

EPHESIANS 1 | Blessed in the Beloved

Opening Greeting

1 Paul, an apostle¹ of Messiah Jesus by the desire (θέλημα)² of God. To the saints who are in Ephesus³ and are believers (πιστός)⁴ in Messiah Jesus.⁵ 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Messiah.

Blessed in the Beloved

3 Blessed (εὐλογητός)⁶ be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Messiah, who blessed (εὐλόγησεν, aor.) us in Messiah with every spiritual blessing (εὐλογία) in the heavenly places,⁷ 4 even as he chose (ἐκλέγομαι, aor.)⁸ us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love 5 he predestined (προορίζω, aor.) us for adoption (υιοθεσία)⁹ to himself as sons¹⁰ through Jesus Messiah, according to the good pleasure (εὐδοκία) of his desire (θέλημα), 6 to the praise of his glorious grace,¹¹ with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. 7 In him we have redemption (ἀπολύτρωσις)¹² through his

¹ See *Apostle*.

² θέλημα is better translated “desire” rather than “will,” which carries too much theological baggage. See *God’s Will*.

³ “In Ephesus” is not found in the earliest Pauline papyrus (Chester Beatty 46). Some propose there was a blank space left for each church to fill in its own name. See *Ephesians*.

⁴ The adjective πιστός can have an active (“trusting”) or passive (“trustworthy, reliable”) meaning.

⁵ Believers have two homes: “in Ephesus” and “in Messiah.” We are simultaneously citizens of two kingdoms.

⁶ Vv. 3-14 are one sentence in the original Greek. The central idea is the blessedness of God the Father, though all three members of the Trinity are mentioned. This paragraph “bursts the boundaries of language” (Steve Reardon).

⁷ “[P]ert. to being associated with a locale for transcendent things and beings (*BDAG*, 388).

⁸ God’s choice of believers could be corporate or individual. It could be based on foreknowledge or not based on foreknowledge. Based on v. 13, the best way to understand the concept of choice and election is that believers are chosen based on God’s foreknowledge for riches and blessing.

⁹ Emperors Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Nero, Trajan, Hadrian, Antonius Pius, and Marcus Aurelius were all adopted sons. **Ro 8:15** 15 ... You have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption (υιοθεσία) as sons by which we cry out, Abba! Father! **Ro 9:4** 4 ... Who are Israelites, to whom belongs the υιοθεσία as sons, and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law.... **Ga 4:5** 5 ... So that he might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the υιοθεσία as sons.

¹⁰ The typical Greco-Roman family is the background of Paul’s discussion.

¹¹ χάρις is a term of benefaction. It relates to the benefactor system of the ancient world.

¹² See *Redemption*.

blood, the forgiveness¹³ of our trespasses, according to the riches¹⁴ of his grace, 8 which he lavished (περισσεύω, aor.)¹⁵ upon us, in all wisdom (σοφία) and insight (φρόνησις)¹⁶ 9 making known to us the mystery (μυστήριον)¹⁷ of his desire, according to his good pleasure (εὐδοκία), which he set forth in Messiah 10 as a plan (οἰκονομία)¹⁸ for the fullness (πλήρωμα)¹⁹ of time, to sum up (ἀνακεφαλαιώω)²⁰ all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

Guaranteed Inheritance

11 In him we have received an inheritance (κληρόω, aor. pass.), having been predestined (προορίζω, aor. pass.) according to the purpose (πρόθεσις)²¹ of him who is working all things according to the resolution (βουλή)²² of his desire, 12 so that we who were the first to hope in Messiah 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 (πιστεύω, aor.) in him, were sealed (σφραγίζω, aor.) with the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is the first instalment (ἀρραβών) of our inheritance (κληρονομία) until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

Prayer for Enlightenment

15 For this reason,²³ because I have heard of your [phase one] faith (πίστις) in the Lord Jesus and your [phase two] love (ἀγάπη) toward all the saints, 16 I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Messiah, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit²⁴ of wisdom and of revelation (ἀποκάλυψις) in the

¹³ See *Forgiveness*.

¹⁴ **Ro 9:23-24** 23 ...In order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory— 24 even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles? **Ro 10:12** 12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek. For the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him.

¹⁵ “[T]o cause someth. to exist in abundance, *cause to abound*...of things that one greatly increases” (*BDAG*, 805).

