

LEADERS GUIDE FOR STUDY GUIDE EPH 1: 3-14

DAY 1

Read the paragraph 3 times.

1. What is the main idea? Or why are we to praise God? (noted in verse 3).

God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

Paul begins by assuring his readers of Ephesians (and us!) that we have been blessed with God's gracious favor - every spiritual blessing in Christ. We praise God for these spiritual blessings. Note the relationship here – "the God and Father or our Lord Jesus Christ". Today this may also be a reminder that like the Ephesians, we can get caught up in the rituals and doing of the Christian life instead of a relationship with the Lord.

Note the word "blessed". Jewish people used the word "bless" to express both God's kindness to us and our thanks or praise to him. Charles Erdman in his commentary on the Ephesians says it is commonly said that God blesses men by acts of love and grace and that men bless God with words, thoughts, hymns of praise and deeds of mercy and kindness done to others. The word here in Greek is eulogesas – to benefit, prosper. "The verb eulogeo is used over 400 times in the Old Testament indicating that God bestows benefits to His children in every age." (The Bible Knowledge Commentary)

God not only blesses us with physical blessings but also spiritual blessings – gifts of grace which we will see described in the following verses.

2. Note these verb tenses: vs.3 has blessed, vs.4 chose or hath chosen (KJV), vs.5 predestined or destined (RSV) or decided(NLT), vs.9 made known or has made known (RSV) or has now revealed (NLT) or having made known (KJV),Vs. 11 chosen or having been destined (RSV) or being predestined (KJV), vs.12, 13 were, vs.13 heard, having believed or when you believed (NLT) or after that ye believed (KJV), were marked or identified (NLT) or were sealed (KJV).

All are past tense. They indicate these things have already been done for believers in Christ.

One principle of Bible Study is to note the tense of the verbs. Verbs express action, thus understanding the tense helps with interpretation and application of Scripture.

3. Circle this recurring phrase: "in Christ" or "in him" (occurs 10 times in vs. 3-14)

What statement or phrase is connected with this phrase?

Another principle of Bible Study is to note the recurring phrases. These help us see important thoughts and themes in the Scriptures. "In Christ" or "In Him" are the most important phrases in this Epistle.

You may want to look at each occurrence in these verses and state the connection with the phrase.

It is through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus that we can have a relationship with our Creator and live our lives now for his glory. Through Christ, God "blessed us with every spiritual blessing...chose us to be holy and blameless...predestined us to be his adoptive children... to praise him of his glorious grace...to be redeemed through his blood...made known to us the mystery of his good will.."

TO DIG DEEPER: Read the whole book of Ephesians and circle every "in Christ" or "in him" or "with Christ" or "in whom". There should be a total of 42 in the NIV Bible, the number may vary in other translations. Note what statement or phrase is connected with this phrase. What effect does this study have on you?

DAY 2

1. In verse 4: For what purpose did God choose us?

God chose – “that we should be holy and blameless in his sight”. Have people read this from other translations. The believer in Christ is declared holy through faith in Christ’s atoning death and is being made holy by the work of the Holy Spirit. It has to do with the inner life of the believer and it means that your life has been changed. Look up 1 Corinthians 1:2 and Colossians 1:22. Blameless means to be without blemish – picture here is perfect like the lamb used for the atoning sacrifice. God chose us to become a certain kind of person!

2. In verse 5: For what have we been predestined, destined or did God decide in advance for us?

God predestined or predetermined that the believers in Christ be adopted as his children through Jesus Christ. The free will of man is never violated because of the election of God. The lost man or unsaved person makes his/her own choice. Predestination comes from the Greek origin prooriosis, 'to destine, to mark out, to set apart'. Predestination, here, is God's purpose with those who are in Christ.

