

EPHESIANS

Chapter 1

Greeting

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus, and are faithful in Christ Jesus: 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

1:1 *apostle*. One specially commissioned by Christ. (CSB)

CSB note on Mark 6:30 - *apostles*. In Mark's Gospel the word occurs only here and in 3:14 (in some manuscripts). The apostles were Jesus' authorized agents or representatives (see note on Heb 3:1). In the NT the word is sometimes used quite generally (see Jn 13:16, where the Greek *apostolos* is translated "messenger"). In the technical sense it is used (1) of the Twelve, (3:14)—in which sense it is also applied to Paul (Rom 1:1)—and (2) of a larger group including Barnabas (Ac 14:14), James the Lord's brother (Gal 1:19), and possibly Andronicus and Junias (Ro 16:7).

CSB note on 1 Cor. 1:1 - *apostle of Christ Jesus*. Paul uses this title in all his letters (except Philippians, 1,2 Thessalonians and Philemon) to establish his authority as Christ's messenger—an authority that had been challenged (see ch. 9; 2Co 11). He reinforces his authority by adding "by the will of God," i.e., by divine initiative.

CSB note on Hebrews 3:1 - *apostle*. Means "one who is sent" (see notes on Mk 6:30; 1Co 1:1). Jesus repeatedly spoke of himself as having been sent into the world by the Father (e.g., Mt 10:40; 15:24; Mk 9:37; Lk 9:48; Jn 4:34; 5:24, 30, 36–38; 6:38). He is the supreme apostle, the one from whom all other apostleship flows.

CC - Luke note - Acts 1:21–22 gives us the qualifications for an apostle, as Matthias is chosen to replace Judas. An apostle must have been (1) present with Jesus from the beginning of his ministry and (2) an eyewitness of the resurrection.

1 Corinthians 15:8, "and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born." CSB note - *one abnormally born*. Paul was not part of the original group of apostles. He had not lived with Christ as the others had. His entry into the apostolic office was not "normal." Furthermore, at his conversion he was abruptly snatched from his former way of life (Ac 9:3–6).

Galatians 1:17, "nor did I go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before I was, but I went immediately into Arabia and later returned to Damascus."

by the will of God. Paul not only stresses his authority under God, but also anticipates the strong emphasis he will make later in this chapter and book on God's sovereign plan and purpose. (CSB)

to the saints – Sometimes the word "saint" is used to refer to someone who lived a holy and exemplary life and who has since died. St. Paul uses the word to refer to anyone who places his/her trust and belief in Jesus Christ as Savior. We become saints through faith in Christ as a result of being called by God through the Gospel. (LL)

Literally, “holy ones,” as God made them through Holy Baptism (5:26-27); 1 Cor. 6:11). The term essentially equates with the term “Church” in Paul’s greetings. The whole congregation was to hear the Letter read publicly. (TLSB)

in Ephesus. The book may have been intended as a circular letter to several churches, including the one at Ephesus. (CSB)

are faithful – This can mean both that they are true to the Christ and that they believe in him. (CSB)

1:2 *Grace and peace.* Although these words were commonly used in the greetings of secular letters, the words that follow show that Paul intended a spiritual dimension. He uses the word “grace” 12 times and “peace” 7 times in Ephesians. (CSB)

Grace is the undeserved mercy and kindness we receive from God our Father through faith in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Peace is the restored relationship with God our Father through Jesus. (LL)

Grace was the Gentile greeting word. Peace was the Jewish greeting word coming from the OT Shalom [It is a happiness where one’s welfare is secure. It wished prosperity in body and soul to the person being greeted.] In our worship service we use phrases like “The Lord be with you – And also with you” and “The peace of the Lord be with you always – And also with you” in the liturgy. Preachers use it at the beginning of the sermon. It is both an affirmation of the oneness of Christ’s body, the church, and the affirmation of the favor which God bestows of his own choosing which is far beyond what we deserve.

The Greek word translated “grace” is the ordinary term one Greek person would use in greeting another. It’s the word Matthew uses to record Gabriel’s salutation to Mary when he announced to her that she would become the mother of our Lord. (PBC)

Lord Jesus Christ – Christ is absolutely central to everything in this epistle as he is the center of all Scripture. (CSB)

Spiritual Blessings in Christ

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, 4 even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love 5 he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. 7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, 8 which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight 9 making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ 10 as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. 11 In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, 12 so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. 13 In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

1:3–14 All one sentence in Greek, this section is often called a “doxology” because it recites what God has done and is an expression of worship to honor him. Paul speaks first of the blessings we have through the Father (v. 3), then of those that come through the Son (vv. 4–13a) and finally of those through the Holy Spirit (1:13b–14). (CSB)

“Blessed be” ESV is a prayer based on the Jewish Berakah “Blessed” patter (Dt. 2:20-23). In Hebrew, the same word is used for our blessing (praising) God and His blessing us (giving us good gifts). Paul naturally begins this way, since he has spent three years worshiping with the Ephesians as their pastor. This Trinitarian prayer invokes the blessings of the Father (vv 3-6), Son (vv 7-12), and Holy Spirit (vv 13-14). (TLSB)

Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus’ relation to God the Father is unique. (CSB)

Jesus is true God. As true man, He addressed the Father as “My God” (Mt. 27:46; John 20:17). He taught us to pray this way and prays with us. (TLSB)

blessed ... blessing. Jewish people used the word “bless” to express both God’s kindness to us and our thanks or praise to him. (CSB)

The happy condition of those who revere the Lord and do his will (see 94:12; 112:1; 119:1–2; 128:1; Pr 29:18; cf. Ps 41:1; 106:3; Pr 14:21; Isa 56:2), who put their trust in him (see 40:4; 84:5, 12; 144:15; 146:5; Pr 16:20; Isa 30:18; Jer 17:7; cf. Ps 2:12; 34:8), and so are blessed by God (see especially 41:1–3; 144:12–14; see also Mt 5:3–12). The Psalter begins by proclaiming the blessedness of the godly and ends by calling all living things to praise God in his earthly and heavenly sanctuaries (Ps 150). (CSB)

The word means more than “happy,” because happiness is an emotion often dependent on outward circumstances. “Blessed” here refers to the ultimate well-being and distinctive joy of those who share in the salvation of the kingdom of God. (CSB-Mt) (CSB)

Who has a joy, of which neither crosses nor losses can deprive him; who will be happy as long as he lives; and who has still more happiness in store for him when death is past. The psalmist is not speaking of the good man as happy because he is aiming at happiness, but as being so because he follows the Law of God, and finds joy therein, without seeking for joy for its own sake. (Note from Psalm 1) – A news reporter recently interviewed the winner of a 45-million-dollar lottery. The sheer overwhelming, “blessedness” of this woman’s experience was written all over her face! How much more, considering the eternal riches of God in our relationship with Christ are we to wear the mind, heart, and face of the blessed! (LL)

heavenly places. Occurs five times in Ephesians, emphasizing Paul’s perception that in the exaltation of Christ (his resurrection and enthronement at God’s right hand) and in the Christian’s union with the exalted Christ ultimate issues are involved—issues that pertain to the divine realm and that in the final analysis are worked out in and from that realm. At stake are God’s eternal eschatological purpose (3:11) and the titanic conflict between God and the powerful spiritual forces arrayed against him—a purpose and a conflict that come to focus in the history of redemption. Here (v. 3) Paul asserts that, through their union with the exalted Christ, Christians have already been made beneficiaries of every spiritual blessing that belongs to and comes from the heavenly realm. In vv. 20–22, he proclaims Christ’s exaltation to that realm and his elevation over all other powers and titles so that he rules over all for the sake of his church. According to 2:6, those who have been “made alive with Christ” share in Christ’s exaltation and enthronement in heaven. Thus (3:11) by the gathering of Gentiles and Jews into one body of Christ (the church),