¹⁶ “[T]he ability to understand, understanding, insight, intelligence” (*BDAG*, 1066).

¹⁷ “[T]he unmanifested or private counsel of God, (*God's*) *secret*, the secret thoughts, plans, and dispensations of God” (*BDAG*, 662).

¹⁸ “[S]tate of being arranged, *arrangement, order, plan*...of God’s unique plan *private plan, plan of salvation*, i.e. *arrangements for redemption of humans* (in the pap of arrangements and directions of authorities” (*BDAG*, 697). See *Dispensations*.

¹⁹ “...[T]he state of being full, *fullness* of time” (*BDAG*, 830). **Ga 4:4** 4 ...When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son.... **Col 1:19** 19 For in [Jesus] all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell....

²⁰ “[U]sed of literary or rhetorical summation *sum up, recapitulate*” (*BDAG*, 65).

²¹ “[T]hat which is planned in advance, *plan, purpose, resolve, will*” (*BDAG*, 869).

²² “[T]hat which one decides, *resolution, decision*” (*BDAG*, 181).

²³ This paragraph is one sentence in the Greek, just as vv. 3-14 are. In both sentences, the Father is the subject.

²⁴ **Is 11:2** 2 ...The Spirit of the Yahweh shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of Yahweh.

knowledge (ἐπίγνωσις)²⁵ of him, 18 having the eyes of your hearts enlightened (φωτίζω, perf. pass.), that you may know (οἶδα) what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches (φωτίζω)²⁶ of his glorious inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power (δύναμις) toward us who believe, according to the working of his great strength (ἰσχύς) 20 that he worked in Messiah when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all rule (ἀρχή), authority (ἐξουσία), power (δύναμις), and dominion (κυριότης), and above every name that is named, not only in this age (αἰών) but also in the one to come. 22 And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head (κεφαλή) over all things to the Church (ἐκκλησία), 23 which is his body (σῶμα), the fullness (πλήρωμα) of him who fills (πληρόω, pres.) all in all.

²⁵ “[K]nowledge, recognition in our lit. limited to transcendent and moral matters” (BDAG, 369).

²⁶ “[P]lentiful supply of someth., a *wealth, abundance*” (BDAG, 832).

Commentary

1. Opening Greeting (Eph 1:1-2).

- a. Paul is an apostle by God's desire, not his own. By writing this letter, he is fulfilling God's directive as ambassador to the the nations. His letter will serve to build up the worldwide body of Messiah. It definitely has done that.
- b. Paul treats his audience as believers. Their salvation is not in doubt. If there are unbelievers within the local church community at Ephesus, Paul isn't writing to them. He assumes his readers are justified and adopted into God's family.

2. Blessed in the Beloved (Eph 1:3-10).

- a. Paul jumps right in to praise the Father (v. 1) for his plan (v. 10) to bless us richly (v. 7) in his beloved Son, Jesus (v. 6).
- b. The entire Trinity, the whole of God, is involved in our salvation.
 - (1) The Father:
 - (a) Blessed us in Messiah with every spiritual blessing (v. 3, 6).
 - (b) Chose us in Messiah before the foundation of the world (v. 4).
 - (c) Set forth his purpose in Messiah (v. 9).
 - (d) Is uniting in Messiah all things in heaven and on earth (v. 10).
 - (2) The Son:
 - (a) Redeems us through his blood (v. 7). See *Redemption*.
 - (3) The Spirit:
 - (a) Seals us (v. 13).
 - (b) Guarantees our future inheritance (v. 14).
 - (4) It takes a Trinity to save us. If God were not a Trinity, we could not be saved.
- c. God has a plan for history. He is purposeful.
 - (1) The incredibly "according to's" in ch. 1 relate to the Father's purpose:
 - (a) The Father predestined us for adoption according to his purpose (v. 5).
 - (b) We have redemption and forgiveness according to the riches of the Father's grace (v. 7).
 - (c) The Father made known to us the mystery according to his purpose (v. 9).
 - (d) We have been predetermined according to the Father's purpose (v. 11).
 - (e) The Father works all things according to the counsel of his desire (v. 11).
 - (f) The Father works his great power toward us according to his great might (v. 19).
 - (2) God's plan:
 - (a) Covers eternity past (v. 4), the present age (v. 10), and eternity future (v. 21).
 - (b) Covers angelic and human history (v. 10, 21).
 - (c) Cannot be stopped (v. 10).
- d. God intends to bless us (vv. 3, 6) with incredible riches (vv. 7, 18) in Messiah.
 - (1) God is no bug-a-bear or party pooper. He wants to bless us. He's always wanted to bless us. But that blessing is on his terms, not ours.
 - (2) Several blessings are listed in this chapter:
 - (a) Election (v. 4).
 - (b) Predestination (v. 5, 11).
 - (c) Adoption (v. 5).

