

## The Greatest Sentence Ever Written



In Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*, young Pip, an orphan raised by his stern sister and kind-hearted brother-in-law Joe in rural England, dreams of escaping his humble beginnings. One fateful day, while visiting his parents' graves, Pip encounters an escaped convict and, out of fear and compassion, aids him with food and a file. This fleeting act of kindness sets the stage for an extraordinary journey. Years later, Pip receives a mysterious fortune from an unknown benefactor, transforming him into a gentleman and propelling him into the dazzling yet deceptive world of London's high society.

Live in your identity and look to your inheritance

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## CONTEXT

- Written around 62 A.D.
- Rome Falls in 70 A.D.
- Chapters 1-3 (doctrine) and 4-6 (application)

**1** Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God,

To God's holy people in Ephesus, the faithful in **Christ Jesus**: (a letter to a bunch of different churches).

<sup>2</sup> Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The roles of the godhead (Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) covenanting with you  
 Theology of the Trinity, Christ, Atonement, Pneumatology, and Soteriology  
 Doctrines of election, redemption, and grace

What's the greatest sentence ever written?

- Verses 3-14 are a single sentence in Greek, “reading like a prayer or praise letter to God Himself.” (Armstrong).

### Praise for Spiritual Blessings in Christ

<sup>3</sup>Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has **blessed us** in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. <sup>4</sup>For he **chose us** in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love <sup>5</sup>he **predestined us** for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—<sup>6</sup>to the **praise of his glorious grace**, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.

### God the Father (v. 3-6)

Blessed us...with every spiritual blessing in Christ overview, thesis statement

Chose us in him before the creation of the world

Predestined us for adoption... *proorizo*, “to determine an outcome beforehand” (Rom. 8:29)

For the praise of His glorious grace

<sup>7</sup>In him we have **redemption through his blood**, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's **grace** <sup>8</sup>that he lavished on us. With all **wisdom and understanding**, <sup>9</sup>he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, <sup>10</sup>to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ. <sup>11</sup>In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, <sup>12</sup>in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory.

### God the Son (v. 7-12)

(“in accordance with the riches of God's grace...”)

Redemption through his blood *apolytrosis* “to buy back a slave and set him free”

Wisdom and understanding (2 Pet. 1:2-3)

Unity of all things under Christ in heaven and on earth

Reconciliation of Jews and Gentiles

<sup>13</sup>And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were **marked in him** with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, <sup>14</sup>who is a deposit **guaranteeing our inheritance** until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.

Ephesians 1:1-14 (NIV)

### God the Holy Spirit (v. 13-14)

(“in accordance with the riches of God's grace...”)

Marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit,

Guaranteeing our inheritance

## WHY THIS MATTERS

- If you're "in Christ," Paul is going to ask a lot of us!

## APPLICATION

### 1. Live in your identity (v. 1-2)

To God's holy people in Ephesus, the faithful **in Christ Jesus**: Ephesians 1:1

Finding our identity in Christ happens when we see his life, death, and resurrection as our life, death and resurrection. Like a Russian nesting doll, we are wrapped in Him.

#### LIFE

<sup>17</sup> Therefore, if anyone is **in Christ**, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

2 Corinthians 5:17 (NIV)

#### DEATH

<sup>20</sup> I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith **in the Son of God**, who loved me and gave himself for me. Galatians 2:20 (NIV)

#### RESURRECTION

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup> Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. Colossians 3:1-2 (NIV)

When we forget that we've been raised with Christ, our hearts fall in love with the our earthly inheritance.

<sup>32</sup> "Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an **inheritance** among all those who are sanctified. Acts 20:32 (NIV)

### 2. Look to your inheritance (v. 13-14)

<sup>13</sup> And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were **marked in him** with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, <sup>14</sup> who is a deposit **guaranteeing our inheritance** until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.

<sup>4</sup> Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first. <sup>5</sup> Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place. Revelation 2:4-5 (NIV)

<sup>35</sup> In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' " Acts 20:35 (NIV)

In this new life, Pip becomes enamored with the beautiful but cold Estella, trained by the eccentric, heartbroken Miss Havisham to break men's hearts. As Pip pursues Estella and social status, he grapples with the emptiness of wealth and the shallow allure of gentility. His friendships with the loyal Herbert Pocket and the enigmatic lawyer Jaggers reveal the complexities of human motives, while encounters with figures like the vengeful Miss Havisham and the calculating Compeyson expose the darker sides of ambition and revenge.

