



ENOGERA BAPTIST CHURCH
Jesus changes lives

EPHESIANS: PART #1 SALVATION



Ephesians #1 – We Are Chosen (1:1-6)

Ephesians 1:5 In love he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ

NOTE FOR LEADERS

This document is intended to be used as a discussion *guide*, rather than a curriculum. As small group leaders, please feel free to lead through the topic as most appropriate for your group.

HOUSEKEEPING

Things going at the moment:

- **AGM – Members meeting this week, after the service** (Sunday Aug 25th)
- **Church Wide Prayer Night:** Wednesday 4th September 7pm
- **Alpha Course Launch! Thursday 29th August. Register online!**
 - **Pray** – God’s Spirit to draw people and open up their hearts
 - **Invite** – friends and family to attend
 - **Cater** – Food is important for loving our guests, so if you’d like to serve by cooking, that’d be highly valued.



EPHESIANS #1 – WE ARE CHOSEN (1:1-6)

REFLECT

This is a time to generate some discussion by reflecting on the ideas in this week's message. Some ideas include:

- Ask the group to debrief for those who have missed the sermons on Sunday
- What stood out? Do you have any questions?
- Were there any special moments of clarity where God spoke to you clearly?

DIG INTO THE WORD

Let's dig a little deeper. Use the biblical text to discover what God reveals to us in his Word.

Ephesians 1:1-14

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

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

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

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,⁴ even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love ⁵ he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. ⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace,⁸ which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight ⁹ making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ ¹⁰ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

¹¹ In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, ¹² so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. ¹³ In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.



APPLY

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scriptures apply directly to their lives. Get group members to talk about the real-life implications of the study.

1. **DISCUSS:** How are we to apply these things? Are there any immediate implications?
2. **IDENTITY:** How do people define themselves? By what we've done to others and what others have done to us. We let these things, either our sin, or the sin of others, shape our very identity.
3. **HOW DOES GOD DEFINE YOU?** *Who God says you are, is who you are; untruth doesn't define you. What would it take for you to believe that God is for you?*
4. **WE ARE BLESSED IN CHRIST (v3-4):** *Our receiving of "every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places" is because we are found "in Christ". Two Spiritual Blessings we spoke about this week was our being Chosen by God and His Adopting of us. What comforts come with these blessings? (Love, Security, Wonder, Beauty, Joy, Relationship, Peace, Purpose and more...). Do you regularly ask God to fulfil these blessings in your life now as it is currently fulfilled "in heavenly places"?*
5. **WE ARE CHOSEN IN CHRIST (v4, 5, 11):** *There will be topics in our faith that are, by nature, mysterious (Deut 29:29) and unknowable about God because He has chosen to not reveal it perfectly to us.*
 - a. Do you have a healthy relationship with embracing the mystery of God? /Are you comfortable with trusting God in the mystery of His ways that He doesn't always explain to us?
 - b. *Despite the mystery, it is clear here and in other scriptures that God elects us unconditionally. What does it mean that God elects unconditionally?*
 - c. *God has decided to love you before you did anything righteous or sinful, in fact, before the very foundations of the world, He loved you! Do you find this idea hard to embrace or comforting? Why?*
6. **WE ARE BLESSED BY BEING CHOSEN IN CHRIST: I AM CHOSEN**
 - a. *God has Chosen you for two reasons: to be Holy and Blameless (v4) and for Adoption as sons (v5). We have been chosen for salvation so that we would be changed into something more wonderful – into the likeness of God's Son and be granted the blessing of Adoption.*
 - b. **HOLY AND BLAMELESS:** *God's grand purpose for you is to conform you into the image of the Son. Have you considered this as the answer to the common question: What's God's will for my life? How does this answer make you feel?*
 - c. **ADOPTION:** *Do you make much of the thought of being God's child? How does this encourage and build you up in the security of your salvation?*
 - d. How does this motivate you to live in obedience to God and strive for holiness?

PRAY

Pray for one another as we seek to embrace our true identity in Christ.

Pray that we would know the assurance that comes from knowing we are *chosen in Christ*.



