

Authentic Christianity

– the Letter to the Ephesians

It covers 3 essential areas:-

Theology – morality – community

It was written by Paul from prison in Rome to Ephesian Christians and associated churches in the surrounding area – eg Colossae, Laodicea, Hierapolis

Date AD 62. - Circumstances have changed but God hasn't and people still have the same basic needs – so Ephesians (the Word of God) is still relevant to us nearly 2000 years later.

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

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. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will-- to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God`s grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfilment--to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.

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

For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers.

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

A man sent by Jesus the Messiah

By the purposes of God

God's will is Sovereign.

Something Paul (and we) have to be grateful for

To the saints in [Ephesus], the faithful in Christ Jesus..

It's a letter and here is the address

Ephesus and others – some manuscripts have a blank space for the fellowship's name. It's for us too.

Saints (alive and well and growing) – set apart to be holy

Faithful – summary of life commitment

In Christ – our essential union that binds us all together

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

Greeting with a blessing
Grace takes the initiative and first place
Peace follows – with God, ourselves and others.
The common source (Father God and our Lord
Jesus) – part of Trinitarian blessing – the Holy
Spirit is mentioned later.

It's not just good wishes – it should be our
experience too.

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.

When we consider who God is and what he has done
then praise and worship naturally follow.

The Father has blessed us

The means is through his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ

How he has blessed us – in and from the heavens
(where he is and where we belong)

Abundantly – every spiritual blessing (name a few)

All found in Jesus and are ours in Jesus

For he chose us in him before the creation of the world
to be holy and blameless in his sight.

God's ultimate purpose in place before the beginning
of creation

Chosen in him (seen as belonging to Jesus)

Before time, the fall, and the present day

This isn't some last-minute idea on God's part.

Chosen destination for us

Perfect! Holy , free from any accusation

In the sight of Him who sees everything.

So if he says that is where he is going to get us that is
where he will bring us.

In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons
through Jesus Christ,

The driving force in God's heart is love
His plan that worked out in our lives in our times
We are adopted as sons (real family!)
Again through who Jesus is and what he has done for us.

The focus should be on Jesus

in accordance with his pleasure and will-- to the praise of his
glorious grace, which he has freely given us
in the One he loves.

It is all working out according to God's pleasure
He 'enjoys' saving us – it is his will that plans how it
happens.

The objective is the praise of his glorious grace
His magnificent grace.

The true mark of grace is it is freely given to us
In his beloved Son.

If we are in the one he loves then we are loved too.

In him we have redemption through his blood,
the forgiveness of sins,

Jesus is the source of our redemption

He uses the Bible's sacrificial language

The Price is paid – redeemed

The perfect atoning sacrifice was made – his blood

The result is forgiveness for all we have done

against him and others

We **HAVE** forgiveness – to be received and rejoiced
in now.

in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding.

How big is it?

The riches of God's grace – beyond measure

He lavished – undeserved abundance -on us

PLUS a new way of seeing and thinking

Wisdom and understanding – lots to learn, we are not left in the dark – he is revealing himself to us

And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ,

God has been pleased to reveal what was previously unknown to us - what his big plan is (which involves us too)

The Messiah is the focal point of God's plan and the fulfilment of the OT promises

to be put into effect when the times will have reached their
fulfilment--

It will happen – in God’s perfect timing
We are not there yet – but it is coming
God’s secret purposes in the timing.
cf. Acts 1:7

*He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that
the Father has fixed by his own authority.*

to bring all things in heaven and on earth together
under one head, even Christ.

God's ultimate purpose:-
To fix it all under the last Adam
The ultimate head of creation
Redeemed and restored.
This process is on-going now.

Romans 8:19-21 For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will,

As part of the new headship of Jesus

We (early Jewish believers) chosen and predestined

According to the Sovereign plan.

God is completely in charge.

Our God is a great God!

in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ,
might be for the praise of his glory.

Early believers are a trophy of grace
Their hope is certain and will bring glory to God
Praise him!

And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.

You – Gentile believers in Ephesus (and elsewhere)
included in God's plan
By means of the gospel
When you 'heard' ie. received and obeyed it
Personal salvation

Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal,
the promised Holy Spirit,

The work of the Holy Spirit

(believing grace)

Sealed – marked as possession of God

The promise of the Father.

Personal experience of the Holy Spirit cf. The baptism

Luke 24:49 And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”

who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance

Who – **he** is a person – the third person of the holy Trinity.

Deposit – given as a promise of what more is to come.

We have an inheritance (the riches of our Lord)

until the redemption of those who are God's possession--
to the praise of his glory.

The guarantee lasts until it is all completed
It is a part of the final inheritance.
And all the redeemed are saved
And God will have the praise and glory

For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers.

Paul's response to these great truths

He prays for the believers that they may know these truths and live in the power of them, such lives as will bring glory to our wonderful God and Saviour.