

# Ephesians 3:11-12 Commentary

PREVIOUS

EPHESIANS - CHRIST AND THE CHURCH  
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NEXT

Ephesians 3:11 *This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord,* ([NASB: Lockman](#))

**Greek:** [kata prothesin ton aionon en epoiesen \(3SAAI\)](#) [en to Christo lesou to kurio hemon.](#)

**Amplified:** This is in accordance with the terms of the eternal and timeless purpose which He has realized and carried into effect in [the person of] Christ Jesus our Lord, ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**Barclay:** and all this happened and will happen in accordance with the eternal design which he purposed in Jesus Christ, ([Westminster Press](#))

**KJV** According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:

**ESV** This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord,

**NIV** according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**NET:** This was according to the eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, ([NET Bible](#))

**NLT:** This was his eternal plan, which he carried out through Christ Jesus our Lord. (NLT - Tyndale House)

**NLT** (Revised) This was his eternal plan, which he carried out through Christ Jesus our Lord.

**Phillips:** in conformity to that timeless purpose which he centred in Jesus, our Lord. (Phillips: Touchstone)

**Wuest:** according to the eternal purpose which He carried into effect in the Christ, Jesus our Lord, ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#))

**Young's Literal:** according to a purpose of the ages, which He made in Christ Jesus our Lord,

**THIS WAS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ETERNAL PURPOSE WHICH HE CARRIED OUT IN CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD:** *kata prothesin ton aionon en epoiesen (3SAAI) en to Christo lesou to kurio hemon:*

- Eph 1:4,9,11; Isa 14:24, 25, 26, 27; 46:10,11; Jer 51:29; Ro 8:28, 29, 30; 9:11; 2 Ti 1:9
- Ephesians 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Ephesians 3:7-13 The Mystery Revealed, Part 3](#) - John MacArthur
- [Ephesians 3:9-13 God's Eternal Purpose and You](#) - Steven Cole

## GOD'S ETERNAL PURPOSE ACCOMPLISHED

Remember that Ephesians 3:2-13 is a single sentence in the original Greek text and as such represents a "parentheses" in which Paul digresses to explain the origin of the Church composed of believing Jew and Gentile who are now one body in Christ.

*This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord* -This was added by the translators in an attempt provide a smoother connection with the previous truths - the mystery itself, its revelation and its making known the wisdom of God before the angels. **In accordance** ([kata](#)) ([kata](#)) means in agreement with or conformity to His eternal purpose. In a manner conforming with "with the eternal design which He purposed in Jesus Christ" (Barclay) The eternal purpose (in context) was for the church to be the means by which the angelic beings learned about the manifold wisdom of God (Eph 3:10). God **carried out** His **eternal purpose** in Christ some 2,000 years ago, for His death opened the door for the inclusion of believing Jews and Gentiles in one brand new, heretofore unknown body, the Church.

**Hoehner** - God's purpose has been accomplished in Christ and that is the basis of the formation of the church, the mystery made known to all mankind and to the angelic leaders. (See [Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary](#))

**Constable** writes that "God brought this part of His plan to fruition through our Lord's earthly ministry. Specifically the Jews' rejection of their Messiah resulted in the postponement of the messianic (Davidic) kingdom and the beginning of the church. ([Ephesians 3 Commentary](#))

**Eadie** - This revelation of God's multifarious wisdom now and by the church has happened according to His eternal purpose — the purpose of ages, or the purpose of those periods which are so distant, as to be to us identical with eternity. ([Ephesians 3 Commentary](#))

**His purpose** - God has an eternal **purpose** for all things. If God is God at all, He is sovereign. He cannot work independently of His own nature, for then He would cease to be God, something that is impossible. He is a wise God; therefore, His eternal purpose is a wise one. He is a powerful God; therefore, He is able to accomplish what He purposes. He is a loving God; therefore, what He purposes will manifest His love. He is an unchanging God; therefore, His purpose is unchanging.