God triumphantly displays his “manifold wisdom” to the “rulers and authorities” in the heavenly realm. As a result, the spiritual struggle of the saints here and now is not so much against “flesh and blood” as against the great spiritual forces that war against God in heaven (6:12). (CSB)

Could also be stated “heavenly matters.” A common phrase in Ephesians which is concerned with the ultimate battle between God’s forces and the devil’s. (TLSB)

This refers to God’s action in Christ over and beyond this earth and time. Christ sits at God’s right hand guiding and ruling for the benefit of his church. (LL)

This designates heaven itself not the visible heaven, but the other-worldly regions, heaven as the habitation of God. The blessings we enjoy are blessings of a higher world. This spiritual heavenly blessing of ours stands in contrast to the material perishable effects of this world. (Stoeckhardt)

spiritual blessings - God blesses us physically and spiritually. Here Paul likely refers to the blessings given through the Holy Spirit. (TLSB)

The blessing is brought by the Holy Spirit. (Third Article and Explanation) The idea of “spiritual” was totally unknown to them. These blessings have their origin in heaven, as the dwelling place of God. The blessings of the higher, of the perfect, of the future world are ours in Christ. (Buls) (Attributes of God - Attributes of Christ - verse 4 - Rev. 21 - Luther’s Evening and Morning Prayers)

Not one good thing is missing. Everything connected with “the heavenly realms” is theirs. Precisely what those blessings are will be indicated later. (Ephesians 6:14-18) (PBC)

The distinctive message of Ephesians is that reception of these heavenly blessings is not delayed until the believer passes from earth into heaven, but they are already possessed now through incorporation into Christ (2:6). The saint thus lives in two realms simultaneously (cf. Col 3:1–4). Luther suggests these blessings allude to the bestowal on the bride of the keys that open the storehouse of God’s heavenly goods. It is because the church is made one flesh with Christ through the spiritual marriage inaugurated in Holy Baptism that all the blessings of heaven are hers (cf. Eph 5:21–33). (CC)

in Christ. This phrase (or one like it) occurs 12 times in vv. 3–12. It refers to the spiritual union of Christ with believers, which Paul often symbolizes by the metaphor “body of Christ” (see, e.g., v. 23; 2:16; 4:4, 12, 16; 5:23, 30). (CSB)

This is the key theme of Ephesians. (TLSB) This can mean “by or through Christ,” as the agent of our salvation. Christ is also the One in whom we find God’s gifts. We are baptized “into Christ” (Gal. 3:26-27) and experience what He has (Eph. 2:4-6). (TLSB p. 1903)

Where the context speaks of what God has done, or still does, to us, has given or given us, is intimated that God’s deed, blessing, gift, is mediated through Christ. (Eph. 1:6, 13, 20; 2:7, 13; Col. 1:16) In our case “in Christ” amounts to “for Christ’s sake.” For the spiritual heavenly blessing is mediated to us through Christ inasmuch as He has obtained and merited it for us. Although the original is best reproduced by “through Christ,” one may translate “in Christ” and also with this translation consider Christ the Mediator of the blessing, or paraphrase thus: the blessing we received was established in Christ. Not outside of but in Christ it rested causatively

that God blessed us with that spiritual blessing, since His redemptive work is the meritorious cause of this divine blessing. (Stoeckhardt)

1:4 even – As in Greek – καθώς—Here this conjunction indicates not a comparison (“just as”), but a cause or explanation: “inasmuch as, because.” The rest of the prayer is an elucidation of the manner in which God has blessed us in Christ, which is the reason for us blessing him (1:3a). (CC)

chose. Divine election is a constant theme in Paul’s letters (Ro 8:29–33; 9:6–26; 11:5, 7, 28; 16:13; Col 3:12; 1Th 1:4; 2Th 2:13; Tit 1:1). In this chapter it is emphasized in the following ways: (1) “he chose us” (here); (2) “he predestined us” (v. 5); (3) “we were also chosen” (v. 11); (4) “having been predestined” (v. 11). (CSB)

According to etymology and composition “to choose,” in the original means and can mean nothing else than: to select, single out, to select, choose from several or from a great multitude of similar persons or things. The middle voice found exclusively in the NT, brings along the meaning “for oneself.” “To choose,” in the original middle voice, means: to choose for oneself, so that the chosen object belongs to the choosing subject, stands in relation to him or in some way serves him and his interests. (Stoeckhardt)

As Israel was once God’s chosen people (Dt. 4:37; 14:2), the Christian Church is now chosen (Rom. 9; 1 Peter 2:9-10). “God’s Word leads us to Christ, who is the Book of Life, in whom all are written and elected who are to be saved in eternity” (FC Ep XI 7). (TLSB)

ἐξελέξατο ἡμᾶς ἐν αὐτῷ—The verb ἐκλέγομαι, “choose,” is related to the adjective ἐκλεκτός, “elect, chosen.” The middle voice (reflexive) is significant: “he chose us for himself.” In the OT, Israel was God’s chosen people. Jesus Christ is called God’s “Chosen One” as all Israel rolled into one, particularly at his transfiguration: “And a voice came from the cloud, saying, ‘This is my Son, the Chosen One [ὁ ἐκλελεγμένος]’ ” (Lk 9:35). The Father’s declaration is then taken up as a taunt by the crowds at Christ’s crucifixion: “He saved others; let him save himself, if he is the Christ of God, the Chosen One [ὁ ἐκλεκτός]” (Lk 23:35). (CC)

Deuteronomy 7:6 “For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession.”

Psalms 4:3 “Know that the LORD has set apart the godly for himself; the LORD will hear when I call to him.”

1 Corinthians 1:26 “Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth.”

James 2:5 “Listen, my dear brothers: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him?”

1 Peter 2:9-10 “But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”

before the foundation of the world. See Jn 17:24. (CSB)

Before we came into being, even before the foundation of the world was laid, God had thought of us in grace, and had his thoughts, in his purpose and council, taken us out of the world, out of lose, condemned mankind, had claimed and secured us for himself, had firmly resolved that we should always be and remain his own and live with him eternally. (Stoeckhardt)

