

Ephesians 1 - New International Version (NIV) translation to English

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

To God's holy people in Ephesus,^[a] the faithful in Christ Jesus:

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

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. **4** For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love **5** he^[b] predestined us for adoption to sonship^[c] through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— **6** to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. **7** In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace **8** that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, **9** he^[d] made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, **10** to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.

11 In him we were also chosen,^[e] having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, **12** in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. **13** And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, **14** who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.

15 For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people, **16** I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. **17** I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit^[f] of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. **18** I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people,

19 and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength 20 he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, 21 far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. 22 And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

Footnotes:

- a. **Ephesians 1:1** Some early manuscripts do not have *in Ephesus*.
- b. **Ephesians 1:5** Or *sight in love*. 5 *He*
- c. **Ephesians 1:5** The Greek word for *adoption to sonship* is a legal term referring to the full legal standing of an adopted male heir in Roman culture.
- d. **Ephesians 1:9** Or *us with all wisdom and understanding*. 9 *And he*
- e. **Ephesians 1:11** Or *were made heirs*
- f. **Ephesians 1:17** Or *a spirit*

POINTS OF INTEREST:

- “Paul... to God’s holy people in Ephesus... Grace and peace to you...”
 - This is a letter, so we have here the equivalent of an addressed envelope with return address and “Dear so-and-so...”
- “Praise be to God...”
 - Paul’s starts off his letter with a prayer of thanking God. The language may seem a bit flowery, but what’s it saying? That it is God’s pleasure to bring **unity** to all through Jesus Christ. Fun fact: in its original Greek language form, Paul’s opening prayer here (verses 3-14) is all one sentence! In today’s English, we would call that a run-on sentence, but long sentences were more common in Ancient Greek.
- “Christ”
 - Paul’s preferred way of referring to Jesus is the title “Christ”. Today, we hear “Jesus Christ” so much, we kind of think of it like Jesus’ last name. But “Christ” was actually a title -- much like “Dr.” or “Mr. President”. Paul is actually implying a lot everytime he calls Jesus “Christ”. The main thing we should keep in mind every time we read “Christ” in this letter (which, again, keeps on coming back to **unity**) is “the way *God* has chosen to bring about unity”, as opposed to “the way *I* might choose to bring about unity”, or the way *people like me* might choose. Paul is saying: Jesus, the “Christ”, is a higher way to bring about unity than humans (like you and me) are capable of on our own.
- “And you also were included...”
 - This is the first indication of a threat to this “unity in Christ” Paul is expressing such thanks for. Paul seems to be assuring some of his readers in Ephesus that they are included, that they are NOT “on the outs” with God. Evidently, there are things leading them to believe otherwise. But Paul tells them that the only proof they need of their inclusion is the Holy Spirit. Basically,

he's saying, "Have you experienced God come near you, and speak to you, and show you that he loves you? Well, that's God's Holy Spirit, so of course you're included!"

- "Far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked"
 - Ancient Ephesus was a society obsessed with power. Its culture was full of superstition and magic because these things promised you could manipulate and control the world and your destiny and the divine -- they promised power. Paul, here, is speaking to that culture saying that *Christ's* power (which, have we mentioned, is all about unifying and including people?) is higher than any of the powers those things claim.
- "Not only in the present age but also in the one to come"
 - This is sort of an Ancient Jewish way of saying: "Jesus Christ is the most important person in history." Ancient Jews like Paul believed that all time would be split into two ages: "the present age" and "the age to come" (when God would come to put an end to all evil on earth). He's saying that the power that will be in charge when God someday comes in a final way to put an end to all evil is *already here and already in charge* -- it's Christ's unifying power.