**William MacDonald** explains God's **eternal purpose** this way "The mystery itself, its concealment, its eventual disclosure, and the manner in which it exhibits the wisdom of God are all according to the eternal purpose... Before the world was made, God knew Satan would fall and man would follow him in sin. And He had already prepared a counter-strategy, a master plan. This plan has been worked out in the incarnation, death, resurrection, ascension, and glorification of Christ. The whole program centered in Christ and has been realized through Him. Now God can save ungodly Jews and Gentiles, make them members of the Body of Christ, conform them to the image of His Son, and honor them in a unique way as the Bride of the Lamb throughout eternity. ([Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

**McGee** - Another purpose of the mystery is revealed here. God's created intelligences are learning something of the wisdom of God through the church. They not only see the love of God displayed and lavished upon us, but the wisdom of God is revealed to His angels. ([Thru the Bible Commentary](#))

**Illustration** - A minister was called to the scene of a coal pit disaster. Someone placed in his hands a beautiful piece of embroidery on which the words "God is love" had been wrought. The minister held this up so that the stricken people could see the message which had been so perfectly worked according to a plan. Then he turned the canvas round and all they could see where the tangled ends of thread that certainly did not seem to make any sense at all.

**Eadie** explains **carried out** explaining that some commentators "like Calvin... (feel the) meaning is, "Which He made," that is, "formed in Christ"... But in the view of Theodoret (et al)... it denotes, "Which He executed or fulfilled in Christ Jesus." This last interpretation is on the whole preferable, for poieo may bear such a sense, as in Eph 2:3; Mt 21:31; Jn 6:38; 1Th 5:24... The words en Christo lesou signify not "on account of," nor "by," but "in" Christ Jesus, as the sphere or element in which the action of the verb takes effect... The lessons of manifold wisdom given to principalities and powers, in connection with the introduction of the Gentiles into the church, are not an accidental denouement (the outcome of a complex sequence of events), nor an undesigned betrayal of a Divine secret on the part of the church. Nor was the disclosure of the mystery forced on God by the power of circumstances, or the pressure of unforeseen necessities, for, in its period and instruments, it was in unison with His own eternal plan, which has been wrought out in Christ—in His incarnation and death, His ascension and glorification. The lesson to the principalities was intended for them; they have not profanely intruded into the sacred precincts, and stolen away the guarded science. In all this procedure, which reveals to principedoms and powers God's manifold wisdom, the Divine eternal plan is consistently and systematically developed in Christ. ([Ephesians 3 Commentary](#))

**Wiersbe** writes that "This great truth concerning the church is not a divine afterthought. It is a part of God's eternal purpose in Christ (Eph. 3:11). To ignore this truth is to sin against the Father who planned it, the Son whose death made it possible, and the Spirit who today seeks to work in our lives to accomplish what God has planned. (See [Be Rich Ephesians: Gaining the Things That Money Can't Buy](#))

**John Phillips** explains God's eternal purpose writing that "God's plans, which center in the church, are part of His eternal purpose. He made His plans before time began, before the rustle of an angel's wing disturbed the silence of eternity. God was not surprised by Adam's sin or Lucifer's fall. God in His omniscient wisdom foresaw these tragic events that introduced such dimensions as sorrow, suffering, and shame into the universe. His answer was the cross of Christ, reared on a skull-shaped hill on a rebel planet in a remote corner of a galaxy. Through the Cross He displayed His wisdom, love, and power as a means of redeeming fallen man and rebuking fallen angels. How wonderful it is that God had us in mind before He created the stars. He wrote our names on His heart before He created the world... " (See [Exploring Ephesians](#))

**MacDonald** explains the accomplishment of this **eternal purpose** in Christ noting that "Before the world was made, God knew Satan would fall and man would follow him in sin. And He had already prepared a counter-strategy, a master plan. This plan has been worked out in the incarnation, death, resurrection, ascension, and glorification of Christ. **The whole program centered in Christ and has been realized through Him.** Now God can save ungodly Jews and Gentiles, make them members of the Body of

Christ, conform them to the image of His Son, and honor them in a unique way as the Bride of the Lamb throughout eternity. ([Believer's Bible Commentary: Thomas Nelson](#)) (Bolding added)

