

Identity **Ephesians 1:1-2**

Introduction

Meeting a person you've never met before:
What do you do for a living? Vocation
Where are you from? Citizenship
Who is your family?

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.

1. Your Work (Vocation)

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

Paul—the Greek version of his name. Did not change at his conversion. He is called “Saul” consistently until Acts 13:9 at the beginning of his first missionary journey, and then “Paul” from then on except when he’s referring to his earlier life in his testimonies.

Acts 13:8-10

⁸ But Elymas the magician (for that is the meaning of his name) opposed them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith.

⁹ But Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him

¹⁰ and said, “You son of the devil, you enemy

of all righteousness, full of all deceit and villainy, will you not stop making crooked the straight paths of the Lord?

Elymas was struck blind, and the proconsul believed.

Why do you think he would start using his Greek name at this point of his life? Answer: as part of his work as the apostle to the Gentiles

An apostle of Christ Jesus

Apostle—a sent one commissioned to carry an official message; common term for a messenger; but to be an official apostle of Christ Jesus

Christ—the Messiah, the Anointed One; not just the Savior-King of the Jews, but for all people, because one of the marks of the Messiah is that the Gentiles would put their trust in Him (Isaiah 11:10—both the Branch and the Root of Jesse).

Jesus— Greek form of the Hebrew Joshua
But named “Yahweh saves,” for He shall save His people from their sins.
Jesus is the God-man Savior.

2 Corinthians 12:12

The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with utmost patience, with signs and wonders and mighty works.

By the will of God

Paul was not a self-appointed apostle; not even a humanly elected apostle. God made him an apostle of Christ. His life of ministry as an apostle was in obedience to God's will.

Few believers were ever called to be official apostles, but all have a vocation by the will of God connected to their relationship to Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 4:1-3

¹ I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, ² with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³ eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

What has God called you to do as a believer in Christ? What is His will for how you walk—live your walkabout daily life?

- Relationships
- Gifts
- Opportunities
- Spirit's power and guidance

2. Your Citizenship

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

Saints—holy ones set apart to God—because they belong to Him

Saints in Ephesus! Of all places! Very important city geographically and economically. Strategic gateway to the province of Asia. Paul's three and a half years teaching in Ephesus touched the entire province.

Christ addresses the 7 churches of Asia in Revelation 2-3. The first one He addressed was the church where? Ephesus. Big on correct doctrine, but had lost their first love.

Temple of Diana/Artemis—banking and fertility; one of the seven wonders of the ancient world

Silver amulets, occult practices, magic arts
Believers burned their books of magic arts valuing 50k pieces of silver.

Later a riot from the silversmiths (Demetrius stirred it up) because so many were being converted that the silver shrine business fell off. Converged in the outdoor amphitheater still standing today.

Faithful in Christ Jesus

Their trust in Him makes them trustworthy as well. Their faithful lifestyle comes from being in Him—and He in them. The indwelling Holy Spirit seals us as God’s own.

You may live in a town known for worshiping the devil, but if you are in Christ, you are holy. You belong to God. And your life will show it. He has taken up residence in you by the Spirit, and the Holy Spirit transforms who you are. No longer part of the kingdom of darkness. You’ve been transferred to the kingdom of light.

Ephesians 5:8-10

⁸ For at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light ⁹ (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), ¹⁰ and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord.

Whatever the prevailing culture is wherever you live, your chief identity is being a saint who is faithful in Christ Jesus.

3. Your Family (Privilege and Blessing)

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

Our Father—we are part of the family of God; born again by the Spirit into His family

Paul and the Ephesian believers have the same Father. And from Him and the Lord Jesus the family privileges and blessings.

Grace to you—favor/goodness received as a gift, not as something we've earned

And peace—not just absence of war, although there is now no more hostility between God and us; Christ has paid for our rebellion

Peace—shalom; everything is as it should be; all set right

John Stott: Perfect summary of the gospel is "peace through grace."

From God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ

A gift from the triune God—the Holy Spirit to be mentioned soon

Children of the Father through the regenerating work of the Spirit because of the redemptive work of the Son.

Whatever happens, you know you are a recipient of goodness far beyond what you deserve. And your life is full of blessing now and in all the years to come throughout eternity. This is your identity. Forever.