

**Ephesians 1**  
**The Gospel of Your Salvation**  
**By**  
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These study notes are from a series we taught at our church several years ago. We prepared study notes for students and a leader's guide for group leaders and will share both groups of notes in case you would be interested in leading a study group with family and friends. If not, please enjoy the insights from one of the greatest Books in the Bible - Ephesians!





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# Basic Premises for Studying Scripture

## **God is worth knowing**

## **His Word is worth learning and obeying**

Because God is worth knowing and His Word is worth learning, we will follow a proven method of knowing Him and learning His Word.

We will use the **I – M – D – I** method of Bible study:

## **Inductive – Methodical – Direct - Independent**

**Inductive study** – “logical, objective, impartial reasoning” ... examining specifics of Scripture before reaching conclusions

**Methodical study** – “a way or path of transit” (Greek - *methodos*) ... focused on taking the proper path to gaining knowledge about God

**Direct study** – “relying on Scripture as the primary tool for learning”

**Independent study** – “original thinking combined with Spirit insight”

**Observe** (See and Record)

**Question** (Ask and Answer)

**Interpret** (Determine the Holy Spirit’s Intent)

**Apply** (How God’s Truth applies to your life)

## For Leaders

“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God.”

The Apostle Paul was well known in the Christian community by the time he wrote his letter to the church in Ephesus. He was first known as a chief persecutor of the early followers of Jesus Christ in Jerusalem and Judea. He was on his way to Syria to arrest believers when Jesus called him to become one of His apostles; with the specific mission of taking the Gospel to the Gentiles.

Here is Paul’s account of Christ’s call in his own words to King Agrippa.

“While thus occupied, as I journeyed to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, at midday, O king, along the road I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and those who journeyed with me. And when we all had fallen to the ground, I heard a voice speaking to me and saying in the Hebrew language, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? *It is* hard for you to kick against the goads.’ So I said, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ And He said, ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you. I will deliver you from the *Jewish* people, as well as *from* the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, to open their eyes, *in order* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness

of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.” Acts 26:12-18

Paul was an apostle of Jesus Christ “by the will of God.” He responded positively to God’s call and spent the rest of his life preaching the Gospel of Salvation to Gentiles and Jews.

We learn in Acts 9 that Jesus sent Ananias to lay his hands on Paul (Hebrew name was Saul) so that he would receive his sight and “be filled with the Holy Spirit.” Paul spent several days with the disciples at Damascus, then preached in synagogues that Jesus Christ was the Son of God. (Acts 9:17-20)

Paul shared more specifics about the history of his ministry with the churches in Galatia.

“But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb and called *me* through His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those *who were* apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord’s brother. (Now *concerning* the things which I write to you, indeed, before God, I do not lie.) Afterward I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. And I was unknown by face to the churches of Judea which *were* in Christ. But they were hearing only, He who formerly persecuted us now preaches the faith which he once *tried to* destroy.’ And

they glorified God in me. Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and also took Titus with *me*. And I went up by revelation, and communicated to them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to those who were of reputation, lest by any means I might run, or had run, in vain.” Galatians 1:17 – 2:2

Paul returned to Tarsus for his own safety and was there for several years. What he did while home in Tarsus is not recorded for us in Acts or Paul’s letters, but it was probably a time of study and reflection for the apostle. Based on the time frame Paul revealed in his second letter to the Corinthians, it would have also been when he received special visions of Paradise (2 Corinthians 12:1-7).

We know that when the apostles in Jerusalem sent Barnabas to Antioch, Syria to see what God was doing there, Barnabas traveled to Tarsus to get Paul and return with him to Antioch. They spent a year teaching the believers there and the disciples were first called “Christians in Antioch.” (Acts 11:25-26)

Based on a prophecy from Agabus “that there was going to be a great famine throughout all the world,” Barnabas and Saul (Paul) took an offering to the disciples in Jerusalem to help meet their needs. (Acts 11:27-30) Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem to Antioch and took John Mark with them. (Acts 12:25)

Paul and Barnabas continued their teaching ministry in Antioch until the Holy Spirit led the prophets and teachers of the church to “separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” The prophets

and teachers fasted and prayed, laid hands on Barnabas and Saul and sent them away. (Acts 13:1-3) That was the beginning of what we know as Paul's first missionary journey.

“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus.”

At the time that the Apostle Paul wrote “to the saints who are in Ephesus,” the city was one of the largest in Asia Minor with a population of more than a quarter-million people. The ruins of the ancient city of Ephesus are located near the town of Selcuk in the Izmir Province of Turkey near the Mediterranean Sea. It is a favorite tourist attraction.

Archaeological excavations have revealed that the area around Ephesus was inhabited thousands of years ago. Burial grounds found in the area have been dated from about the 16<sup>th</sup> Century BC. Much of what historians know about that time comes from the writings of the Greek poet Homer (e.g. Iliad, Odyssey, Trojan War, Nostoi, Cypria, Epigoni) who wrote in the 8<sup>th</sup> Century BC.

Ephesus was founded as an Attic-Ionian colony during the 10<sup>th</sup> Century BC. One legend is that a prince named Androklos was the founder of Ephesus and joined 12 cities together into what was known as the Ionian League. Another legend has Ephos, Queen of the Amazons, as the founder of the city. The legend of the Amazons is based on Greek mythology. They were a nation of all-female warriors.

Ephesus became famous for the Temple of Artemis, the Greek goddess of hunting, the wilderness, wild animals, virginity, fertility and childbirth. Most of the Greek world worshiped Artemis as a secondary deity, but the Greeks

in Asia Minor (location of Ephesus) worshiped her as a prominent deity. The Temple of Artemis was one of the Seven Wonders of the World and reportedly the largest building of the ancient world. The building was also known as the Temple of Diana (Diana is the Latin name for Artemis).

The Cimmerians attacked Ephesus about 650 BC and destroyed the city, including the Temple of Artemis. The people of Ephesus eventually drove out the Cimmerians and rebuilt the city. The king of the Lydians conquered Ephesus about 560 BC, but treated the people well and helped rebuild the Temple of Artemis. Archaeologists found his signature on the base of one of the temple's columns. The Persians defeated the Ephesians and made the city part of the Achaemenid Empire. The Ephesians were eventually able to remove the Persians from power about 479 BC. The Temple of Artemis was burned down in 356 BC, but the people of Ephesus rebuilt the temple and made it even larger than the one before.

Alexander the Great defeated the Persian forces in 334 BC and all the Greek cities of Asia Minor were freed. Alexander died in 323 BC and one of his generals took over rule of Ephesus many years later. Ephesians moved the city about two miles away from the Cayster River after silting led to marshes, mosquitoes and malaria, killing many people. Ephesus became part of the Seleucid Empire in 281 BC, then came under Egyptian rule in 263 BC and the Attalid Dynasty in 197 BC. Ephesus became part of the Roman Republic in 133 BC.

In 27 BC, Emperor Augustus made Ephesus the capital of proconsular Asia instead of Pergamum, which led Ephesus into a time of great prosperity as a seat of government and center of commerce. Eventually, Ephesus

became second only to Rome in size and importance with a population of almost 500,000 people. Ephesus would have been at its peak when Paul visited in the middle of the 1<sup>st</sup> Century AD.

Through all the centuries of trying times in the life of the Ephesians, they remained committed to the goddess Diana (Artemis) as we see during the Apostle Paul's visit to Ephesus.