**Hoehner on in the Lord Jesus Christ**- The final prepositional phrase (ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ ἡσο τὸ κυρίῳ μὲν) uses the full title of Christ to enhance the idea that God's purpose was accomplished in the historical Jesus when he died on the cross about thirty years before the Ephesians received this letter or about two thousand years ago for the present day believer. The preposition indicates sphere or locale in which God's purpose was fulfilled. The full title of Christ is given, though not in the same word order, in Eph 1:3 and Eph 1:17.... this title shows four things: (1) His Lordship ("**Jesus is Lord**") was an early confession of the church, Acts 2:36; 8:16; 10:36; 11:17; 19:5; Ro 10:9; 14:9; 1 Cor 12:3; 2 Cor 4:5; Phil 2:11); (2) His Name ("Jesus"); (3) His title ("Christ") which is more than just a name, because it denotes that he is the promised Messiah who would bring salvation to both Jews and Gentiles and make it possible for both to be created into one new person; and (4) his personal relationship to believers ("our Lord"). (See [Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary](#))

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**Eternal** (165) (**aion**) in context refers to an unlimited portion of time, time having an infinite duration. Literally this reads "the purpose of the ages". The eternal exists outside of and is unaffected by time. Paul is saying that the church is not an afterthought.

**Purpose** (4286) (**prothesis** from **protithemi** = set before oneself; to purpose or plan from **pró** = before, forth + **tithemi** = place) means a setting forth of a thing and then to plan or purpose in advance. God's purpose runs on through the ages. **Prothesis** - 12x in 12v - NAS = consecrated(3), purpose(7), resolute(1), sacred(1). Matt 12:4; Mark 2:26; Luke 6:4; Acts 11:23; 27:13; Rom 8:28; 9:11; Eph 1:11; 3:11; 2 Tim 1:9; 3:10; Heb 9:2.

**Carried out** (4160) (**poieo**) means performed (done) and expresses action either as completed or continued.

**Christ** (5547) (**Christos** from **chrío** = to anoint, consecrate to office) is the NT counterpart of the Hebrew word transliterated Messiah.

**Jesus** (2424) (**Iesous**) is the NT counterpart of the Hebrew Yeshu'a meaning Jehovah His Help. It corresponds to the OT name Joshua. It is He Who saves. **Josephus** on **Jesus** (note he calls Him "Christ"! and speaks of His resurrection) - 3.(63) Now, there was about this time **Jesus**, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works—a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews, and many of the Gentiles. He was [the] **Christ** (corresponds to Hebrew - Messiah); (64) and when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him, for he appeared to them alive again the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him; and the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day. (Antiquities of the Jews, Book 18, chapter 3, paragraph 3.)

**Lord** (2962) (**kurios** from **kuroo** = give authority) refers to one who is supreme in authority who has absolute ownership and unrivaled power. In classical Greek, kurios was used of gods, and thus one finds inscriptions applied to different gods (who are really no gods) such as Hermes, Zeus, etc.;

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**Ephesians 3:12 in Whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him. (NASB: Lockman)**

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**Greek:** [ἐν ᾧ ἐχομεν](#) (1PPAI) [τὴν παρρησίαν καὶ προσάγωμεν ἐν πεποιθῆσει διὰ τῆς πίστεως αὐτοῦ.](#)

**BGT** ἐν ᾧ ἔχομεν τὴν παρρησίαν καὶ προσάγωμεν ἐν πεποιθῆσει διὰ τῆς πίστεως αὐτοῦ.

**Amplified:** In Whom, because of our faith in Him, we dare to have the boldness (courage and confidence) of free access (an unreserved approach to God with freedom and without fear). ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**Barclay:** through whom we have a free and confident approach to him through faith in him. ([Westminster Press](#))

**ESV** in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him.

**KJV** In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.

**NET:** in whom we have boldness and confident access to God because of Christ's faithfulness. ([NET Bible](#))

**NIV** In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence.

**NLT** (revised) Because of Christ and our faith in him, we can now come boldly and confidently into God's presence.

**NLT:** Because of Christ and our faith in him, we can now come boldly and confidently into God's presence.  
(NLT - Tyndale House)

**Phillips:** It is in this same Jesus, because we have faith in him, that we dare, even with confidence, to approach God. (Phillips: Touchstone)

**Wuest:** in whom we are having our freedom of speech and entree in perfect confidence through faith in Him. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#))

**Young's Literal:** in whom we have the freedom and the access in confidence through the faith of him,

## IN WHOM WE HAVE BOLDNESS AND CONFIDENT ACCESS THROUGH FAITH IN HIM: en o echomen (1PPAI) ten parrhesian kai prosagogen en pepoithesei dia tes pisteos autou:

- Eph 2:18; Jn 14:6; Romans 5:2; Heb 4:14-16; Heb 10:19-22
- Ephesians 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Ephesians 3:7-13 The Mystery Revealed, Part 3](#) - John MacArthur
- [Ephesians 3:9-13 God's Eternal Purpose and You](#) - Steven Cole

### Related Passages:

John 14:6 Jesus \*said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.

