

# Introduction

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The Epistle of Ephesians was regarded as a genuine Epistle of Paul until recent times. The idea that Paul was not the author of some epistles attributed to him was initiated in the rise of biblical criticism of the nineteenth century. One of the sources for this trend was the “Tübingen school”<sup>1</sup> made up of scholars who questioned the authenticity of a number of Pauline epistles. Eventually their influence spread, so much so that many liberal scholars today often divide the Pauline epistles into two groups: “undisputed” and “disputed.” Those epistles considered to be genuinely authored by Paul are: Romans, 1&2Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1Thessalonians, and Philemon. Thus, the remainder of the epistles historically attributed to Paul are disputed and considered to have been written by an unknown author: 2Thessalonians, Colossians, Ephesians, 1&2Timothy, and Titus.

*Was Paul the Author of Ephesians?*

A great deal of scholarly debate has therefore ensued over the authenticity of the so-called disputed epistles of Paul and thus the authorship of Ephesians. Guthrie sums the arguments against Pauline authorship of Ephesians under four main heads.<sup>2</sup>

1. *Linguistic and stylistic arguments* – An example of this argument would be that whereas Paul refers to the devil by various titles in the undisputed epistles (σατάν, *satan*; Βελιάρ, *Beliar* [*Belial*]; ὁ ὄφις, *ho ophis* [the serpent]; ὁ θεὸς τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου, *ho theos tou aiōnos toutou* [the god of this world], etc.), only in Ephesians does he use the term διάβολος, *diabolos* cf. Eph 4:27; 6:11.

This is supposed to be evidence against the Pauline authorship of Ephesians. But, in fact, *diabolos* is found in 1Tim 3:6-7, 11; 2 Tim 2:26; 3:3; Titus 2:3, but since these epistles are already considered “disputed,” those who argue against Pauline authorship of Ephesians do

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1 Friedrich Schleiermacher, David Friedrich Strauss, and Ludwig Feuerbach, F.C. Baur, are noted names associated with the Tübingen school.  
2 Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 3rd edition (IVP, 1970), pp. 482–90.

not accept these occurrences as valid evidence.

Along with the linguistic argument is the argument of style. Some point to supposed “redundant expressions,” such as τὴν βουλὴν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ, “the council of His will” (1:11) and τοῦ κράτους τῆς ἰσχύος αὐτοῦ, “the strength of His might” (1:19), which they deem as “uncharacteristic” for Paul. But many scholars have felt that the difference in style between Ephesians and the other Paul epistles is not sufficient to discount Pauline authorship. Indeed, it would be perfectly normal for stylistic difference to exist in letters by the same author due to a different occasion, purpose, and time of writing.

2. *Literary arguments* – An example of this argument is the close parallels which exist between Ephesians and Colossians.<sup>1</sup> It is argued that whoever wrote Ephesians was very familiar with Colossians and used it to forge a letter in the Apostle Paul’s name.

It is maintained that over a quarter of the words in Ephesians are borrowed from Colossians, while more than a third of the words in Colossians reappear in Ephesians.<sup>2</sup>

But this argument against Pauline authorship is very weak, for it is just as reasonable to presume that Paul produced the two Epistles within a short period of time and had applied in a general way in Ephesians the great themes of the epistle to the Colossians (or *vice versa*), albeit augmented to address a number of different communities with general but pressing admonitions and teachings.

3. *Historical arguments* – The early reception of Ephesians as authored by Paul is well attested. Eusebius in his *Ecclesiastical History* (3.25)<sup>3</sup> lists all of the Epistles of Paul as “recognized.” The Muratorian Canon, dated by some scholars to

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1 For an exhaustive table of these parallels, see William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of Ephesians* (Baker, 1967), pp. 6–29.

2 Guthrie, *op. cit.*, pp. 483-4.

3 Written 320–330 CE.

the late 2nd or early 3rd Century CE,<sup>1</sup> lists Ephesians as widely received among the Church. Ephesians is listed as a received Pauline epistle by Clement (155–220CE), Tertullian (160–220), Hippolytus (170–235), Origen (185–254) and Athanasius (296–373). Yet those who deny Pauline authorship of Ephesians seek to discredit the overwhelming evidence of the early reception of Ephesians by arguing that in the emerging Christian era, pseudepigraphy (a work written under a false name) was a common practice among the early Christian churches, and that Ephesians, though a pseudepigraphal epistle, would have been readily accepted even if it were known to have been written by someone other than Paul.

