

Ephesians 1

Intro

- Share your summary of Ephesians 1.

Read Ephesians 3:1-6

- What is Paul's "revelation" of the mysteries of God that weren't known in previous generations?
 - *Through the Gospel, Gentiles AND Jews can become sons and daughters of God and are one unified body.*
- What are Gentiles?
 - *Anyone who is not Jewish.*
- Why is it a new concept for Gentiles to become sons and daughters of God?
 - *Before Christ, God chose to partner with the nation Israel. Israel only considered themselves to be children of God. However, God promised to bless the entire world through the nation Israel (Genesis 12:1-3). This would happen through the sacrifice of Jesus. God chose to partner with Israel for the sake of bringing forth Jesus to save all of humanity from their sins, whether Jew or Gentile.*

The entire letter of Ephesians is based around this "revelation" that Paul had. Ephesians 1-3 is about comprehending the revelation, and Ephesians 4-6 is about responding to the revelation.

Read Ephesians 1:1-14

- Who is the "we/us" and the "you" in Ephesians 1:3-14?
 - *Remember that Paul is Jewish, and he often writes through a lens of Old Testament knowledge. Therefore, when he says "we" or "us," he is talking about Israel/the Jews. When he says "you," he is referring to the Gentile crowd that he is writing to.*
- What does it mean that God chose us before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight?" (Verse 4)
- In verses 9-10, Paul mentions the revelation that we discussed before. How does Paul's revelation "bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ?"
 - *As we mentioned before, Paul's "revelation" is that both the Gentiles and the Jews can become sons and daughters of God. This is the unity that happens through Christ.*
- What does Paul mean when he says that "we (Israel/the Jews) were the first to put our hope in Christ?" (Verse 12)
 - *The Jews were waiting for a Messiah, someone to rescue them from the sin in the world. That Messiah is Jesus. The Gentiles, being that they weren't Jews, did not have knowledge of the coming Messiah. Therefore, the Jews were the first to put their hope in the coming Messiah, Jesus Christ.*

Read Ephesians 1:15-23

- Why was Paul thankful for the people that he was writing to (Verses 15-16)? What does this have to do with his “revelation?”
 - *Paul is thankful for their faith in Jesus and for their love for ALL God’s people. Again, Paul’s revelation is that all people have the ability to become a child of God. Paul is thankful because the church has understood the revelation as well.*
- What does verse 17 reveal about how we can experience growth in our relationship with God? (*Answer: It is God’s Spirit that allows us to know Him better.*)
- Paul knows that people receive the Holy Spirit upon belief (verse 13), yet he prays that his fellow believers would receive the Spirit to know God better (verse 17). How would you explain this?
 - *The Holy Spirit helps us in our process of knowing God and growing in relationship with Him.*
- Why is it important to pray for fellow believers as Paul did?
- What “power” is there for us who believe? (Verse 19)
- How does the “power that is at work within us” contribute to the unity of Paul’s revelation?

Concluding Questions

- Paul saw a unifying spirit occur between Gentiles and Jews. Where would you like to see greater unity within the Church?
- What are some relationships in your life that need more unity?
- How can Christ bring unity to the areas you mentioned in the previous two questions?

Further Study Opportunities (Optional)

- Paul’s “chosen/elect” language - Paul understands that Israel was once the “chosen” or “elect” people of God. Now, he uses this language to say that all who are in Christ are the “chosen/elect/holy people.” Scripture on this includes Deut 4:37, Deut 7:6, Deut 10:15, Deut 14:2, Eph 1:1, Eph 1:4, Eph 1:11.
- Paul’s “inheritance” language - Again, Paul sees through a lens of the Old Testament. To Israel, their inheritance was the Promised Land that was on the other side of their exile from Egypt. Paul sees that we too were once living in exile (a life apart from God) and now will enter a new “promised land” (His Kingdom). Scripture on this includes, but is not limited to, the physical Promised Land in Joshua 12-19 and the spiritual Promised Land in Daniel 12:13, Eph 1:14, Eph 1:18, Eph 5:5.

Application

- Take a few moments to pray for unity within your church, within Chi Alpha, within your small group, and within the relationships that you just mentioned. Pray that the “eyes of their hearts may be enlightened” to know Christ more deeply.

Do For Next Week:

- Read Ephesians 1-2 in one sitting.
- Give a 1-2 sentence summary of Ephesians 2.