

THE BRIDE'S PEARL

EPHESIANS

A COMMENTARY

Brian Kinsey

The Bride's Pearl A Commentary on Ephesians

by Brian Kinsey

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I.

PAUL'S SALUTATION

(1:1-2)

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

The salutation Paul used in Ephesians was patterned after the normal letter writing of his time. The salutation has three parts: the identification of the writer, the naming of the recipients, and a greeting. Paul expanded the greeting of Ephesians to include a blessing for the reader. This blessing resembled the blessing God commanded the high priest to bestow upon Israel (Numbers 6:23-27).

The salutation of Ephesians omits the names of Paul's companions at the time, which is in keeping with the non-personal nature of the entire epistle. (Note the contrast to I Corinthians 1:1; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:1; I Thessalonians 1:1; II Thessalonians 1:1; Philemon 1:1.) Paul made no personal references throughout Ephesians because he did not direct the letter toward acquaintances he had made on his journeys, but rather it is a simple declaration of the gospel. This declaration highlights the

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will of God for the church and outlines the ministries needed to bring life to Christ's body, the church.

Verse 1. Paul described himself as an apostle, identifying his calling and ministry. By the will of God, his ministry was a specific calling that applied directly to the Gentiles. Knowing that, he was able to focus his energy in a definite manner, increasing the effectiveness of his ministry.

Paul identified his calling as "an apostle of Jesus Christ" (Greek: *apostolos*). Paul knew that his apostleship was not granted because of any personal merit or ability, but simply "by the will of God." This attitude is seen clearly throughout Paul's writings (I Corinthians 15:9; Galatians 1:13-15; I Timothy 1:12-16). His apostleship demanded total commitment to Jesus Christ Himself, not just Christ's work or will, but to His person. As R. W. Dale explained, Paul's assurance of his calling was vital to the success of his labor:

The vigour and hopefulness of our work for others are lessened by the uneasy consciousness that we are wanting in spiritual fervour and force; by the fear that our motives are not perfectly unselfish, that our consecration is not complete, that our intellectual qualifications are inadequate. Thoughts like these are sufficient to paralyze the strength of the strongest and to quench the fire of the most zealous.¹

A study of the salutation shows that all salvation and ministry depend on the will of God. "And all things are of God" (II Corinthians 5:18). Without God's commission and decisive call, a person, especially the minister, will never find true, godly success.

Paul identified the people he wrote to as “the saints which are at Ephesus” (1:1). His audience dictated his approach and style of writing. Paul’s attitude towards his readers set the tone for his letter. He considered them to be “the faithful in Christ Jesus” (1:1).

The word “saints” (Greek: *hagioi*), means “the set apart ones.” Paul called them “the faithful” (Greek: *pistoi*), meaning that they had obtained a state of trustworthiness; they could be trusted in a storm or trial. The purpose of ministry is not just to comfort the weak and tend to the hurts of people, but also to set people apart for a specific work and to generate in them a character that is trustworthy, so that even when persecution comes their faith in Christ is not diminished.

Paul immediately connected sainthood with a relationship and fellowship with God. The word “saints” does not refer to special people who perform various miracles and are then canonized after their deaths. It refers to a spiritual relationship with God enjoyed by all those who are faithful in Christ Jesus.

The words “in Christ” are used twenty-seven times in Ephesians. Condemnation no longer exists for a saint who abides in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1), and the hope of the resurrection awaits if the saint abides in Christ (I Corinthians 15:17-23). Every saint can only claim the privilege of being a new creation by abiding in Christ (II Corinthians 5:17). Being “in Christ” means developing a personal relationship with Him, which is the ultimate purpose of ministry.

Verse 2. Paul pronounced a blessing of grace and peace specifically to the people of Ephesus and also upon believers in general. From the start, Paul defined the