

Brief overview of Ephesians:

From: Paul (an apostle of Christ)

To: God's holy people in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ - primarily Gentile (non Jewish)

When: around 60AD

Where was Paul? Most likely in prison in Rome (3 v13 refers to his current sufferings)

Why written? To encourage Gentile believers, to show Jews & Gentiles are one in Christ, to remind them of God's moral law (they were either unaware of it or lax in following it)

What the new life in Christ is: 1v 3 – 2v10

**God's new community
(Jews & Gentiles):** 2v11 – 3v21

The new standards God expects: 4v 1 – 5v21

**How various relationships are
affected & the need to be prepared
for battles with the devil:** 5v21 – 6v24

Eph 1 v11-14

1) Whose we are

2) How did we become so

3) Why did we become so

1) Whose we are

Who is the we?

v11 “In him **we** . . who were the first to put our hope in Christ (ie Jews) . .”

v13 “And you also (Gentiles) . .”

& later talks about “our inheritance” v14

Words that used to be for the one nation of Israel are now reapplied to an international people (Jews & Gentiles) who have Christ in common (‘in him’)

In him we were also **chosen** (NIV) v11

Translation from original language not straightforward

NASB says “we have obtained an inheritance”

gk kleroo means to give or receive an inheritance.

. . But who’s inheritance?

Ours (a gift we have received) or

God’s (because he has taken us to be his own)?

The latter is more natural & has support in OT :

“For the LORD’s portion is his people, Jacob his allotted inheritance” Deut 32 v9

“Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, the people he chose for his inheritance.” Ps 33 v12

Until the redemption of those who are God's **possession** v14

V14 *gk peripoiesis*

But again who's possession?

Is it ours "until we acquire possession of it" or

Is it God's (ie his people – assumed by NIV)

Again the latter has more support in the bible.

"the LORD has declared . . . that you are his people, his treasured possession . . ." Deut 26 v18

"But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may . . ." 1 Pet 2v9

Paul appears to be speaking here of the church as God's 'inheritance' & 'possession'.

Such great love for us. How do we respond?

“Who am I, that the lord of all the earth,
Would care to know my name,
Would care to feel my hurt.

. . .

Lord, you catch me when I'm falling
And you've told me who I am,
I am yours.” (Casting Crowns)

“I was in your eyes
long before the sun had ever given light.
You designed my life
Planning every day, I was your delight.

And through each battle I face
There sounds an anthem of grace:
Come on my boy, come on my girl.
I hear your voice now cheering out for me.
The father's calling lifts my eyes to see
Your pleasure over me.” (Phatfish)

2) How did we become God's people?

By the will of God:

v5 in accordance with *his pleasure & will*

v9 made known to us the *mystery of his will according to his purpose*

v11 according to *the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will*

But still things for us to do:

v13 you *heard* the message of the truth

. . you *believed* . .

& were marked with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit
(something we *received*)

The Holy Spirit: a seal, as promised, a guarantee

Seal – mark of ownership

v13 marked with a seal, the promised HS

“He . . Set his seal of ownership on us & put his Spirit in our hearts . .” 2 Cor 1 v22

As promised:

“These people are not drunk . . No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel ‘In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people . .’” Acts 2 v15-17

“And I will put my Spirit in you & move you to follow my decrees . .” Ez 36 v27

A guarantee

Gk arrabon – in ancient transactions it signified first instalment, deposit, down payment

Not just guaranteeing our inheritance but giving a foretaste of it (v14)

“. . . An inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade.”

1 Pet 1 v4

“Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people . . . I am making everything new” Rev 21 v3-5

3) Why did God make us his people?

OT background:

“Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord GOD: It is **not for your sake**, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, **but for the sake of my holy name**, which you have profaned among the nations to which you came. And I will vindicate the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you have profaned among them. And **the nations will know that I am the LORD**, declares the Lord GOD, **when through you I vindicate my holiness before their eyes.**” (Ezek. 36:22–23
ESV)

Similar theme here in Eph 1:

“chosen to be holy & blameless . . adopted as sons . .**to the praise of his glorious grace**” v6

“so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be **to the praise of his glory**” v12

“HS . . A deposit guaranteeing of our inheritance until the (full) redemption . . **to the praise of his glory**” v14

God’s eternal purpose is that we glorify his name and so that the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places will see his manifold wisdom (3:10).

The bible doesn't give many glimpses into what goes on in the heavenly realms but there is one in Job ch 1

God says to devil: “ have you considered my servant Job, upright & blameless . . .” v8

The devil says to God: “*Does Job fear God for nothing?*” v9

In other words the devil is saying: “God, no one will serve you simply because you are good and wonderful; you have to bribe them!”

The question is, can God re-create a people, dead in their trespasses and sins, who will freely love him and glorify his name for no other reason than that he is truly worthy?

If so, those people will be TO THE PRAISE OF HIS GLORY.

Summing up

We are God's inheritance

We are God's possession

We have a glorious future

This is all by his will – though we hear & believe the message

We are given the HS – as promised, marked with a seal, as guarantee

That we might be 'for the praise of his glory'

Challenges:

To bask in the devoted love of God for us.

We are so used to putting **our will** at the centre.

And we do many things for **our glory**.

Here **God's will** is at the centre.

We are to live for the praise of **his glory**.

Make war in the heavenly realms with your praise!