NOTES

1:1–2 Letter Opening. The opening of Ephesians, as in other Pauline letters, contains the names of the sender and recipients, and a greeting.

1:1 apostle. See note on 4:11. **God’s holy people.** Paul regularly calls his readers this (Rom 1:7; 1 Cor 1:2; 2 Cor 1:1; Phil 1:1) not because they are pious but because they believe in the definitive cleansing of sins made possible by Christ (Acts 13:38–39). By faith, Christ, through his death, has made them holy (Eph 5:25–27; cf. Acts 15:9), i.e., set them apart to be God’s people of the new covenant. Nevertheless, believers must also reflect the holiness of the God who called them (v. 4). By appropriating a term that was used for God’s covenantal people in the OT (Exod 19:6; 22:31), Paul reminds his Gentile readers that they stand within the stream of God’s redemptive history.

1:3–3:21 Calling of the Church Within Christ’s Cosmic Reconciliation. Paul unfolds for his readers God’s eternal plan to unify all things in Christ, and explains how the church is to understand its call and identity—who it is, how it came about, and what its mission is within this plan.

1:3–14 Praise for Spiritual Blessings in Christ. Appearing as one long sentence in the original Greek, this section is often called a “doxology.” Here, Paul praises God for his spiritual blessings in Christ (v. 3). These blessings are based on the work of the triune God: election and adoption by the Father (vv. 4–6), redemption in Christ (vv. 7–12), and sealing in the Spirit (vv. 13–14). Each of these three subsections concludes with a similar refrain that praises God’s glory (vv. 6, 12, 14). This entire section presents a grand sweep of God’s saving purposes. It begins with our election from “before the creation of the world” (v. 4) and climaxes with the pronouncement of God’s will to bring unity to the cosmos under Christ (v. 10).

1:3 heavenly realms. Where not only God and the ascended Christ reside but also the evil spiritual powers reside (1:20–21; 6:12; cf. 3:10). The heavenly realms in Ephesians must be understood from Paul’s eschatological perspective of two ages: “the present age” and “the one to come” (v. 21; cf. Matt 12:32). We currently live in the overlap of these two ages. The age to come has been inaugurated by the exaltation and enthronement of Christ to God’s “right hand ... far above all rule and authority” (vv. 20–21). The present age nevertheless continues until the final consummation of the age to come when Christ returns. As the heavenly realms are still part of the “present evil age” (Gal 1:4; cf. Eph 5:16), evil powers continue to be active in the heavenly realms until the final consummation, when they will be completely eradicated (1 Cor 15:24–26). Through our union with Christ, believers who are physically on earth also presently reside with Christ in the heavenly realms (Eph 2:6). Believers consequently share in every blessing that belongs to and comes from the heavenly realms. At the same time, our battle is not against “flesh and blood,” but against the powers that war against God in these realms (6:12). **every spiritual blessing.** Verses 4–14 specify the contents of these blessings, which cover the whole scope of God’s saving work in Christ. This includes our election, adoption to sonship, redemption, forgiveness, and sealing. These blessings are spiritual not so much in the sense that they are non-physical but in the sense that the Spirit of God graciously gives them. **in Christ.** Paul highlights Christ’s centrality in vv. 3–14 by repeatedly noting that God’s plan of reconciliation is accomplished



and its blessings made available “in Christ” (vv. 3, 9, 12, 13), “in him” (vv. 4, 7, 11, 13), and “in the One he loves” (v. 6). See Introduction: Themes (Christ).¹

1:4 he chose us. In vv. 3–14 Paul emphasizes God’s eternal decision to grant salvation to believers in the following ways: “he chose us” (v. 4), “he predestined us” (v. 5), and “we were also chosen, having been predestined” (v. 11). Since this divine election of believers occurred “before the creation of the world” (v. 4), it is based solely on God’s gracious decision and not on any human merit (cf. God’s choosing Israel to be his treasured possession in Deut 7:6–8, or God’s choosing of Jacob over Esau before they “were born or had done anything good or bad” in Rom 9:11). See also John 5:21; 6:37, 39, 44; 15:16; 17:6; Rom 8:29–30; 9:6–26; 11:5, 7, 28; Col 3:12; 1 Thess 1:4; 2 Thess 2:13; Titus 1:1; 1 Pet 1:1; 2:9; Rev 17:8. **to be holy and blameless.** The goal, not the basis, of God’s election is ethical purity. See note on v. 1.