Nevertheless, as the modifying prepositional phrase πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου, “before the foundation of the world” (see the next textual note), suggests, there is more than Baptism in mind. This “choosing” occurred not only in history at the moment of Baptism, but also before history in the eternity of God’s will. For Gentiles who had been raised in the belief that their fate was controlled by gods and hostile spiritual forces, by enemies wielding magic, and by astrological signs, the message that they were chosen by a loving Father would have been immensely liberating. Paul’s classic words on the subject in Rom 8:29–30 emphasize that God’s foreknowledge (οὓς προέγνω, “whom he foreknew”) involved more than a passive preview of the future. God actively “predestined” (προώρισεν, Rom 8:29) those whom he foreknew (a related participle, προορίσας, “he had predestined,” occurs in Eph 1:5). This predestination led to their call (ἐκάλεσεν), justification (ἐδικαίωσεν), and ultimate glorification (ἐδόξασεν, Rom 8:30). Peter likewise calls his hearers “chosen ... according to God the Father’s foreknowledge/predestination [ἐκλεκτοῖς ... κατὰ πρόγνωσιν θεοῦ πατρός]” (1 Pet 1:1–2). All of this occurs “in him” (ἐν αὐτῷ, Eph 1:4), in Christ, that is, because of the work of Christ (*propter Christum*) and by means of one’s incorporation into Christ (*per Christum*). With these two prepositional phrases—“before the foundation of the world” and “in him”—Paul thus stresses two aspects of election: God’s eternal plan (see the next textual note) and the concrete, historical working out of the plan in Christ, whose merit is applied to the saint in Holy Baptism (see the fifth textual note on 1:3). This baptismal application stands at the center of Paul’s prayer for the Ephesians. Baptism into Christ is the moment when God’s eternal choosing is made manifest, emerging from his hidden will to become the certain object of saving faith. (CC)

holy and blameless. See 5:27 for the same pair of words. Holiness is the result—not the basis—of God’s choosing. It refers both to the holiness imparted to the believer because of Christ and to the believer’s personal sanctification (CSB)

Not a description of our morality as seen by the world, but our status in God’s eyes. As Christ is holy and blameless, the perfect sacrifice for our sins (Heb. 7:26; 9:14), we, too, are made holy and blameless by forgiveness through His blood (Eph. 1:7). (TLSB)

A Christian’s life in all its connection with God’s will is holy, consecrated. The word translated “blameless” comes from a word describing an animal that is without blemish and therefore fit for sacrifice. To describe Christians as blameless people is to say we are committed to offering our Lord the very best – lives of excellent service and sacrifices that are pleasing to him. (LL)

Our blessings in Christ are not merely for this world. We are already experiencing here a foretaste of the eternal blessings that are in Christ.

Christ reconciled (made thoroughly different), washed and cleaned us in baptism and thus actually presented us as being holy and blameless and also glorious. (Lanski)

It is not that we were holy and blameless to begin with and for that reason God took a liking to us and chose us. No, far from it! But he chose us “to be holy and blameless.” (PBC)

before him – κατενώπιον αὐτοῦ—In the NT and early Christian literature, the preposition κατενώπιον, “before [someone],” is used only of God. It implies the authority of judgment and points to the glorious face of God, before which only those who are holy and without blemish may stand. A holy God consumes anything in his presence that is unholy. The work of the Gospel is to prepare God’s people to stand before him in a position of privilege and intimacy. (CC)

In love. We could never be holy before God unless the loving relations between us were restored. The spirit of love, trust, admiration, directed to God helps our complete sanctification – changes us into the same image. (PC)

John 3:16, “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

1:5 *predestined us* – προορίσας ἡμᾶς—“Since he had predestined us” renders the causal participle. Because this is an aorist participle, it should be understood as an action that preceded the act of choosing (1:4). God’s choice (both in eternity and in the act of Baptism) arises from his plan. προορίζω is used in the NT exclusively of God’s plan of salvation (Acts 4:28; Rom 8:29–30; 1 Cor 2:7; Eph 1:5, 11). (CC)

The Doctrine of Predestination

The primary point is that as God’s chosen we can rest assured that our salvation will not be taken away from us.

Predestination is whatever God has done, is doing and still will do for us during our life on earth to bring us to faith in Christ and to preserve us in this faith unto eternal salvation.

Some things to remember:

1. It is a mystery that we will never understand this side of heaven.
 - Deuteronomy 29:29, “The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law.”
 - Romans 11:33-36, “³³Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! ³⁴“Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?”³⁵“Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?” ³⁶For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.”
2. It is not a matter of chance.
 - Ephesians 1:4, “For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.”
3. It is not motivated by any personal merit and worthiness or better conduct on the part of humans.
 - 2 Timothy 1:9, “who has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time.”
 - Romans 11:6, “And if by grace, then it is no longer by works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace.”
4. People are not predestined to hell. That would be contrary to God’s will.

- 1 Timothy 2:4, “who desires all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth,”
 - Ezekiel 18:23, “Do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked? Declares the Sovereign Lord. Rather, am I not pleased when they turn from their ways and live?” Luke 15:10 “In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”
5. No one should think that, because he is in faith today and thereby assured of his election, he may now discard the Gospel, lose faith, live in sin, and still regard himself as one of the elect who will unfailingly be saved. People can through willful and intentional neglect throw away their faith. There is no such thing as “once saved, always saved” [Cain Gen 4:16 – Pharaoh – Judas/Peter – Jews – Romans 1:24]. We must make use of those means by which God assures us of His grace and thereby of our election.
 6. The life of the Christian is not in the hands of “fate.” In this short phrase three things are said:
 - a. Our destiny is in God’s hands,
 - b. The spirit in which God handles us is loving, and
 - c. Christ is the agent through whom our destiny is managed.

We have no advance or direct information of our election unto eternal life, but we may know of it by its results in our lives, by the faith, in which we now stand. As long as we remain in this faith, we should regard ourselves as the elect of God, and be certain that we are bound for heaven.

(Much of the information shared about predestination comes from: “A Summary of Christian Doctrine” by Edward W. A Koehler)

John 10:27-28: “²⁷ My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸ I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand.”

In the NT divine predestination is always presented in the context of gratitude for God’s grace, never is the sense of blaming God or questioning God’s choices. (LL)

Luther says, “If you believe, you are called; if you are called, your surely are also predestinated.” (What Luther Says – A Practical In-Home Anthology for the Active Christian – Plass – page 456)

2 Timothy 1:9 “who has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time,”

adoption. Christians are already God’s children, but this is a reference to the full realization of our inheritance in Christ. – Adoption was common among the Greeks and Romans, who granted the adopted son all the privileges of a natural son, including inheritance rights. Christians are adopted sons by grace; Christ, however, is God’s Son by nature. (CSB)

In the Greco-Roman world, only sons could inherit (Gal. 4:7). Some men ignored their natural children and declared an adopted son as heir. To be adopted by God is to be reborn into His family, made heirs of His kingdom (John 1:12-13; Rom. 8:16-17; 1 John 3:1-2). This happens, when we are all made “sons” (children, heirs) of God through His Son, Jesus (John 3:5; Gal. 3:26-29). (TLSB)

The original Greek word for “predestination” means adoption and then the filial relation established through adoption - sonship. (Stoekhardt)

In the ancient world, when a man adopted a son, that son’s entire identity and future changed. The grateful son, lavished with blessings and an inheritance, knew in a real way the significance of a father’s choice. Being chosen meant everything. Many adopted children today know the power and reassurance of being loved by choice. Christians are adopted children who never stop celebrating the sheer grace of our heavenly Father’s choice. There are no accidental adoptions. (LL)

Deuteronomy 14:2 “for you are a people holy to the LORD your God. Out of all the peoples on the face of the earth, the LORD has chosen you to be his treasured possession.”

Hosea 11:1 ““When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.

John 1:12 “Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God”

Romans 8:15 “For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, “*Abba*,^h Father.”