Ephesians 2:18+ for **through** ([dia](#)) **Him** (Jesus) we both have our **access** ([prosagoge](#)) **in one Spirit to the Father.**

Romans 5:1-2+ Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our **Lord Jesus Christ, through** ([dia](#)) **Whom** also we have obtained our **introduction** ([prosagoge](#)) by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.

2Co 3:4-6+ And such **confidence** we have **through** ([dia](#)) **Christ** toward God. Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

## FREE FULL ACCESS TO OUR FATHER THRU CHRIST

**In Whom** (CHRIST) **we have boldness** ([parrhesia](#)) **and confident** ([pepoithesis](#)) **access** ([prosagoge](#)) **through** ([dia](#)) **faith** ([pistis](#)) **in Him - Amplified** = "we dare to have the boldness (courage and confidence) of free access (an unreserved approach to God with freedom and without fear)." **ESV** = "we have boldness and access with confidence " Paul uses 3 words to emphasize the Gentile's privilege - boldness, confident (confidence) and access! Paul's point is that although God's eternal plan was accomplished in Christ some two thousand years ago, His past work has an wonderful continuing effect in the present for every believer. **We** refers to the Gentiles, and Paul, the former persecutor of believing Jews, both have **boldness** or freedom of speech of Ep 6:19+) before God and **access** or freedom of approach and familiarity but without fear of being rejected by God's holiness! Ponder that a moment sinners saved by grace now have access to the Holy One sitting on His throne of grace! (Are you taking advantage of your lofty privilege by talking with Him frequently during your busy day?) **Access** includes the idea of introduction to the Father made possible in Christ. **Have** ([echo](#)) is in the present tense indicating that this is every believer's continual privileged possession, so that now every saved sinner can freely draw near to the throne of grace and the Father's presence at any time in any place, coming of course not in self-confidence but in Christ-confidence. Amazing grace indeed!

**Boldness** is used here in a more sense of ease of feeling and comfortable self-possession, in our access to God. **Boldness** is the antithesis of Adam's reaction after becoming dead in his trespasses and sins (eating forbidden fruit), Moses recording "And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. Then the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" And he said, "I heard the sound of Thee in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself." (Genesis 3:8-10) What a contrast is the believer's **boldness** and the attitude of unrepentant men who should be desperately seeking an audience with God, instead seek to hide from Him, John recording "And the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the

rich and the strong and every slave and free man, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains; and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb for the great day of their wrath has come; and who is able to stand?" (Revelation 6:15-17<sup>+</sup>)

**Boldness** ([parrhesia](#) cf Ep 6:19+) and **confident** ([pepoithesis](#)) **access** ([prosagoge](#)) - access is the freedom believers possess to speak to God in prayer anytime, anywhere. The believer's confidence is the assurance of a ready welcome, a open hearing, and a wise, loving response which is all possible through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Have you ever had a friend who knew some very famous or distinguished person. You would never have had any right to enter into that person's presence, but in your friend's company you had the right of entry and were able to meet the distinguish personality and converse with them. That is what our Friend Jesus does for us with the most distinguished of all, Almighty God. In the presence of our Redeemer there is an open door into God's very throne room.