“And about that time there arose a great commotion about the Way. For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Diana, brought no small profit to the craftsmen. He called them together with the workers of similar occupation, and said: ‘Men, you know that we have our prosperity by this trade. Moreover you see and hear that not only at Ephesus, but throughout almost all Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away many people, saying that they are not gods which are made with hands. So not only is this trade of ours in danger of falling into disrepute, but also the temple of the great goddess Diana may be despised and her magnificence destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worship.’ Now when they heard *this*, they were full of wrath and cried out, saying, ‘Great *is* Diana of the Ephesians!’ So the whole city was filled with confusion, and rushed into the theater with one accord, having seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians, Paul's travel companions. And when Paul wanted to go in to the people, the disciples would not allow him. Then some of the officials of Asia, who were his friends, sent to him pleading that he would not venture into the theater. Some therefore cried one thing and some another, for the assembly was confused, and

most of them did not know why they had come together. And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander motioned with his hand, and wanted to make his defense to the people. But when they found out that he was a Jew, all with one voice cried out for about two hours, 'Great *is* Diana of the Ephesians!' And when the city clerk had quieted the crowd, he said: 'Men of Ephesus, what man is there who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is temple guardian of the great goddess Diana, and of the *image* which fell down from Zeus? Therefore, since these things cannot be denied, you ought to be quiet and do nothing rashly. For you have brought these men here who are neither robbers of temples nor blasphemers of your goddess. Therefore, if Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen have a case against anyone, the courts are open and there are proconsuls. Let them bring charges against one another. But if you have any other inquiry to make, it shall be determined in the lawful assembly. For we are in danger of being called in question for today's uproar, there being no reason which we may give to account for this disorderly gathering.' And when he had said these things, he dismissed the assembly." Acts 19:23-41

What happened to Ephesus after Paul wrote his letter to the Christians there? The Goths destroyed the Temple of Diana in 263 AD. The Roman Emperor Constantine I rebuilt much of the city during the 4<sup>th</sup> Century and several Christian councils were held in Ephesus during that time. An earthquake destroyed portions of Ephesus in 614 AD and the city's importance declined because of silting in the harbor by the Cayster River,

causing it to lose access to trade from the Aegean Sea. People moved to higher ground and used ruins from the temple and other buildings for new houses. Muslims sacked Ephesus in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries. Christians and Muslims fought over the city for many more centuries, but Ephesus eventually became part of the Ottoman Empire and was abandoned after many years.

## For Leaders and Students

Paul was a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, which is now part of Turkey. His Hebrew name was Saul, but was a Roman citizen because of being born in Tarsus. Paul's father was a Pharisee from the tribe of Benjamin and Paul was also a Pharisee. He studied at the prestigious School of Hillel in Jerusalem at the feet of Gamaliel, the grandson of the founder of the rabbinical school. Paul was taught according to the strictness of the Mosaic Law and was zealous toward God. He persecuted followers of Christ to the death, binding and delivering into prison both men and women.

Paul was on his way to Damascus to arrest disciples of Christ there to return them to Jerusalem to be punished, when Jesus Christ blinded Paul and spoke to him. Jesus called Paul to preach the Gospel to kings, Gentiles and Jews. Paul believed, was baptized, began preaching, and became an apostle to the Gentiles (Romans 11:13).

Paul established churches in many cities across the Roman Empire. One of those cities was Ephesus, located in Asia Minor near the Mediterranean Sea. Paul wrote letters to many of the churches to help them grow in Christ and deal with problems and challenges. Ephesians is one of those letters.

The most likely place for Paul to have written Ephesians is during the two years he spent in Rome under house arrest (Acts 28), though some scholars believe he may have written Ephesians during his earlier imprisonment in Caesarea (Acts 23–26).



(Image Credit: <http://www.ccel.org/bible/phillips/JBPhillips.htm>)

Paul wrote several letters during his imprisonment: Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon and Philippians. They are known as Paul's "Prison Epistles." If he wrote them from Rome, the dating would be during the early part of the 7<sup>th</sup> decade of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD (60-62 AD). If Paul wrote them from Caesarea, the dating would be during the last part of the 6<sup>th</sup> decade of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD (57-59 AD).

The words "in Ephesus" in 1:1 are in some ancient manuscripts, but not in others. Ephesians also does not include personal references, which seems strange given Paul's close relationship with the believers at Ephesus (Acts 19-20). This has led some New Testament scholars to consider that Paul's letter to the Ephesians may have been a general letter meant to be read by all of the Gentile churches.

# For Students

**Observe** – Write what you see

## **Ephesians 1:1-2**

*“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”*

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.
- 13.

**Question** - Ask and answer questions based on observations

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

15.

16.

17.

18.

19.

20.

**Interpret** - What do you believe is the Holy Spirit's intent in these verses?

**Apply** - How can you apply these spiritual truths to your life?

## For Leaders

### **Ephesians 1:3-6**

*“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, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.”*

Ephesians 1:3-14 is one continuous thought. It's one of the longest in the Bible (more than 200 words in Greek, more than 250 words in English) with a number of clauses making up this one, great sentence. How great is this sentence? It is among the richest, deepest and most important sentences in the Word of God. Paul reveals God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit in these verses. First, we see the “will” of the Father, then the “work” of the Son, and the “witness” of the Spirit.

Paul began and ended this amazing sentence praising God - “Blessed be the God” (vs. 3) and “to the praise of His glory” (vs. 14). As we will see in our study of Paul’s Epistle to the Ephesians, the glory of God is utmost on the apostle’s mind and heart; as it should be to every child of God.

If your study group is large enough, divide into two groups. Group #1 will study verses 2-4. Group #2 will study verses 5-6. After 30 minutes observing, asking, answering, and interpreting, study groups will report their findings to the entire Life Group.

Invite your group members to use their study guide to record all the words they believe are important to understanding Paul's greeting.

### **Some of the important words are:**

**Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ** – two Greek words are translated “blessed” in the New Testament ... *makarismos* and *eulogia* ... *markarismos* is the idea of being “happy” about something ... *eulogia* means “good speaking, praise, spoken well of” (our English word “eulogy” comes from *eulogia*) ... the Greek word in Ephesians 1:3 is the adjective *eulogetos* and is always used in the New Testament to describe God ... “Praise be to God”

**Father of our Lord Jesus Christ** - Paul further describes God as the “Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” ... He quickly defines God (*theos*) for his readers and introduces a special relationship between God the “Father” (*pater*) and “our Lord Jesus Christ” (*kuriou hemon Iesou Christou*) ... We will see that the relationship between God the Father and God the Son plays an important role in the general and specific doctrines Paul taught the church through this letter.

**who has blessed us** – “who” is *ho* (the one) and points back to God as being the actor of the verb ... *eulogesas*, the verb, is active voice, aorist tense in the Greek, meaning something God completed in the past and

something we can look at and admire, like a photograph of an important event in our lives. It happened at a past time and had a huge impact on our lives. Christians are not waiting “to be” blessed. We are “already” blessed. We “were” blessed. We “have been” blessed. Our blessings going forward are based on the blessings God has already given us. We bless Him with words because of His gift of blessings. God always acts first. Our act of blessing (praising) God is always in response to His blessings (action).

**With every spiritual blessing** – *pase* (every) means “all, every kind” ... *eulogia pneumatike* (blessing spiritual) is about “blessings” (noun) that come from the “spiritual,” which imply the work of the Holy Spirit in a believer, which Paul addresses later in this same sentence. The blessings are more than merely spiritual. They are “of and from” the spiritual (Spirit). The “kind” of blessings we have are only limited to the limits of the Holy Spirit. As we will see throughout Ephesians, Paul emphasizes the work of the Holy Spirit on the human spirit ... Paul uses an interesting literary technique here by using one word in three methodologies in the same clause of a lengthy sentence. The words are *eulogetos* (adjective), *eulogesas* (verb), and *eulogia* (noun). God who is blessed (praised) blessed us (gave to us) with every spiritual blessing (every kind of blessing from God’s Spirit).

**in the heavenly places** – *en tois epouraviois*, “in the heavenlies,” pertains to those things that occur in Heaven ... the work of God’s Spirit in blessings us was done in the sphere of “heavenly places,” far above the natural and petty things of this physical world.

**in Christ** – these blessings in the heavenly places are “in Christ,” meaning in the sphere of Christ, from Christ, because of Christ ...

**just as He chose us in Him** – *kathos exelexato humas en auto* ... the word *kathos* means “even as, in conformity with the fact” ... God’s blessing us are in conformity with the fact that He chose us ... *exelaxato* (chosen, picked out, selected out of) is aorist tense, middle voice, indicative mood, which means God made a choice “for Himself” at a past time. Indicative mood presents God’s action of choosing as real and certain. His choice is an objective fact. It also carries the idea of choosing certain ones out of group, which means not choosing others in the same group. Think about what that meant to the Greek-speaking Christians who read Paul’s letter. What God did in choosing them was not because He had to do it. There was no outside force making God choose us. He chose because He wanted to for His own reasons. That precludes any idea that something about the Ephesians or us caused God to choose. He chose us because He wanted us for Himself without any pressure or purpose other than His own will ... God’s choice was “in Him,” being in the context of “in Christ.” God the Father chose us for Himself in the sphere of God the Son.

