
FIRST STUDY

GREETINGS AND SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS

(Ephesians 1:1-14)

As Paul begins this epistle to the Ephesians, he calls the Church at Ephesus the faithful in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 1:1).

Paul used the opening statements to address the entire congregation in a general way, rather than an opportunity to develop a theological argument about a specific individual's destiny. Most scholars believe that Ephesians was a circular letter intended for many congregations. ¹

It applies to all believers.

Within the total context of the epistle it seems obvious that the word "*us*" (Ephesians 1:3,4) must refer to the cooperate body of Christ rather than the individual Christian that makes it up. Paul used this opening section to declare that the body of Christ was God's plan. ¹

Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself. Ephesians 1:5. In the Greek, predestinated means to decide before hand. It was God's plan from the beginning of time that there would be a Church, and that Church would fulfill God's plan. If Christ was His plan from the beginning, then why wouldn't He decide

1. Copied from my notes in my Bible, origin unknown.

in the beginning, that He would establish the Church?

It was God's will for mankind, to save them through Christ. *In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace* (Ephesians 1:7). What a wonderful plan! For in *the fullness of time* (Galatians 4:4), God sent Jesus so that the next portion of His plan could be established and brought into being. But there is a choice to be made by all of mankind whether or not they choose to accept this plan for themselves, and be a part of this great Church, whether Jew or Gentile (Ephesians 1:9-13).

Ye were sealed. (Ephesians 1:13). This is God's mark of ownership. All who have the Spirit, have God's seal that he or she belongs to the heavenly family. This is a Holy Spirit deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who stay with God; who are God's possession *unto the praise of His glory*.

1. Do you believe, this *seal of the Holy Spirit with promise*, mentioned in Ephesians 1:13, means: no matter what unconfessed sins you have, you are guaranteed heaven even if you die in your sins?

If you were predestined to be a Christian, there would be no reason for Paul to say, "After ye believed, ye were sealed." why not "before," if you were predestined to be a Christian?

PRAYER FOR DIVINE ILLUMINATION (Ephesians 1:15-23)

Paul expresses his never failing to give thanks nor pray for the Churches, after he had heard of their faith in the Lord Jesus, and love to all the saints (Ephesians 1:15,16).

1. From Ephesians 1:17-23, for what does Paul pray concerning the universal Churches?

(1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____
