***“RECEIVE THE RICHES OF HIS GRACE!”***

#  *The Epistle of Paul the apostle to the Ephesians*

#  *Introduction*

**- Author: Paul, the Apostle, written from prison in Rome.**

**- Date written: Approximately A.D. 64**

**- Theme: *“Unity of the body of Christ”* (Subtheme: *“In the Heavenlies!”*)**

**- Key verses: Ephesians 1:3 *- Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,***

**Ephesians 2:8-9 *- For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.***

**Ephesians 3:20-21 *- Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.***

**Ephesians 4:13 *- till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;***

**Ephesians 5:30-32 *- For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.***

**Ephesians 6:11-12 *- Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.***

**- *Key phrase:* *“In Christ”* is found twelve times throughout this epistle.**

**- *Old Testament comparative:* *The Book of Joshua* – Why? Inheritance – the riches of the promise land compared to the riches found in Christ Jesus!**

***- Two major divisions of Ephesians:***

 ***Chapters 1 – 3* (Our *position* as a Christian.)**

 ***Chapters 4 – 6* (Our *practice* as a Christian.)**

***- Ephesians chapter by chapter:***

**Chapter 1 – *“God’s Wealth”***

**Chapter 2 – *“God’s Work”***

**Chapter 3 – *“God’s Wonder”***

**Chapter 4 – *“The Believers Walk”***

**Chapter 5 – *“The Believer’s Worship”***

**Chapter 6 – *“The Believer’s Warfare”***

***- Learn how to pray from Ephesians:***

**1st prayer – Ch. 1:15-23**

**2nd prayer – Ch. 3:14-21**

***- Understanding the city of EPHESUS –* Ephesus was alarge and important city on the west coast of Asia Minor where the apostle Paul founded a church. A number of factors contributed to the prominence which Ephesus enjoyed.**

**The first factor was economics. Situated at the mouth of the river Cayster, Ephesus was the most favorable seaport in the province of Asia and the most important trade center west of Tarsus. Today, because of silting from the river, the ruins of the city lie in a swamp 8 to 11 kilometers (5 to 7 miles) inland.**

**Another factor was size. Although Pergamum was the capital of the province of Asia in Roman times, Ephesus was the largest city in the province, having a population of perhaps 300,000 people.**

**A third factor was culture. Ephesus contained a theater that seated an estimated 25,000 people. A main thoroughfare, some 35 meters (105 feet) wide, ran from the theater to the harbor, at each end of which stood an impressive gate. The thoroughfare was flanked on each side by rows of columns 15 meters (50 feet) deep. Behind these columns were baths, gymnasiums, and impressive buildings.**

**The fourth, and perhaps most significant, reason for the prominence of Ephesus was religion. The Temple of Artemis (or Diana, according to her Roman name) at Ephesus ranked as one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. As the twin sister of Apollo and the daughter of Zeus, Artemis was known variously as the moon goddess, the goddess of hunting, and the patroness of young girls. The temple at Ephesus housed the multi-breasted image of Artemis which was reputed to have come directly from Zeus (Acts 19:35).**

**The temple of Artemis in Paul's day was supported by 127 columns, each of them 60 meters (197 feet) high. The Ephesians took great pride in this grand edifice. During the Roman period, they promoted the worship of Artemis by minting coins with the inscription, "Diana of Ephesus."**

**The history of Christianity at Ephesus began probably about A.D. 50, perhaps as a result of the efforts of Priscilla and Aquila (Acts 18:18). Paul came to Ephesus in about A.D. 52, establishing a resident ministry for the better part of three years (Acts 20:31). During his Ephesian ministry, Paul wrote 1 Corinthians (1 Cor 16:8).**

**The Book of Acts reports that "all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 19:10), while Paul taught during the hot midday hours in the lecture hall of Tyrannus (Acts 19:9). Influence from his ministry undoubtedly resulted in the founding of churches in the Lycus River valley at Laodicea, Hierapolis, and Colossae.**

**So influential, in fact, was Paul's ministry at Ephesus that the silversmith's league, which fashioned souvenirs of the temple, feared that the preaching of the gospel would undermine the great temple of Artemis (Acts 19:27). As a result, one of the silversmiths, a man named Demetrius, stirred up a riot against Paul.**

**During his stay in Ephesus, Paul encountered both great opportunities and great dangers. He baptized believers who apparently came to know the gospel through disciples of John the Baptist (Acts 19:1-5), and he countered the strong influence of magic in Ephesus (Acts 19:11-20).**

**After Paul departed from Ephesus, Timothy remained to combat false teaching (1 Tim 1:3; 2 Tim 4:3; Acts 20:29). Many traditions testify that the apostle John lived in Ephesus toward the end of the first century. In his vision from the island of Patmos off the coast of Asia Minor, John described the church of Ephesus as flourishing, although it was troubled with false teachers and had lost its first love (Rev 2:1-7). In the sixth century A.D. the Roman emperor Justinian (A.D. 527-565) raised a magnificent church to John's memory in this city.**

**Ephesus continued to play a prominent role in the history of the early church. A long line of bishops in the Eastern church lived there. In A.D. 431 the Council of Ephesus officially condemned the Nestorian heresy, which taught that there were two separate persons, one divine and one human, in the person of Jesus Christ. (from Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary)**

* **The BIRTH CERTIFICATE of Christian faith at Ephesus – ACTS 18:18 – 19:10**
* **The POWER OF CHRIST at Ephesus – ACTS 19:11-22**
* **SPIRITUAL WARFARE at Ephesus – ACTS 19:23-41**
* **CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP at Ephesus – ACTS 20:17-38**
* **LOVE at Ephesus – REVELATION 2:1-7**