**Before the foundation of the world** – God chose us for Himself in the sphere of His Son at a past time that Paul described as “before the foundation of the world” ... *pro kataboles kosmou* ... the word “foundation” comes from *kataboles*, which means “casting down, throwing down, laying down” ... *kosmou* means “world” ... “throwing down” the world is a description of God creating the world ... God’s choosing us for Himself happened “before” (*pro*) He “threw down” the world. This is the idea of God choosing from eternity past, not just moments before He created. What a

remarkable truth that God “chose” us before time and space. Think about this. Doesn’t the fact that God “chose” us before He created mean that He “knew” us before creation? Wouldn’t God choose what He knew? Think about how God knew you and chose you before He created the heavens and the earth. That fact should play a major role in shaping our faith and trust in God Who has known us from eternity.

**That we should be** – The present infinitive (*einai*) expresses purpose on God’s part, not obligation on ours. God had a wonderful purpose in choosing us in Christ “before the foundation of the world.” His purpose was that we would be “holy and without blame.” Paul presents the doctrine of God’s purpose first, then our responsibility for living out the doctrine later in this epistle.

**Holy and without blame** – holy is *hagious* and means “separated.” Ancient Greeks understood the word to be used as something that was sacred and “dedicated to the gods.” Once chosen and dedicated to the gods, the thing was not to be used again for secular or common purposes. God’s purpose in choosing us from eternity past was that we should be dedicated to Him. We are a separated people, dedicated to worship God and serve Him forever. God also purposed before the creation of the world that we should be “without blame.” The Greek word is *amomous* and means “without blemish.” The translators of the Hebrew Bible into Greek (Septuagint) used the word *amoumous* to describe animals that were without blemish and therefore acceptable as sacrifices to God. That is our standing before God because of Christ. Humans are not able to make themselves acceptable to God. He chose us before the creation of the world for the purpose of accepting us through the perfection of His Son.

**Before Him in love** – *katenopion* means “to see down in.” It is the idea of a deep and penetrating gaze into something. That is how God sees us. Hagar called God, *El Roi*, “You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees.” When Samuel was searching for the young man God would make the new king of Israel, the Lord said to him, “For *the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.*” (1 Samuel 16:7) To stand “before” God is for Him to see deep down into the heart of our intent. He knows us better than we know ourselves. God chose us before Him “in love.” The word for love is *agape*. It is one of several Greek words translated “love,” but the noun *agape* and verb *agapao* are the dominant words for love used in the New Testament. In fact, Greeks in the ancient world rarely used the words *agape* and *agapao*. They are found primarily in the New Testament, leading some Greek scholars to think that Christians may have coined the word. *Agape* and *agapao* have the idea of “unconditional” love, which focuses on the one who loves rather than the one who is loved. It is not necessary for the one being loved to be worthy of that love. God loves the unlovely. *Agape* is primarily a “spiritual” love, rather than physical/lust (*eros*), mental/emotional (*phileo*), natural affection (*storge*), or deep desire (*thelema*). God was not under any “condition” to love us. His love is truly “unconditional.” Paul will explain this beautiful truth in more depth later in this epistle.

**Having predestined us** – It was in that unconditional love that God “predestined us” before the creation of the world. The word *proorisas* is aorist tense, active voice, nominate case, participle, which means that God determined, ordained in the past that He would do something to or for us. It is different than foreknowledge (knowing something beforehand). It is

descriptive of God's choice. Many Christians shy away from the doctrine of predestination because it has been so misunderstood and maligned through the centuries. *Proorisas* comes from the preposition *pro* and the verb *horizo*, which means "to mark out a boundary, define a limit." When the preposition and verb are connected it means "before." Predestination is something someone does "before" something else. In the case of God choosing us from before the foundation of the world, predestination is a type of decree. In the process of choosing us beforehand, God pre-determined something about us beforehand – thus the predestination or foreordination. In other places where the word *proorisas* or *proorizo* is used in the New Testament, it is used of God determining from eternity past.

**To adoption as sons** – What God determined in the past (before the creation of the world) was to "adopt" us "as sons." The preposition *eis* is often translated as "with a view to" and signifies purpose or result. The act of God predestinating (foreordaining) is to the "adoption as sons." The Greek word is *hiothesian*. Only the Apostle Paul uses it in the New Testament. He alone speaks of the adoption of sons. We will see later in Ephesians why he uses that specific word when speaking to Christians. Paul also uses the term in Romans 8 and Galatians 4. *Hiothesian* comes from *huios*, "a son," and *thesis*, "a placing." The Greeks understood *hiothesian* as a legal term, which meant "a placing in the condition of a son." A child who did not have natural placement in a family would be adopted by the legal head of the family and placed into a legal position equal to that of a natural-born child. Under Roman law, the adopted son became a legal heir entitled to both property and the rights and burdens of civil status. The process of adoption was as real and as legally secure as

the process of birth. That is what God chose to do to us from before the foundation of the world. He placed us into a real and legally secure position as “sons.”

**By Jesus Christ to Himself** – This adoption is “by” or “through” Jesus Christ to Himself – *dia Iesou Christou eis auton*. The preposition *dia* with the genitive case means “through, by means of.” It is often used with the genitive as the instrument used to accomplish something. God’s adoption of us as sons is “through, by means of” Jesus Christ. God “accomplished” His intent from before the creation of the world that we should be holy and without blemish before Him in love having predestined us to adoption as sons “by means of” His Son, Jesus Christ. The words *eis auton*, “to Himself,” speaks to the fact that the adoption of sons by Jesus Christ is to the God who predestined. How marvelous is that!

**According to the good pleasure Of His will** – “good pleasure” is *eudokian*. The Greek word comes from *eu* (well) and *dokeo* (to seem) and carries the idea of “gracious purpose, satisfaction with a good object in view, pleased with a choice.” God’s choice from before the foundation of the world to adopt us as sons was according to His gracious purpose- a purpose with which He was satisfied – as it came from “His will” (*tou thelematos autou*). The word *thelematos* speaks objectively to that which is willed. The Greeks also understood it be a desire which came from a person’s heart/emotions. God has deep feelings about His choosing us in Christ from before the foundation of the world. It is dominated by a sense of satisfaction based on what God willed to do based on His personal purposes. If someone asks why God chose them from eternity past to adopt them as sons, the answer is simple: it pleased Him to do so.

**To the praise** – *eis epainon* ... this is the strengthened form of *ainos* (a tale, narration), which developed in ancient Greece into the idea of praise, commendation. What is it that is to be praised and commended?

**Of the glory of His grace** – *doxes tes charitos autou* ... The word *doxes* (*doxa*) comes from *dokeo* (to seem). That makes *doxes* and *eudokian* (good pleasure) closely aligned. *Doxes* signifies the honor that results from a high opinion of someone or something. Paul and the other apostles use the word many times in their epistles to describe God, His Words and His Works. In the context of Ephesians 1:6, it is the glory of God's "grace." *Charitous* means "favor, kindness, gift, blessing, goodwill" and speaks of God's Divine Character. The glory of God's grace is what is to be praised and commended. Look at what He has done for us! He chose us "in Him" before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will." Is it any wonder that He should be praised and commended?

**By which He made us accepted in the Beloved** – *es echaritosen humas en to egapemeno* ... "by which" refers to God's "grace," which He freely bestowed on those He chose. The word translated as "accepted" is *echaritosen*. It also comes from the root word for "grace" and carries the idea of receiving blessings because of favor. God's acceptance of us is based on His "grace." The words *en to egapameno* are translated "in the Beloved." *Egapameno* comes from *agapao* and is a participle in the perfect tense, which speaks of an action completed in the past that has present and, in this context, permanent results. It also demonstrates the degree of love that God has for "the Beloved." Who is the "Beloved?" It is God's Son,

Jesus Christ. We are graciously favored and accepted by God in Jesus.

## For Students

Ephesians 1:3-14 is one of the greatest connected discourses about God ever written and also one of the longest sentences in the Bible at more than 200 Greek words and 260 English words. Paul addressed the deep and eternal purpose of God for the human race by revealing what He did before He created the universe, why He did it, and who benefits from it.

Paul's discourse at the beginning of Ephesians sets the tone as "theological," specifically the theology of "redemption." It is a tone Paul will continue to use through the end of Chapter 3.

Here is a basic outline of Ephesians 1:3-14. As you study this section verse-by-verse, develop your own outline based on your observations, interpretations and applications and those in your Life Group.

