

*Series: Survival Guide for Christians
Chosen by God*

Introduction (Text: Ephesians 1:1-2)

- A. **This letter to the church at Ephesus begins with a typical Pauline greeting.** He refers to himself as **“an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God” (1:1).** **He knows that he has been called by God for a specific purpose. He has been chosen to be the apostle to the Gentiles.**
- B. **The city of Ephesus played a very important role in Paul’s ministry.** He spent three years working in this area. He had wanted to preach the gospel in the province of Asia before now, but the Holy Spirit had forbidden it. The timing did not seem to be right.
- **On his third missionary journey, Paul goes back to the city of Ephesus and preaches the gospel there.** It is at this time that churches are started all over the province of Asia (cf. Acts 19).
 - **We believe that the seven churches written to in the book of Revelation got their start during this time. After Paul’s work is done, Timothy, Paul’s son in the Spirit, stayed behind to preach for this congregation.**
 - **Despite the difficulties that Paul had while preaching here, the church at Ephesus was a strong church that was spreading the gospel message all over the province.**
- C. **Some have suggested that what we might have here is a circular letter that was to be read and followed by the churches in this area, including Colossae and Laodicea.** This gives us an insight that this letter is extremely valuable to all the churches throughout history. **Some have suggested that this letter is a survival guide for Christians facing persecution.**
- D. Certainly, it is a letter that we need to study closely. He reminds us of how much God loves us and how wonderful his plan for our life is. Realize that he shares with us how we should live as those chosen by God. **If we are striving to be God’s holy people who are faithful (trustworthy) in Christ Jesus, then this letter is for you.**

#1: Chosen by God (Ephesians 1:3-6)

- A. **As Paul begins this letter, he offers praise to God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.** You were chosen by God to live in a relationship with God. He has chosen you to receive all spiritual blessings. What difference does that make for us?

- B. First, we must understand that these blessings are for those who are in Christ Jesus.** If all spiritual blessings are in Christ, we want to be in Christ. How is that possible? Paul reminds the Galatians (**Galatians 3:27**).
- C. It will be impossible to list all of our spiritual blessing that can be found in Christ. What are some of our spiritual blessings? Paul will discuss two of them later in our text.**
- **First, we have God as our Father (1 John 3:1-2).**
 - **Second, we have an incredible future-heaven (Revelation 21:1-5).**
 - **Third, we have a wonderful fellowship (1 Corinthians 12:26-27).** This is to name only a few.
- D. As Christians, we live in an ungodly world, as did the Christians in Ephesus. Paul reminds us that as difficult as our lives may be, we need to understand that we have been chosen by God even before the creation of the world. No matter what happens in our world, we are chosen by God and called to live lives that are holy and blameless in his sight. It is our choice how we will respond.** We must understand that there are eternal consequences to the choices that we make.
- I remember how good it felt to be chosen as a member of a team (little league - made the team).
 - I remember how good it felt and still feels to know that my wife loved me enough to say “yes” to our spending the rest of our lives together (43 years).
- E. God has planned that our lives will ultimately bring praise to God’s grace.** We have been called by God to love and share God’s grace to those we come in contact with, when we do this we are bringing praise to God’s grace. **When we love as God has loved us, then others will be drawn to Christ, but when we fail to love we are driving people away. We have been chosen by God for a specific purpose.**

#2: Redeemed by God (Ephesians 1:7-12)

- A. We are chosen by God. Also, we are redeemed by God. The price has been paid for our salvation. We were slaves to sin, to darkness, but that has changed.** We have been purchased and now have our freedom. **(Ex: slave bought and then given freedom).**
- B. We must remember that our freedom was bought at a very high price.** Through Christ’s blood, the price has been paid. Our redemption could only take place through the blood of Jesus Christ, the perfect God-Man.
- C. This brings us to another spiritual blessing that we have in Christ and that is forgiveness of our sins. God’s grace is demonstrated by his willingness to forgive (Acts 2:38; 1 John 1:7).** Do we realize the full impact of this? **When I look at myself in the spiritual mirror, I know that I am a sinner. There is no hope for me without Jesus Christ.**

- **This forgiveness, God has lavished on us.** We don't deserve it. We can't earn it. It is only by a gift of God.
- In the past, this was hidden, but this mystery is now revealed in Christ Jesus. **This mystery of the gospel was hidden, but is now revealed, that Jesus Christ through his death has brought unity to all things in heaven and on earth.**

D. **We need to realize that God has a plan and that He is in control.** In the city of Ephesus, there was the temple of Diana. Pagan idolatry ran rampant. There were those who practiced witchcraft and followed after many different pagan gods. There was also the allegiance to the Roman Empire. It did not appear that God was in control, but Paul reminds them that it is Jehovah God who is working out his plan.

E. **Our world seems very much like the ancient world. We are moving as far away from God as fast as possible. As Christians, in order to survive with our faith in this world, we need to be reassured as often as possible that God is in control.** His plan is what is being worked out in our world. Realizing that God is in control, encourages us to commit our lives to his control. **When we commit our lives to his control, we are bringing praise to his glory. This is the fulfillment of our calling. We are chosen by God. We are redeemed by God so that we can bring the praise of his glory. How do we know this is true?**

#3: Sealed by the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13-14)

A. When we heard the gospel and accepted Jesus, you were marked in Him. This seal that we have received is another one of our great spiritual blessings in Christ. **We have been marked by Christ with the seal of God's Holy Spirit.**

- **Remember what Peter told the Jews on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:36-38).**
- **Remember what Paul wrote to the church at Corinth (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).**
- **Also, consider what John wrote to the same congregation later (1 John 2:26-27).** This anointing is God's Holy Spirit. John reminds us (1 John 4:1-4). In this day and age, we need to hear this over and over again and believe it! **It is by God's Spirit in us that we can tell what is false teaching and what is true!** (Ex: Origins, by Dan Brown; legalism vs. grace and love-study God's word).

B. **The Holy Spirit has been given to us as a deposit guaranteeing that God will keep his promise to us.** When I go in to buy a house or a car and I make the decision to make the purchase, I make a down payment to show that I will make the purchase. **The Holy Spirit is our guarantee that God will keep all of his wonderful promises.**

C. How do I know that I have been chosen? How do I know that I have been redeemed? God has made a down payment and He has given us His Holy Spirit to dwell inside of us. God's Spirit is in us until our redemption fully takes place! We have been chosen to be God's possession and when we ultimately submit to His Spirit, it will result to the praise of God's glory.

D. Our prayer should be as we live our daily lives:

“Send the Spirit of Thy Son,
To make the depths of Godhead known,
To make us share the life divine,
Send him the sprinkled blood to apply
Send him our souls to sanctify,
And show and seal us ever thine.”