

BACKGROUND: Ephesus was and is a harbor city in present day Turkey. It was the commercial center for the region. It was a strategic city for the spread of the Gospel. Paul spent three years there and built a powerful church. (Acts 18:23; 19:41) Paul wrote this letter to the Ephesian church (and to the world-wide church) while imprisoned in Rome.

MAJOR THEME in Ephesians: **Being rich but living poor.** Few are the church communities that are so "in Christ"-- so intimately joined to Him, that they have some sense of their personal, unlimited potential, and a good awareness of the blessings that the Father would like to pour out on earth's life, both spiritual and material, for those who ask.

IN CHRIST: What makes a Christian different from other people is not that he or she is super holy or super good. The truth is that there are worldly people who are as righteous or generous as the best among us. What makes the Christian different is the indwelling presence of Christ in them. Things are accomplished through them that only God can do. The Christian is "of Christ." 1:1; "in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus." 1:3; "chosen in Christ." 1:4; "Adopted through Christ." 1:5; "In God's dearly beloved Son." 1:6; "Redeemed in Him." 1:7; "Given an inheritance in Him." 1:11; "Given hope in Him." 1:12; and it goes on.

- **1:1-2 From Paul:** Paul is writing not only as a friend and pastor to the Ephesian church ...but also as an _____ in the same league as Peter, James, John – the 12 disciples. He is not merely one who "accepted Christ" one day. He was _____ by God and forcibly converted by Jesus Himself and compelled, in a sense, to serve Christ. (Acts 9) He has authority over them. What he says has the authority of Christ. He does not allow himself to be lumped in with other teachers who often put him down to put themselves up.
- Paul is writing to God's holy _____, who are _____ followers of Christ.
- The first thing Paul does is speak Father God's blessing over them. "May _____ and _____ be yours, sent to you _____ God our Father and Jesus Christ our _____." What is coming in his letter is more blessing from God - God's words.

APOSTLE means "sent out." One who is sent out with authority from God to build His churches on truths made known through Christ and the prophets (writers of Scripture) and to be the chief leader in His churches. The 12 disciples (minus Judas and plus Paul) are unique as the foundation of the Church. Barnabas was included too. The term is also used for men gifted to plant, organize and oversee churches (apostles with a little "a"). (Eph 4:11)

- **1:3-5 A blessed people:** The part of humanity called the world, who buys the Devil's lies and dominates the media and much of education, indoctrinates us – putting into our minds that we descended from apes—there is no creator – there are no moral absolutes-

there is no hope beyond death – we as individuals don't matter – there is no judgment of the wicked ---so we should just as well "*feast and get drunk (and be merry) for tomorrow we die.*" I Corinthians 15:32 • Paul, speaking by the Holy Spirit, gives an entirely different world view and hope. There is a God and Father to _____ with glad hearts. He has blessed us with every _____ blessing. There is a _____ (God-filled) realm in addition to that which we experience on earth. We, and our lives on this good earth, are not accidents but planned by God even before He _____ the world. We were known in His mind and _____ by Him and _____ to be His children when "*the earth was empty, a formless mass cloaked in darkness.*" (Genesis 1:2) And we thought we were hopeless in the grip of our evil natures, but He knew we would choose to go our own ways rather than his and planned a way of making us _____ and without _____ in His eyes. His unchanging plan even when he knew we would fall away and become children of the Devil was to _____ us in his own _____ by sending Jesus to bring us home. The prospect of having us around His table gives him great _____.

ADOPT: There is a common misconception that all people are children of God. Jesus, however, said that anyone not joined to Him was a child of the devil. (John 8:44) Therefore, we have to be brought back to God's family by adoption.

1:6-8 Brought out of slavery. "*So we thank God for the wonderful _____ he has _____ out on us because we _____ to His dearly beloved Son.*" Common delusion is that if we get to do things our way—as we please -- then we are experiencing freedom. Trouble comes when we don't follow the rules (health rules, relationship rules, government rules, financial wisdom, moral rules, rules or laws of physics) and we end up not free (ruined health – car run into a telephone post— addicted – sitting in jail—people we love not wanting any more of us—an inability to force ourselves to do what we need to do to change). Eventually everyone comes to the end of their rope – not free. "*We are sold into slavery with sin as our master.*" Romans 7:14 • It is God our Father who _____ our _____ through the life's _____ of His Son and our sins are _____. He showers kindness, _____ and understanding upon us.

PURCHASED: In Greek – *APOLUTRO*. It means to pay what something is worth to get it back – to set it free. A person redeems what he has pawned to get it back. In the Old Testament, the redeemer was a relative who paid the price to buy his kinsman out of the slavery he had sold himself into. In the New Testament, Christ is the redeemer who pays the price to set us free from sin, death, the power of the devil, and the wrath of God. The appropriate payment for sin was death (Romans 6:23), so Jesus paid for us with His life's blood. I Peter 1:18f

- **1:9-11 Mixed up people and the world brought under God's authority.** God's _____ has been revealed to us. His plan from the beginning –knowing that the human race would run for it when they were given their own way—was that one day He would bring absolutely _____ together under the _____ of Christ. Everything includes both the heavenly realms where angels rebelled and fell and on earth where humanity rebelled. In this new world we who have given ourselves over to belong to Christ have an _____. Also, we would get a merry heart back from God and would naturally _____ Him.

• 1:12-14 **We can know we belong in God's world.** We believe the _____, that only God can _____ us. We _____, we placed our trust in Christ. He responded by identifying before all creatures in heaven and earth that we are _____ own. We know that he has done this by our experience of the _____. The Spirit is God's _____ that he will give us everything His Word _____. Secondly, the Holy Spirit's presence drowns out the voice of the Devil and others and convinces us that God did indeed _____ our freedom because we feel free. So we can't stop thanking and praising our _____ God.

GUARENTEE: In the Greek - *ARRABON*. "First installment, deposit, down payment, pledge...that pays a part of the purchase price in advance, and so secures a legal claim to the article in question." (Arnt and Gingrich Greek Lexicon) Paul is speaking about a coming of the Holy Spirit upon a person with such overwhelming joy and love that the person knows forever he is the Lord's. Romans. 8:14-16

What Does This Scripture Say To You? _____