

(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: 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 in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be whole and blameless before Him.

(5) In love He predestined us for adoption to Himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will, 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 --- which He lavished upon us --- in all wisdom and insight, making known to us the mystery of His will, according to His purpose, which He set forth in Christ 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, 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, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of His glory!

Think on these things:

- 1) God, our heavenly Father, has blessed us with how many spiritual blessings in heaven through Christ Jesus (v.3)?  
**“Every” spiritual blessing! 2 Pet. 1:3 – His divine power has granted us all things that pertain to life and godliness.**
- 2) V.4 is an important discussion on God’s “omniscience” and the doctrine of “predestination.” Both are essential to understanding God. When did God choose us to be whole and blameless? This was “pre-determined” (predestination).

**God chose us to be whole & blameless before the foundation (creation) of the world.**

- 3) Continuing to look at v.4, let’s examine the doctrine of omniscience. Can you explain what this means? What did God know about you and Jesus before you were ever born into this world?

**God knows everything about everything: past -> present -> future. This means God knew everything about me as it relates to Jesus, including whether or not I would come to belief.**

- 4) Which do you believe: God chose you to be saved before you were born, or God chose to save you because He knew you would put your faith in Jesus for salvation? Why does it matter?

**This question is about Wesleyan/Arminius vs. Calvinist theology. Did God choose me to be among the saved (excluding others) or did God choose me because I came to belief in Jesus? Salvation Army doctrine is the latter: because I came to belief (saving faith) in Jesus. Jn. 3:16 says that, “whosoever” believes in Him shall be saved. We don’t believe that God saved me, but damned my spouse --- before or despite what we want to believe about God.**

5) According to v.5, what else did God predestine for us?

**To be adopted as sons (children) of God through Jesus.**

6) Beginning in v.7, there are three “In Him...” teachings. What are these? In Him we have...

v.7 **Redemption -> forgiveness of my trespasses (sins)**

v.11 **An inheritance in heaven after we die our earthly death.**

v.13 **Holy Spirit sealing -> marked and protected as God’s child.**

7) What are we told about God’s “grace” for believers in v.8? Grace is undeserved favor.

**God lavishes His grace on believers. He can’t wait to be kind and forgiving!**

8) According to vs. 9-10, what mystery has God revealed, His purpose as set forth in Jesus Christ?

**The mystery revealed is this: In Jesus, all things in heaven & earth will be united.**

9) When you skim again verses 5-12, do you get the sense that God is orchestrating the affairs of men across time towards a plan He has in mind? What phrases would support that?

**Yes, God is orchestrating the affairs of mankind across time. He has a purpose and a plan for this world. In Jesus He revealed His plan for the fullness of time -> uniting all things and providing an inheritance to believers. God predestines and “works all things according to the counsel of His will” (v.11).**

10) What do you think being “sealed” with the Holy Spirit means? Consider 2 Corinthians 1:21-22 and Revelations 7:2-3. Sealing can mean 1 of 2 things, and it was a common practice of royalty and government leaders. (Remember Pilate sealed Jesus’ tomb, Matthew 27:62-66.)

**Being sealed by the Holy Spirit marks one as belonging to God and being under His protection. Sealing was also used to confirm the authenticity of the sealer; in this case, God Himself.**

11) What other purpose is explained by the Holy Spirit’s presence in the believer’s life? This is a financial term, similar to a down payment in today’s conversations. What is the “payoff?”

**The Holy Spirit is God’s guarantee about our futures with Him. The “payoff” is for each one of us to actually receive God’s inheritance --- to His glory!**

12) Are you aware of the Holy Spirit’s presence in your life...?

People and situations I want to pray for this week: