



STUDY 1

UNITED WITH CHRIST

Heavenly Minded

That is what the apostle Paul directs us to be as he bursts forth in praise to God for the spiritual riches that we have in Christ (Eph. 1:3-14). And it is as we renew our minds in the truth of who we are and all that we have in Christ, resting in it by faith, that we are empowered to walk in a manner worthy of our calling (Eph 4:1) and to stand firm against the enemy (Eph 6:13).

In this the first of a 3-part study series 'United with Christ' we begin by reminding ourselves of God's amazing grace to us in Christ Jesus – that will set the foundation for how we are to live (**study 2**) and stand strong against the evil one (**study 3**).

OBSERVE

Read the verses below in **Ephesians** and:

- underline every reference to *SEATED*.
- put a box around every reference to *IN THE HEAVENLY PLACES*.

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,
¹⁹ and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power towards us who believe, according to the working of his great might
²⁰ that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places,
²¹ far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.
²² And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church,
²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

Ephesians 1:3;19-23

⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us,
⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ —by grace you have been saved—
⁶ and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,
⁷ so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 2:4-7

DISCUSS

2:4-7 – Where has God seated us? And why / how did He do it?

1:19-23 – Where does this position us in relation to Jesus and to the principalities and powers?

1:3 – What do we find in this position? In whom?

IN CHRIST – those who through faith in Jesus Christ are spiritually united to Him.

IN THE HEAVENLY PLACES – unseen spiritual realm where Christ reigns over all things on behalf of His Church where those who are in Him are seated with Him and have every spiritual blessing.

Let's take some time now to look at the wonderful spiritual blessings we have as those who are in Christ and seated with Him in the heavenly places.

CHOSEN BY THE FATHER

OBSERVE

Read **Ephesians 1:4-6** and:

- underline every reference to *CHOSE*.
- circle every reference to *IN HIM / IN THE BELOVED*.
- put a box around the phrase *ADOPTION AS SONS*.

⁴ even as he chose us in him [Christ] before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love

⁵ he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will,

⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.

Ephesians 1:4-6

DISCUSS

1:4 - When did God choose us in Christ? What does this exclude?

What was God's purpose in choosing us?

HOLY – STRONGS 40 (hagios) – sacred, consecrated, saint.

BLAMELESS – STRONGS 299 (amomos) – without blame (blemish, fault, spot), faultless.

1:5-6 – What was God's destiny for us from before the foundation of the world? How? Why?

ADOPTION – “by adoption the redeemed become sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty; they are introduced into and given the privileges of God’s family.” – John Murray

What a humbling and wonderful blessing that from eternity past God loved us and chose us in Christ to be adopted into His family – beloved children who are holy and blameless before Him, accepted in His Beloved Son, and whose eternal and loving purpose for us is to make us like Jesus. Let’s look at some verses that explore this a bit further.

OBSERVE

Read **2 Corinthians 5:17,21**:

¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

²¹ For our sake he [GOD] made him [JESUS] to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

2 Corinthians 5:17,21

DISCUSS

5:17,21 - What is true of anyone who is in Christ?

BE SIN — “Christ was not guilty, and could not be made guilty; but he was treated as if he were guilty, because he willed to stand in the place of the guilty. Yea, he was not only treated as a sinner, but he was treated as if he had been sin itself in the abstract. This is an amazing utterance. The sinless one was made to be sin.” (Charles Spurgeon)

BECOME THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD – Those who through faith in Jesus Christ are justified (Romans 3:21-26) - no longer under God’s wrath, their sins forgiven, and credited by God the Father with the perfect righteousness of His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ. What a glorious exchange!

OBSERVE

Read **1 John 3:1a**:

^{1a} See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.

1 John 3:1a

DISCUSS

How has the Father loved us?

OBSERVE

Read Romans **8:28-30**:

²⁸ And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

²⁹ For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

³⁰ And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

Romans 8:28-30

DISCUSS

8:29 – What is the Father’s good purpose for us, His children?

OBSERVE

Read **Matthew 3:17**:

¹⁷ and behold, a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

Matthew 3:17

WELL PLEASED – STRONGS 2106 (eudokeo) – to be well pleased with, take pleasure in.

DISCUSS

3:17 – What is the Father’s verdict of all who are in Christ, His Beloved Son?

Do you believe that the Father delights in you?

REDEEMED BY THE SON

OBSERVE

Read **Ephesians 1:7-10** and:

- underline every reference to *IN HIM / CHRIST*.
- circle the phrase *REDEMPTION THROUGH HIS BLOOD*.

7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace,

8 which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight

9 making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ

10 as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

Ephesians 1:7-10

REDEMPTION – STRONGS 629 (apolytroxis) – to pay a price to free somebody from bondage.