- (d) Redemption (v. 7).
- (e) Forgiveness (v. 7).
- (f) Inheritance (vv. 11, 14, 18).
- (g) Hope (v. 18).
- (h) Power (v. 19).
- (3) Everyone who is in Jesus gets all these blessings. There are no exceptions. Paul says “we” (vv. 3, 6, 18).
- (4) To be blessed, there is only one condition: believe in Jesus (vv. 13, 19).
- e. God’s plan centres on one person—his Son, Messiah Jesus.
 - (1) We are blessed in Messiah (vv. 3, 6).
 - (2) We were chosen in Messiah before the foundation of the world (v. 4).
 - (3) We are adopted as sons through Messiah according to the Father’s purpose (v. 5).
 - (4) The Father set forth his purpose in Messiah (v. 9).
 - (5) The Father’s plan is to unite in Messiah all things in heaven and on earth (v. 10).
 - (6) The Father raised Messiah from the dead and seated him at his right hand (v. 20).
 - (7) The Father put all things under Messiah’s feet (v. 22).
 - (8) Messiah is head over all things (v. 22).
 - (9) Messiah fills all in all (v. 23).

3. **Guaranteed Inheritance (Eph 1:11-14).**

- a. We have obtained an inheritance in Messiah (v. 11).
- b. The Spirit is the guarantee of our inheritance (v. 14).
- c. We will acquire possession of our inheritance (v. 14).
- d. Our acquiring possession of our inheritance will be to the praise of the Father’s glory (v. 14).
- e. Our inheritance is glorious and involves great riches (v. 18).
- f. No unbeliever has an inheritance in the kingdom of Messiah and God (Eph 5:5).
- g. See *Inheritance*.

4. **Prayer for Enlightenment (Eph 1:15-23).**

- a. Faith (v. 15), love (v. 15), and hope (v. 18) are the three central virtues of the Church. There are mentioned together here and elsewhere.
 - (1) **1 Co 13:13** 13 So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three. But the greatest of these is love.
 - (2) **1 Th 1:3** 3 ...Remembering before our God and Father your work of faith, labour of love, and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Messiah
- b. We need spiritual insight to know and understand God’s blessings toward us.
 - (1) We need wisdom (v. 17), revelation (v. 17), knowledge (v. 17), and enlightenment (v. 18).
 - (2) The Spirit is the one who reveals and teaches (vv. 17-18) us about the Father.
 - (3) This knowledge is for every believer in the Church, not an elite.
- c. There are three things every believer urgently needs to understand:
 - (1) Hope we have (v. 18).
 - (2) Riches we have (v. 18).
 - (3) Power we have (v. 19).

- d. The power the Father exercises towards us is the same power that raised Jesus from the dead and seated him (v. 20) far above all rule and every name (v. 21).
 - (1) With all of his omnipotence, God is for us. God is working his incredible power toward us right now.
 - (2) Raising Jesus' from the grave to supremacy over the universe is the greatest exercise of the Father's power.
- e. Jesus is supreme over absolutely everything (v. 21). He fills all in all (v. 23).
 - (1) Notice the repetition of the "all" word group in ch. 1 (vv. 10-11, 21-23).
- f. The Church is huge important in God's plan.
 - (1) The Father gave Messiah to the Church (v. 22).
 - (2) The Church is Messiah's body (v. 23).
 - (3) The Church is the fulness of Messiah (v. 23).
 - (4) As believers, we go from spiritual death (Eph 2:1) to being seated with Messiah at the Father's right hand (Eph 2:6), far above all rule, authority, power, and dominion (v. 21). This is due to God's great power (v. 19), grace (Eph 2:8), and wisdom (Eph 3:10)!
 - (5) This means our lives, as believers, have a real, definite, eternal purpose. We are God's plan A. We are special.
 - (6) We are therefore to treat every human being as extremely valuable. Not only is each human being created in the image of God, but each has has the potential to be adopted into the Father's family, just as we have been.