This, of course, is an argument from silence and is a weak attempt at discrediting the massive evidence for the early, wide reception of Ephesians as an epistle written by Paul.

4. *Doctrinal Issues* – This category is clearly the weakest of all those waged against Pauline authorship of Ephesians. For instance, those who seek to deny Pauline authorship point to the fact that in Ephesians, Paul attributes to Yeshua what in other epistles he attributes to God. In Eph 2:15-16, reconciliation is attributed to Messiah whereas in Col 1:20; 2:13–14 reconciliation is the work of God. Another example is Eph 4:11 where Messiah is said to appoint official leaders in the *ekklesia*, while in 1Cor 12:28, such leaders are appointed by God. But Paul regularly teaches the unity of the Godhead, and thus likewise attributes the work of God as including Father, Son, and Spirit.

Likewise, those who use doctrinal issues to argue that the theology of Ephesians is not typically Pauline, note that nowhere else does Paul write of Messiah's descent into hell as he does in Eph 4:9. But this argument really has no weight, for no one could insist that if an author writes of something he has not mentioned in previous letters, that this raises suspicions about the true identity of the author. Moreover, as we shall see, Eph 4:9 is best interpreted in an entirely different manner than stating that Yeshua descended to hell in the time between His death and resurrection.

Guthrie offers this conclusion with regard to the use of

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1 See F. F. Bruce, *The Books and the Parchments* (Revell, 1963), p. 109; *The Canon of Scripture* (IVP, 1988), p. 158; Bruce Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament* (Oxford, 1988), pp 192-93; Paul D. Wegner, *The Journey from Texts to Translations* (Baker, 1999), p. 140; E. Ferguson, "Canon Muratori: Date and Provenance," *Studia Patristica* 18.2, pp. 677-683;

doctrinal issues as an argument against Pauline authorship of Ephesians:

There are so many weak links in this doctrinal attack on Pauline authorship of Ephesians that no amount of cumulative consideration can redeem it. The only possible conclusion to which a detailed examination can lead us is that there is nothing incompatible with the doctrinal teaching of the apostle.<sup>1</sup>

Beyond the fact that the external attestation strongly supports the Pauline authorship of Ephesians, the internal evidence is incontrovertible. Ephesians begins with Paul identifying himself as the author:

Paul, an apostle of Messiah Yeshua by the will of God...  
 Παῦλος ἀπόστολος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ...

Every extant manuscript that contains the Epistle of Ephesians has this opening line which includes the name “Paul” as the author—there are no exceptions or variants. Such consistent and substantial manuscript evidence cannot be ignored or set aside. Given the fact that the arguments against Pauline authorship (as noted above) are quite weak and thus easily refuted, the universal voice of the external evidence in the extant manuscripts of Ephesians makes it certain that the Apostle Paul was, indeed, the author. The conclusion to this matter as given by E. K. Simpson is therefore fitting:

The authenticity of the epistle, called in question by the Tübingen school, largely because it did not tally with their arbitrary hypotheses, now happily effete, is amply sustained by evidence, both external and internal. The critic who carps at its contents betrays his own incapacity to appreciate one of the loftiest products of inspiration, fitly termed by Dr. Pierson “the Switzerland of the New Testament.” Here is in sooth a Pisgah survey of the land of promise. It may be hard to decide whether this or the kindred letter to the Colossians was the prototype; but that they both issue from the glowing heart of the self-same apostle only violent prejudice can question.<sup>2</sup>

