

Living as Citizens of Heaven

A Study of *Ephesians, Philippians,
Colossians & Philemon*

October-December 2023

Class Schedule

October 1	Ephesians 1	God had a plan before he created anything
October 8	Ephesians 2	We are created for good works
October 15	Ephesians 3	Rooting and grounding ourselves in love
October 29	Ephesians 4	Be careful how you walk! (1)
November 5	Ephesians 5:1-6:9	Be careful how you walk! (2)
November 12	Ephesians 6:10-24	Standing strong in God's strength
November 19	Philippians 1	God is working on me
November 26	Philippians 2	Learning to think like Jesus
December 3	Philippians 3	Our citizenship is in heaven
December 10	Philippians 4	Lives of joy, gentleness, and peace
December 17	Colossians 1-2	Recognizing who comes first in everything
December 24	Colossians 3-4	Setting our minds on things above
December 31	Philemon	Living as citizens of heaven

Throughout this quarter, we want to learn what it means to be and live as “citizens of heaven” (**Phil 3:20**). The apostle Paul is our guide as we explore his letters to the churches in Ephesus, Philippi, Colossae, and the very personal letter written to a disciple named Philemon. Paul wrote these letters in A.D. 62 when he was a prisoner in Rome (**Acts 28; Eph 3:1; 4:1; 6:20; Phil 1:13; 4:22; Col 4:3, 10; Philemon 1, 9-10, 13, 23**).

Ephesians, *Colossians*, and *Philemon* were sent from Rome with disciples named Tychicus and Onesimus (**Eph 6:21; Col 4:7-9; Philemon 10**). The church in Philippi had sent a gift to Paul with Epaphroditus, who was a member of the Philippian congregation. Paul sends *Philippians* back with Epaphroditus, who had recently recovered from a serious illness (**Phil 2:25-30**).

Could I encourage you to always have a pen and highlighter ready as we watch the class videos together? I'll do my best to draw your attention each week to things worth talking about as a class and remembering for the rest of your life.

Thanks.

- Jason

The Letter of Paul to the Ephesians

Ephesians 1 • God had a plan before he created anything

¹ Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God,

To the saints who are in Ephesus, and are faithful in Christ Jesus:

² Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴ even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love ⁵ he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. ⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, ⁸ which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight ⁹ making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ ¹⁰ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.



For Class & Family Discussion:

- ▶ What did Paul mean when he described himself as “an apostle”?
- ▶ There’s a lot we can learn in **Acts 18-20** about the time Paul had spent in Ephesus about 10 years before writing this letter. Is there anything that stands out to you?
- ▶ What sort of “spiritual blessings” are available to us through Jesus?
- ▶ Why is it a really big deal that God had a plan before he ever created anything?

¹¹ In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, ¹² so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. ¹³ In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

¹⁵ For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, ¹⁶ I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, ¹⁷ that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, ¹⁸ having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might ²⁰ that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹ far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. ²² And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, ²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

For Class & Family Discussion:

- ▶ Where do you see God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit in [Ephesians 1](#)?

- ▶ What role do each of them play in making these spiritual blessings available to us?

- ▶ Why do you think Paul prayed for the Christians in Ephesus? Is there anything we can learn from that?

- ▶ What are “the eyes of your hearts”?

- ▶ In your own words, what did Paul want these Christians to know?

- ▶ What did Jesus do for us to make all of this possible?

- ▶ Where is Jesus now?

- ▶ Is the church important? If so, why?