God does not predestine anyone to be lost, or unsaved. From the beginning, in Genesis 1-3, God’s intent was for all humans to be in relationship with Him. The first humans disrupted that relationship by disobeying God’s command because of their desires and pride. Thus sin entered the world. God initiated reconciliation by sacrificing a lamb, paying for their disobedience with a substitute death, and clothing the couple – thus reconciling the relationship, though the couple would still experience some consequence for their disobedience. This developed into a system of sacrifices and culminated in Christ’s once for all sacrifice. It is through Christ that we are all reconciled to God. So from the beginning of time, even before, God predestined that humans be in a relationship with Him. Each one is to make the choice whether they want to be in that relationship by accepting or rejecting Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.

Whether the universe or the individual Christian is in view, it is only in relationship to Christ that there is a meaningful future destiny.

The phrase “adoption as sons” expresses a particular relation to God implying special privileges of access and communion and rights of inheritance. It is an idea borrowed from Roman law – one who is a stranger I blood became a member of the family into which he was adopted and had all the rights and privileges which would have been his had he been a son by birth. “It is the rank to which God admits those who believe in his Son.” (from Charles R. Erdman). You may be a member of the human race created by God but you are not a member of God’s family unless you come through Christ.

How were we adopted? See also Romans 8:14,15

Through Jesus Christ in accordance with his pleasure and will.

God is the father of all in that he created all and his love and providential care are extended to all (see Mt.5:45). But not all are his children. Jesus said to the unbelieving Jews of his day, “You belong to your father the devil (Jn.8:44). People become children of God through faith in God’s unique Son (Jn.1:12-13), and being led by God’s spirit is the hallmark of this relationship – the presence of the Holy Spirit in us demonstrates the genuineness of our faith, proves that we are God’s children, and secures eternal life for us. Adoption was common among the Greeks and Romans, who granted all privileges of a natural son, including inheritance rights. Christians are adopted sons by grace; Christ, however, is God’s son by nature. God delighted to adopt believers in Christ as his sons!

3. In verse 6: What is the end result of being chosen and adopted?
Our adoption is to the praise of his glorious grace!

God graciously accepts us (though we don't deserve it) now that we belong to him through his dearly loved son. Our adoption brings praise and glory to God. Charles R. Erdman states it "that thereby the splendor and magnificence of the grace of God might be manifested and adored". By the believers themselves.

TO DIG DEEPER: Note the connecting words: vs.4" For" or "Just as"; vs.5 "In love"; vs.9" And he"; vs.11 "were also" or "also" or "furthermore"; vs.12 "in order that" or "so that" or "that"; vs.13 "And you also" or "And now you" or "ye also". How do they connect each previous thought with the next thought?

Another principle of Bible Study is that connection words help connect the thoughts and help us understand those connections.

DAY 3

1. The spiritual blessings mentioned so far include: 1) chosen to be holy and blameless (vs.4), 2) predestined to be adopted as sons (vs.5).

What spiritual blessings are stated in vs. 7-9? *Redemption through his blood, forgiveness of sins, and making known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure.*

"...redemption through His blood" (7) - Forgiveness in OT was granted thru shedding of animal's blood. God cannot forgive until the penalty has been paid. Greeks and Romans were also familiar with the idea of redemption - slaves were freed by the payment of a ransom. See 1 Peter 1:18 and 19

Rom.3:25-26 "God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood...he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus".

2. What is the mystery that is made known to believers in verse 9 and 10? See also **Colossians 1:25-27**. To bring all things in heaven and earth together under one head, even Christ.

Col.1:25-27 "I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness – the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory."

God was not intentionally keeping his plan a secret but his plan for the world could not be fully understood until Christ rose from the dead. Now everyone – Jew and Gentile – will be one under Christ. In the New Testament a "mystery" does not mean something which cannot be known, but something once unknown and now revealed.

3. In vs.10 – when will this mystery be put into effect? See also **Revelation 21:4**.

Many people still do not understand God's plan. 'When the times will have reached their fulfillment', he will bring us together to be with him forever. Then everyone will understand. Galations 4:4 – "But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son..." this has been done but has also a future final fulfillment.

Phil.2:10-11 "that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father".

Rev.21:4 "He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away. A time when all things both spiritual and material will be under Christ and His rule.