1 Guthrie, *op. cit.*, p. 507.

2 E. K. Simpson, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians* in *NICNT* (Eerdmans, 1957), p. 17.

### The Recipients

The opening of Ephesians in most of our English bibles states plainly that it was written by Paul to “the saints who are at Ephesus” (τοῖς ἁγίοις τοῖς οὖσιν [ἐν Ἐφέσῳ]). However, in the earliest three manuscripts containing Ephesians (P<sup>46</sup>, S<sup>\*</sup>, B<sup>\*</sup>), the words “in Ephesus” are lacking, leaving the clause without an expected predicate: “to the saints who are\_\_\_\_\_”. Yet the words “in Ephesus” are found in the later manuscripts<sup>1</sup> as well as in the Latin, Syriac, and Coptic versions. Many scholars believe these words to have been inserted later and consider it a strong possibility that the Epistle was encyclical in nature,

designed for general circulation, a blank being, it may be, left in its foreword to be filled in, according to the community to which a particular copy was dispatched.<sup>2</sup>

But another interesting thing is that in all three of the earliest manuscripts in which the words “in Ephesus” are missing in the opening line of the Epistle, they do have ΠΡΟΣ ΕΠΕΣΙΟΥΣ (*pros ephesious*, “to Ephesus”) as the superscript, as do all other extant manuscripts of Ephesians. This could indicate that the original epistle was sent to the community in Ephesus with the expectation that copies would be made and sent to the various communities throughout Asia minor.

Some scholars, however, consider these data to indicate that the original epistle from the hand of Paul was sent to Ephesus with the words “in Ephesus” actually in the text, and that the copies made from that original, to be sent to the other communities of The Way, were written with the blank to be filled in as the letter reached its desired destination.<sup>3</sup>

That the later manuscripts and versions contain the words “in Ephesus” would indicate a long standing tradition that Ephesus was the original recipient of the epistle. We know from Luke’s account in Acts 18:18–21 that Paul, in his second “missionary journey” (c. 52 CE), took Priscilla and Aquila with him and visited Ephesus for a short time. When asked to stay longer he declined, leaving Priscilla and Aquila there to continue

1 S<sup>2</sup>, A, B<sup>2</sup>, D, F, G, Ψ 0278, 33, 1881. (S<sup>2</sup> and B<sup>2</sup> designate the second corrector of both Codex Sinaiticus and Vaticanus respectively.)

2 E. K. Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

3 Harold Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Baker, 2002), pp. 144-48.

the work. But a few years later Paul returned to Ephesus (Acts 19:1) where he remained to teach for two years (Acts 19:10).

Thus, it seems quite probable that, having been in Ephesus for an extended time, there would have been believers there who were able to assist him in his travels and missionary endeavors. This also makes it likely that he would have sent this encyclical epistle to Ephesus first, in the hands of Tychicus (Eph 6:21), and entrusted to the Ephesian community the task of making copies and sending them to the other cities in which communities of The Way existed.

Ephesus was the leading city of the richest region of the Roman empire. The population of Ephesus is estimated to be about 250,000 people with only the cities of Rome and Alexandria being larger. Ephesus served as the Roman provincial capital of Asia Minor and was therefore a very prosperous commercial center. The fact that it was the principle port for Asia Minor made it the crossroads for merchants and cargo vessels from all over the Mediterranean as well as passengers from Asia Minor to Rome and throughout the empire. Strabo, a first-century writer, called Ephesus “the greatest commercial center in Asia this side of the Taurus river.”<sup>1</sup>

Ephesus was known as having a religiously pluralistic environment even though the Artemis cult was the primary deity worshiped. But besides the cult of Artemis, as many as fifty other gods and goddesses were worshiped in Ephesus, including Zeus, Athena, Aphrodite, Asclepius, Apollo, Dionysus, and many more. Yet Artemis was clearly the most revered and worshiped deity in the city of Ephesus, for her relationship to the city was based upon a divinely directed covenant relationship in which one month of the year was named after her, Olympic-style games were held in her honor, and the cult operated the major savings and loan institution for the whole region. Indeed, the temple of Artemis was praised by ancient writers as one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Made almost entirely of marble, its massive structure dominated that main entrance to the city with 127 Ionic columns that stood 60 feet high. She was viewed as a goddess of the hunt, the virgin huntress armed with bow and arrows, as well as having connection to fertility and aiding women in giving birth. Luke relates that an object, likely a meteoric stone, was housed in the temple of Artemis as apparently a token from the gods relating to her exalted position.

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1 Strabo 14.1.24 (quoted from Clinton E. Arnold, “Ephesians” in Arnold, ed., *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary*, 4 vols. (Zondervan, 2002), 3.301.

