

In Christ: I Am

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A study in the book of Ephesians Chapter 1:1-14

While imprisoned in Rome, Paul wrote an epistle to the Ephesians. Although Paul composed this letter to the church in Ephesus, he expected the letter to be circulated and read by several other New Testament congregations. Ephesus was one of the seven churches that Jesus addressed in the Book of Revelation. Ephesians was written to 1) reveal the mystery of the church 2) to unite Jews and Gentiles in Christ Jesus and 3) to empower and equip God's people to persevere and conquer over evil. The book of Ephesians was not written just for the believers at Ephesus, but for Christians of every era and location. As modern day believers we too will benefit from applying the wisdom and teachings of Ephesians to our lives. Before reading out text for today, please take a moment to pray and ask God for eyes to see and ears to hear what He speaks through His Holy Word in the book of Ephesians.

Please read Ephesians 1:1-14.

1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ, 4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, 5 having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.

7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace 8 which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, 9 having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, 10 that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him.

11 In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, 12 that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

13 In Him you also *trusted*, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, 14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

Now please go back and read chapter one again and mark or make notes on verses that speak to your heart.

Why did Paul become an apostle (verse 1)?

Paul became an apostle by the *will* of God. The word used for *will* in this text is the Greek word *thelema*, which means *what one wishes or has determined shall be done; will, choice, inclination, desire, pleasure*. When traced back to its roots, this word also means *to take delight in, to take for oneself, to prefer, to choose*. In the very same way we too have become Christians by the will of God. When we were in the midst of our own plans, our own sin, God came and took us for Himself. We were chosen. *You* were chosen. *You are* chosen. You did not become a Christian by accident. By God's great pleasure and delight He willed for you to become His. Knowing all our mess, knowing all our sin, He choose us not for what we were but for what we would become in Him.

When did God choose you to become His (verse 4)?

Does that make you feel wanted? Before you were born, before anyone was born, before any *thing* was born, God choose you to be His.

Since God has chosen us, what have we become (verse 4)?

We are holy and blameless. I can't say I would use the words *holy* and *blameless* to describe myself ... but God does. Have you ever known God to lie? What He speaks is truth. His truth trumps our emotions. The word *holy* used in verse 4 means *a most holy thing, a saint*. You are a most holy thing. Holiness also means something set apart for God's use. The temple of God was holy because God's Presence resided there; the ground Moses stood upon was holy because God's Presence dwelt there; Mount Sinai was holy because God descended upon it in a fiery cloud. If you are a Christian, you are holy because God's Presence inhabits you.

Please finish the following statement: Since I am holy ...

Please read verse 4 again.

Now, please right down a definition for *blameless*:

In the original Greek the word *blameless* transliterates as *amomos*, which means *as a sacrifice without spot or blemish, morally faultless or unblameable*. Under the

Old Testament, in order for an animal to be worthy to be used as a sacrifice, it had to be perfect of color, size, health, proportions—the best of the flock. Because God has made you holy and blameless, your life can also be used as a sacrifice for His kingdom. You have been made worthy to witness for Him, to live for Him, to minister for Him and to die for Him.

What does it mean to you that God has made you holy and blameless?

Take a look back at verses 2 and 3 and list three things that God has given us.

Because of Jesus' death on the cross we have peace, grace, and blessings in Christ.

Why did God adopt you in Christ Jesus (verse 5)?

What has been forgiven according to verse 7?

Our sins. Small sins. Big sins. Ugly, messy, hurtful, shameful sins. Every sin is forgiven. That certain sin, which you have marked *unforgiveable*, God has marked it *paid in full* by the blood of Christ. Forgiveness is just the beginning of the wonderful inheritance we have In Christ.

Please read verses 3-14 and make a list of many of the benefits we have in Christ. I've started the list below:

In Christ I am:

1. blessed (vs. 3)
2. chosen (vs. 4)
3. holy (vs. 4)
4. blameless (vs. 4)
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.

Add more bullet points if needed.

Next, please highlight the bullet points that mean the most to you and comment on why they are important.

Now, please go back and read your list aloud starting with the phrase, "*In Christ I am ...* "

Finally, in closing, turn your list of bullet points into a prayer of thanksgiving. Start at the top of the list and specifically thank God for all that He has done for you.

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