2 Corinthians 6:18 “I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.”

Galatians 4:5-6 “to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, “*Abba*, Father.”

in accordance with his pleasure and will – Thus the apostle finally points to the motive of predestination to adoption or of eternal election. The essential concept is the free self-determination of God. The entire expression should indicate that this act of God originated alone in God, not in something outside of God. In His election and predestination God took into consideration nothing outside of Himself, nothing that is in man, in no way considered man’s conduct or the cessation of wanton opposition on his part. (Stoekhardt)

1:6 *to the praise*. See vv. 12, 14. Election is for God’s glory. (CSB)

It is to show that Divine grace is not a limp shallow attribute, but one of glorious riches, deserving infinite praise. The idea of the richness, fullness, abundance, of God’s grace is prominent throughout the epistle. God desires to draw attention, not only to this attribute, but to the boundlessness of it – thus draw the love and confidence of his creatures to himself and inspire them with the desire to imitate him. (PC)

This refrain closes each section of the prayer, confessing that the blessings are due to God’s grace, not our own merit. (TLSB) Explanation of Lord’s Prayer: Fifth Petition: We pray in this petition that our Father in heaven would not look at our sins, or deny our prayer because of them. We are neither worthy of the things for which we pray, nor have we deserved them, but we ask

that He would give them all to us by grace, for we daily sin much and surely deserve nothing but punishment. So we too will sincerely forgive and gladly do good to those who sin against us.

His glorious grace – Knaritoo To highly favor or honor someone and to do so without having them merited it. (CSB)

Through the grace of God in Jesus, whose entire work is an expression of the love of God toward us, we become both the objects and the recipients of His love. (Buls)

Beloved - This describes Jesus at His Baptism (Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22) and transfiguration (Matthew 17:5; Mark 9:7). Through our Baptism into Christ, we, too, are beloved of God (Eph. 5:1; Col. 3:12). (TLSB)

1:7 redemption. See v. 14; 4:30; Ro 3:24; Tit 2:14. The Ephesians were familiar with the Greco-Roman practice of redemption: Slaves were freed by the payment of a ransom. Similarly, the ransom necessary to free sinners from the bondage of sin and the resulting curse imposed by the law (see Gal 3:13) was the death of Christ (called here “his blood”). (CSB)

Payment made to free a slave or captive - a common picture for salvation in the NT, evoking the exodus (Ex. 15:13; Luke 1:68). (TLSB)

Redemption implies that someone is a slave or captive and needs to be ransomed. (PBC)

through his blood. Cf. 2:13; 1Pe 1:18–19. (CSB)

OT sacrifices are also evoked (Lev. 17:11; Hebrew 9:14-15; 1 Peter 1:18-19). (TLSB)

St. Bernard of Clairvaux: “Where there is reconciliation there is remission of sins. And what is that but justification? Whether, therefore, we call it reconciliation or remission of sins, or justification, or again, redemption, or liberation from the chains of the devil... we have been justified freely by His (Christ’s) blood” (SLSB, pp. 287-88). (TLSB)

forgiveness of our trespasses – Sin is not only canceled out in terms of guilt, but is actually removed from our lives. (CSB)

Forgiveness implies that someone has acted improperly toward another and in so doing has incurred guilt that needs to be covered over or taken away. (PBC)

Luther: “Where there is forgiveness of sins there is life and salvation.

Psalm 103:12 “as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.”

1 John 1:9 “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”

according to the riches of his grace – ploutos An abundance of wealth to be given.

With these words Paul again expressly points to the motive of redemption and forgiveness. This His grace God has further demonstrated to us in a rich measure well explained in the coming verses. (Stoeckhardt)

Ephesians 2:7 “in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.”

Philippians 4:19 “And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.”

1 Timothy 1:14 “The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

1:8 *lavished upon us* – perisseuo To excel beyond any imagination. To be superabundant in giving. (CSB)

“In accordance with the riches of God’s grace that He lavished on us,” He did the unthinkable: God Himself paid the price. He sent His Son to be our substitute, to suffer and die in our place. Through His blood we have been rescued from the captivity of sin and freed from its guilt. (PBC)

In a million years we would not have devised such a plan. Rather, God devised it. (TLSB)

God is the prodigal – that is, extravagant – father of Luke 15, waiting for us to come and eager to shower us with an abundance of undeserved love. (LL)

Romans 6:23 “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Psalms 36:8 “They feast on the abundance of your house; you give them drink from your river of delights.”

John 10:10 “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full”

Ephesians 3:20 “Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us,”

Philippians 4:19 “And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.”

2 Peter 1:11 “and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

all wisdom and insight – With God’s grace comes wisdom and understanding. The wisdom, of which Paul writes, is to know and understand the mysteries of God so that they make sense of life. Wisdom is applied Scriptural truth. Wise people know God’s truth (knowledge) and have a firm grasp of it so that they articulate it (understanding), but they can also apply God’s truth to

their own life experiences. The wisdom God gives to Christians may appear foolish by worldly standards (1 Cor. 1:20-25), but in the end it is the wisdom that matters most for a blessed life. (LL)

Many ancient religions and philosophies, such as Gnosticism, promised special knowledge (4:14; Col. 2:16-223), but Paul taught that true wisdom is found in Christ (cf. Matt. 13:54; 1 Cor. 1:24, 30; Col. 2:3). (TLSB)

Wisdom and the similar expressions: discretion, prudence, understanding, do not always in Biblical usage designate only the intellectual faculty and endowment, but often the mind, the disposition, refer at the same time to the tendency of man's of the Christian will. They appear in both the OT and NT as religious moral concepts and are also used in the practical sense, in the sense of practical wisdom, discretion, prudence, which is intent upon the right, which knows how to attain which is right, corresponding to the goal, corresponding to the will of God. So also in our letter. (Stoekhardt)

Make us ready and perfect for a holy, blameless conduct in love. All these gifts, everything that we are and possess in spiritual matters we owe entirely to the free grace of God. (Kretzmann)

Romans 11:33-36, "Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! ³⁴"Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?" ³⁵"Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?" ³⁶For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen."

Proverbs 4:7: "Wisdom is supreme; therefore get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding."

1:9 *mystery*. The so-called mystery religions of Paul's day used the Greek word (*mysterion*) in the sense of something that was to be revealed only to the initiated. Paul himself, however, used it to refer to something formerly hidden or obscure but now revealed by God for all to know and understand (see 16:25; 1Co 2:7; 4:1; 13:2; 14:2; 15:51; Eph 1:9; 3:3-4, 9; 5:32; 6:19; Col 1:26-27; 2:2; 4:3; 2Th 2:7; 1Ti 3:9, 16).); Col 1:6 {*All over the world*. Hyperbole, to dramatize the rapid spread of the gospel into every quarter of the Roman empire within three decades of Pentecost (see v. 23; Ro 1:8; 10:18; 16:19). In refutation of the charge of the false teachers, Paul insists that the Christian faith is not merely local or regional but worldwide. (CSB)

An astonishing revelation – the Gospel is for the Gentiles as well as the Jew (3:6). "Mystery religions" in the ancient world promised to reveal mysterious truths as adherents progressed to higher levels. For Paul, the emphasis is not on things kept hidden, but that things once hidden in God's plan are now revealed to all (3:9). Paul defines the mystery primarily as Jesus Himself (5:32; Col. 1:27; 2:2-3), whom God revealed as the Messiah to the apostles and prophets (3:3-5), and whom they revealed to the world in their preaching (3:8-9; 6:19; Col. 1:25-27). (TLSB)