- I. The Plan of Redemption (1:3-14)
  - A. The work of the Father (1:3-6)
  - B. The work of the Son (1:7-12)
  - C. The work of the Spirit (1:13-14)

**Observe** – Write what you see

### **Ephesians 1:3-6**

*“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, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the*

*world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.”*

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**Question** - Ask and answer questions based on observations

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**Interpret** - What do you believe is the Holy Spirit's intent in these verses?

**Apply** - How can you apply these spiritual truths to your life?

## For Leaders

It's important to remember that these verses are part of the same sentence Paul started in verse 3. There is no change to the context or thought pattern. Verse 7 is simply a continuation of what Paul was saying in verse 6. As we saw last week, we are graciously favored and accepted by God in "the Beloved," Christ Jesus.

**In Him** – this connects directly to "the Beloved" at the end of verse 6. In the sphere of the Beloved ...

**We have redemption** – *echomen ten apolutrosin* ... verb is present tense, durative in action – "we are having redemption"... "redemption" comes from the word *apoluo*, "set free, send away, send off" ... the Greek idea of redemption here is of "deliverance, release, setting free." It was used for letting someone or something go free for ransom paid. The word *ten* is the definite article in the Greek, which points to the specific "redemption" that the writer and reader understand and the concept of ownership. The person who paid the price for redeeming something could claim legitimate ownership of that something. Christians have their "redemption" (freedom paid by ransom) "In Him," in Christ the Beloved.

**Through His blood** – *dia tou aimatos* ... the word "blood" comes from *aima*, "blood, death, murder" ... Jesus was murdered and His blood was the price paid to ransom us ... *dia* (through) is the preposition of intermediate agency ... "redemption" comes "through" the blood of Jesus Christ.

**The forgiveness of sins** – *ten aphasin ton paraptomaton* ... “forgiveness” comes from the root words *apo*, “from,” and *hiemi*, “to send” ... *aphasin* denotes a dismissal, release, cancellation, and is used for the remission of sins ... it was used during Bible times for things like releasing a prisoner and letting go of a debt ... “forgiveness” specifies the particular quality of “redemption” (Vincent) ... this word reminds us of the goat in the Old Testament that was offered as a sin offering on the Day of Atonement. The priest placed the sins of the Israelites on the goat (symbolically), then released the goat into the wilderness never to be seen by Israel again (Leviticus 16) ... “sins” is *paraptomaton* and means “a falling aside, transgression, wrongdoing, misdeed, deviation from truth and uprightness.” It speaks to results of our sinful nature.

**according to the riches of His grace** – *kata to ploutos tes charitos autou* ... the word *kata* is a preposition with the meaning of “down,” and is understood by the idea of “domination” and “control” ... the word *ploutos* means “wealth, abundance, preeminent, plentitude, riches” ... *charitos* is “grace, kindness, favor, benefit, blessing” ... it is the opposite of *krisis* and *krima*, “judgment” and “condemnation” ... though we are deserving of God’s judgment and condemnation, He forgives us completely dominated/controlled by His grace based on the redemption we have in the Blood of Jesus Christ. (Hallelujah!)

**which He made to abound toward us** – *hes eperisseusen eis hemas* ... the word “which” (*hes*) refers to God’s Grace (“riches of His grace”) ... “which He” (God) “made to abound” toward us ... the words “He made abound” comes from the single Greek word *eperisseusen* ... it means “to exceed a fixed number or measure, to cause to overflow in abundance, to

be more abundant, to be in greater abundance” ... another way of understanding the use of the word is to say something is “more than enough” ... God has made “the riches of His grace” to “overflow in abundance” toward us ... “toward us” is *eis hemas* and means that the overflowing abundance of the riches of God’s Grace is aimed specifically at us. God manifested, or made known, His Grace to us in superabundance. We are the goal of God’s Grace!

**in all wisdom and prudence** – *en pase sophia kai phronesei* ... *sophia*, which translates as “wisdom,” was a very important word to the ancient Greeks ... it included the ideas of intelligence, ability to learn, practical and speculative wisdom, sound philosophical thinking, sound judgment in all matters of life, cleverness and skill in the arts and handicrafts, and unique abilities in mathematics and the sciences ... Greeks viewed *sophia* as the most noble wisdom ... *phronesei* comes from the word *phren* (the mind) and *phroneo* (to think with the mind, have a mind set) and means “to have understanding” ... the word was used by the ancient Greeks for both prudence in governing one’s personal life wisely and for practical wisdom ... Paul’s use of *sophia* and *phronesei* here in Ephesians speaks to both the ability to think wisely and the skill to use wisdom in the challenges and demands of life.

**having made known to us the mystery of His will** – *gnorisas hemin to musterion tou thelematos autou* ... the word *gnorisas* comes from the root *ginosko* and means “to come to know, to take in knowledge, to recognize, to understand” ... *musterion* comes from the root word *mueo*, “to initiate into the mysteries,” which comes from *muo* (to shut the mouth) ... it means “hidden thing, secret” ... Paul uses the word *musterion* six times in

Ephesians, five times in 1 Corinthians, four times in Colossians, two times in Romans, two times in 1 Timothy and one time in 1 Thessalonians. The only other writer who used *musterion* multiple times was the Apostle John in Revelation ... the word has a different meaning in the Greek than the English word “mystery.” *Musterion* was used for something that was unavailable to people through natural means and could only be revealed through Divine revelation and illumination (thus the idea of information known by an initiate). Once revealed and illumined, the information was relatively easy to understand ... the “mystery” Paul wrote about here is the “mystery of His will” ... the word “will” is *thelematos* from the root word *thelo*, “to will, have in mind, intend, to purpose” ... the idea here is that God had a secret intention at a past time that He revealed at this time.

**according to His good pleasure** – *kata ten eudokian autou* ... this is the second time Paul has used the word *eudokian* (good pleasure) in context of what God does ... the first usage was in verse 5: “according to the good pleasure of His will” ... as a reminder, the Greek word comes from *eu* (well) and *dokeo* (to seem) and carries the idea of “gracious purpose, satisfaction with a good object in view, pleased with a choice.” In verse 5 and verse 9, the context is tied to God’s will. Verse 5 dealt with God’s choice from before the foundation of world to adopt us as sons. Verse 9 deals with the redemption we have through the Blood of Jesus, and the resulting forgiveness of sin, that is according to the riches of His Grace which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known to us the mystery of His will, which is dominated by “His good pleasure.” Isn’t that amazing! The will (desire, purpose) of God was dominated by His good pleasure. God’s decisions are not based on a

“whim” of a sovereign, but are instead the reasoned intention of the loving God to bless us. God does what is good for us; that’s what drives His purpose and intent.

**which He purposed in Himself** – *hen proetheto en auto* ... the word *proetheto* comes from *pro* (before) and *tithemi* (to set, put, place) and means “a setting forth, to place before, to set before one’s self, to purpose, determine.” God purposed this good pleasure “in Himself.”

**that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times** – *eis oikonomian tou pleromatos ton kairon* ... the word “dispensation” is *oikonomian* and comes from the words *oikos*, which translates as “house,” and *nomos*, which translates as “a law.” *Oikonomian* is used nine times in the New Testament: six times by the Apostle Paul and three times by Luke in his Gospel account. Paul used the word three times in Ephesians. The literal translation of *oikonomian* is “house law.” Greeks in the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD understood the word to signify the management of a household. English translators have chosen to use “dispensation” and “stewardship” to explain its meaning. Though some people have understood the word to mean a period of time or era, the idea is how someone manages and administers a household. That includes purpose and planning on the part of the manager.

This “household management” is “of the fullness of the times.” The word “fullness” (*pleromatos*) is used 17 times in the New Testament: 12 times by Paul and 5 times in the Gospels (Matthew, Mark and John). *Pleromatos* is a singular noun in the genitive case. The idea of both fullness and fulfillment. It comes from the root word *pleroo*, “to make full, to fill up.” This particular “fullness” is “of the times” (*ton kairon*). The word *kairon* is a singular noun in

the accusative case and means “a measure of time, a larger or smaller portion of time.” When used for time, *kairon* signified a fixed or definite period, an epoch time, a season or opportune season. Paul wrote that God manages His household “of the fullness of the times.” For what purpose?