DISCUSS

1:7-8 – What do we have in Christ? How? Why?

1:10 – What was God's purpose in redeeming us?

Let's look a little closer at what we have been redeemed *from* and *for*.

OBSERVE

Read **Ephesians 2:1-3**:

¹ And you were dead in the trespasses and sins

² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—

³ among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

Ephesians 2:1-3

DISCUSS

2:1-3 – What was our *former condition* and *way of life* that we've been redeemed (set free) from?

OBSERVE

Read **Colossians 2:13-14**:

¹³ And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him [Christ], having forgiven us all our trespasses,

¹⁴ by cancelling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.

Colossians 2:13-14

DISCUSS

2:13-14 – What has God forgiven us? How?

“...The only sin that you can defeat is a defeated sin... the only way to defeat it is to see it as a punished sin, a covered sin.” – John Piper

Do you struggle with guilt over past sin? Then rest in the complete forgiveness of sins that is yours in Christ - see that sin as punished, as cancelled, and know the Spirit's power to put it to death and have victory over it.

As well being redeemed from the world, the flesh, and the devil, we have also been redeemed by Christ for unity. The Church - Jew and Gentile now one in Christ – a holy temple in the Lord being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. Let's look at some verses to explore this further.

OBSERVE

Read **Romans 3:9-10**:

The apostle Paul has been speaking about his Jewish heritage:

⁹ What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all. For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks [Gentiles], are under sin,

¹⁰ as it is written: “None is righteous, no, not one;

Romans 3:9-10

3:9-10 – What is the case for both Jew and Gentile *outside* of Christ?

OBSERVE

Read **Ephesians 2:11-14** and:

- underline every reference to *REMEMBER*.
- circle every reference to *CHRIST* (including pronouns).

¹¹ Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called “the uncircumcision” by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands—

¹² remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

¹⁴ For he himself is our [Jew and Gentile] peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility

Ephesians 2:11-14

DISCUSS

2:11-12 – What are we (Gentiles by birth) to remember?

2:13-14 – What is now true for all who are in Christ Jesus? How?

Here we see the wonder of the Church – former enemies now one in Christ whose love for one another makes known the manifold wisdom of God to the demonic rulers and authorities in the heavenly places (Eph. 3:10; 6:12).

How should the truth that we are one in Christ affect our love towards all the saints?

SEALED WITH THE SPIRIT

OBSERVE

Read **Ephesians 1:13-14** and:

- underline every reference to *IN HIM*.
- circle every reference to *SEALED*.
- put a box around the phrase *GUARANTEE OF OUR INHERITANCE*.

¹³ In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,

¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

Ephesians 1:13-14

SEALED – STRONGS 4972 (sphragizo) – to stamp with private mark for preservation, to confirm or attest a thing.

GUARANTEE – STRONGS 728 (arrabon) – a downpayment, i.e., part of the purchase-money or property given in advance as security for the rest.

DISCUSS

1:13 – Who are those sealed with the Spirit?

1:14 – How is the Spirit described?

Sealed & Guaranteed

Being sealed with the Spirit shows that we belong to God, evidenced by the inner testimony of the Spirit to our hearts of God's love, and whose presence and power at work in us is the guarantee, the downpayment, that God will one day glorify us, and that we will enjoy the fullness of our inheritance – the pinnacle of which is to know and enjoy God perfectly forever. What a glorious inheritance is ours!! Let's look at some verses that explore this a bit more.

OBSERVE

Read **Galatians 4:6-7**:

⁶ And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!”

⁷ So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

Galatians 4:6-7

ABBA – Aramaic word used when addressing one’s own father.

DISCUSS

4:6 - Who has God sent into the hearts of His children? What does the Spirit bear witness to in our hearts (see also Romans 8:15-17)?

4:7 – What were we before? What are we now?

How do you relate to the Father – as your slave master trying to earn His favour or as one who knows His love and who is an heir of all things (1 Cor. 3:21-23)?

“Adoption is the highest privilege that the Gospel offers: higher even than justification... To be right with God the Judge [justification] is a great thing, but to be loved and cared for by God the Father [adoption] is greater.” - J. I. Packer

OBSERVE

Read **1 Peter 1:3-5**:

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

⁴ to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you,

⁵ who by God’s power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

1 Peter 1:3-5

BEING GUARDED – STRONGS 5432 (phroureo) – to mount guard as a sentinel, to keep (with a garrison).

DISCUSS

1:3 – What have we been born again to? How?

1:4 – What is that living hope?

1:5 – How can we sure that we will receive our inheritance?

How should such a certain future impact how we live in the present?

OBSERVE

Read **Colossians 3:1-4**:

¹ If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

² Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.

