

Looking Back
Ephesians 1:1-14

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Are you saved? Am I saved?
First we must define what it means to be saved.

The person who is justified has *been* saved.
The person who is justified is being sanctified and is *being* saved.
The person who is justified and sanctified *will be* saved.

Justification, sanctification, and glorification are the three aspects of being saved.

My definition of being saved begins with an acceptance of our just condemnation by a Holy God.

Do you believe that the righteousness of Jesus Christ is sufficient?

By just condemnation, I mean that you agree that when you die and should you wake up in hell that you would agree that God was right to send you to hell.

However, when you die and should you wake up in glory with Jesus Christ you can only say, "It had to be grace!"

In this brief study we will be "Looking Back."

We will start at the end; with Jesus Christ in glory, and look back to see how we got there.

Ephesians 1:1-14

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God,

To the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus:

² Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul addresses the saints who are in Ephesus.

A saint in the Bible is every believer in Jesus Christ.

The Roman Catholic Church has corrupted a good Bible word to make it mean a person who meets strict criteria laid out by the church and declared to be a “saint” by the power of the pope.

Every true saint is a saint at the instant they repent and believe in the gospel.

Ephesians is written to the saints who are in Ephesus but because: 2 Tim 3:16-17

¹⁶ All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Because that is true then what Paul writes to the saints who are in Ephesus applies to every saint anywhere.

Eph 1:3-14

³ Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ, ⁴ just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, ⁵ having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, ⁶ to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.

⁷ In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace ⁸ which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, ⁹ having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, ¹⁰ that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth – in Him. ¹¹ In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, ¹² that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

¹³ In Him you also *trusted*, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

For our edification and instruction we are going to start at the end, in glory, and work our way back to see how we got to be in glory.

Here we are in glory!

Verses 13-14

¹³ In Him you also *trusted*, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

You trusted Jesus Christ after you heard the gospel.

No one is saved before they believe and trust Jesus Christ.

There is no such thing as eternal justification; election is unto salvation; every one of the elect of God will come to faith in Jesus Christ.

Verse 12

What will we be doing in glory?

Praising God for His grace and mercy.

¹² that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

Verse 11

¹¹ In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will,

It is a puzzle to me why some people get so uptight when you mention predestination. The only reason that I can imagine is that they don't want God to be in control. It is as though the Scripture read, "...Him, who kind of helps when you exercise your free-will and then He works things out so His will fits into your "decision."

Better read verse 11 again!

¹¹ In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will,

About 800 years before Paul wrote the letter to the church in Ephesus the prophet Isaiah wrote this:

Isa 46:8-11

⁸ "Remember this, and show yourselves men;
Recall to mind, O you transgressors.
⁹ Remember the former things of old,
For I *am* God, and *there is* no other;
I *am* God, and *there is* none like Me,
¹⁰ Declaring the end from the beginning,
And from ancient times *things* that are not *yet* done,
Saying, 'My counsel shall stand,
And I will do all My pleasure,'
¹¹ Calling a bird of prey from the east,
The man who executes My counsel, from a far country.
Indeed I have spoken *it*;
I will also bring it to pass.
I have purposed *it*;
I will also do it.

Verse 10

¹⁰ that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth – in Him.

Dispensation means “management.” God is managing everything so that at just the right time all things are coming together in Christ.

Verse 9

⁹ having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself,

A mystery in the Bible is something that was not known until it pleased God to reveal it. There was a great mystery before the Old Testament saints that had to do with God's purpose toward the Gentiles.

Is it only the Jews who will be saved?

And among the Jews, Israel after the flesh is there only a remnant!

The mystery is revealed in chapters 2 and 3 of Ephesians as well as in Romans:

First a quick look at Romans 11:

Rom 11:25-26

²⁵ For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.

²⁶ And so all Israel will be saved,....

This study is not intended to explain who “all Israel” is in 11:26 but Paul clearly defines “all Israel” as the elect Gentiles and the remnant of the Jews.

Read Romans 9, 10, and 11 and leave out your preconceived notions as to who is Israel in 11:26.

God saves individuals and He saves them according to His good pleasure.

Dispensational eschatology teaches that the “mystery” was that there would be a Christian church. Ephesians reveals that the “mystery” was the make-up of the Christian church.

In Ephesians the “mystery” is revealed as being Gentiles and Jews in one body, the church, which is the body of Christ.

Eph 2:11-3:13

¹¹ Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh – who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands – ¹² that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

¹⁴ For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, ¹⁵ having abolished in His flesh the enmity, *that is*, the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man *from* the two, *thus* making peace, ¹⁶ and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. ¹⁷ And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. ¹⁸ For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.

¹⁹ Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰ having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief *cornerstone*, ²¹ in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, ²² in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

3 For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles — ² if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you, ³ how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, ⁴ by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), ⁵ which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: ⁶ that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel, ⁷ of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power.

⁸ To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, ⁹ and to make all see what *is* the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; ¹⁰ to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly *places*, ¹¹ according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, ¹² in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him. ¹³ Therefore I ask that you do not lose heart at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.

Verses 7-8

⁷ In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace ⁸ which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence,

We have redemption through the blood of Jesus Christ; forgiveness of sins all by grace. Amazing grace is truly amazing!

Verse 6

⁶ to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.

Where are you accepted?

In the beloved!

Verse 5

⁵ having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,

Personally, I have no problem with predestination.

Unless I was predestined to adoption as a son according to the good pleasure of His will I would either be in hell or still dead in trespasses and sins.

Verse 4

And looking back when were you chosen by God?

Was it when you exercised your free-will and made a “decision” to allow God to save you?

⁴ just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,

Verse 3

We are almost finished with our “Looking Back.”

³ Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ,

We have looked back.

Salvation: election, calling, justification, sanctification, and glorification begin in Christ before the foundation of the world and will continue in Christ for as long as God lives!

And so I will close with this: I will ask you again; Are you saved?