

# THE STORY OF SALVATION: JUSTIFICATION, REDEMPTION, REGENERATION

## Ephesians 1:1–14 • Brian Brodersen

### Introduction:

*“The New Testament Epistles are living documents from the period of the early church’s mission, providing a fascinating glimpse of the interaction between church-planting missionaries, such as Paul and the churches he planted (or in some cases, did not plant). In many (if not most) cases, Acts provides the canonical, historical, and logical foundation for reading the Epistles, setting forth the early days and years of the church from its inception and its missionary setbacks and successes, following a geographical pattern from Jerusalem to Rome and featuring the missionary work of Peter, Paul, and their associates ... In Acts, we read about Paul; in his Epistles, we hear from Paul directly. Conversely, in the Gospels, we hear from Jesus directly; in the Epistles, we hear about the ramifications of Jesus’s work for believers.*

*“While the book of Acts, as a historical narrative, tells us more overtly what did take place in the early church, the Epistles, as didactic material, focus more explicitly on what should happen in the church, both by way of direct pronouncement—e.g., ‘Forgive one another.’*

*“The New Testament Epistles also supply us with a more full-fledged theology of the implications of the work of Christ for the life of the believer, such as Paul’s teaching of the believers’ union with Christ on an individual level and his teaching on the church as the body of Christ on a corporate level. In addition, the Epistles contain many other teachings which Paul wrestled to develop, including the nature of the resurrection body (1 Cor. 15:35–58), end-time events such as the rapture (1 Thess. 4:13–18), or the relationship between Gentiles and Israel (Romans 9–11).”*

Kostenberger & Patterson

1. Pauline Epistles: Pauline (from the apostle Paul), Epistle (a formal letter). Paul is the author of Romans through Philemon, and perhaps Hebrews (the authorship of Hebrews is still debated). Written to believers in specified locations or to specified individuals—Rome, Corinth, Galatia, Timothy, Titus, Philemon.
2. General Epistles: James, Peter, John, and Jude are written to believers unspecified by location. Peter writes to the pilgrims that are scattered throughout a whole region.
3. As was stated in the Kostenberger/Patterson quote: “The Epistles supply us with a more full-fledged theology of the implications of the work of Christ for the life of the believer ...” I would say that a bit differently: the Epistles, especially Paul’s, tell us more thoroughly who Christ is and what God has done through him for us. Paul is very intentional, especially in Romans and Ephesians, to begin and then to take up a large portion of those letters explaining who Christ is and what he’s done for sinners.

In Romans, for example, he spends the first eleven chapters deep diving into what he calls the “Mercies of God,” before he appeals to us (believers) to present ourselves as “living sacrifices” to him because of those mercies. He does something similar in Ephesians.

**READ Ephesians 1:1–14**

Today as we look at the Story of Salvation, we are going to look specifically at the *what God has done for us through Christ* part, and next time we'll look at how we are to respond to God by living in the power of his Spirit for his glory.

- I. **In Christ.** This is Paul's favorite way of referring to believers. We, who by nature were in Adam and sin, are now, through faith, in Christ, and therefore declared righteous.
- II. **Justification.** Declared righteous!
  - A. Chosen to be holy and blameless in his sight, v. 3
  - B. Favored or accepted in the Beloved, v. 6
  - C. "There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus ... Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand and we boast in hope of the glory of God." Romans 3:23–24; 5:1–2
  - D. "The article of justification must be sounded in our ears incessantly because the frailty of our flesh will not permit us to take hold of it perfectly and to believe it with all our heart." Luther

It is hard to believe, but it's true: **simple faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus declares us righteous before God.**

My favorite verse on justification is Romans 4:5, "To the one who does not work but trusts God who justifies the ungodly, their faith is credited as righteousness." We are holy and blameless in his sight.

- III. **Redemption.** To release by payment—ransom.
  - A. Released from the penalty and power of sin through the payment of Christ's blood by his grace that he lavished on us.
  - B. Jesus said, "the Son of Man came to give his life a *ransom* for all." Mark 10:45
  - C. "Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that he has died as a *ransom* to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant." Hebrews 9:15
  - D. "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you *purchased* for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation." Revelation 5:9

We have been purchased out of slavery to sin and Satan and made the possession of God.

"Jesus paid it all, all to him I owe, sin had left a crimson stain, he washed it white as snow."

- IV. **Regeneration.** Ephesians 2: "You he made alive who were dead in trespasses and sins."
    - A. "He saved us not because of righteous things we have done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit." Titus 3:5
- Again: Birth, New Birth, Born Again
- B. Power to become the children of God—born of God. John 1:12
  - C. Partakers of the Divine nature. 2 Peter 1:4

Transformation (which we'll talk more about next time) flows out of regeneration.

V. **Sealed by the Holy Spirit.** Guarantee.

*"The Greek word arrabon used here, in modern usage among Greek speakers means an engagement ring. But in ancient commercial transactions it signified a 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, or makes a contract valid. In this case the guarantee is not something separate from what it guarantees, but actually the first portion of it. An engagement ring promises marriage but is not itself a part of the marriage. A deposit on a house or in a lease-purchase agreement, however, is more than a guarantee of payment; it is itself the first-installment of the purchase price. So it is with the Holy Spirit. In giving him to us, God is not just promising us our final inheritance but actually giving us a foretaste of it ..."*

John Stott

**Close**

Every one of Paul's epistles begins and ends with grace: "Grace and peace be to you." "The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you."

The theme of Paul's life might very well be, The Grace of God to the Greatest of Sinners. One thing Paul knew that we should know also: "Grace saves us, grace keeps us, grace will lead us safely home."