As Pip unravels the truth behind his "great expectations," he discovers his benefactor is not a distant aristocrat but the very convict he once helped—Abel Magwitch, a man whose gratitude reshapes Pip's understanding of loyalty and morality. Through betrayal, loss, and personal growth, Pip confronts his own flaws, learning that true nobility stems from integrity, compassion, and humility, not wealth or class.

*Great Expectations* is a gripping coming-of-age tale that weaves love, mystery, and redemption into a vivid portrait of 19th-century England. For first-time readers, it offers a timeless exploration of identity, the cost of ambition, and the enduring power of human connection, inviting you to reflect on what truly matters in the pursuit of a meaningful life.

#### Notes:

In June, took a small yacht with some Bay Area church planters for lunch to the San Francisco Yacht Club in Tiburon. One of the planters commented that it reminded him of Morocco. The houses built on the cliffs looking down at the Bay, Angel Island is a few miles away, and the city is in clear view. It was awesome. When I arrived, I saw this Hollywood-looking man, that later I came to meet as the President of the San Francisco Yacht Club. I was happy to meet him—maybe I would get the chance to come back. Members get to frequent the club, eat at their fine restaurant, and rent a slip on their dock. It's pretty cool. But I wasn't a member. I wasn't in. I asked how much it cost to be in. I think someone said, \$8,000 per year and \$1,200 per month.

This little preposition, "in" is other worldly language. It's not just that you're "in" like an association or membership. It's a suzerain covenant made by a sovereign with you, a vassal.

Revelation 2:1–7 (NIV)

#### CONTEXT

- Written around 62 A.D.

- Rome Falls in 70 A.D.
- Ephesus is est. in 23 B.C. (massive earthquake in 17 A.D.)— home of the Temple of Artemis
- Paul spent 2-3 years in Ephesus
- Big Themes: Understanding-- Unity and Being "in Christ"
- Chapters 1-3 (doctrine) and 4-6 (application)
- Earliest MSS, Papyrus 46; Irenaeus and Martian's Canon include it in 140 A.D., Muratorian Canon 80-100 A.D.
- Paul: around 64-67 A.D., beheaded in Nero's circus after he fashions the guilt of the burning of Rome on Xns in 69 A.D. (Tacitus). Emperor Diocletian as well.
- Ephesus is a port city, because of anonymity like Las Vegas. This is the est of many cultic practices; temple prostitution was thriving. There are no rules. Then Paul writes: "Husband, love your wives as Christ does the church...." Silting: The surrounding rivers are dumping silt into the port of Ephesus. Trade is taking a hit. Every year, silt increases and the economy is tanking." Xns enter culture and teach against idolatry. The Ephesian believers are under a lot of pressure.
- Verses 3-14 are a single sentence in Greek, "reading like a prayer or praise letter to God Himself." (Armstrong).
- Plan on content is spicy and sweet, harsh and gentle, and unagreeable and unimaginable. This is Yahweh's Word.

## WHY THIS MATTERS

- If you're "in Christ," Paul is going to ask a lot of us!
- Eph was not a suggestion, an underground "cult" of monotheism
- Holy means "set apart" ones. "Christian was a derogatory way of remarking on this new movement?" Culture didn't know what to do with "Christian." The Bible doesn't define Christian in the Bible (Acts 13)?
- "in Christ Jesus"
  - o A personal identity
  - o Clinton Arnold-- "This ontological shift of the Christian's mind was the new reality for all believers. Everything flows from this. You are now in Christ." It's a positional identity.
  - o G.K. Beal-- "It's a spiritual union, not a metaphorical one. It's a physical and spiritual union. It's a real covenantal location. A new way of existing." 2 Cor. 5—"If anyone is in Christ"
  - o Why did Paul begin with "holy people" and "in Christ"? Bec this book says a lot of stuff you're not going to like.

## To the Church in Ephesus

### 2 "To the angel of the church in Ephesus write:

These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands. <sup>2</sup>I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked people, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false. <sup>3</sup>You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary.

<sup>4</sup> Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first. <sup>5</sup> Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place. <sup>6</sup> But you have this in your favor: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

<sup>7</sup> Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.

Live in your identity and look to your inheritance