**MacArthur** sums up the significance of **access** ([prosagoge](#)) writing that "Those who once were socially and spiritually alienated are in Christ united with God and with each other. Because they have Christ they have both peace and access in one Spirit to the Father. They have an Introducer who presents them at the heavenly throne of God, before whom they can come at any time. They can now come to God as their own Father, knowing that He no longer judges or condemns but only forgives and blesses. Even His discipline is an act of love, given to cleanse and restore His precious children to purity and spiritual richness. (See [Ephesians MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

NT boldness is in marked contrast to the limited access and even trepidation (See [Did the high priest have a rope tied to him when he entered the Holy of Holies?](#)) in the Old Testament where only the High Priest could go into the Holy of Holies and then only once per year (See [Day of Atonement](#)- Lev 16:1-34+). In the book of Hebrews we read that the veil between the holy place and the holy of holies has been rent, and we can come in with confidence and with boldness because of the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Since therefore, brethren, we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. (Hebrews 10:19-22+)

For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:15-16+)

**Through faith** ([pistis](#)) **in Him** - Paul explains how it is possible for believers to have **boldness** and **confident access** to the Father. **Through** ([dia](#)) signifies the channel through which God's grace flows, here speaking **offaith** and remembering that this free flow of grace is based on the object of that faith, Christ Jesus our Lord. **Faith** is never the basis or the reason for justification, but only the channel through which God works His redeeming grace. **Faith** is a convicted heart reaching out to receive God's free and unmerited gift of salvation. **Through** the perfect, once for all sacrifice of Christ and through receiving His gift of righteousness, we have access to God in both daily prayer and eternal salvation.

[Brian Bell](#) calls this "Trifecta: *Boldness, access, & confidence* to come to God in faith."

**S Lewis Johnson** on **Through faith in Him** - This shows us the means by which we come into the glorious position whereby we who are Gentiles stand on this same basis in the body of Christ as the Jews, through the faith of Him. ([Sermon](#))

**TECHNICAL NOTE** on **faith** ([pistis](#)) **in Him** - Some expositors propose that this is a subjective genitive rather than an objective genitive, meaning that it speaks of Christ's faithfulness. This fits well with the present context, namely, the body of believers have free access with confidence through the faithfulness of Christ on behalf of the church. However, others suggest that this should still be considered an objective genitive,<sup>4</sup> and thus the object of faith is Christ Jesus our Lord. This view emphasizes the believers' faith rather than the faithfulness of Christ. The choice between these options is difficult; however, the latter is preferred. On the other hand, some suggest that rather than accepting the genitive as either subjective or objective, it should include both meanings. Hence, believers have faith in Christ's faithfulness to God on behalf of the church. (See [Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary](#))

**C.H. Spurgeon** once said, Prayer pulls the rope down below and the great bell rings above in the ears of God. Some scarcely stir the bell, for they pray so languidly; others give only an occasional jerk at the rope. But he who communicates with heaven is the man who grasps the rope boldly and pulls continuously with all his might.

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**Boldness** ([3954](#)) ([parrhesia](#) from **pas** = all + **rhesis** = speech) literally conveys the idea of freedom to say all. It is that attitude of



openness that stems from freedom and lack of fear ("shaking" fear - godly, reverential fear is always appropriate). Greeks used **parrhesia** of those with the right to speak openly in the assembly

**Confident** (4006) (**pepoithesis** from **peitho** = to persuade, come to a settled conviction) means full persuasion and expresses a belief in someone or something to the point of placing one's trust or reliance in them - the idea is having been persuaded and remaining persuaded. It is a belief that one can rely on someone or something. The nuance of meaning depends on the context - it can mean confidence or trust in others (2Co 1:15), in God (Ep 3:12) or in oneself (i.e., self-confidence) (2Co 10:12).

**Wuest Word Studies** says that **pepoithesis** "comes from the **perfect** participial form which refers to a past process of being completely persuaded, with the present result that we are in a confirmed and settled state of utter confidence."

**NIDNTT** - The stem **peith-** (pith-, poith-) has the basic meaning of trust (cf. Lat. fido, fides). [New International Dictionary of NT Theology.](#))

**TDNT** - This word means "trust" or "confidence." In 2Co. 1:15 Paul is confident that the Corinthians now have some understanding. In 2Co. 8:22 his confidence is in the church's readiness regarding the collection. A radical self-confidence is at issue in Phil. 3:4; its opposite is confidence in God (2Co. 3:4; cf. 10:2). Eph. 3:12 singles out the element of confidence comprised in faith, **parrhesia** ("boldness") being synonymous. The apostolic fathers use the term for the confidence of the OT saints (1 Clem. 31.3; 45.8) or of Christians (2 Clem. 6.9); its opposite is the empty confidence of arrogant believers (Hermas Similitudes 9.22.3). ([Kittel, G., & Bromiley, G. W. Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Eerdmans](#))

**Pepoithesis** - 6x in 6v -confidence(5), confident(1)

2Co 1:15+ In this **confidence** I intended at first to come to you, so that you might twice receive a blessing;

**Comment:** The confidence is to be understood in the light of the hope spoken of in 2Co 1:13, 14.

2Co 3:4+ Such **confidence** we have through Christ toward God.

