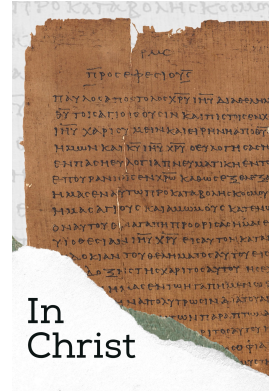


“In Christ” Self-Starter Summary

Ephesians 1:1-14



Introduction

Paul begins his letter to the church at Ephesus. At the time of Paul’s writing, Ephesus was second only to Rome as a cosmopolitan center of culture and commerce and for a time was the second largest city in the empire. Ephesus played a vital role in the spread of Christianity. According to Acts 18-20, Paul spent nearly three years with the Ephesian congregation—more time than with any other mission congregation. Because of all the evangelistic efforts there, Christianity would become the city’s official religion. This is simply amazing considering that Ephesus was once the home to one of the 7 Wonders of the Ancient World, the great Temple of Artemis, built as a tribute to the Greek goddess.

Paul wrote this letter around A.D. 60. He had not been to Ephesus for at least five years and took the opportunity to communicate with them while he was a prisoner in Rome. The letter describes the important truths of the Christian faith. In doing so Paul gently addresses the problem of division between the congregation’s Jewish and Gentile members, reminding them over and over again of God choosing his people “in Christ” and his eternal plan for salvation. He goes on expand on this relationship between grace, faith, and good works under the theme of God uniting people under Christ and his church.

1. **Hear the objective Good News!**

- a. Read 1:1-6.
- b. Paul makes it clear that every spiritual blessing (the gift of eternal life) comes from being “in Christ.”
- c. How is one “in Christ?” Baptism.

- d. Forgiveness, reconciliation—where one is declared justified based on faith in Christ—is because they (we) have been chosen.
- e. We have been predestined or chosen in Christ before time began. We didn't do anything to earn this or deserve it. God chose us in Christ!
- f. This is meant to be given and heard as utter encouragement for the reader.

For more on
“predestination,” read:
Romans 8:28-30, 2 Timothy
1:9, John 10:27-30

2. **The love of God drives everything afterwards!**

- a. Read 1:7-10
- b. Paul doubles down on the grace in Christ here.
- c. Redemption, forgiveness—not anything they or we have done—all according to his grace that he lavishes upon us.
- d. This plan God has created in Christ will reconcile his creation and all things to himself in the “fullness of time” (the messianic age that began with Christ's incarnation, death, and resurrection).

For more on “the fullness of
time” read: Galatians 4:4, Jn
12:23

3. **The Word is where the power is found!**

- a. Read 1:11-14
- b. The word is what the Spirit uses to change who we are.
- c. The Ephesians (and us) are not just somebody. We are somebody “in Christ!”
- d. It's not that we *could* be saved but that we **are** saved.
- e. This is a guarantee from God's point of view.
- f. What does this mean for us? We have a promise of eternal life from the one who couldn't die. The Holy Spirit testifies to us that God will keep his promise. We have been redeemed. We still struggle with sin, which means we will still die. But we have an eternal promise that we are “in Christ!”

4. **A question to ponder this week:** What comfort can you gain from confessing that you are in Christ?