**He might gather together in one all things in Christ –** *anakepsalaiosasthai ta panta en to Christo* ... God’s purpose for managing His household of the fullness of times is so that He “might gather together ...” The word *anakepsalaiosasthai* is a combination of the words *ana* (an emphatic meaning “again”) and *kephalaioo* (“to sum up, gather together in one”). A key here is the word *ana*, since it speaks of gathering “again.” It is the middle voice and means “to gather together in one, to reunite under one head.” God is going to gather again in one “all things in Christ.” What are those “all things”?

**both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him –** *ta epi tois ouranois kai ta epi tes ges en auto* ... God will gather together “again” in one all things in Christ “both which are in heaven and which are on earth” in Him. The word “heaven” is *ouranois* and was understood by Greeks of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD to mean the visible heavens (e.g. blue sky, sun, moon, stars), the air (atmosphere), and the peculiar seat and abode of God (gods), of angels, and glorified spirits. The earth (*ges*) was used by Greeks for the planet, the land, country, region, soil, ground and mankind. God, in His household management of the fullness of times, will gather together again in one all things in Christ, which includes those things “in heaven” and “which are on earth” and He will do that “in Him.” God will do all of this “in” Christ. The Father does everything for His Son and The Son does all things for The Father. What this means is that all things in heaven

and on earth were once “together” in Christ and in the management of the “fullness of times” God will “again” gather together all things in heaven and on earth in Christ.

Greeks, Romans and Jews had different ideas about God. Greek theology (from the Greek word for “god” - *theos*) was based on the belief in many gods (polytheism). Greek theology was more in line with the Greek concept of democracy. Roman theology was also polytheistic, but was heavily influenced by the Etruscan worldview and led the Roman religion to be shaped more by politics and the nobility. For purposes of political rule, Romans were also skilled in adapting cult religions from the cities and countries they conquered to work within the Roman religious system. Jews believed in one God (monotheism), which made them an oddity outside of Israel in a polytheistic culture.

It was to this diverse people that Paul preached the Gospel “of your salvation.” It was a spiritual truth that none of them had heard before, but would literally turn their worlds upside down when they believed and were sealed with the Holy Spirit.

## For Students

The Apostle Paul had amazing insights into the mysteries of God that surprised even the 12 Apostles of Christ in Jerusalem. When did Paul receive these unique revelations and how?

Paul wrote in his second letter to the Corinthians (chapter 12) that he had been caught up to the third heaven (Paradise) 14 years earlier and “heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.” Paul wrote that he experienced an “abundance of revelations” during that time.

New Testament scholars believe Paul wrote 2 Corinthians about 55 or 56 AD. Subtract 14 years from that date and we see that Paul would have been caught up to Paradise about 41 or 42 AD. Based on information about Paul’s travels found in the Book of Acts and Galatians, he would have returned to Tarsus and ministered in the regions of Syria and Cilicia at the time of the visions and revelations. That was well before Paul began his first missionary journey with Barnabas (46 or 47 AD).

People often wonder what Paul was doing for so many years between leaving Jerusalem for Tarsus and Barnabas bringing him from Tarsus to Antioch in Syria to preach and teach Gentiles about the grace of God. Jesus was preparing Paul to take the Gospel to the world with supernatural insight into the special revelation God gave him.

**Observe** – Write what you see

**Ephesians 1:7-10**

*“In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him.”* Ephesians 1:7-10

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**Interpret** - What do you believe is the Holy Spirit's intent in these verses?

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## For Leaders

### Ephesians 1:11-14

*“In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.”*

**In Him also we have obtained an inheritance** – *en ho kai eklerothemen* ... It's important to remember that we're studying one long sentence – one continual thought. The words “In Him” flow from *“that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth”* to *“also we have obtained an inheritance.”* Jesus Christ is the “in Him” that connects both the idea of all things being gathered again in Him to our having obtained an inheritance.

The Greek word *eklerothemen* is used only one time in the New Testament – here in Ephesians 1:11. It is a verb in the aorist tense, indicative mood, passive voice, which means we did nothing in the process of obtaining an inheritance at a past time. Watch how the Greek plays out.

*Eklerothemen* comes from the words *kleros* (to assign by lot) and *nemomai* (to possess) and carries the idea of being chosen by someone to be their possession (property). The word *eklerothemen* translates literally as “we were lot cast as [His] inheritance.” Another way of understanding this concept is that we were designated as a “heritage.” The idea in the Greek language is not that we did something to obtain an inheritance, but that we were made an inheritance, designated as a heritage. We are God’s heritage, His possession through the work of Jesus Christ on the Cross.

Everything Paul has shared with us so far about receiving all spiritual blessings is that it is what we have is all from God. He is the Actor and we are the receiver in all these blessings. He chose us by lot (*kleros*) out of (*ek*) to become His possession (*nemomai*). Why would God do such a thing? Remember what Paul wrote a few clauses before – “*having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself ...*” God’s Will is mysterious and His choosing us is according to HIS good pleasure which HE purposed in HIMSELF. We members of the Body of Christ are the Lord’s prized possession. All glory to God!

**being predestined according to the purpose of Him** – *prooristhentes kata prothesin tou ...* Paul’s not done yet. He next tells us we were “predestined according to the purpose of Him.” The word “predestined” is *prooristhentes*, which comes from the words *pro* (before) and *horizo* (establish boundaries, limits). Greeks in the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD understood the word to mean pre-determining boundaries and limits and marking them out. The word is a participle in the nominative case, aorist tense and passive

voice. Someone else marked us out beforehand, establishing boundaries and limits, for the purpose of the One Who marked out the boundaries.

Paul used the word earlier in verse 5 - “having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will ...”

Paul used the words “predestined” and “purpose” twice in this long sentence and both of them in the same context. In verse 5, God pre-determined us to adoption as “sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will.” In verse 11, God chose us to be His inheritance “being predestined according to the purpose of Him.”

Another way of looking at this is that God chose us beforehand and did something about it. It reminds us of what Paul wrote in verse 4 – *“just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world ...”* What we are witnessing here is the great plan and purpose of Almighty God carried out in the heavens and on the earth with us – you and me – being His prized possession. We have a unique relationship with God through the Redemptive Work of Jesus Christ on the Cross - “In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.”

**who works all things according to the counsel of His will – *ta panta energountos kata ten boulen tou thelematos autou ...*** Paul continues the theme of what God does. He “works all things according to the counsel of His will.” The word *energountos* comes from *energes*, an adjective meaning “energized, full of energy,” and has the idea of being successful at accomplishing a work goal. Ancient Greeks understood the word to carry

the idea of someone successfully carrying out a plan from one stage of the work phase to the next.

God is successful at working out “all things” (*panta* – every conceivable thing) “according to” (*kata ten* – dominated by) the “counsel of His will.” The word “counsel” is *boulen*, which has in it the idea of both intelligence and deliberation. It is intention as the result of reflection that speaks to the plan of God. *Boulen* is the counsel of God preceding His decision. (Zodhiates) It speaks to a deliberate design. God had a plan to redeem a particular people as a prized possession even before He created the first person.

Note that this is the counsel of “His will.” *Thelematos* is used most often for the Will of God in the New Testament and means “that which is desired.” Greeks of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD understood that *thelematos* was an expression of pleasure toward something. It’s important in understanding the “will” of God to see that His Will is part of His “desire.” God does all that He does according to the counsel of “His desire, His will.” God’s desire for us led Him to express His pleasure toward us in Christ redeeming us on the Cross from sin and death.

**that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory**  
– *eis to einai hemas eis epainon doxes autou tous proelpikotas en to Christo* ... “that” (*eis*) is a preposition often used to show a result. The word “trust” is *proelpikotas*, which comes from the words *pro* (before) and *elpizo* (hope for). This is another word that is found only once in the New Testament. It is a “hoped for before” (trust) in Christ. This “trust” is not the same word Paul will use later in Ephesians for “faith” and “believe” (*pisteuo*). Paul is addressing something else that was a part of God’s plan – “we,” a group of people who “hoped before” - possibly Jewish

Christians, like Paul who hoped for Israel's promised Messiah (*en to Christo* – in the Christ), who discovered God true plan in Christ as Lord and Savior of both Jews and Gentiles (a major theme in Ephesians as we will see later).

These “hoped before” people had a purpose – “should be to the praise of His glory.” *Epainon* comes from the Greek words *epi* (on, fitting) and *ainos* (praise). It means praise that is fitting, appropriate. It carries the idea of having an accurate recognition of something. *Doxes* comes from the Greek word *dokeo* (to seem) and means “opinion, judgment, view.” It is always used in the positive sense in the New Testament of having a “good opinion,” thus praise, honor and glory. Paul wrote that he along with others who had hoped before for the Christ had the purpose of being to the praise of God's Glory.

