

# How to Study the Bible

**Session 7: Putting it all  
Together**

**Ephesians 1:1-14**

# Observation in 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: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

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, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. 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, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. 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, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

# Observations from Ephesians 1:1-14

**Author:** Paul (v1)

**Audience:** Gentile believers in Ephesus (v1)

**Date:** AD 62, while he was in prison (ESV Study Bible)

**Genre:** Epistle

**Purpose:** 2 main themes: (1) Christ has reconciled all creation to himself and to God, and (2) Christ has united people from all nations to himself and to one another in his church; accomplished through the powerful, sovereign, and free working of the triune God and received by faith alone through his grace. In light of this, Christians are to lead lives that are a fitting tribute of gratitude to their great Lord. (from ESV Study Bible)

## Observation Notes:

- Who: Paul, Ephesians, Jesus, God the Father, Holy Spirit
- What: Paul wants to communicate some things about God and salvation
- Where: Paul in prison in Rome, Ephesians in Ephesus (See ESV Study Bible intro for more)
- Important Ideas: Blessing, “in Christ”, “according to”, predestination, God’s glory
- 5 important blessings: predestination, adoption, redemption, inheritance, Holy Spirit
  - All 5 are from our “in Christ” relationship
- The ground of our blessings is God’s purpose/counsel and their result is his praise
- Impressions/Questions:
  - All the things in this passage were true from before creation until the fullness of time. What does this mean about who God is and what he has done?
  - Everything we have is from Jesus, how should this change how I worship him?

# Interpretation of Ephesians 1:1-14

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## Interpretation Notes:

- v3-14 are really one single sentence (ESV Study Bible note), so that means that there is really only one thing being said.
  - Main verb: to bless
  - Subject: Paul and the Ephesians (any by extension us)
  - Main object: God
- Structure is helpful here

# Structure of Ephesians 1:1-14

- Greetings to the saints at Ephesus from Paul the Apostle (1:1-2)
- Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (1:3-14)
  - Who has blessed us in Christ (v3)
  - With every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places (v3)
    - To have his choice of us (v4)
    - To have adoption as sons (v5-6)
    - To have redemption from sin (v7-10)
    - To have an inheritance with Christ (v11-13a)
    - To have the Holy Spirit (v13b-14)

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  - Main object: God
- Question: where does God's choice fit in. Is it one of the blessings or does it explain the term blessing? (see next slide)
- What does predestination mean? See Rom 8:28-30; Rom 9; Acts 2:22-24; Acts 4:23-31
- Summary: God is blessed because he blessed us in Christ by choosing to save us, by adopting us, by redeeming us, by giving us an inheritance and the Holy Spirit.

# Commentaries on Ephesians 1:1-14

One question I had is where the idea of predestination fit into the flow of the text.

Option 1: God's predestination or choice is one of the blessings that we receive in Christ. So we have 5 blessings: God's choice, adoption, redemption, inheritance, and Holy Spirit.

Option 2: God's choice was an explanation of or expansion on the idea of blessing. So God "blessed us with" or "chose us to receive" 4 things: adoption, redemption, inheritance, and Holy Spirit.

I consulted 2 commentaries:

- *The Message of Ephesians* by John R. W. Stott (The Bible Speaks Today series)
- *The Letter to the Ephesians* by Peter T. O'Brian (Pillar NT Commentary series)

Both agree with option #1, that God's predestinaton is itself one of the blessings we receive "in Christ", and so that is the way I placed it in the outline.

# Application of Ephesians 1:1-14

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**Audience:** Gentile believers in Ephesus (v1)

**Date:** AD 62, while he was in prison (ESV Study Bible)

**Genre:** Epistle

**Passage Summary:** God is blessed because he blessed us in Christ by choosing to save us, by adopting us, by redeeming us, by giving us an inheritance and the Holy Spirit.

## Application Notes:

- v3-14 are a doxology, so how could I express praise of or give glory to God each day?
  - I could meditate on the 5 blessings listed in this verse and consider God's goodness in each one
  - I could memorize the list of blessings so that I can think on them over the course of time
- What keeps me from giving this praise?
  - I do not really think that I am in desperate need of these things and so my heart is not moved to praise
- What in this text encourages me?
  - God chose me before the foundation of the world, so it is clear that he does want me and will not change his mind.
  - All these promises are rooted in Christ not my performance