

# Gospel Empowered by God's Spirit

Thomas Robinson, *Ephesians – Growing Up Into Christ 2*, July 24, 2011

## Ephesians 1:11-17

- <sup>11</sup> in whom we were **allotted as God's inheritance**, [Deut 4:20; Ps 33:12]  
having been **foreordained** according to the **purpose** of him  
who works in everything according to the counsel of his will,
- <sup>12</sup> so that **we who were the first to hope in the Messiah**  
might be to **the praise of his glory**,
- <sup>13</sup> in whom **you also**, when you **heard the word of truth**,  
the **gospel** of your salvation,  
in whom also, when you **believed**,  
you were **sealed with the Spirit of the promise, the Holy Spirit**,  
<sup>14</sup> who is the **first installment** that **guarantees** our **inheritance**  
until our redemption as God's own possession,  
to **the praise of his glory**.
- <sup>15</sup> For this reason, because I have heard of **your faith in the Lord Jesus**  
and your **love** toward all the **saints**,
- <sup>16</sup> I do not cease to give **thanks for you**,  
remembering **you** in my prayers,
- <sup>17</sup> that the **God** of our **Lord Jesus Messiah, the Father of glory**,  
may **give you a Spirit of wisdom** and of **revelation**  
in the **knowledge of him**, ...

## Ephesians 1:3-10

<sup>3</sup> **Blessed is the God and Father** of our **Lord Jesus Messiah**, who has blessed us with every **spiritual** blessing in the **heavenly places, in the Messiah**, <sup>4</sup> even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, for us to be **holy and blameless before him**, since in **love** <sup>5</sup> he foreordained us for **adoption as sons through Jesus Messiah, into him**, according to the good **pleasure** of his will, <sup>6</sup> to the glorious **praise of his grace**, with which he has graced us in the Beloved, <sup>7</sup> in whom we have the redemption through his **blood**, the **forgiveness** of trespasses, according to the riches of his **grace**, <sup>8</sup> which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight <sup>9</sup> by making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good **pleasure**, which he set forth in him <sup>10</sup> as a **universal plan for the fullness of times**, to sum up into one head all things in the Messiah, 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**.

## Ephesians 2:14-16

<sup>16</sup> For **he [Jesus] himself is our peace**, who has **made us both one** ... <sup>15</sup> that he might create in himself **one new humanity** in place of the two, so making **peace**, <sup>16</sup> and might **reconcile us both to God in one body** through the **cross**, thereby **killing the hostility**.

## Romans 8:9-11

<sup>9</sup> **You**, however, **are** not in the flesh but **in the Spirit**, if in fact the **Spirit of God dwells in you**. Anyone who does not **have** the **Spirit of Christ** does not belong to him. <sup>10</sup> But if **Christ is in you**, although the body is dead because of sin, **the Spirit is life** because of righteousness. <sup>11</sup> If the **Spirit of him who raised Jesus** from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also **give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you**.

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## Growing Up in Wisdom, Revelation, Knowledge

Ephesians is a condensed vision of the Gospel to feed our minds and hearts as we grow into Christ. Paul prays that God will give the readers the Spirit to open wisdom, reveal reality. Eph 1:3-10 takes us on a spiraling journey upward to reflect on what has happened “in the Messiah” – person, world transforming event, meeting place of God and humanity. From before the world, to the moment of the Cross, to the ultimate reuniting of all things in him. God moves/acts in the whole story. We receive as we share in Jesus: blessings of the Spirit, adoption, grace, redemption, forgiveness, participation in his ultimate plan. The entire story flows out of God’s love, pleasure to create humans to share freedom, love.

## From Israel to All Nations in the Messiah

The deep tragedy of human life is that our exaltation as free moral beings is also our downfall into self-centeredness, idolatry, mutual destruction, alienation from God and each other. Paul begins to anticipate one of the great themes of the letter, breaking down the barrier between people, seen in divisions between Jew & Gentile (Israel & Nations) [Gal 3:28]. Paul’s inclusive “we” becomes “we” / “you.” That’s reality. God chose Abraham and his descendants ultimately embodied in the Messiah (seed of Abraham, son of David). God made Israel his “inheritance” – center of his covenant and law, grace and judgment. Thus the first generation of those who put their hope in the Messiah were all Jewish. But an astonishing thing happened. People who had never shared in Israel’s story nor cared about it, who had their own culture and story, heard of the truth of this Messiah and recognized it as their reality as well—an announcement of deliverance for their own lives. Most of the readers were “you,” the non-Jews who came to trust this Messiah for life.

## The Spirit – First Experience of Ultimate Life

What happened was not just an interesting cross-cultural phenomenon. God acts and human life moves to an unexpected new level. God acted in Jesus creating a new realm of life where our faith/trust brings us into a powerful relationship with God. Even Gentiles could share adoption as God’s children, redemption, forgiveness, grace lavished on us. These Gentiles (“You”) received the living, indwelling Holy Spirit that the promises of God had foretold. Thus they were “sealed” as authentically belonging to God, like Israel was. They were now part of Abraham’s story, whether they were Greeks, Ethiopian, Egyptian. The Holy Spirit is also “first installment,” experience, guarantee of every promise to come. He is the presence of the Trinity in us, until God fully redeems us as his own in new creation. The Spirit unites us in one, assures salvation, empowers transformation, creates life now.