It is not surprising to discover that Ephesus was also known as a center for magic, shamanism and the occult arts. Luke relates how the influence of occult practices remained a stumbling block for new believers in Yeshua. The sons of Sceva, a Jewish High Priest, were attempting to exorcise evil spirits but were themselves overcome by the power of the demons, and this caused some of the believers in Yeshua to give up their attachments to occult practices.

Seven sons of one Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. And the evil spirit answered and said to them, "I recognize Yeshua, and I know about Paul, but who are you?" And the man, in whom was the evil spirit, leaped on them and subdued all of them and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. This became known to all, both Jews and Greeks, who lived in Ephesus; and fear fell upon them all and the name of the Lord Jesus was being magnified. Many also of those who had believed kept coming, confessing and disclosing their practices. And many of those who practiced magic brought their books together and began burning them in the sight of everyone; and they counted up the price of them and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. So the word of the Lord was growing mightily and prevailing. (Acts 19:14–20)

Thus, we see that the truth of the word of God, inspired by the Ruach and penned by His chosen prophets and apostles, was the means by which the kingdom of God was enlarged in Paul's day, and still has the same power to change the lives of those who accept Yeshua and receive the eternal truths of the Scriptures as the divine instructions for living out a life of faith.

### *The Date of the Epistle*

It is clear that Paul is in prison as he writes this epistle (Eph 3:1; 4:1) and since Ephesians has a close affinity with Colossians, it seems reasonable to presume that both epistles were written in Paul's first Roman imprisonment, dated 60–62 CE. Some would date the epistle earlier (54–55 CE) to Paul's detention at Caesarea (Acts 22–23) or to an unrecorded imprisonment in Ephesus itself. But the majority of scholars consider the first Roman imprisonment to be the time in which Paul wrote this epistle. Of course, those who deny the Pauline authorship of Ephesians place its writing in the post-destruction era, usually around 90 CE.

## Outline of Ephesians<sup>1</sup>

The Letter's Greeting: 1:1–2

- I. Part I: The Mystery of God's Will – The Unity of All Things in Messiah (1:3–3:21)
  - A. Doxology: Praise to God for His Eternal Plan of Reconciling All Things in Yeshua (1:3–14)
    1. An eternal plan (vv. 3–4)
    2. Conceived in love through Messiah (vv. 5–6)
    3. A love which bring redemption (vv. 7–8)
    4. A love with a cosmic scope (vv. 9–10)
    5. Guaranteed by the Ruach for Jew and Gentile alike (vv. 11–14)
  - B. Prayer That the Readers Will Understand This Great Mystery (1:15–23)
    1. The depth of this mystery and wealth of their inheritance (vv. 15–19)
    2. The lordship of Messiah over His body, the *ekklesia* (vv. 20–23)
  - C. The Old Life and the New Life (2:1–22)
    1. Death and life (vv. 1–10)
      - a) Then: death in bondage to the spirits of the world (vv. 1–3)
      - b) Now: a new workmanship, saved by God's sovereign grace (vv. 4–10)
    2. Alienation and reconciliation (vv. 11–22)
      - a) Then: Gentile strangers to the covenants of the promise (vv. 11–12)
      - b) Now: the new person reconciled as one in Messiah (vv. 13–18)
      - c) The *ekklesia* that embodies this new unity (vv. 19–22)
  - D. The Apostle: His Commission and His Prayer (3:1–21)
    1. Paul's commission as a minister to the Gentiles of this mystery (vv. 1–3)
      - a. His personal role as a steward of the mystery (vv. 1–9)
      - b. The cosmic scope of the *ekklesia's* witness (vv. 10–13)
    2. Paul's prayer for his readers (vv. 14–21)
      - a. To comprehend the fulness of God's plan in Messiah (vv. 14–19)
      - b. Concluding doxology: Glory to God in the *ekklesia* (vv. 20–21)
- II. Part II: Living the Life of Those Who Have Been United in Messiah (4:1–6:20)
  - A. Promoting the Unity of the *Ekklesia* (4:1–16)
    1. Qualities that promote unity (vv. 1–3)
    2. A confession of faith the enhances unity (vv. 4–6)

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1 Taken (with some edits) from John B. Polhill, *Paul & His Letters* (Broadman & Holman, 1999), pp. 360–61.