³ For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

⁴ When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Colossians 3:1-4

DISCUSS

3:1-2 – What are we, who have been raised with Christ, to do?

3:3-4 – Why are we to do this?

Why not block out time in your schedule to further meditate upon the truths of Eph. 1:3-14?

FURTHER STUDY

We hope that this study has been a blessing to you and filled you with praise to God for how He has so richly blessed us in Christ. To Him be all the glory!! Time and space do not permit us to include all, or even if a little, of the Scriptures that we could have looked at. However, if you would like to do some further study, we have included below a study of one of Paul's prayers for the church in Ephesus – prayers for the Church, for all the saints.

Prayer for knowledge (Eph. 1:15-21)

After extolling the wonderful spiritual blessings that we have in Christ (Eph. 1:3-14) the apostle Paul then gives us his prayer he prays that would we know them more fully, in both in understanding and experience (1 Cor. 2:12):

OBSERVE

Read **Ephesians 1:15-21** and:

- underline the phrase *FOR THIS REASON*.
- circle every reference to the *SPIRIT*.
- put a box around every reference to *KNOW*.

¹⁵ For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints,

¹⁶ I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers,

¹⁷ that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him,

¹⁸ having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints,

¹⁹ and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might

²⁰ that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places,

²¹ far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.

Ephesians 1:15-21

POWER – STRONGS 1411 (dynamis) – miraculous power, ability, abundance, mighty work.

DISCUSS

1:15-16 – What is the reason for Paul's prayer?

1:17-19 – What does Paul pray that the Spirit will help them to know?

1:20-21 – What is the power at work in us as saints?

Why not take some time now to pray this prayer for the saints you know and those you don't?

About this study...

This resource has been designed to allow you to jump into God's Word and study it closely. It requires no preparation, and provides you with a structure to study a passage, with questions to help you think and reflect on it.

This study gives you a small insight into the world of inductive Bible study through three key parts:

Observe - *What does the text say?*

Understand - *What does the text mean?*

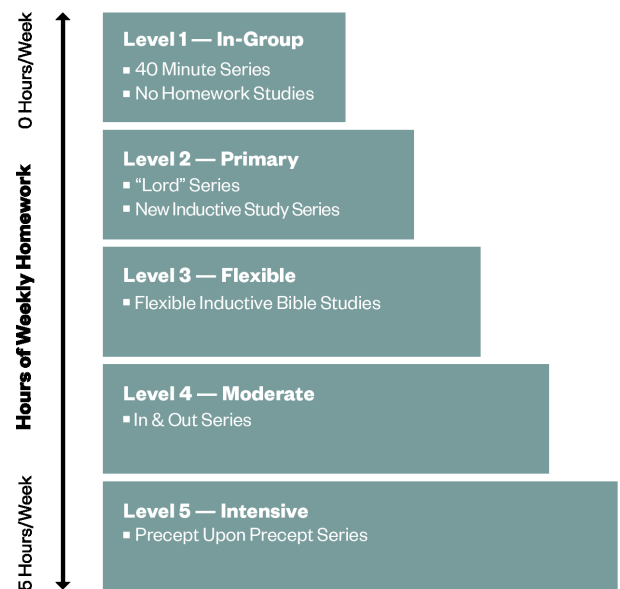
Apply - *What does this mean for me?*

By using this approach, we can study the Bible in a way that allows us to know God deeply, and to live differently.

About Precept Ireland...

Precept was founded in 1970 in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and now works in 160 countries, and has Bible study material translated in over 70 languages. In 2001 Precept was established in Ireland, and has grown through it's mission to engage people in relationship with God through knowing His Word. Precept Ireland seeks to resource and train Bible study leaders to help students like you discover God's truth for yourself and be transformed by it. With more than 250 unique titles ranging from zero to five hours of weekly homework, Precept has a Bible study that meets you where you are.

Visit our online shop to see all our available resources.



Events, Training & more...

Would you love to find out how to study the Bible for yourself, or run an event in your church? Precept Ireland hosts events and inductive Bible study workshops to help individuals and groups. These can be delivered online or we can come to you!

Do you wish others were learning to study God's Word with you? We also provide Leader Training sessions to equip people with the skills needed to lead a Precept Bible study.

Get in touch with us to see how we can help you or your church.

PARTNER WITH US

Precept Ireland seeks to equip Christians across Ireland with the skills to study the Bible for themselves. If you would like to donate to Precept to help us fulfil this mission, please get in touch.

PRECEPT IRELAND

www.preceptireland.org
+44 (028) 9074 6082
info@preceptireland.org
Unit 9A, NCM House, 218 York Street,
Belfast, NI, BT15 1GY