Not only would we not have thought up a plan like this, but we would never have grasped or understood it if He had not made it known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He proposed in Christ. The mystery of God's Will, will be treated more fully late in this letter (3:2-13). Suffice it at this stage to say that the mystery of God's will is almost synonymous with God's plan of salvation, that is, His will to save sinners. God's plan is not mysterious in the sense that it mystifies people or is incomprehensible to them. It is a mystery only in the sense that people cannot come to understand it by themselves. God has to explain it to

them and lead them to know it and accept it. And that He does of course, in the gospel that proclaims His grace in Christ. (PBC)

Note from Acts 10:2 “(Cornelius) a devout man who feared God.” - Although he was pious and generous, he did not yet know Jesus as his Savior from sin. He would have known there was a coming Messiah. Ancient inscriptions have shown that Gentile patrons gave gifts to synagogues. “Cornelius living among the Jews, had heard long before about the coming Messiah, through whom he was righteous before God. In such faith, his prayers and alms were acceptable to God” (SA III VIII 8). (TLSB)

The word “mystery” encompasses all of God’s purposes in Christ – knowledge not known except through the revelation of the inspired Scriptures, centered in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ and the proclamation of the Gospel. The ultimate result of God’s revelation in Word and Christ is the salvation and inclusion of both Jews and Gentiles in the NT church, and the bringing of all things in heaven and earth together in eternity, when in the new heaven and new earth all God’s people shall live with Christ forever (2 Peter 3:130 (LL)

his purpose – The is a word of “purpose is eudokia – “good pleasure – and stresses both the absolute sovereignty and benevolence of God. The Greek word is always use in the sense of a gracious decree from God. (CSB)

1:10 a plan – The word “plan” is oikonomia – the word for “steward” or “stewardship” Here the meaning is the execution of a project previously determined.

Fullness of time to unite all things – This phrase makes the plan of historical – the plan is worked out in this world. History is significant because it is the sphere of the saving activity of God. The word here for “time” (literally, “the times”) is the standard Greek for a moment of intense significance

The messianic age began with Christ’s incarnation, death, and resurrection (Gal. 4:4; Luke 2:6; John 12:23). (TLSB)

A time of salvation (Greek kairos). We might best translate this phrase, “When the time was exactly right. To be filled completely, to bring to a head.

Romans 5:6, “You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.”

2 Corinthians 6:2, “For he says, ‘In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you.’ (Is. 49:8) I tell you, now is the time of God’s favor, now is the day of salvation.”

to unite all things in him. Paul uses a significant term here that not only has the idea of leadership but also was often used of adding up a column of figures. A contemporary way of putting it might be to say 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. (CSB)

Literally, “put under one head,” i.e., Christ (cf. v. 22; 4:15; 5:23). Because Jesus is both God and man, humankind and God are reconciled in Him (2:16; 2 Cor. 5:18-20). Because all who are

baptized are “in Christ,” they are also reconciled to one another, whether Jew or Gentile, male or female, slave or free (2:14; Ga. 3:26-29). (TLSB)

God’s purpose is to have everything add up to and make sense in Christ. (LL)

All things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth. Brought into one unit, actually become one. The children according to election he wanted to lead, one after the other, to Christ, join them together in Christ, make them all one in Christ, unite them in one whole. So here for the first time in our letter we meet the idea of the one holy Christian Church. (Stoekhardt)

1:11 *In him.* Christ is the center of God’s plan. Whether the universe or the individual Christian is in view, it is only in relationship to Christ that there is a meaningful future destiny. Paul goes on to speak, not of the world as a whole, but of those who respond to God’s call. (CSB)

obtained – Literally means “appointed,” “allotted.” (TLSB)

an inheritance - The Israelite tribes received the Promised Land as their allotment from God, Christians receive God’s kingdom, eternal life, and heaven (Mt. 25:34; Col. 1:12; 1 Peter 1:4). As we are God’s children, this can be called an inheritance (1:14, 18). (TLSB)

predestined - “In Him we are seek the eternal election of the Father, who has determined in His eternal divine counsel that He would save no one except those who know His Son Christ and truly believe in Him. Other thoughts are to be entirely banished... We know (assuredly that out of pure grace, without any merit of our own, we have been elected in Christ to eternal life” (FC Ep XI 13). (TLSB)

according to the purpose – God’s inheritance is not a fortuitous benefit, but the result of God’s deliberate and eternal foreordination; it rest therefore on an immovable foundation. (PC)

In speaking of how God’s eternal plan centers on Christ, Paul returns once more to the subject of election and predestination. He states, “In him 9Christ) we were also chosen, having been predestinated 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. (PBC)

council of his will – Man resolves to do many things but does not by far accomplish everything he has determined to do. Whatever God has determined he also carries through and accomplishes in spite of all obstacles. (Stoekhardt)

1:12 *we, who were the first to hope in Christ.* Probably a reference to those Jews who, like Paul, had become believers before many Gentiles had. (CSB)

Paul writes as a Jewish Christian, one who received the Messiah. He insists that the Gentiles, who receive Christ through his preaching (v. 13) are united with the Jews in Christ by their common Baptism. (TLSB)

This does not simply describe the believers out of Israel but points at the same time to this that God, who does all things after the counsel of His will, has actually carried out His eternal decree of election in the elect out of Israel. (Stoekhardt)

Whoever hopes and trusts in Christ from his heart, he is through Christ a child of God and a vessel to the praise and glory of God; in him God's power and grace have glorified themselves. We may render vv. 11, 12 thus: in whom we also have been chosen, since we were predestinated according to the purpose of Him who does all things according to the counsel of His will, that we should be to the praise of His glory - we, we who have also before hoped and trusted in Christ. (Stoekhardt)

God's faithfulness to the Jewish nation was only part of His plan, though. Paul hints at that when he says, "We...were the first to hope in Christ," implying there are others. We Jews may have been the first to believe in Christ, Paul says - but he quickly adds, "You (Ephesian readers, Gentiles by birth) also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation." The Jews are part of God's plan, but in Christ the Gentiles are also in the picture. Note the implications of that for God's plan and purpose of bringing "all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ." (PBC)

to the praise of his glory - We should redound (To have an effect or consequence - To return) to the praise, to the honor of God's glory. God wanted to glorify Himself in us through His grace and mercy, then also through His power and might. This present statement concerning our eternal election and predestination is not simply a repetition of what was said at the beginning of this section, but by means of the words "even in Him: in whom also we have been elected," etc., stands in close connection with the purpose of God's will just mentioned: to gather together all things in Christ. God wanted to gather together all who are children in heaven and on earth in Christ, in the Christ in whom it is established that we are chosen, or through whom we are chosen and predestined unto adoption, unto the praise of God's glory. We owe it to Christ, the Redeemer of the human race, that God has chosen us in grace unto His own, who are by nature poor sinners. Christ should also then be the focal point, in whom all the elect children of earth along with the elect angels are found together. (Stoekhardt)

1:13 *you also*. Probably refers to the majority of the Ephesians, who were Gentiles. (CSB)

when you heard the word of truth – Heard and received the truth as it is in Jesus, the glad tidings of salvation through a crucified Jesus, just as freely as did the believing Jews, and to the same blessed effects. (PC)