**In Him you also trusted** – *en ho kai humeis* ... Paul is writing to a church (or churches) in Asia Minor made up of mostly Gentiles. That makes the words, “In Him you also trusted,” a contrastive comparison to his earlier words, “we who first trusted in Christ.” The word “also” (*kai*) supports the idea that Paul is presenting two groups here – one being Jewish believers who had hoped before for the promised Messiah and the other being Gentile believers. The Greek word for “trusted” is not repeated in verse 13 – *en ho kai humeis* translates as “in the ones also yes.” The idea of “trust” is understood in the context, though not repeated.

**after you heard the word of truth** – *akousantes ton logon tes aletheias* ... The Gentiles were included as ones who “hoped” in the Christ “after” they “heard the word of truth.” Gentiles did not “hope before” for the Messiah because they had no part in the Messianic promise God made to Israel

(more on that in chapter 2). They were included *akousantes ton logon tes aletheias*. The word *akousantes* (participle, nominative case, aorist tense, active voice) comes from *akouo* (to hear) and means “to pay attention, understand, perceive the sense of what is said, comprehend.” What they “heard” was “the word of truth” – *ton logon tes aletheias*. *Logon* (word) is more than just the name of a word. Ancient Greeks understood it to mean the “expression of thought.” The expression of thought the Gentile Christians had heard was “of truth” (*tes aletheias*). Greeks understood the word *aletheias* to be objectively what is true in anything being considered. It is “the reality lying at the basis of an appearance; the manifested, veritable essence of a matter” (Cremer); “truth as evidenced in relation to facts” (Zodhiates).

**the gospel of your salvation** – *to euaggelion tes soterias humon* ... Paul further defined the “word of truth” the Gentiles had as “the gospel of your salvation.” The Gospel (*to euaggelion*) means “good news” and Paul adds that it is the good news of *soterias humon* (salvation of you). Greeks in the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD understood *soterias* to mean “deliverance, preservation, safety, salvation” from physical dangers. *Soterias* comes from the word *soter*, which translates as “savior, deliverer, preserver.” Ancient Greeks and Romans were familiar with “saviors” in their mythologies, but there are many differences between those mythological saviors and the True Savior, Jesus Christ. The mythological saviors were personally flawed and often petty. Jesus Christ was/is personally Perfect and always serious and magnanimous. The differences between Christ and the mythological “saviors” of Greece and Rome would have been obvious from the teaching and preaching ministries of Christians in the 1<sup>st</sup> century.

**in whom also, having believed** – *en ho kai pisteusantes* ... Paul wrote that having believed in Jesus Christ for salvation, a major aspect of the “good news” of the Gospel is that Christians received “every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.” That included the Blessings from the Ministry of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

**you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise** – *esphragisthete to pneumatic tes epaggelias to hagio* ... Ephesians is not the first time Paul taught or wrote about the Ministry of the Holy Spirit in the lives of Christians. In fact, Paul is not the first person to teach about the Holy Spirit. The doctrine (teaching) of the Holy Spirit began in Genesis 1:2 where He was “hovering over the face of the waters” of Creation. Jesus revealed His purpose for sending the Holy Spirit to the disciples (John 16:5-15), then sent Him on Pentecost to empower the disciples for their great ministry (Acts 2). Peter preached about the power of the Holy Spirit and warned disciples about the consequences of lying to Him (Acts 5). The apostles knew the importance of Christians being filled with the Holy Spirit for service (Acts 6) and Stephen spoke harshly to his enemies about their resistance of the Holy Spirit (Acts 7). The Holy Spirit demonstrated God’s decision to save Gentiles (Acts 10) and called Paul and Barnabas for the special mission of opening the door of faith for Gentiles (Acts 13).

One of the primary Ministries of the Holy Spirit is to “seal” believers. The word “sealed” is *esphragisthete* and comes from *sphragis* (a seal or signet). It is the first aorist passive indicative, which means believers were “sealed” by someone else at a past time. In this case, God sealed believers with His Holy Spirit. The seal or signet ring was used to signify ownership and security in the 1<sup>st</sup> century world. It had been done for centuries before and

is still used today in many types of personal and legal situations. It also confirmed, proved and authenticated documents sent from one individual to another. The Holy Spirit residing in a believer is proof that the believer belongs to God.

Believers are sealed by “the Holy Spirit of promise” (*to pneumatic tes epaggelias to hagio*). The word “promise” (*epaggelia*) is another legal term and was understood as a summons or a promise to give something or do something. It comes from the words *epi* (upon) and *angelo* (announce, proclaim, messenger – as in an angel) and speaks to a fitting or appropriate message. The Holy Spirit is what was promised to believers. Remember what Jesus said in John 16: “Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.” And in Acts 1: “And being assembled together with *them*, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, ‘which,’ *He said*, ‘you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” Jesus promised He would send the “Promise of the Father” and He did what He promised. The Holy Spirit living in believers is the Lord’s “seal” of ownership and security.

**who is the guarantee of our inheritance** - *hos estin arrabon tes kleronomias* ... The Holy Spirit of God is “the guarantee of our inheritance.” The word “guarantee” in Koine Greek is *arrabon*. It is a very old word which may have come into use by the Greeks from the Phoenicians. It was originally earnest money that a purchaser would deposit as a promise that they would complete the purchase. If they did not complete the purchase,

the purchaser would forfeit the earnest money. It is a type of “downpayment, pledge.” The modern Greek word *arrabona* is used for an engagement ring. It is the promise of a groom that he will complete the marriage promise and marry the bride.

What does the Holy Spirit guarantee? “our inheritance” (*tes kleronomias*) Paul used a similar word translated “inheritance” in verse 11 where he said that Christians are God’s inheritance, His heritage. The word he used here, *kleronomias*, means “inherited property, an inheritance.” The word is used 14 times in the New Testament – once each by Matthew and Mark, four times by Luke (2 in Luke and 2 in Acts) and nine times by Paul. Three of those uses are in Ephesians. The idea of Christians being “an inheritance” of God is an important theme of the epistle. The word was also used to designate someone as “an heir” of the inheritance.

**until the redemption of the purchased possession** – *eis apolutrosin tes peripoieseos* ... Paul said that the Holy Spirit is God’s guarantee that He will complete the purchase. The Spirit of God lives in the bodies of believers, and as such is a promise that God will complete the purchase. That’s why Paul wrote that the Holy Spirit is the guarantee of our inheritance “until the redemption of the purchased possession.” Christians are called “the redeemed” many times in Paul’s letters, but our redemption is still future. The word “redemption” is *apolutrosin*, which comes from the words apo (from) and lutroo (to redeem). It means “to let go free for a ransom.”

Paul wrote that the Holy Spirit is the “guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession.” The words “purchased possession” are the one Greek word *peripoieseos*. Christians are the

“purchased possession.” Jesus purchased us by redeeming us “through His blood” (verse 7). Our Lord’s Sacrifice on the Cross paid the price in full. This is another primary theme of Ephesians.

**to the praise of His glory** – *eis epainon tes doxes autou* ... The Work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Christian is “to the praise of His glory.” These are the same words Paul used in verse 12 when he wrote about those who were first to hope in Christ “should be to the praise of His glory.”

## For Students

**Observe** – Write what you see

### **Ephesians 1:11-14**

*“In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.”*

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**Interpret** - What do you believe is the Holy Spirit's intent in these verses?

**Apply** - How can you apply these spiritual truths to your life?

## For Leaders

Ephesians 1:3-14 contains the full purpose and plan of God - from before the creation of the heavens and the earth to after the creation of the new heavens and the new earth. What Paul shares in that great beginning to the Epistle to the Ephesians is the foundation of the Christian faith and practice.

The next thing Paul addresses is the need for prayer for those who have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Whenever you see the word "therefore" in Scripture, ask what the "therefore" is "there for." The word "therefore" is a thought or idea connector. It's like saying, "on the account of everything I just said, look at this."

Paul had "heard" of their "faith" in the Lord Jesus and their "love" for all the saints. The Greek words *ten kath humas pistin* (the among you faith) are literally "the down among you faith." It has a distributive sense and speaks to the faith the believers lived out day by day. Paul had heard more about their faith than they had believed in Christ; he had heard about how they lived out their belief in Christ on a daily basis. A big part of living out their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ was expressing "love for all the saints."

