers seen in the purpose of God before the worlds were made?

II TIMOTHY 1:9 _____

12. Unto what are believers predestinated (“checked off beforehand”)?

1:5 _____

13. What else was included in God’s predestination?

ROMANS 8:29 _____

14. What comes ahead of God’s predestination of believers?

ROMANS 8:29; I PETER 1:2 _____

As someone puts it: Outside heaven’s gate we may read: “Whosoever *will* may enter.” But when you get inside, you may read on the other side of the gate: “Whosoever *would* was foreknown and checked off in the eternal councils.” Bear in mind there is no word to the unsaved about predestination. The gospel is for *whosoever*.

15. When one is marked off beforehand, what makes him acceptable to God?

1:6 _____

16. How do we become children of God?

JOHN 3:7; compare EPHESIANS 1:5 _____

Note that there are two aspects of sonship: (1) *Generative*—through a heavenly birth we partake of the divine nature. (2) *Adoption*—the word for “adoption” means “son-placing,” suggesting a *legal* transaction into the full privileges of the family. That is, a Christian is immediately placed in the position of a full grown son, which makes him a full heir; a “joint heir with Jesus Christ”—the Son from eternity.

17. What is the price that gives us entrance to heaven?

1:7 _____

18. What does the believer experience when he is saved?

1:7 _____

19. "Redemption" means a price paid to deliver one from what?

I THESSALONIANS 1:10 _____

20. What attributes of God are illuminated by His grace?

1:8 _____

A divine mystery revealed

21. The divine plan of redemption looks forward to what occasion?

1:10 _____

The word for "dispensation" means "a stewardship." The Greek word forms the basis for our English word "economy." The same word is used in LUKE 16:2-4: "Give account of thy stewardship"—administration, house management. All points toward "the stewardship of the fullness of times" when Christ is coming to be "glorified in his saints" (II THESSALONIANS 1:10). Then He will "gather together in one"—literally, "head up for Himself in one"—the whole universe. Jesus the true Steward will, in the fullness of seasons, come and take possession of all His inheritance.

A divine inheritance

22. How should the knowledge of such an inheritance cause us to live?

1:12 _____

23. How is this inheritance described?

I PETER 1:4 _____

We read now concerning the inheritor's *guarantee*. This doctrine applies only to those genuinely born of the Spirit, raised in Christ to newness of life.

24. What happens when one really hears the gospel and believes it?

1:13 _____

The words "after that" in both instances in this verse should read "when." This sealing takes place at the time of salvation. It is the stamp of God upon a life that designates it as God's property.

25. What one thing is necessary in our salvation?

I PETER 1:23-25; JAMES 1:18 _____

A *seal* suggests three things:

1. Ownership. Entrance of the Holy Spirit into the life through the new birth marks one as belonging to God. It is a legal act of God, not an emotional experience.

2. A seal is used to prevent molestation—of letters, documents, packages (MATTHEW 27:63-65). The believer is guaranteed unto the end (I CORINTHIANS 1:8).

3. A seal is a mark of acceptance. The Jewish priest examined the sacrificial lamb and if there was no defect, he put the temple seal upon it as fit for sacrifice. Of Jesus we read: "Him hath God the Father sealed" (JOHN 6:27). He was the Lamb without blemish.

26. The Holy Spirit is what part of our inheritance?

1:14 _____

The word for “earnest” means the “first installment.” The Holy Spirit is the pledge of our salvation until it is completely consummated at Christ’s coming.

27. How far does this “until” stretch?

EPHESIANS 4:30 _____

28. What does this future redemption include?

ROMANS 8:23 _____

29. Of what will those who carry the seal of that future day be certain?

I PETER 1:4, 5 _____

Note that the seal marks God’s claim on us. The earnest of the Spirit is our claim on God. Have you received eternal life?

30. Of what one thing can we be confident (rely on)?

PHILIPPIANS 1:6 _____

check-up time No. 1

You have just studied some important truths about the mystery of the Church. Review your study by rereading the questions and your written answers. If you are not sure of an answer, reread the Scripture portion given to find the answer. Then take this test to see how well you understand important truths you have studied.

In the right-hand margin write "True" or "False" after each of the following statements.

1. Christians' blessings are of a material nature. _____
2. Christians are chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. _____
3. The Christian is expected to live a holy life. _____
4. Divine predestination is linked with divine fore-knowledge. _____
5. Man can be saved by his own good works. _____
6. Since our inheritance is assured, we may live as we please. _____
7. The Holy Spirit seals believers in Christ, marking them out as belonging to God. _____
8. Our entire inheritance as believers is reserved for us in glory. _____
9. The resurrection of the believer's body is included in the plan of redemption. _____
10. Eventually all things are to be gathered together in Christ. _____

Turn to page 64 and check your answers.