The sinner hears the Gospel concerning Christ and accepts this Word in faith. He who does that thereby also accepts Christ, of whom the Gospel speaks. (Stoekhardt)

gospel of your salvation – τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς σωτηρίας ὑμῶν—The genitive has two aspects: "the Gospel message whose *content* is the salvation accomplished for you" and "the Gospel message that *brings* you salvation." (CC)

sealed with the promise . In those days a seal denoted ownership. – Such faith is sealed and resealed through Word and Sacraments. A stamp on our hand can wear off and so can the seal if we neglect his Word and Sacrament. (CSB)

Baptized. A seal marked ownership. The word was used for a wax seal on a scroll (John 3:33; Rev. 5:1-5; Jer. 32:10); also for a brand on any animal or a tattoo on a slave or soldier. In the OT, God sealed Cain to protect him (Gen. 4:15), and circumcision sealed the Israelites as God's people (Gen. 17:11; Rom. 4:11; Col. 2:11-12). God seal marks all those in heaven (Rev. 7:2-4; 9:4). A seal leaves its image, through Baptism, the promised Spirit (Luke 24:49; Acts 2:33) makes

us His dwelling (2 Cor. 1:21-22). “Baptism and the Lord’s Supper - appointed as outward signs - work as seal” (LC III 98). (TLSB)

The impression of it is partly within believers and partly without. Within it is the felt result of the working of the Holy Spirit – the feeling of satisfaction and delight in the work and person of Christ, of love confidence, and joy flowing out toward God and the desire and endeavor in all things to be conformed to his will. Without, it is the fruit of the Spirit, the new man, created in righteousness and holiness after the image of Christ. (PC)

The Holy Spirit protects us unto salvation, which is promised us in the Gospel of Christ, to which we have been elected from the beginning. Preservation is a work of the Holy Spirit. (Stoekhardt)

The Ephesians bear a seal: having the Holy Spirit in their hearts. In ancient times a seal was a sign of ownership. For a Christian to bear the seal of the Holy Spirit is an indicator that he or she belongs to God. That is a present blessing. (PBC)

1:14 *guarantee*. The Christian’s possession of the Holy Spirit is not only evidence of his present salvation (vv. 14, 16) but is also a pledge of his future inheritance—and not only a pledge but also the down payment on that inheritance (see 2Co 1:22; 5:5; Eph 1:14).} (CSB)

Deposit or down payment; a substantial part of a purchase price paid in advance. The Holy Spirit dwells in us as the firstfruits of God’s gifts; the final “payment” is the resurrection and eternal life (Rom. 8:23)

The Holy Spirit is the down payment, the earnest money, of our heavenly inheritance. The Holy Spirit brought us to faith and, as Martin Luther put it in his explanation to the Third Article of the Apostles’ Creed, The Holy Spirit “keeps us in the one true faith.” In other words, we are secure. Our place in heaven is guaranteed. A deposit has been made. Our reservation is confirmed in the ongoing presence and power of the Spirit in our lives. (LL)

We have future blessing. A deposit, down payment, is the first installment of a transaction and guarantees the rest of the obligation will also be met. (PBC)

2 Timothy 1:12, “That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet this is no cause for shame, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day.”

to the praise of his glory – This is a vivid purpose statement for the life of the Christian. We are people of praise. That means our lives celebrate Christ. Our attitudes and our actions are meant to lift people to see Christ with us and within us. (LL)

1:3–14 Paul directs the Ephesians away from themselves, teaching them to trust in God’s promises in Christ. Pride tempts us to trust in our commitment to God; doubt makes us worry that we are not committed enough. Jesus blesses us spiritually by leading us to repent of sinful pride by the Law and calming our worried hearts through the Gospel. • Father, forgive my self-centeredness, and teach me to rely on Your loving plan for me; through Jesus Christ. Amen. (TLSB)

Thanksgiving and Prayer

15 For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, 16 I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, 18 having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might 20 that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. 22 And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

1:15-23 These verses are really only one sentence, one complete thought. These verses apply what was said in verses 3-14. Verses 3-14 speak about what our election in Christ in eternity has caused for us in time. Verses 15-23 direct our attention to sanctification, to our everlasting hope in heaven, and never lose sight of Christ. See how many times you can find Him (Christ) referred to in verses 15-23. Kretzmann says of this section: “A long remarkable sentence, presenting the loftiest conception, both of Christ’s own supremacy and of the grandeur of that Church of His, of which the Ephesians have been made members.” (Buls)

Following hard upon the longest sentence in the NT (1:3–14; 204 Greek words), Paul manages the second longest (169 words)! The same grandiloquence of expression and liturgical redundancy characterize this sequel to the opening prayer. Indeed, some have questioned why Paul should include both a *Berakah* prayer (1:3–14) and a formal thanksgiving (1:15–23) at the head of one letter, an apparent redundancy not matched in any other NT letter. (CC)

1:15 *for this reason* – Greek “therefore” διὰ τοῦτο—The meaning of this common phrase (“for this reason, therefore”) is not in doubt, but its referent is unclear. Normally it appeals to a cause that has just been mentioned (Eph 5:17; 6:13; Col 1:9). It could be a specific reference to the Ephesians having heard the Word and been baptized (Eph 1:13), which would lead naturally into his thanksgiving for their continued faith and love. Or it may be a more general marker of rhetorical progression: just as God is to be praised for the cosmic, saving deeds he has accomplished for us in Christ (the *Berakah* prayer, 1:3–14), so also he is thanked for preserving the Ephesians in this faith. (CC)

because I heard. This sounds strange from one who had spent a few years in Ephesus. He may be referring to a greatly enlarged church there, many of whom Paul did not know, or, if Ephesians was intended as a circular letter (see note on v. 1), he may be referring to news from the whole area, only a part of which he had visited. (CSB)

A messenger has apparently brought news to Paul about the congregation he founded. He is relieved that they have kept the faith. (TLSB)

Stoekhardt says: “These three, faith, hope, and love, which Paul also joins in other letters, e.g., 1 Thess. 3:3; 1 Cor. 13:13; Col. 1”⁴⁻⁵, constitute the present Christian status. The more faith grows in strength and unfolds its power in love, the more intense becomes also the hope of Christians. The nearer the end of their faith, the soul’s salvation, approaches, the more distinct this goal presents itself to the inner eye of the Christians, and thus they grow in hope and in the knowledge of their hope and the object of their hope. (Buls)

1:16 remembering you in my prayers – What a thrill it must have been for the Ephesians to know that Paul continually thanked God for their faith and for their love for all the saints. What’s more, he kept on praying for them. Those prayers encouraged the Ephesians. A young missionary tells of receiving a letter from a disabled elderly woman in a nursing home. She simply wrote, “I’ll be praying for you at 8:30 a.m., Eastern Standard Time, every morning.” The missionary figured out the differences in the time zones and thought of the woman often just at the moment of her prayers. He wrote back that he treasured the woman’s prayers and knew that they had a powerful impact on his work. Near the woman’s bed, framed and on the wall, is the missionary’s letter. They have never met, these two Christians, but in a very real way they depend on each other. We all need encouragement in prayer. Sometimes it is all that we can give, and sometimes it is all that we can receive. Yet the singularity of the gift makes its impact no less significant. (LL)

Even while in prison, we notice as a remarkable feature of Paul’s personal religion, as well as his pastoral care, the frequency of his thanksgiving, indicating the prevalence in him of a bright joyous state of mind, and tending to increase and perpetuate the same. Constantly to recognize God’s goodness in the past begets a larger expectation of in the future. (PC)