It's important to notice that Paul mentions both their faith in Jesus and their love for the saints. Remember what Jesus told His disciples in John 13:35? "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one

another." Love for one another is proof of faith and obedience to Christ.

Paul said that he did not "cease" to give thanks for the Christians in Ephesus. The word "cease" in the Greek is *pauomai* and means "to stop, to make an end, to take one's rest." Paul said he was continually thankful for the believers, without end. That's what we should be for each other - always thankful. Paul also said that he made mention of them in his "prayers." The Greek word for "prayers" is *proseuchon*, a word always used in the Bible for prayer to God.

One of the greatest things we can do for each other is pray for one another. It is a great demonstration of our love for God and each other and our dependence on His sovereignty in life.

Paul says that his prayer for the believers is "that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him ..." The use of the definite article "the" before "Father of glory" speaks to the fact that He is the Father to whom glory belongs.

Paul's prayer for the believers is that God would give them "the spirit of wisdom and revelation." Why would Paul ask God to give them the Holy Spirit when he just wrote a few sentences earlier that they already had the Holy Spirit? Paul prayed that God would give them *pneuma sophias kai apokalypseos*. It translates literally as "a spirit of wisdom and of revelation." [So you know, some commentators believe "spirit" refers to the Holy Spirit. Whichever is the correct understanding, the Holy Spirit must be involved in

guiding our spirit into wisdom and revelation.]

Paul already told the Ephesians that "having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise." The Holy Spirit seals every true believer in Christ and is "the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory." So, what's Paul asking God to do for believers with a "spirit of wisdom and revelation"?

The Holy Spirit is our seal and our guarantee and so much more. The Spirit of God communicates with our spirit. Look at what Paul wrote in Romans 8:

"For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, 'Abba, Father.' The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together." Romans 8:15-17

During our life as believers on earth, the Holy Spirit will communicate many things with our spirit. Two things Paul prayed that the Ephesian believers would have is "wisdom and revelation." Wisdom (*sophias*) is something the Greeks wanted to experience. They viewed wisdom as the central idea of their way of thinking. They wanted to be friends with wisdom (*philo-sophia* - friend of wisdom). Paul introduced into the Greek and Roman world a new kind of wisdom that came directly from the mind of God. That wisdom was found only in Christ who was both the power and wisdom of God (1 Corinthians 1:24). Therefore, believers in Christ are the only ones who can

have the "spirit of wisdom." The fact that Paul would pray that God would give (doe) them the spirit of wisdom shows that it's something believers need to be aware of getting from God. Every true believer in Christ has the Spirit of God, but not all believers have wisdom. Paul's example shows us the importance of praying for each other that we would all have a spirit of wisdom.

Paul also prayed that believers would have a "spirt of revelation." Revelation is *apokalypseos*, That's the same word used in the Book of Revelation - *Apokalupsis Iesou Christou* (The Revelation of Jesus Christ). The word *apokalypseos* means "an uncovering, unveiling." It was used in the Bible for pulling back a veil, uncovering, showing something that had not been seen before. Paul was praying that believers would have a spirit of "revelation." Believers can uncover truth on a spiritual basis that non-believers cannot see or comprehend. Believers can also uncover spiritual dangers and warn others about them.

Both the "wisdom and revelation" come from the Spirit of God working in our spirit. It's not something we can work up in ourselves apart from the Holy Spirit. It is something we can ask God to give us - a spirit of wisdom and revelation.

The spirit of wisdom and revelation is in the sphere of "the knowledge of Him." The word "knowledge" is *epignosis* - knowledge that is true, accurate, thorough, full, complete. It is a knowledge that recognizes, perceives, discerns. The word means knowledge that is directed toward a particular object. The words that follow, "of Him," denote the object of the knowledge.

Paul prays that God will give believers a spirit of wisdom and revelation "in the knowledge of Him." God is always the focus of our search for wisdom and revelation.

Paul's prayer for the believers is not finished yet. He also wants this for them - "the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints." Notice that Paul's prayer includes wisdom, revelation, knowledge and understanding. The words "the eyes of your understanding being enlightened" are *pephotismenous tous ophthalmous tes kardias humon* - "having been enlightened in eyes of the heart of you."

Greeks viewed the heart as the seat of reason, intelligence, and understanding, so it wasn't unusual for Paul to ask that the "eyes" (*ophthalmous*) of their "heart" (*kardias*) be "enlightened" (*pephotismenous*). The word *ophthalmous* means "sharp sight." The word *kardias* contained the idea for a person's entire mental and moral activity, including the ability to reason, will and emote. The word *pephotismenous* signifies giving light as in shining light on something. The words are a perfect participle, which refers to a past complete act that has present results. One translator (Wuest) writes - "the eyes of your heart having been enlightened with the present result that they are in a state of illumination." The perfect tense points to a continuous process of enlightenment. Paul prayed that God would sharpen their understanding by the Holy Spirit continually shining a spiritual light. On what?

"that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints ..."

The first "what" is that they might "know what is the hope of His calling." The word "know" is *eidenai* and means "to see, perceive, have knowledge." The word hope is *elpis* and means "favorable and confident expectation." Paul prayed that believers would know the hope of "His calling." That's *tes kleseos autou* (hope of the calling of him). The word *kleseos* (calling) means "invitation" and carried with it the benefits attached to the invitation. Paul prayed that believers would have a hopeful expectation of all that God included in His invitation to them.

The second "what" is "the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints." The word "riches" is *ploutos* and is used here in the sense of spiritual wealth, abundance, fulness. The wealth believers experience is "of the glory of His inheritance in the saints." Glory is *doxes* and means "high opinion, estimate, judgment, view, honor resulting from high opinion." Inheritance is used for the third time in Ephesians 1. It is *kleronomias* and means "to possess by lot, to receive of one's own, what is given to one as a possession, property received, to obtain." The words "in the saints" is *en tois hagiois* and are locative of sphere. God's inheritance is within the sphere of the saints.

Look at the three mentions of "inheritance" so far to see what Paul is telling the Ephesians:

"In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will ..." verse 11

"... who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory." verse 14

"... the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints ..." verse 18

Paul prays that believers would know how precious they/we are in God's sight as His inheritance. God is glorified in His saints and that glory is extremely valuable.

"and what *is* the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated *Him* at His right hand in the heavenly *places*, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all *things* under His feet, and gave Him *to be* head over all *things* to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all." Ephesians 1:19-23

Paul's prayer has included the request that God would give believers "the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him." Paul prayed that the "eyes of your understanding" would be enlightened. He asked that they would know "what is the hope of His calling" and "what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints."

Next, Paul prays that their knowledge would include "what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe." These are exciting words for a believer and flow logically from all that Paul has revealed about the purpose of God in earlier verses.

The words "exceeding greatness" are *hyperballon megethos*. The word *hyperballon* means "to surpass in throwing, to throw over or beyond any thing." Greeks in the 1<sup>st</sup> century understood the word to mean the idea of excelling, exceeding, transcending, surpassing, superior." *Megethos* means "greatness, vastness." It comes from the word *meegas* – "large, great, in the widest sense."

Paul writes that what is great and exceeding is the "power" of God. The Greek word is *dunameos* and means "physical power, force, might, ability." God's power is a surpassing power, a vast and great power. That should be obvious since He created the heavens and the earth, but Paul wanted the Ephesians to know that God used His almighty power in a very specific way for them. "toward us who believe" – *eis humas tous pisteuontas* – literally, "toward us the ones believing." God aimed His exceedingly great power "toward" believers. Paul wanted all believers to "know" that fact.

How did reveal His great power toward us?

“according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated *Him* at His right hand in the heavenly *places*”

*kata ten energeian tou kratous tes ischuos autou* – Paul wrote that God’s exceedingly great power toward us was “dominated by” the “operation of the might of the strength of Him.”

The word *energeian* means “working, action, operation, activity, productive work.” We get our English word “energy” from it, but the word is confined in the New Testament to supernatural energy. It speaks to energy put forth in specific operation. The word *kratous* means “dominion, strength, power, mighty deed, manifested strength.” The word *ischous* means “force, strength, ability.”

Paul used four Greek words that all carry the idea of “power” and uses all of them to describe what God did “toward us.” One Greek-English translation (Wuest) explains the words this way – “And what is the superabounding greatness of His inherent power to us who are believing ones as measured by the operative energy of the manifested strength of His might.”

