

TRANSFORMED IN CHRIST

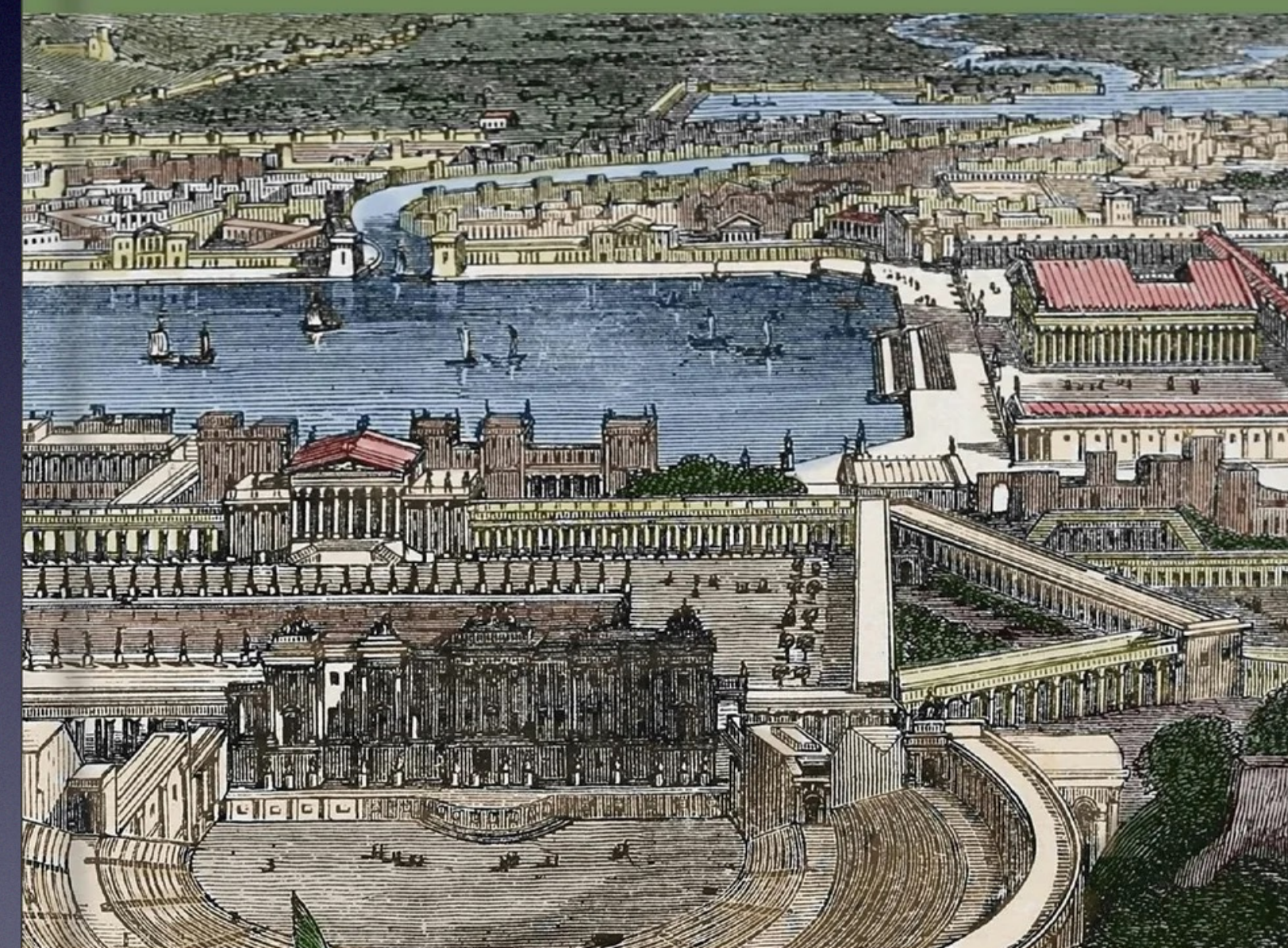
Ephesians

 **LifeGroups** FALL 2026
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THE LETTER TO THE EPHESIANS

An Exegetical and Theological Commentary



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Temple of Artemis



Sculptures of Artemis



A Clash of Cultures











Adopted into God's Family

- We have been adopted into God's family as His heirs
- Ephesians 1:3-6
- It's hard to break up Ephesians 1:3–14 into three “talking point” sections.
- In Greek, it's actually one long sentence.

Adopted into God's Family

- Paul packed lots of theology into this opening section, which is really a hymn of praise.
- For those who love God, all our praise should be steeped in theology, and all our theology should result in praise.
- Paul started with praise to God who has blessed us with “every spiritual blessing” in Christ.

Adopted into God's Family

- Paul was writing as a prisoner, in chains for the Gospel, with his future uncertain.
- Yet, he reminded the Ephesians of God's sovereignty over all things, even the heavenly realms.
- No matter what we face, there is no reason to fear because we are children of the sovereign Lord, who lavishes us with every spiritual blessing.

Adopted into God's Family

- This section of praise is an overview of the Gospel, what God has done for us in Christ.
- But it starts even before we were created: He chose us before creation (1:4) and predestined us for adoption.
- He purposed all of this in Christ (1:9).