Ceaseless prayer is urged by our Lord (Luke 21:36) and elsewhere by Paul (Rom. 12:12; Col. 4:2; 1 Thess. 5:17). The Spirit prays within us, literally without ceasing (Rom. 8:26-27). But here Paul refers to his regularly daily hours of prayer. (TLSB)

Paul often speaks of thanking God for Christians and praying for them. Cf. 1 Thess. 1:2ff; 2 Thess. 1:3; 1 Cor. 1:4ff; Rom. 1:8ff; Phil. 1:3ff; Philemon 4ff. Why would Paul thank God for them? Because conversation and what follows is a miracle of God, the greatest thing that can happen to any mortal. Why would Paul continue to pray for them? Because Christians have a sinful flesh and live in a sinful world. There is always the danger that they will stagnate. The substance of the prayer now follows in verses 17-18. (Buls)

1:17 God of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is said of Jesus Christ incarnate. God is God of Jesus as a true man. The real point that Paul is making is that God is my God because He is the God of the incarnate Christ. (Buls)

him. God the Father. (CSB)

Kretzmann says: “He is the Father of glory, for glory is His essential attribute, Acts 7:2; 1 Cor. 2:8. Perfection, magnificence, divine majesty and excellence is found in Him. Stoeckhardt says: “This God is the Father of glory, that is to say, the highest, majestic glory is His very own. (Buls)

spirit of wisdom and revelation - Through the Word, the Spirit (Is. 11:2; 1 Cor. 12:8) gives wisdom and reveals the Father and the Son (John 16:13; 1 Cor. 2:10-13). (TLSB)

The Spirit of wisdom and revelation teaches Christians to understand heavenly, divine things and reveals to them what would otherwise remain hidden to them. (Stoeckhardt)

We offer a paraphrase to bring out the meaning: “I pray that He give you an attitude of wisdom and revelation by greater knowledge of Him (God Himself) (Buls)

give you...knowledge – Knowing Christ is more than just knowing about Him. It is being in close personal relationship with Christ. Knowing Christ is looking like Christ, saying what Christ would say, doing what Christ would do. It is similar to a couple who has been married for many

years and can actually finish one another's sentences, know just what the other is thinking, and get the same idea at the same time. Jesus knew the Father on such a basis because he and the Father were in constant communion. (LL)

Having such great spiritual blessings, it is most necessary that they know and realize ever more fully what these blessings are, the greatness and their value. We often take God's supreme gifts as a matter of course, which may result in our regarding them lightly, perhaps losing them. (Lenski)

Kretzmann: "The Holy Spirit reveals to Christians an ever clearer and sharper understanding of God. They advance from truth to truth, from knowledge to knowledge." Stoeckhardt: "The Spirit of wisdom and revelation teaches the Christian to grasp the heavenly, divine things and reveals to them that which otherwise would remain hidden to them. By receiving true faith the Christians have with it and in it received also the Holy Spirit. The prayer of Paul requests the increase of the Spirit and His gifts." (Buls)

Colossians 1:9, "For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding."

1:18 *eyes of your heart.* Your mind or understanding or inner awareness. (CSB)

In biblical language, the heart is the seat of thought and will (not emotions). The light is God's realm (Col. 1:12-13; 1 John 1:5-7) Apart from Christ, people are "darkened in their understanding" (Eph. 4:18), but through Baptism, they are brought into the light (5:8, 14; cf John 9:11; Acts 9:18). Early Christians spoke of Baptism as enlightenment. Just: "This washing (Baptism) is called illumination, because those who learn these things are illuminated in their understanding" (ANF 1:183). (TLSB)

The heart according to the biblical view is the central seat and organ of personal life, not only of feeling and experience but also of mind and will, and comes into consideration here according to its aspect of understanding. (Stoeckhardt)

Such enlightenment from the Word will help the Ephesians to recognize and appreciate three great blessings from the Father: (1) the hope to which he has called them, (2) the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and (3) his incomparably great power for those who believe. (PBC)

hope. Has an objective quality of certainty (see Ro 8:25). It is the assurance of eternal life guaranteed by the present possession of the Holy Spirit (see v. 14). (CSB)

In the midst of the greatest troubles, sickness, trial, or affliction, a Christian is assured by the everlasting Gospel that what has happened to him in time (conversion) is the result of God's eternal plan in Christ for him and points the eyes of his heart to the Hope to which God called him and to the wealth, the riches, which consists in the great inheritance of heaven which God gives in the Gospel. Stoeckhardt writes: "The hope of the Christians is fixed upon the inheritance which God at some future day is to bestow upon His children. This inheritance is, as has been noticed in verse 14, the completion of their salvation, the heavenly joy, the transcendent ecstasy and bliss, or the future glory." (Buls)

Christian hope is not magic. It is real faith that sees heaven in the future with all its glories. In this sense Christians live in the now, having been in the future already. With such hope we can become a “youthening” force in a world of fear and despair. (LL)

The nearer the end of faith the salvation of souls comes, the more distinctly does their goal appear before the inner eye of the Christians. They grow in hope and in the knowledge of this hope and its objective. (Stoekhardt)

called. See Php 3:14; 2Ti 1:9; Heb 3:1. (CSB)

The apostle refers the Christian reader to their calling or conversion wherein their election was realized. At that time when he called and took them out of the world, called and drew them unto himself and made them his children, God awakened hope in them. (Stoekhardt)

his glorious inheritance in the saints. Either the inheritance we have from God (see v. 14; Col 1:12) or the inheritance God receives, i.e., the saints themselves. (CSB)

Stoekhardt: “Glory, doxa is here a most splendid condition. It is a wonderful, beautiful, glorious inheritance, far beyond anything we can conceive at present, which awaits the children of God... This inheritance has its place among the saints, in the congregation of those that shall be perfected in holiness and righteousness, nowhere else... It is an incorruptible, undefiled inheritance that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven, 1 Peter 1:4, and thus they alone are the heirs of this inheritance who have been sanctified by the Holy Spirit... AS long as the Christians are still living and walking here in this world, their eyes, their senses, their thoughts are still so easily fascinated by the things and treasures of this visible world and are thus distracted from the glorious treasures of the world to come; and therefore the Apostle prays for them, and we are without ceasing to pray and to implore God that He through His Spirit may enlighten us that we may always more and more and better and better behold the righteousness of the glory of the inheritance of the saints in light, as it is presented to us in His Word, so that our inner eye may become accustomed more and more to behold the brilliance of eternity, of the promised heavenly glory. (Buls)

saints. Those whom God has called to be his own people, i.e., all Christians (see vv. 1, 15). The word carried the idea of dedication to a deity. (CSB)

John 8:31-32, “To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, ‘If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. ³² Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.’”

Romans 8:18, “I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.”

1 Peter 2:9, “But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.”

1:19 In this verse Paul piles term upon term to emphasize that the extraordinary divine force by which Jesus Christ was raised (v. 20) is the same power at work in and through believers. (CSB)

The synonyms for power add emphasis. Here, God’s power is His saving action for those “who believe.” (TLSB)

This strength is God's capacity. Power is the manifestation of this capacity, the power of God that is effective in the objects involved. Likewise in Col. 2:12 where faith is called the operation of God. And Christians should now rightly estimate and consider how superabundantly great are God's might and power which they have experienced and do continually experience in themselves. (Stoeckhardt)

immeasurable greatness of his power – dynamis is the Greek word that suggests the ability to accomplish something. God is able to bring about all these great things in the lives of the Ephesians. (CSB)

Power – kratos suggests power over others that subdues or rules. Not only does God have the ability but in fact, he is doing it because he rules. By the very strength which is inherent in himself as God.