**Comment:** This refers to the confidence that grows out of the apostolic commission

2Co 8:22+ We have sent with them our brother, whom we have often tested and found diligent in many things, but now even more diligent because of his great **confidence** in you.

2Co 10:2+ I ask that when I am present I need not be bold with the **confidence** with which I propose to be courageous against some, who regard us as if we walked according to the flesh.

**Comment:** The confidence has the sense of self confidence which is made possible through Christ toward God (He is the real basis for the apostle's self-confidence).

Ephesians 3:12+ in whom we have boldness and **confident** access through faith in Him.

Philippians 3:4+ although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else has a mind to put **confidence** in the flesh, I far more:

**Access** (4318) (**prosagoge** from **pros** = toward + **ago** = bring) literally means "a bringing near" or providing access (freedom, permission and/or the ability to enter). It describes a continuous and unhindered approach to God, One Whom we could never approach in our unredeemed, unholy, sinful state. **Prosagoge** was used to describe the introduction to or audience which one is permitted to have with a king or other person of high rank. This introduction or audience must be effected through an officer of court to whom the duty is entrusted. Notice that **prosagoge** always refers to the believer's **access** to God **through** Christ. What was unthinkable to the Old Testament Jew is now available to all who come to Christ by grace through faith.

**Prosagoge** - 3x - Rom. 5:2; Eph. 2:18; Eph. 3:12

**Prosagoge** carries the idea not of possessing access in our own right but of being granted the right to come to God with boldness, knowing we will be welcomed. It is only through our Savior's shedding of His blood in sacrificial death on Calvary and by faith in Him that we have union in His Holy Spirit and have access to the Father. The Spirit is at work to draw us continually to God (Ro 8:15, 16, 17; Gal. 4:6, 7). Both and one spirit emphasize again the commonality of Jew and Gentile.

To summarize, from the 3 NT uses of **prosagoge** and related passages

1. We have access into grace (Ro 5:2+) God's throne is the throne of grace (He 4:16+).

2. We have access to the Father (Ep 2:18+). Though He is sovereign, we can still approach Him as a child does a father (Luke 11:11-13+, Ro 8:15+).

3. We have access through Jesus Christ (1Ti 2:5). The blood gives us boldness (He 10:19+).

4. We have access by our faith (Ro 5:2+ Ep 3:12+). The essential ingredient is prayer (He 10:22+).

**Prosagoge** also pictures **fellowship** and **communion** (see [communion, fellowship](#)) available with the Father through Christ for all who have been redeemed by His blood! The French word for this is **entree** meaning freedom of entry or access. And that is exactly what our Lord Jesus Christ provides for a believing sinner. He clothes him with Himself as his righteousness, cleanses him in His precious blood, and brings him into the full unmerited favor (grace) of God the Father. This is a believers **entree**. It is a priceless boon to have the right to go to some lovely and wise and saintly person at any time, to have the right to break in upon him, to take our troubles, our problems, our loneliness, our sorrow to him. That is exactly the right that Jesus gives us in regard to our Father, the All Wise God.

**Prosagoge** pictures provision of access into the presence of One Whom we would normally be restricted from approaching. In the Orient, one who came to see a king needed both access—the right to come and an introduction—the proper presentation. You couldn't just waltz into a king's presence. To do so would invite death. In fact the Persian royal court actually had an official called the **prosagogeus** whose function was to introduce people who desired an audience with the king.

There is an Old Testament story in the book of Esther which is a beautiful illustration of **prosagoge**. Esther sought to plead with King Ahasuerus for the safety of her Jewish countrymen but she knew what fate might await her for approaching the King without an introduction (see Esther 4:11). Esther risked her life by doing this, not knowing beforehand whether Ahasuerus would grant her an "introduction." Fortunately for her, he granted her grace. Ray Stedman fills in the details writing that...