Adopted into God's Family

- Even in this opening hymn of praise, before he delved into the theological meat of the letter, Paul was already addressing our identity in Christ, as sons (1:5).
- He specifically used “sons,” not just “children,” because in the ancient world, it was sons who inherited their father's estate (1:14).

Adopted into God's Family

- This Greek word is unique to only a few verses in the New Testament, always referring to our spiritual adoption by God (Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:5).
- It is a compound of two Greek words, something Paul did often to create a new term, “son” and “to place,” meaning God places us in the position of a son/heir.

Adopted into God's Family

- Adoption is one of the “spiritual blessings” Paul had in mind. These blessings are not primarily earthly or material; they are the blessings of salvation that come from God and are ours because we are united with Christ.
- This doesn't mean these blessings are only future and that we just need to hold on through this life and wait for heaven.

Adopted into God's Family

- Paul wrote that God has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of His beloved Son (Colossians 1:12–14).
- God has lavished His grace upon us, giving us redemption and forgiveness (1:7–8). He has chosen us to be “holy and blameless before Him” (1:4) and given us His Spirit, who enables us to walk in holiness (Galatians 5:16–25).

Adopted into God's Family

- Paul called believers to rejoice in the Lord always, not just when circumstances were good.
- We praise Him all the time because He is always good and works all things together for the good of those who love Him, even when we cannot see or understand what He is doing (Psalm 34:1; Romans 8:28–29).

Redeemed by God

- We have been redeemed by God through the precious blood of Christ
- Ephesians 1:7-10
- Paul had already said that God adopted us into His family through Jesus Christ (1:5). Now he described more of the spiritual blessings we have in Christ (1:7).

Redeemed by God

- The language of redemption would have been familiar from the Old Testament.
- God redeemed Israel from slavery in Egypt and made them His people (Exodus 6:6–7; 19:5–6).
- Their obedience did not earn their redemption. God redeemed them first, and then called them to live as His people.

Redeemed by God

- In Christ, we have experienced an even greater redemption—not from physical slavery, but from slavery to sin (Romans 6:15–18), and not through the blood of lambs, but through the precious blood of Christ (1 Peter 1:18–19).
- We don't obey God to earn redemption; we obey because we have been redeemed.

Redeemed by God

- God didn't just set us free from slavery.
- He set us free to a new life as His people (Titus 2:14).
- This redemption is closely connected to our adoption.
- We are no longer slaves but sons and heirs (Galatians 4:7).

Redeemed by God

- The Psalms implored the redeemed of the Lord to “say so,” to shout the praise of their Redeemer (Psalm 107:2).
- Paul implored the Ephesians to praise God, their Redeemer, for the “riches” of His grace that He has “lavished” upon us (1:6–8).
- Paul was rich with spiritual blessings. His body was in chains, but his soul was set free in Christ (Galatians 5:1).

Redeemed by God

- We have been sealed with the Spirit as a guarantee of our inheritance
- Ephesians 1:11-14
- Paul was writing about two groups of believers here: Jewish believers who were the first to hope in Christ (“we” in 1:11–12) and Gentile believers who later heard and believed the Gospel (“you also” in 1:13).

Redeemed by God

- Paul's point wasn't that the inheritance belonged only to the Jewish people who first hoped in their Messiah.
- Gentile believers had also been included in Christ, and when they believed, they too were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit.
- Jew and Gentile alike share in the spiritual blessings God gives to everyone who is in Christ.

Redeemed by God

- Paul said that those Jewish believers who first hoped in Christ were “to the praise of His glory” (1:12). Their salvation displayed the glory of God because it was the fulfillment of His gracious plan and promises.
- Then, after explaining that the Gentile believers had also been included in Christ and sealed with the Holy Spirit, Paul returned to the same purpose: “to the praise of His glory” (1:13–14).

Redeemed by God

- Paul then pointed ahead again to the final fulfillment of our redemption and inheritance (1:14).
- In Corinthians, Paul explained that when we are resurrected, we will be given new glorified bodies.
- Paul wrote that “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable” (1 Corinthians 15:50).

Redeemed by God

- Paul said the minute we believed, we were sealed by the Holy Spirit, guaranteeing our future inheritance in Christ.
- We don't have to worry about losing our future inheritance; it is guaranteed.
- The Greek word was a term that referred to a deposit or down payment that guarantees the rest will be given later.

Redeemed by God

- The Holy Spirit's being with us in this life is like a down payment on the full inheritance to come (1:14).
- The Holy Spirit's presence with us now is a foretaste of the full inheritance to come, the greatest blessing of which will be perfect, unhindered fellowship with God forever.

Redeemed by God

- When Revelation describes the final kingdom of God, what makes heaven so great isn't that we get mansions or pots of gold; it's that God is there.
- The greatest blessing of our inheritance is God Himself—living forever in perfect fellowship with Him.
- “He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God” (Rev. 21:3).

Redeemed by God

- Our inheritance is ultimately eternal life with God in His kingdom (Romans 8:17; Revelation 21:7).
- We will have glorified bodies and live in the new heavens and new earth.
- The greatest blessing of our inheritance will be God Himself and living forever with Him.

Resources