Another way of saying this is "that in a world of confusion, where things do not 'add up' or make sense, we look forward to the time when everything will be brought into meaningful relationship under the headship of Christ". (from NIV footnotes on verse 10.)

DAY 4

1. Verse 11 is a summary statement leading to the next thought. Read verses 12-13. Who are the “we”? Who are the “you”?
The “we” were probably the Jews who, like Paul, had become believers before many Gentiles had. The “you” are probably the majority of believers in Ephesus and Asia Minor who were Gentiles.
2. What did the “we” do? (vs.12)
The “we” were the first to hope in Christ.
3. What did the “you” do?
The Gentiles heard the truth of the gospel and believed.
Both Jew & Gentile were previously alienated by the covenant that God had with the Jewish people. Both were brought together through Christ into a new relationship with God, in which they become one body and the old barriers were removed in Christ.

DAY 5

1. What truths about the Holy Spirit are stated in verses 13 and 14?
The Holy Spirit is God's seal that we belong to him and his deposit guaranteeing that he will do what he has promised. The Holy Spirit is like a down payment, a deposit, a validating signature. His power works in us to transform us now, and what we experience now is a taste of the total change we will experience in eternity. (The resurrection was the final stage of our adoption. The first stage was God's predestination of our adoption, the second is our present inclusion as children of God.)? “The sealing of the Spirit is designed to make us certain of that completed salvation which the future will bring. It leads unto “the redemption of God's own possession.” The price has been paid in full but the effects are only enjoyed in part. As Christians we are waiting for the “redemption of our body” , for the final release from the presence of sin and for the eternal and glorious life with God in eternity.
2. Note the phrase “in accordance with” or “according to” in verses 5, 7, 9, 11. What is stated after each occurrence? These statements confirm that God has a plan, design, purpose for believers in Christ.
*God's purpose is to offer salvation to the world, Jews and Gentiles, just as he planned to do long ago. God is sovereign; he is in charge. God's purpose cannot be thwarted, no matter what evil Satan may bring. When the believer is in the center of God's will, he is living a life of fullness. Living in God's will adds purpose to life; we are going to be for the praise of His Glory.
God has a carefully thought out plan for believers in Christ – adoption as sons, forgiven sins, redemption and to know the mystery of his will – all according to a divine plan.*
3. Read John 14:15-18. As believers, what would be our status without the Holy Spirit?
Without the Holy Spirit we would be as orphans. But He has sent the Holy Spirit.
In Ephesians we 1:13 and 14 we see that the Holy Spirit is a seal, a guarantee that we belong to God. In the New Testament times a seal denoted ownership. It also indicated security. The Holy Spirit is the believer's guarantee of the security of his salvation.
{Paul prayed that the Ephesians would know Christ better. Christ is our model, and the more we know of him, the more we will be like him. The hope we have is not a vague feeling that the future will be alright – it is complete assurance of certain victory through God. This complete certainty comes to us through the Holy Spirit who is working in us. The Holy Spirit implants the image of God upon the heart to give reality to the

believer. Without the Holy spirit we would be as orphans.}These are good thoughts but don't really fit in the context of these verses.

DAY 6

1. The phrase "Praise be to" starts this section in verse 3. Mark this phrase: "to the praise of his glory in verses 6, 12, and 14. What do these phrases indicate brings praise to God?

Predestined to be his adopted children (6). The Jews who believed (12). Believers marked with a seal of the Holy Spirit (14).

APPLICATION: This section shows us what God has done for us – the spiritual blessing as He has given us. And, that knowing this we are to praise God for them. As others see them in our lives they will bring praise to God. Take time today to praise God for these spiritual blessings He has given you.

Col.3:15-17 "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since a member of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God".

APPLICATION 2: Considering the blessings which God through Christ has given you (refer to Day 3 question 1 and Ephesians 1:13 & 14), what are the ways you might use these blessings to bring glory and praise to God?

In verse 14 the word "inheritance" is used. Some may wonder what the inheritance is. To discuss this In class, look up Acts 20:32, 2 Corinthians 5:5, Romans 8:23 and 1 Peter 1:4-5. It is our salvation and heaven or eternity with God.