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3. Gifts of ministry that serve unity (vv. 7–12)
  4. The goal of unity: full maturity of the body of Messiah (vv. 13–16)
  - B. Abandoning the Old Pagan Lifestyle (4:1–5:20)
    1. The old nature and the new (4:17–24)
    2. Sins of human nature that destroy unity (4:25–32)
    3. Imitating God and Messiah (5:1–2)
    4. Abandoning impurity and walking in the light (5:3–14)
    5. Walking in the Spirit (5:15–20)
  - C. Being Subject to One Another in Family Relationships (5:21–6:9)
    1. Wives and husbands to be as Messiah and His *ekklesia* (5:21–33)
    2. Children reared in the discipline and instruction of the Lord (6:1–4)
    3. Slaves and masters to relate as those having the same heavenly Master (6:5–9)
  - D. Fighting the Battle for Messiah (6:10–20)
    1. The enemy (vv. 10–12)
    2. The armor (vv. 13–17)
    3. The power (prayer) (vv. 18–20)
- III. Conclusion to the Letter (6:21–24)



# Chapter One

## *commentary*

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**1–2 Paul, an apostle of Messiah Yeshua by the will of God, to the saints who are at Ephesus and who are faithful in Messiah Yeshua: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Yeshua Messiah.**

Ephesians opens following a common pattern when compared to other epistles penned by Paul, having three main elements common to letters of Paul's day: the name of the sender, the recipients, and a greeting. The name Paul was doubtless given to him since he was born as a citizen of Rome (Acts 22:28), though his Hebrew name was Saul (שׂוּל, *Shaul*). That he became known by his citizenry name, Paul, is most likely in order to make an easier opening to the Gentile population to whom he was sent as an apostle of Yeshua. It is also possible that he preferred the name Paul to that of Saul because in Greek a similar-sounding word to *Shaul*, i.e., σαῦλος, *saulos*, means "conceited," especially referring to a "haughty gait," and was used to describe the "loose and wanton gait of prostitutes."<sup>1</sup>

*an apostle of Messiah Yeshua by the will of God...* – The word "apostle" (ἀπόστολος, *apostolos*) is derived from the verb ἀποστέλλω (*apostellō*) which designated a person sent by an authority to achieve a particular function or task. The One in authority here is "Messiah Yeshua," Who chose Paul, drew him to saving faith, and commissioned him to be His "sent one" to bring the Gospel of life to others.<sup>2</sup> Paul relates his commissioning before Agrippa at his trial, telling him of his experience on the road to Damascus when the living Messiah appeared and spoke to Him saying:

But get up 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; (Acts 26:16)

Paul was therefore divinely "called" and "set apart" (Rom 1:1; 1Cor 1:1) to proclaim the Gospel of Yeshua and he thus speaks and writes, not as having taken divine dictation but, being carried along by the

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1 T. J. Leary, "Paul's Improper Name," *NTS* 38[1992], 467–69.

2 cf. Acts 22:6–10; 26:12–18

Ruach HaKodesh, his words are the very breath of God, being the inspired word of the Almighty. This is the force and impetus of the title “apostle” and we must therefore receive Ephesians as the divinely ordained, inspired and inerrant word of God Himself.

And Paul presents himself, not as one who speaks about himself or for his own agenda, but as one who writes and teaches in order to point people to Yeshua as the promised Messiah and Savior of sinners, in order that they might repent of their sins and seek salvation that only He can give. In some of Paul’s epistles he refers to himself as an “apostle of Yeshua Messiah” and in others as “an apostle of Messiah Yeshua.” The order of the Names does not seem to make a difference and we probably should not try to glean any significance from the different order.<sup>1</sup> But the primary point is that Yeshua, the Name which means “Savior” cognate to the Hebrew verb *יָשָׁא*, *yasha’*, “to save, deliver” is combined with the name Messiah, *מָשִׁיחַ*, *mashiach*, “one who is anointed,” i.e., the Messiah promised by Israel’s prophets of old Who is Prophet, Priest, and King. Whether “Yeshua Messiah” or “Messiah Yeshua,” the emphasis is upon the fact that only the Messiah promised by the God of Israel is able to save sinners from their sin and from the judgment of God’s wrath against sinners.

