

BELIEVERS' SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS

M O N D A Y

The Place of the Passage

Paul begins Ephesians by revealing that the church is a spiritual entity, initiated and formed by Christ, which leads to a new social identity. The blessings of the church's heavenly identity have become the basis for the new way of living Paul exhorts the church to practice here on earth.

Read

- ☐ [Ephesians 1:1-14](#)

The Big Picture

Ephesians 1:1-14 shows that the church has always been part of God's plan. God forms the church in Christ to reveal His glory. This is a demonstration of God's grace based on the work of Christ; God intends for the church to accomplish His will in the here and now, not just in heaven.

Read

- ☐ [Ephesians 1:1-14](#) again. This time, make note of significant words and concepts.

Question to Consider

- What stands out as you read? Write down your initial thoughts and impressions about this letter.

Reflection and Discussion

Today we do a deep dive into [Ephesians 1:1-2](#). Read through [Ephesians 1:1-14](#) again and then review the following questions concerning this introductory section to Ephesians' discussion of the church. Write your observations in a journal or the space provided.

Study: Apostolic Greeting and Initiation of Themes (Eph. 1:1-2)

- Paul writes to this church as an “apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God.” (1:1) As an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, Paul has God-given authority. **In an age where we are inundated with information from questionable sources, what confidence does Paul’s title of apostle give us in the truth proclaimed in this letter?**
- Want to learn more about the Apostle Paul? Check out [this interview](#) with New Testament and Jewish Studies scholar, N.T. Wright.

Taking it Personally

Each of Paul’s 13 letters **begin** with the phrase: “Grace to you” (as seen in [Ephesians 1:2](#)). Each of Paul’s 13 letters **end** with, “Grace be with you” (as seen in [Ephesians 6:24](#)). *Why does Paul always use this format?*

Unique, special grace is flowing through God’s Word over His people as His truth is preached. When the speaking of God’s word is over (or in our case, the reading of God’s Word), Paul says God’s grace is then intended to be taken with us as we go out into the world: in our cars, workplaces, and schools; as we ride on the metro; as we conduct meetings over Zoom; as we eat dinner with friends; as we play with our children. No matter where we find ourselves, we are meant to be aware of God’s grace with us in our everyday, ordinary moments—and let His grace influence the way we live in those moments. Consider your day today or yesterday...

Questions to Consider

- How has God’s grace been with you in your everyday, ordinary moments?
- Could you have relied on His grace more? How would your day have looked different?

Definition: Predestination (Ephesians 1:5)

God's sovereign choice of people for redemption and eternal life. Also referred to as "election."

Reflection and Discussion

Today we will look more in depth at Ephesians 1:3-10. Read through [Ephesians 1:1-14](#) again and then review the following questions. Write your own thoughts in a journal or the space provided.

Study: Revelation of Spiritual Blessings in Christ from the Father (Eph. 1:3-10)

- Paul offers praise to God for the spiritual blessings (1:3) listed in the verses to follow. These blessings are anchored "in Christ"—in His person and work in salvation—and "in the heavenly places."
 - ❑ Reread [Ephesians 1:3-10](#), and circle every reference you see to "in Christ," "in Jesus," or "in him." List the spiritual blessings that we receive through Christ mentioned in Ephesians 1:4-6.

- Paul includes "redemption" and "forgiveness of our trespasses" among the blessings lavished upon believers by grace (1:7). Here we see the need for Christ's atoning work.
 - ❑ Read [Leviticus 17:11](#) and [Hebrews 9:22](#). Then take a moment to write out a prayer of thanksgiving to God. You might want to start by thanking Him for saving you by grace through the atoning blood of Christ. Then consider writing out your gratitude to God for the spiritual blessings that you are particularly thankful for today.

Reflection and Discussion

Today we will look more in depth at [Ephesians 1:11-14](#). Read through Ephesians 1:1-14 again and then review the following questions. Write your own thoughts in a journal or the space provided.

Study: Inheritance in Christ, Sealed by the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:11-14)

- According to Ephesians 1:11, how do believers gain an inheritance in Christ?
- According to verse 12, what is the goal of this inheritance?

Taking it Personally

The Holy Spirit seals Christ's redemptive work. Hearing the truth of the gospel is what makes this sealing possible (Eph. 1:13). Imagine Ephesians 1:3-14 as a description of a beautiful tapestry, each of these glorious strands woven together for your salvation:

God chose us before the foundation of the world, predestined to be adopted through His Son, Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:4-6).

This could only take place through the redeeming blood of Jesus Christ, the atonement for our sins (Eph. 1:7).

God lavishly bestowed upon us grace, wisdom and understanding, making known to us the mystery of His good plan: that everything would be brought together through His Son, Jesus Christ, the Messiah (1:8-10). Through Christ we have also received an inheritance (Eph. 1:11) so that we can bring praise to God's glory (Eph. 1:12).

Upon hearing and believing, we were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit (1:13), Who is the down payment of our inheritance (1:14).

What role, then, does belief play in this entire tapestry of salvation discussed above?

Personal Implications

This week we have learned about the grace of God in electing us to salvation, and the powerful assurance of our salvation we have in being sealed by the Holy Spirit. Read [Ephesians 1:1-14](#) and spend some time reading about Election and Guarantor. **What hope do you find in these theological truths?**

Theological Grounding: Election

Just as the Lord lovingly chose Israel from among the nations as his own people ([Deut. 7:7-8](#); [10:15](#); [Hos. 11:1](#); [Mal. 1:2](#)), so in mercy the Lord has lovingly chosen those he will save from all the people of the earth ([Rom. 9:11-13](#); [Eph. 1:4-5](#)). This choice is part of his eternal decree, occurring before the creation of the world or any of its inhabitants ([Eph. 1:5](#); [2:10](#)). The choice is in Christ, not man, therefore it does not rest on any foreseen decision of any human person ([Eph. 2:9](#)). Gloriously, in His act of election, God chooses to save people who deserve his greatest wrath and who would otherwise never choose to come to him. Election is the only way anyone receives salvation in Christ. Those who are chosen will experience God's eternal mercy ([Rom. 8:29-30](#)).

Theological Grounding: Guarantor

When the Lord wished to assure Abraham that he would receive the promised inheritance, the Lord Himself sealed the covenant, making the promises depend on His faithfulness alone ([Gen. 15:7-21](#)). Similarly, in order to guarantee the work of salvation from beginning to end, the Lord gives the Spirit of God as the guarantor (or down payment) of our inheritance ([Ephesians 1:14](#)). The presence of the indwelling Spirit in believers secures salvation for the elect forever. It guarantees that those predestined to be holy and blameless will not lose the gift of Christ, but will acquire its full possession.

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Taking it Personally

- ❑ Spend some time today writing out your personal tapestry of salvation (see yesterday's reflection), including details of God's involvement, large and small. Then spend time thanking God for the ways He so beautifully intervened in your life and saved you. Consider sharing this "tapestry" (also known as a testimony) with a friend, family member, roommate, child, or spouse.

Prayer

- ❑ Take a moment now to pause and ask for the Lord's grace and help as you continue in this study of Ephesians. Look back through this unit of study and reflect on some key things that the Lord may be teaching you—and take note of things to review again in the future.

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