

The Mystery of Jesus

Thomas Robinson, *Ephesians – Growing Up Into Christ 1*, July 17, 2011

Ephesians 1:1-10

- ¹ Paul, apostle of Messiah (Christ) Jesus through the will of God,
To the saints who are [in Ephesus], and are faithful in Messiah Jesus:
- ² Grace to you and peace
from God our Father and LORD Jesus Messiah.
- ³ Blessed is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Messiah,
who has blessed us 1
with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,
in the Messiah,
- ⁴ even as he chose us in him 2
before the foundation of the world,
for us to be holy and blameless before him,
- since in love ⁵ he foreordained us for adoption as sons 3
through Jesus Messiah, into him,
according to the good pleasure of his will,
⁶ to the glorious praise of his grace,
- with which he has graced us 4
in the Beloved,
- ⁷ in whom we have the redemption through his blood, 5
the forgiveness of trespasses,
according to the riches of his grace,
- ⁸ which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight 6
⁹ by making known to us the mystery of his will, 7
according to his good pleasure,
- which he set forth in him 8
¹⁰ as a universal plan for the fullness of times,
to sum up together all things in the Messiah, 9
things in the heavens and things on earth
in him, ...

Ephesians 4:1

I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, beg you to **lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called.**

Ephesians 4:15

We are to **grow up** in every way into him who is the head, **into Christ.**

Growing Up into Jesus the Messiah

Ephesians is written for grown-ups, so that they can grow to the real fullness of life that God created us to have. It's fundamental but also challenging. It requires serious engagement. It articulates a new kind of life that was being experienced in communities of followers of Jesus. It is just as new and revolutionary today, even in much of the church.

It was no new philosophy, but the realization that in Jesus, God the creator had intervened in human life and had created a new situation, new paradigm of life, new self-revelation.

We humans are called into that new life with all its promises & blessings from God in place.

We're helped to live a life that fits that calling. This sets off transformation and growth.

“In Christ” – the Great Drama – Mystery Revealed

Growth begins from the roots / rewriting our DNA. You need to know what story you're in, what reality is, how it works. The wonder is that in Jesus, the great story of Israel has been brought to a climax and fulfillment and amazing new universal vistas opened up.

Ephesians 1 begins with a grand unveiling of that mystery – a reality we could never have brought about or even guessed but that is now revealed as true. Eph 1:3-14- one sentence.

The Messiah Jesus is central: God and Human, loving, teaching, serving, crucified, resurrected.

As Messiah he embodies Israel, suffering servant. He welcomes all people into him.

Thus “in Christ”/ “in the Messiah” is the new community/body, the unimagined reality that God has long been preparing where human life comes to fulfillment in God's own life.

“Blessed is God”: What God has Done – What We Receive

God alone can create this new reality. We receive, respond, enjoy. The nine verbs in vv 3-10 all describe actions of God that embody his purpose/love/pleasure fulfilled in the Messiah.

- 1) He blessed us with every blessing that flows from God's Spirit, all that heaven has, in Christ.
- 2) He chose us in Christ. We could never reach God. He had to initiate everything in Christ to open his love / grace to us. Before creation he intended this drama of love to lead us to him.
- 3) He foreordained out of his love the most fundamental blessing, that through Jesus we can be adopted as God's sons and heirs, sharing the life of the Son, Jesus, intimacy with God.
- 4) In this he graces us with his Grace: we are loved from the flow of love in the Godhead.
- 5) In Jesus we receive God's redemption (exodus from slavery) through his crucifixion/blood. The power of sin is broken as God forgives our sins in Jesus so that we live in his grace.
- 6) He overflows his grace extravagantly on us to help us experience new reality – wisdom.
- 7) He makes known (not conceals) a level of reality and purpose that we could never have guessed – a mystery that is God's heart and delight. We can be shaped by that delight.
- 8) In Jesus he brought into public view his ultimate plan for the universe, a way of dealing with the world that had been incubating through the ages until the right moment.
- 9) God is reuniting and unifying everything in his creation in the Messiah – angels, galaxies, humans, animals, objects, sub-atomic particles. In Jesus, God remakes, renews his world.

When we live in this true vision of reality, we begin to experience real growth into Christ.