...by the will of God. – The Greek has *διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ*, utilizing the Greek preposition *διὰ* (*dia*) which has the sense of “through” (whether of distance or time) as well as a “marker of instrumentality or circumstance whereby something is accomplished or effected.”<sup>2</sup> Here we have an example (which we will see numerous times in Ephesians) of the work of God and that of Yeshua as being one and the same, for Paul received His commissioning directly from Yeshua and yet here he accredits being commissioned as an Apostle by the will of God.

Further, the primary point Paul wishes to make is that he did not set himself up as an authority in matters relating to the Gospel but that whatever authority he has was given to him by God Himself. Thus, in Galatians 2:7–9 Paul speaks of the fact that he sought the confirmation of “pillars,” i.e., those already recognized as commissioned Apostles of Yeshua, as to his right to go forth with authority to proclaim the Gospel to the Gentiles. All too often in the history of the Church, we see self-appointed leaders who take authority unto themselves and seek to wield that authority over God’s people, to the detriment of themselves

1 Messiah Yeshua: Romans, 2Cor, Phil, 1Tim, 2Tim,  
Yeshua Messiah: 1Cor, Gal, Col, Titus,

2 BDAG, “διὰ”.

and others.

... to the saints who are at Ephesus and who are faithful in Messiah Yeshua

The word “saints” (ἅγιοι, *hagioi*) is often misunderstood in our times, due in part to the improper use of the word by the Roman Church to confer this “title” upon special leaders and officials within their ecclesiastical framework. But the word simply means those who have been declared righteous and thus who are separated from death and unto life in Messiah. This is surely how Paul is using the word in this opening salutation. And “saints” or “separated ones” is paired with the phrase “who are faithful” (πιστοῖς, *pistois*) so that we could just as well construct the sentence to read: “to the saints and faithful ones in Messiah Yeshua who are at Ephesus.” The point I wish to make is that “saints” is paired with “faithful” because those who are separated from death and unto life in Messiah have lives characterized by faithfulness to their Lord and Savior, Messiah Yeshua.

As noted in the Introduction, the words “at Ephesus” (literally “in Ephesus”) are missing from the oldest manuscripts of Ephesians, but this is most likely because the epistle was originally sent to Ephesus as a encyclical letter to be copied and sent to other communities of The Way in Asia Minor. Thus, the name of the city was changed as copies were made for the various communities to which they would be sent. That all of the manuscripts have “To Ephesus” as a superscript would support the idea that Paul sent this epistle to Ephesus first.

*Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Yeshua Messiah.* This is the common greeting which Paul uses in the majority of his epistles.<sup>1</sup> But its common usage should not cause us to glance over it as having less significance. Grace (χάρις, *xaris*) can never be earned, for if it is earned it is no longer grace, as Paul specifically states in Romans.

Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor (χάρις, literally “grace”) but as what is due. But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness.... (Rom 4:4–5)

One of the themes throughout Ephesians is that the life granted to those who are in Messiah Yeshua is the result of God’s grace, not of anyone being able to earn eternal life in the Son.

The same is true of “peace” (εἰρήνη, *eirēnē*). The peace that we have

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<sup>1</sup> Rom 1:7; 1Cor 1:3; Cor 1:2; Gal 1:3; Eph 1:2; Phil 1:2; Col 1:2; 1Thess 1:1; 2Thess 1:2; Phlm 1:3

with God is founded upon His declaration that we never again need to fear being condemned by Him for our sin, for Yeshua Himself is our peace (Eph 2:14) because those who are saved by His grace have died with Yeshua and risen again with Him to life eternal.

This peace, then, of which Paul speaks, is likewise a gift, for it is “peace from God our Father and the Lord Yeshua Messiah.” There is no greater gift that a person can have than to know that he or she has unending peace with God and never needs to fear being condemned or banished from His presence. Thus, Paul throughout this epistle seeks to help his readers (including us) to experience in greater measure the realities of God’s grace in Yeshua and the peace that this brings into one’s life.

**3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Yeshua Messiah, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Messiah,**