

Ephesians 1:1-8

Ephesians 1:1-8 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus: (2) 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 has 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,

Questions On The Text

Who wrote the letter?

Verse 1: Paul is the author of this epistle. As in most of his other letters, he identifies himself as an apostle. Literally, the word “apostle” means “sent one” a reference to a person sent in an official capacity. A good alternative translation would be “ambassador.”

To whom is the letter written?

Verses 1-2: The letter is written to the Ephesian church although some Greek manuscripts omit that information, a fact which has led some scholars to believe that this was originally a circular letter meant for a number of churches. In the style of the day, the name of the writer is followed by the name of the recipient and then the greeting. The greeting is distinctly Christian, wishing grace and peace from the Father and the Son for the readers.

What blessings are ours in Christ?

Verse 3: Every spiritual blessing is ours in Christ in the heavenly places. This is the beginning of the longest sentence in the New Testament which extends from verse three to the end of verse 14, and contains 202 Greek words and even more in English. The term “heavenly places” (literally “heavenlies”) refers to the entire invisible spiritual realm.

What kind of people should we be?

Verse 4: When God chose us in Christ, even before the foundation of the world, His intention was that we should walk in love, holiness and blamelessness. The fact that He chose us prior to the creation of the world is evidence that we are saved by grace and not by works.

What has God predestined us to?

Verse 5: God has predestined us to adoption as His sons (a term that is all about status and has nothing to do with gender). The word “predestined” means “marked out beforehand.” Adoption in the Greco-Roman world typically occurred when a childless, but well-off adult decided legally to adopt a son so that they would have an heir. Often, the adopted son was a slave, but was endowed with the full rights and benefits of a biological son. Adoptive sonship is thus a position of grace and not a right.

Our newfound status as sons of God is a) in Christ, and b) according to the good pleasure of God’s will. Its availability through Christ only draws our attention to the cross, whereas the good pleasure of His will emphasises God’s having taken the initiative in the process of salvation.

What has God's grace accomplished?

Verse 6: It is through God's grace that we have been accepted by God. "Accepted" is literally "graced, be-graced" so the phrase could be rendered "His grace by which He graced us", emphasising again that all the spiritual blessings with which God has blessed us are free. Where is this grace found? In the Beloved, a reference to Christ. See also Colossians 1:13 where Jesus is referred to as "the Son of His love," and Matthew 3:17 and Mark 9:7 where the Father calls Him beloved.

What has the blood of Jesus gained for us?

Verses 7-8: The blood of Christ has purchased for us redemption. Technically, redemption is the buying back of something, so the blood of Jesus has purchased us and we are now God's property. But in this verse, Paul equates redemption with the forgiveness of sins. Again, he relates this back to God's grace. Words like "riches" and "abound" only serve to remind us of how lavish God's grace really is.

Further Questions For Discussion:

What do you think is the difference between an apostle as an ambassador and the fact that every Christian is an ambassador for Christ?

If our spiritual blessings are in the heavenly places in Christ, how do we appropriate them into our lives as a practical experience?

What does it mean to walk in love, holiness and blamelessness?

What does it mean to you to be an adopted son of God?

Why do you think God chose you?

What does it mean to be accepted in the Beloved?

What does redemption mean to you?