

## INTRODUCTION

Ephesus was second only to Rome as to importance in the Roman Empire, and was the center of the worship of Artemis (or Diana), whose temple was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. In the early Church, Ephesus became an important center. The church at Ephesus was the recipient of one of the seven letters to churches in Revelation 2-3.

After the establishment of the church at Ephesus, Paul later met with the elders of the church on his way back to Jerusalem and said to them (Acts 20:26-27)

*“Therefore I declare to you this day that I am not responsible for the blood of any of you, for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God.”*

Paul was saying he held nothing back. This serves as a reminder that we can’t “pick and choose” when it comes to the Scriptures. All is there for a purpose, and as Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 3:16-17, *“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”*

## CHAPTER 1:1-14

Begin by reading these verses.

1. When Paul thought about his position as an apostle, it must have amazed him when he thought about his past life. ♪ Sing or say at least the first verse of “Amazing Grace”.
2. Meditate on verse 2. What does it mean to you that we can say God is our Father? What does each part of “the Lord Jesus Christ” mean, and mean to you?
3. Remember that verses 3-14 are one sentence in the original Greek. Verses 3-6 focus on God the Father, verses 7-12 on Christ, and verses 13-14 the Holy Spirit. Each section ends with “to the praise of His glory”. Note all the things that God has done for the Christian. (You might even write down a list!)
4. We have “blessings in heaven” because we have “dual citizenship”! Read Philippians 3:20-21.
5. God chose us to do or be what?
6. We are “holy and blameless” because of what Christ has done. Remember the term “imputed righteousness”? It is described in 2 Corinthians 5:21.
7. Like “chosen”, “predestined” has an object. What is the object here? What would that look like in your life?
8. We are not only created by God, but we are also adopted into God’s family. Read Romans 8:14-17 to learn more about what that means.
9. Paul begins the section about Christ (vv. 7-12) talking about our redemption through His blood, which is known as “substitutionary atonement”.

Read also 1 Peter 3:18-19

10. The “forgiveness of our trespasses” is also talked about in 1 John 1:9. This is a good verse to commit to memory.
11. “...He has made known to us the mystery of His will...” This is the first time that “mystery” is used in Ephesians, and one of 27 times in the New Testament. Remember that a mystery in biblical terms is a divine truth formerly hidden but now revealed in the Good News. The Dictionary of Biblical Theology says, “This word suggests a profound reality, inexpressible; it reveals a glimpse of the infinite; inaccessible to human intelligence without revelation.” Take a moment to thank God for revealing this mystery to us!
12. Paul reminds us that Christ came in the “fullness of time.” (See also Galatians 4:4-5) God always does things at just the right time! When Jesus came to earth, what made it just the right time? What has God done in your life at “just the right time”?
13. Verse 10 talks about another “right time” New Living Translation: “At the right time He will bring everything together under the authority of Christ – everything in heaven and on earth.” Philippians 2:9-11 talks about the same thing: when all is perfected at the end times.
14. Verse 11 talks about our “inheritance.” What is that? Why do we have an inheritance? (See verse 5.)
15. Paul refers to the Gospel as the “word of truth”. Truth is a very important issue in the New Testament. Read John 14:6 (another good verse to memorize.) Read also 2 Timothy 2:15 which reminds us of our responsibility toward the “word of truth.” What does that mean you should do?
16. “*When you heard.... and believed... [you] were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit.*” Note that all true believers have the Holy Spirit, not just some. (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:3) When was the Holy Spirit promised? (See John 14:16-17; Acts 1:8; Acts 2:37-39)
17. If the Holy Spirit is the pledge – or down payment – of our inheritance, when will it be “paid in full”? (See 1 Peter 1:3-5)

### **Remember Philippians 4:6-7**

*Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

May God be with you!

Pastor Bob