# **Ephesians 1:1-14**

**Greetings from Paul**

1 This letter is from Paul, chosen by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus.

I am writing to God’s holy people in Ephesus, who are faithful followers of Christ Jesus.

2May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.

**Spiritual Blessings**

3All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ. 4Even before He made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in His eyes. 5God decided in advance to adopt us into His own family by bringing us to Himself through Jesus Christ. This is what He wanted to do, and it gave Him great pleasure. 6So we praise God for the glorious grace He has poured out on us who belong to His dear Son 7He is so rich in kindness and grace that He purchased our freedom with the blood of His Son and forgave our sins. 8He has showered His kindness on us, along with all wisdom and understanding.

9God has now revealed to us His mysterious plan regarding Christ, a plan to fulfill His own good pleasure. 10And this is the plan: At the right time He will bring everything together under the authority of Christ—everything in heaven and on earth. 11Furthermore, because we are united with Christ, we have received an inheritance from God, for He chose us in advance, and He makes everything work out according to His plan.

12God’s purpose was that we Jews who were the first to trust in Christ would bring praise and glory to God. 13And now you Gentiles have also heard the truth, the Good News that God saves you. And when you believed in Christ, He identified you as His own by giving you the Holy Spirit, whom He promised long ago. 14The Spirit is God’s guarantee that He will give us the inheritance He promised and that He has purchased us to be His own people. He did this so we would praise and glorify Him.

**Helpful Background for the Passage**

1. The term “apostle,” (1:1) was understood by the early church to be “one who had been personally, directly, called and commissioned by Christ Himself.” These first generation leaders were invested with a special authority because of this office, and were used by God to give authoritative teachings. In the NT, the term is not used to describe any one who is called into ministry, by the Holy Spirit, or through the service of an apostle. (For example, Timothy, John Mark, Titus, and others, are not called apostles.)

2. The phrase in 1:1 “holy people” (NIV = “saints,”) means “called out ones,” or “those who are set apart.” Paul uses this term throughout his letters to refer to all Christians, because we are “called out” from the world, and “set apart” for the purposes of the Lord.

3. In the greeting, (1:2) Paul combines the standard Greek greeting, “grace,” with the common Hebrew greeting, “peace.” Paul is a Jew, but he lives as a Greek. A major theme of Ephesians is that we are one in Christ, regardless of our backgrounds as Jews, Greeks, or anything else. Paul teaches this theme in his greeting, using every opportunity to teach and encourage his readers.

4. When studying the Bible, always notice the tenses of the verbs. It is extremely important in this passage, to note what verbs are past tense, and how that impacts our Christian walk. (1:3-10)

5. In verse 5, we are reminded that we are “adopted” children of God, through Christ. Under Roman law, as today, a legally adopted child has all the rights and rewards of a biological child. We are more than servants or workers in God’s house; we are children of the Father, co-heirs with Jesus.

6. Grace (used about 10,000 times in Ephesians) means “undeserved, unmerited favor. A gift, not a wage. Paul uses the Greek term, [Charis,] which is related to the Greek common greeting word, [charie,] to describe all the amazing gifts that we receive from God.

7. The term “purchased” (NIV =“redemption or redeemed,”) in 1:7, literally refers to the act of paying ransom to free a slave or prisoner. There must be a payment in exchange for freedom.

8. The term “mysterious plan” (NIV = “mystery,”) in 1:9, refers to something formerly hidden which has now been revealed. The term is used today in the same sense. When you begin to read or watch a mystery, you do not know how it will turn out. The thrill is in the discovery, as you begin to gradually see the way the truth is being uncovered. The truth, or plot, is always there. It is just hidden for a time.

9. Paul indicates a chronology in which the gospel was heard and received. (1:12-13) He indicates that the Jews were the first to believe in Jesus, as they had the background and were waiting for the Son of God. But God then included all in this opportunity for salvation. There is no difference between these two groups. They are equal in God’s eyes and in value. The gospel went first to the Jews, then to the Gentiles. This reality contains no order in value.

10. In 1:14, the term “guarantee” (NIV = “deposit” or “pledge”) is the common Greek term (and in modern Greek as well) used to describe an engagement ring. It is a promise, a commitment, or a pledge, of something greater that will occur in the future. We can take great comfort and encouragement in knowing that He who made the promise, is incredibly able to keep it.

**Review Questions**

1. Who wrote Ephesians? Why? How are the Ephesian believers addressed?

2. What is significant about the greeting? (1:2) “Grace,” and “peace.”?

3. Paul begins Ephesians by praising God, specifically, why? What has God done? Is it past, present, or future? (1:3-4 only, for now!)

4. When were we chosen and why? For what purpose? (1:4)

5. In what manner were we “adopted,” and why? (1:5)

6. What is grace? How did God give it to us, and through whom? (1:6)

7. What does it mean that we were “purchased?” (NIV = redemption/redeemed,) And from what? How is it related to God’s grace? (1:7-8)

8. What is the “mysterious plan” mentioned in 1:9? How is it accomplished in Christ?”

9. What is God’s complete plan, only part of which we have seen in the cross? When will it be put into action? (1:9-10)

10. What does it mean to be “united with Christ?” (1:11). In what manner did God choose us in advance? According to what plan? (1:11)

11. Who were the “first to trust in Christ,” (1:12) and why were they saved? Who else “heard the truth,” and how was this accomplished? (1:13)

12. What does it mean to be “identified” as God’s own? (1:13b). What is the guarantee (NIV = deposit,) that Paul mentions? (1:14). What is significant about this promise? What does it indicate?

**SO WHAT?**

13. How does it impact you to realize that if you are in Christ, “united with Christ,” you are ALREADY loved, chosen, adopted, forgiven, and set free? Because of grace, you don’t have to earn or do anything!

14. In this passage, we have understood that our new identity is that we are “united in Christ.” (or in Christ.) What does this mean? How should your life reflect this reality?

15. What courage and comfort can we find in the promises that God has made to us? (1:9-14)