This is the basis of the strength to which the Christian community is summoned. The community is in Christ. This place is in some sense invested with the omnipotence which is Christ's. Thence the members are summoned to be strong. (Kittel)

might – ischys suggests inherent strength whether used or not. God rules by the very strength which is inherent in himself as God. (CSB)

It is largely co-extensive with *duna* and the derivatives overlap. In the case of *isthu* there is more emphasis on the actual power implied in ability or capacity, i.e. on the power which one possesses. (Kittel)

1:20 *he worked* – God's power was shown in the extraordinary acts of Christ's resurrection and ascension. In Baptism, God raised us by the same power, and He continues to use it for our benefit (2:6; 1 Cor. 6:14; 2 Cor. 13:4; Col. 2:12). (TLSB)

Since it reads: "To us-ward who believe, according to the working," the point in question here is a continuous operation of God's power. The apostle has in mind the beginning of faith or the constancy of our faith till now. So then our standing is faith appears as an act of omnipotence, as a miracle of the triune God. (Stoeckhardt)

right hand. The symbolic place of highest honor and authority. (CSB)

Not a place where Christ is confined, but a symbolic picture of His saving power (Ex. 15:6; Ps. 48:10; Is 41:10). "The received human nature in Christ has and retains its natural essential properties. But over and above these, through the personal union with the Deity, and afterward through glorification, Christ's human nature have been exalted" (FC SD VIII 12). (TLSB)

heavenly places – ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις—See the fourth textual note on 1:3 for this distinctive Ephesian phrase, "in the heavnlies." Although no noun is expressed, in the present context the adjective ἐπουράνιος certainly refers to "heavenly places" as the location of Christ's ascension. This does not preclude the significance of the action: if Christ is seated at the right hand of God in the heavenly *places*, then it symbolizes his power in heavenly *matters* (cf. Col 3:1). More precisely, it expresses the triumph of Christ over the hostile spiritual forces that oppose God's people, as described in the next verse. (CC)

1:21 *all rule and authority*. Including whatever supernatural beings his contemporaries might conceive of, for in his day many people believed not only in the existence of angels and demons, but also in that of other beings. Christ is above them all. (CSB)

Judaism used four terms for ranks of angels (cf. 2 En. 20-22). It may also refer to hostile, fallen angels (Eph. 6:12). Christians need not fear their influence, for Christ is Lord over all (3:10; Rom. 8:38-39; Col. 2:15). (TLSB)

Paul uses four terms to describe position of great power. He could no doubt have listed more than four, or he might have settled for fewer. The number of positions is not significant. The point is that absolutely no authority figure can successfully oppose the risen and ascended Christ. (PBC)

power – Over everything that has name and value in this and the future world Christ is highly exalted. Paul does not want to say that in the future other spirits would not come to exist who also be also be subordinated to Christ, but that neither in the earthly nor in the celestial world could one find any kind of a name that would be on a par with Christ. (Stoekhardt)

in this age ... the one to come.† Like the rabbinic teachers of his day, Paul distinguishes between the present age, which is evil, and the future age when the Messiah will consummate his kingdom. (CSB)

The time of the Messiah, as described by the rabbis, would be blissful. (TLSB)

The expression “world that is to come” is selected because for us the entrance into the same is still in the future, even though in itself it already exists. When in Hebrews the heavenly world, on the one hand, is presented as already existing for us (Heb. 12:22) and the same heavenly Jerusalem, on the other hand, is designated as the city that is to come (Heb. 13:14); yes, if the readers have already come to taste the powers of the world to come (Heb. 6:5), it is perfectly clear that Paul by “world to come” simply means the world above. (Stoekhardt)

Philippians 2:9-11, “⁹Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

1:22 *under his feet*. Ps 8:5–6 emphasizes the destiny of man, and Heb 2:6–9 shows that ultimately it is the Son of Man who rules over everything (cf. Heb 10:13). (CSB)

Christ as the Second Adam and God’s victorious Son is given dominion over all creation (Ps. 110:1; 1 Cor. 15:27-28; Heb. 2:6-9). (TLSB)

Yes, not only all names and powers of the visible and invisible world but everything, all things, all creatures God has placed under the feet of Christ, as Psalm 8 already testified of the Son of Man, the Messiah. Preeminence includes dominion; subordination includes subjection. (Stoekhardt)

head. Christ is not only head of the church, but also head over everything. (CSB)

That is to say: and to Him, the Christ who has all things under His feet, to Him God, by virtue of His attribute as Head over all things, has given and presented the Church which is His body. (Stoekhardt)

church - Christ's lordship is for the benefit of His Bride - not just one congregation, but all Christians everywhere. Hus: "Christ is the head of the universal church" (The Church, p. 17). (TLSB)

1:23 *his body*. The key idea in Ephesians (2:16; 4:4). Through Baptism, there is a true, organic unity between all believers and Christ (1 Cor. 12:13), which is nurtured by receiving His true body in the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 10:16-17). "These marks (of the Church) are the pure doctrine of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments in accordance with the Gospel of Christ. This Church alone is called Christ's body, which Christ renews, sanctifies, and governs by His Spirit" (Ap. VII and VIII 5). (TLSB)

The believing Christians, to whom and of whom Paul has up till now spoken, are now expressly embraced under the collective name "Church." The Church is the gathering, the congregation of believers, all the elect children of God upon earth. The Church belongs to Christ and cannot exist or have any meaning without him. (Stoekhardt)

fullness ... fills. The church is the fullness of Christ probably in the sense that it is filled by him who fills all things. (CSB)

As true God, Christ fills and governs the whole universe (Col. 2:9-10). Yet in His plan, God has graciously chosen that the Church should make Him complete, and likewise be filled by Him (Eph. 3:19; 4:13). (TLSB)

The Church is as closely attached to Christ as the body is to the head. It represents the fullness of Christ's graces and gifts. And so Christ will certainly exercise the sovereignty He now possesses and summon forth His heavenly powers and angelic host, whose Lord He is, to guard and protect His Church against all dangers that menace it from without, against all hostile powers of earth and the deep. He will indeed make all things under His dominion subservient to this purpose. The omnipotence of Christ and God is guaranteed for the continuance of faith, as well as for the continuance of the congregation of believers in the world that is hostile to God and Christ. (Stoekhardt)

This statement is actually something of a paradox, an apparent contradiction in terms. Christ fills everything in every way. He is completely self-sufficient. Yet he chooses to be empty and unfulfilled without his Church. How can that be? Simply because God is true to his eternal plan. From eternity he elected and predestined the members of his church – and he will not rest until he has accomplished their salvation. Only then will he be truly fulfilled. (PBC)

1:15-23 Paul gives thanks for God's power at work in the Ephesians. God's power is not automatically good news. It terrifies sinners, but it comforts us who know his love for us in Christ – Merciful Lord, powerful to save, grants us your good Spirit that we may boldly confess Jesus' saving Gospel. Amen.