"There is a beautiful picture in the book of Esther that illustrates this: Remember Esther, that lovely Jewish maiden, a captive in the land of Persia? The king, seeking a bride, found her and made her his queen. After Esther ascended to the throne as queen, a plot was hatched against the Jews. The king, unwittingly, signed a decree that meant death for all Jews in the land of Persia. Esther's godly uncle, Mordecai, said it would be necessary for her to go to the king and tell him what he had unwittingly done. Esther knew that was a dangerous thing, because it was the law of the Medes and Persians that no one could come before the king without first being summoned by him. It meant death for anyone to dare come before the king in that manner. There were no exceptions -- even for a queen -- for this was the law of the Medes and the Persians and could not be changed. Unless the king extended his golden scepter to that person, he must die. Yet Esther knew that she had to dare to take her life in her hands and go before the king. The story tells us that she fasted for three days and three nights before she went. I am sure that was to prepare her heart and her courage. It doesn't say what else she did during that time, when she was getting ready to come before the king. With a wife, four daughters, and a mother-in-law in my home, I've observed women getting themselves ready for some years now. I'm sure that what Esther was doing was fixing her hair. It probably took three days and three nights to get ready! Then we are told that she dressed herself in robes of beauty and glory. When she was all ready, she stepped into the audience hall of the king, appearing all alone before him. The king was so smitten with her beauty that his heart went out to her. He stretched forth his scepter and accepted her. She had access to the king. Dressed in robes of beauty and glory that do not belong to us -- for they are the garments of Jesus -- we have access to the King, to receive from him all that we need to handle any threat that has come into our lives. We have continual acceptance before him." (excerpt from [Rejoicing in Hope](#))

**Faith** (4102) (**pistis**) means a firm persuasion, conviction, or belief in the truth. **Pistis** is not just mental assent but firm conviction, surrender to that truth and conduct emanating from that surrender. In sum, faith shows itself genuine by a changed life. Faith is never the basis or the reason for justification, but only the channel through which God works His redeeming grace. Faith is simply a convicted heart reaching out to receive God's free and unmerited gift of salvation. Furthermore, faith, like grace, is not static. In short, saving faith is more than just understanding the facts and mentally acquiescing. It is inseparable from repentance, surrender, and a supernatural longing to obey. None of those responses can be classified exclusively as a human work, any more than believing itself is solely a human effort.

### [My Faith Looks Up to Thee](#)

by Ray Palmer

My faith looks up to Thee,  
Thou Lamb of Calvary, Savior divine!  
Now hear me while I pray, take all my guilt away,

O let me from this day be wholly Thine!

May Thy rich grace impart  
Strength to my fainting heart, my zeal inspire!  
As Thou hast died for me, O may my love to Thee,  
Pure warm, and changeless be, a living fire!

While life's dark maze I tread,  
And griefs around me spread, be Thou my Guide;  
Bid darkness turn to day, wipe sorrow's tears away,  
Nor let me ever stray from Thee aside.

When ends life's transient dream,  
When death's cold sullen stream over me roll;  
Blest Savior, then in love, fear and distrust remove;  
O bear me safe above, a ransomed soul!

**My Faith Looks Up to Thee** - "My Faith Looks Up to Thee" was written in 1832 by Ray Palmer, a 22-year-old school teacher. Several months after his graduation from Yale University and while still living with the family of the lady who directed the girls' school where he taught, Palmer wrote the text for this hymn. He had experienced a very discouraging year in which he battled illness and loneliness.

The words for these stanzas were born out of my own soul with very little effort. I recall that I wrote the verses with tender emotion. There was not the slightest thought of writing for another eye, least of all writing a hymn for Christian worship. It is well-remembered that when writing the last line, "Oh, bear me safe above, a ransomed soul!" the thought of the whole work of redemption and salvation was involved in those words, and suggested the theme of eternal praises, and this brought me to a degree of emotion that brought abundant tears. (Ray Palmer)