All of God's power toward us was demonstrated in this action – “which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated *Him* at His right hand in the heavenly *places*.” When God raised Jesus Christ from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly place, God was demonstrating His love and power for believers.

The word “worked” is *energeken*, which Paul used in verse 19. Raising Jesus Christ from the dead was God's operative energy toward the physically dead body of His Son. The words “raised Him from the dead” are *egeiras auton ek nekron*. *Egeiras* is aorist active participle for “raise up”. The word *nekron* was used to describe the death of a body. God's power acted on the dead body of Jesus at a past time to bring Him back to physical life.

“seated *Him* at His right hand” is *kathisas en dexia autou*. The word *kathisas* means “to cause to sit, to seat.” It's active aorist. God caused Jesus to sit at His right hand. In the Old Testament, the “right hand” of God was demonstrative of His almighty power over enemies:

“Your right hand, O Lord, has become glorious in power;  
Your right hand, O Lord, has dashed the enemy in pieces.” Exodus  
15:6

“You stretched out Your right hand;  
The earth swallowed them.” Exodus 15:12

“Your hand will find all Your enemies;

Your right hand will find those who hate You.” Psalm 21:8

“You have a mighty arm;

Strong is Your hand, *and* high is Your right hand.” Psalm 89:13

“Oh, sing to the Lord a new song!

For He has done marvelous things;

His right hand and His holy arm have gained Him the victory.” Psalm  
98:1

“The right hand of the Lord is exalted;

The right hand of the Lord does valiantly.” Psalm 118:16

The Old Testament also refers to God’s “right hand” in the context of saving and upholding His chosen people.

Seating Jesus Christ at the “right hand” of God was God’s operative energy toward the physically resurrected body of His Son. Raising Jesus from the dead and seating Him next to His Father in Heaven was an action of God’s exceedingly great power toward believers. I’m awed as I consider what God has done for all of us who believe.

Paul continues his thought with these words – “far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.” This is in the context of where Jesus is seated in the “heavenlies.” It is located “far above all principality and power and might and dominion.”

The words “far above all” in the Greek are *huperano pases*. *Huperano* comes from the words *huper* (over, beyond, more than, beyond) and *ano* (above, upwards, on high, in a higher place). It was used for a thing that was “above” another thing or a place that was “above” another place. It was also used for a person who was “above” another person in rank or power.

God raised Jesus from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenlies; a place that is far above in rank and power –

“principality” – *arches* – means “beginning, a first one, a leader, ruler, government” and is used in Scripture for angels in their various roles and ranks. The word “archangel” comes from the combination of the words *arches* and *angelos* (*archangelos*). Archangels were the leading or chief angels.

“power” – *exousias* – means “delegated authority, right to act, freedom of action, right to exercise power” – the word is also used for angels. It carries the idea of both influence that comes from authority and privilege that comes from the right to exercise power.

“might” – *dunameos* – means “inherent ability, capability, physical power, force, might, ability, efficacy, energy” – the word is also used in Scripture for angels.

“dominion” – *kuristetos* – means “lordship, power” (from the word *kurios*, lord, owner, master) – the word is also used in the Scripture for angels.

Jesus Christ is “far above all” of these angelic powers!

Paul wrote that Jesus is also far above “every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.” This phrase covers every powerful being that would come into a position of power. Angels do not procreate and make more angels, but people do procreate and make more people. Each person has a name and Jesus is above every name that has or ever will be named. Paul was saying that God seated Christ at His right hand in Heaven far above every created angelic power and every human power that would ever be named. Jesus is far above all created beings.

Being seated “far above all” powers and names means that everything would be “under” Jesus’ feet. Paul explained it this way -

“And He put all *things* under His feet, and gave Him *to be* head over all *things* to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.”

The Greek reads *kai panta hupetaxen hupo tous podas autou*. The word *hupetaxen* is a military term and means “to put in subjection under one.” A military victor would often place his foot on the neck of his enemy (under his feet) and pronounce victory over the enemy. The word was also used for placing troops under the control of a leader, to arrange troop divisions. The Greeks understood well the meaning of the word.

God raised Jesus from the dead, seated Him at His right hand in Heaven above all angelic powers and every name ever named and put all in subjection to Him. Jesus Christ fought the greatest military battle of all time and won by sacrificing Himself for us. God raised up Jesus from the dead and put everything and everyone in subjection to Him (put all things under His feet).

The words “gave Him *to be* head over all *things* to the church” are *kai auton edoken kephalen huper panta te ekklesia*. Jesus Christ is God’s gift to the Church to be its “head.” The word *kephalen* in relationships means anything supreme, chief, prominent – as in a master or lord. In Christ’s relationship with believers (the Church), Jesus is the Head of the Church. He is the Head “over all things” to the “church.” The word *ekklesia*, translated “church,” means “assembly, a body of called out individuals.” The Church is the great assembly of believers in Jesus Christ, the vast “body of called out individuals.”

Paul further defined the “church” as “which is His body.” The Greek words are *hetis estin to soma autou*. The word *hetis* (which) has a qualitative nature to it and means “which is of such a nature as.” The nature of the Church is that it is “His body.” The word “body” is *soma*. Paul often used the word when describing the relationship of believers to the One they believed, Jesus Christ. Christians are the “body” of Christ. Jesus is the “head” of the “body.” He is over the Church, yet connected to the Church in a life-giving and directing fashion. The “body” gets its life and direction from the “head.” Jesus is our King and our Lord, but His relationship to His Church is more personal, more intimate – He is connected to His body as

its Head.

“the fullness of Him who fills all in all” – the word “fullness” is *pleroma* and means “that which is or has been filled.” The word was used for how a military ship would be “filled” with sailors and soldiers. Paul said that the “church” is the “fullness” of Christ “who fills all in all.” The Church is the Body of Christ and that which is filled by Him, which is “all.” Jesus Christ is seated at the right hand of God in Heaven and is “far above” every spiritual and physical power and name in the universe. All things are under His feet and He is the Head over all things to the church, “which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

## For Students

Paul often spoke about “laying” foundations. He told the Corinthians that God had called him to be “as a wise master builder” and lay “the foundation.” Paul was quick to add - “for no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” (1 Corinthians 3)

Ephesians 1:3-14 is the “foundation” Paul revealed about Christianity. As we’ve already seen, Paul presented in a powerful display of spiritual wisdom and insight how God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit worked together from “before the foundation of the world” to – 1. Bless us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, 2. Choose us in Christ for the purpose of our being holy and without blame before God, 3. Mark us out beforehand for adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to God, 4. Accept us in the Beloved, 5. Redeem us through the Blood sacrifice of Jesus Christ, 5. Make known the mystery of His will for us to us, 6. Give us everlasting inheritance, 7. Seal us with the Holy Spirit of promise, 8. Guarantee our inheritance until our redemption as God’s purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

What’s next? Paul’s prayers for God’s people. Because Paul knew the majesty and depth of God’s purpose, Paul also knew the challenges Christians would face in living out God’s purpose. Look carefully at what Paul prayed for the Ephesians because it is what we need to pray for each other.

**Observe** – Write what you see

**Ephesians 1:15-18**

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**Question** - Ask and answer questions based on observations

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**Interpret** - What do you believe is the Holy Spirit's intent in these verses?

**Apply** - How can you apply these spiritual truths to your life?

## For Students

Ephesians is known as one of the great “theological” writings of Scripture and is often given this general outline:

Chapters 1 – 3 ... Doctrinal

Chapters 4 – 6 ... Practical

In the first half of Ephesians, Paul explained the great “teachings” he received directly from God for the Church. In the second half of Ephesians, Paul explained the great “actions” God expects from His people.

It’s important to remember that good Theology is both “doctrinal” and “practical” at the same time. Wrong doctrine leads to wrong practice. Wrong practice often leads to wrong doctrine.

A church that emphasizes **doctrine without practice** can become a “dead” group of people accomplishing almost nothing good for God. A church that emphasizes **practice without doctrine** can become a “dangerous” group of people accomplishing the wrong things in the Name of God.

The best churches are those that emphasize both “doctrine” and “practice,” in balance. May we be that kind of church.

**Observe** – Write what you see.

**Ephesians 1:19-23**

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**Question** - Ask and answer questions based on observations

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**Interpret** - What do you believe is the Holy Spirit's intent in these verses?

**Apply** - How can you apply these spiritual truths to your life?

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