1:5 predestined. Predetermined. See note on v. 4. **adoption to sonship.** In the Roman world, sons were adopted to carry on the family name and maintain property ownership. The adopted son was no longer responsible to his natural father but was only responsible to his new adoptive father. Similarly, all believers, male and female, who receive the Spirit that brings about adoption (Rom 8:15, 23) acquire a new status with its accompanying privileges and responsibilities. We are no longer obligated to our old father, the devil (John 8:38, 44).

1:6 to the praise. Our election and redemption is ultimately for God’s glory. See vv. 12, 14. **the One he loves.** Echoes what the Father pronounced at Jesus’ baptism and transfiguration (Matt 3:17; 17:5).

1:11 we. Probably refers to Paul and Jewish believers. The “we” contrasts with “you” (Gentile believers) in v. 13, and this we-you contrast anticipates the Jew-Gentile issue in ch. 2. **chosen.** Jewish believers in Christ “were made heirs” (see NIV text note), or more specifically, God claimed them as his inheritance and possession in much the same way that he claimed Israel as his possession and heritage in the OT (Exod 19:5; Deut 4:20; 9:29; 32:9). **predestined.** See note on v. 4. **works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will.** Emphasizes God’s providence and sovereignty. Everything that happens results from God’s will in some way, and everything that God planned will certainly come to pass (Dan 4:35; Rom 11:36). At the same time, God never does evil and Scripture never blames God for evil or sin (Job 1:21–22; Rom 5:12). Humans are still responsible for their actions (Eccl 7:29; Rom 9:19–20). They should do right and not grieve the Spirit (Eph 4:30).

Introduction to Themes: Christ

Ephesians, like Colossians, presents a cosmic Christ. Christ brings all of history to completion (1:10). He is seated at the right hand of God, exalted above all spiritual powers, and is the authoritative head over everything (1:20–22). He possesses “boundless riches” (3:8), and he freely gives gifts to the church (4:7–11). While focusing on Christ’s resurrection, exaltation, and enthronement, Ephesians also speaks of his death on the cross as the basis for redemption and reconciliation (1:7; 2:13, 16; 5:2,

¹ Moo, D. J. (2015). [The Letters and Revelation](#). In D. A. Carson (Ed.), *NIV Zondervan Study Bible: Built on the Truth of Scripture and Centered on the Gospel Message* (p. 2399). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.



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25). Ephesians, like Colossians, uses the phrase “in Christ” more than Paul’s other letters. This expression is probably rooted in Paul’s understanding of Christ as a corporate figure. As Adam determines the fate of all who belong to him, Christ also determines the fate of those who exercise faith and are “in him” (see Rom 5:12–21; 1 Cor 15:22). Thus, those who are “in Christ” are united with him and participate in his death, resurrection, and new life. They have a new identity that necessitates reorienting one’s entire existence (2 Cor 5:14–17). In Ephesians and Colossians, Paul expands the use of this language to a cosmic scale such that the creation and redemption of the cosmos is also said to be “in Christ” (Eph 1:9–10; 3:11; Col 1:16–17). Despite the overlapping occurrences of this expression between the two letters, Ephesians differs by using it more significantly to denote the basis on and the sphere in which believers have fellowship not only with God but also with one another. Vertically, Christ connects God and the church; horizontally, Christ connects all believers, even those who come from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds.²

REFERENCE:

Developed with the help of the following:

- ESV Study Bible, Crossway.
- NIV Zondervan Study Bible.

² Moo, D. J. (2015). [The Letters and Revelation](#). In D. A. Carson (Ed.), *NIV Zondervan Study Bible: Built on the Truth of Scripture and Centered on the Gospel Message* (p. 2397). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.