Two years later, while visiting in Boston, Palmer chanced to meet his friend, Lowell Mason, a well-known name in musical circles during this time. Upon seeing Ray Palmer's text, Mason stated: "Palmer, you may live many years and do many good things, but I think you will be best-known to posterity as the author of 'My Faith Looks Up to Thee'." Lowell Mason composed a melody for this text, a tune which he called "Olivet" in reference to the hymn's message. Soon the hymn appeared in its present form in a hymnal edited by Mason. And from that time on this musical expression has had an important place in nearly every hymnal that has been published:

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### John Calvin - Asking with Boldness

In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him. Ephesians 3:12  
SUGGESTED FURTHER READING: Hebrews 4:12–16

We are admonished to go forward in faith until we are thoroughly persuaded that, in fighting against all the temptations that can assail us, we shall get the upper hand by means of faith. We may glory both against life and death and despise all distresses, knowing full well that nothing is able to separate us from the love that Jesus Christ has shown us and which God his Father has also displayed toward us in his person.

It follows that our prayers must be based upon full assurance of faith. For he who thinks he will obtain anything while doubting deceives himself. We must assure ourselves by the promises of the gospel that God is ready to receive us in mercy whenever we come to him. Thereby we perceive that Paul did not say in vain that if we have faith we must not seek anything more than Jesus Christ. He must be our entire treasure.

Let us, then, fall down before the majesty of our good God, acknowledging our sins, and praying that he so makes us feel them that we hate them more and more. Yet we must not cease to be happy that he has shown himself so compassionate toward us in the person of his only Son. He is willing to draw us out of the pit of hell to give us entrance into his kingdom. He grants us the grace to come to himself in true faith and to withdraw ourselves from all worldly enticements that turn us away from him so that we may forsake all vainglory. Since we are void of all goodness in ourselves, let us seek everything we lack in him who is the true fountain of all goodness and can never be drained dry.

Let it please him to grant this grace, not only to us, but to all people. [865 Days with Calvin](#)

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## Wilberforce - 'Small as well as great occasions'

'In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.' Ephesians 3:12

SUGGESTED FURTHER READING: Psalm 20:1–9

The Christian watches himself also on small as well as on great occasions: the latter indeed, in the case of many persons, can hardly ever be expected to occur, whereas the former are continually presenting themselves. Thus, whilst on the one hand they may be rendered highly useful in forming and strengthening a just habit of mind in the particular in question, so, on the other, they are the means most at hand for enabling us to discover our own real character.

Let not this be lightly passed over. If anyone finds himself shrinking from disrepute or disesteem in little instances, but apt to solace himself with the persuasion that his spirits being fully called forth to the encounter, he could boldly stand the brunt of sharper trials; let him be slow to give entertainment to so beguiling a suggestion; and let him not forget that these little instances, where no credit is to be got, and the vainest can find small room for self-complacency, furnish perhaps the truest test whether we are ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, and are willing, on principles really pure, to bear reproach for the name of Jesus.

FOR MEDITATION: In the parable of the talents in Luke 19, the servant receives praise and reward from his lord because he had 'been faithful in a very little'. We are no different. God's blessing rests upon those who are faithful in the small things. Such faithfulness attests the growth of Christian character within us. ([365 Days with Wilberforce](#))

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### Our Daily Bread devotional "He's Waiting"...

Telephone answering machines can be helpful, but it's often frustrating to call someone and hear a recorded voice say, "I'm sorry I can't take your call just now, but please leave your name and phone number and I'll get back to you." Disappointed, we speak into the machine, hoping the other person won't be forgetful or too busy to call back.

In our high-tech world, it's encouraging to know that when we call out to God we get straight through to Him. In Ephesians 3, the apostle Paul said that "in Christ Jesus our Lord ... we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him" (Ephesians 3:11-12).

In 1 Thessalonians 5:17, Paul encouraged believers to "pray without ceasing," which assumes, of course, that God is always listening and wants to hear from us. Yet, for some reason we often keep God waiting. Our prayerlessness gives God the repeated message that we won't answer His call to pray now, but we'll get back to Him later.

What are the things that keep you from praying? Begin by talking to God about whatever is hindering your prayer-life. Such praying will cultivate the two-way closeness that your heavenly Father is longing to enjoy with you.

Why keep God waiting any longer? —J E Yoder ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

We can know that God is watching,  
Always present, everywhere,  
And with hope and joy and patience  
He is waiting for our prayer. —Roworth

If you're too busy to pray, you're too busy.