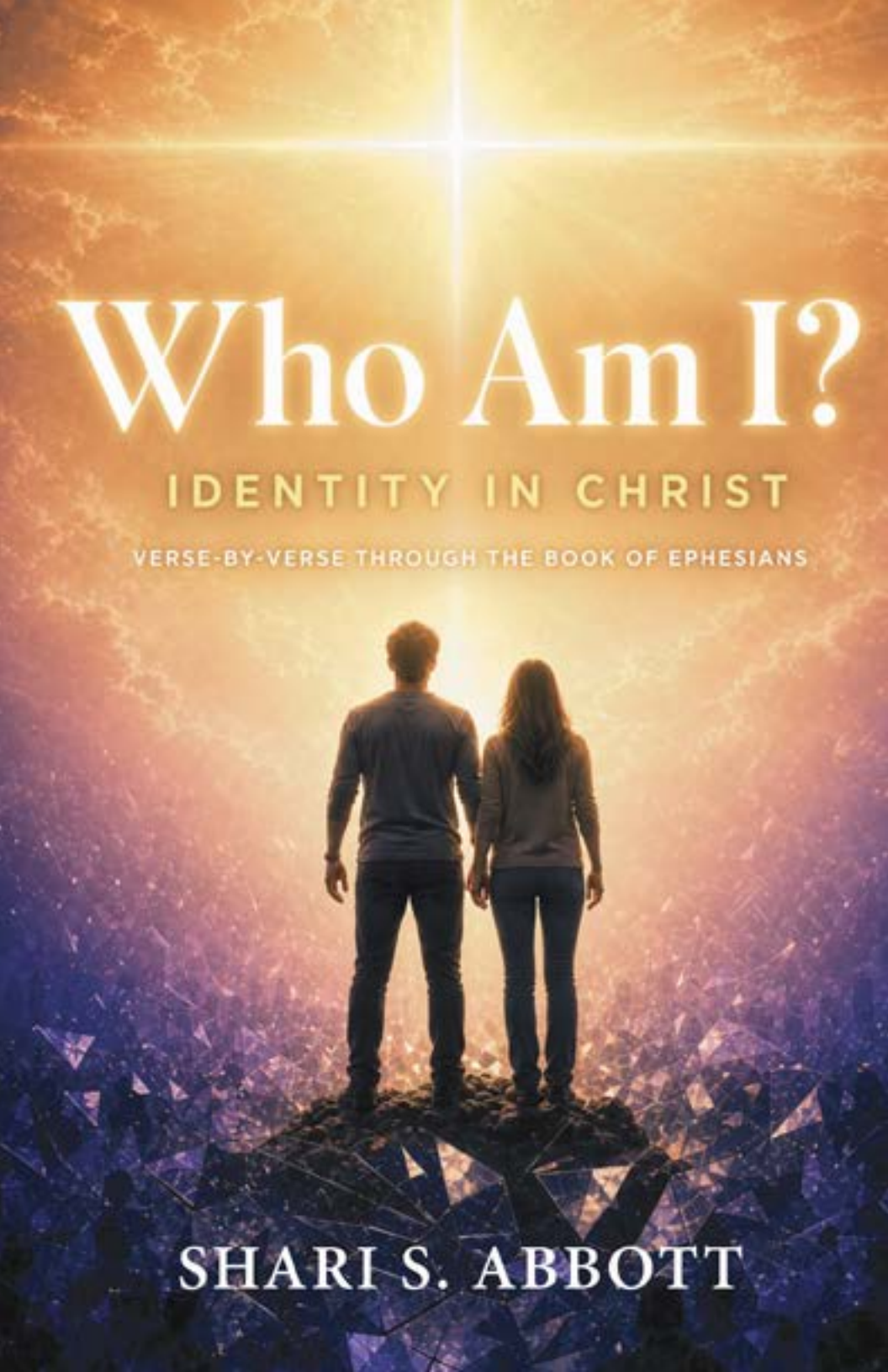


The background of the cover features a man and a woman standing side-by-side, seen from behind, looking up at a brilliant, glowing cross in a sky filled with soft, golden clouds. They are standing on a dark, reflective surface composed of numerous sharp, faceted crystals that resemble diamonds or gemstones. The overall color palette transitions from deep purples and blues at the bottom to warm oranges and yellows near the top where the light source is.

Who Am I?

IDENTITY IN CHRIST

VERSE-BY-VERSE THROUGH THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS

SHARI S. ABBOTT

WHO AM I? IDENTITY IN CHRIST

Verse-by-Verse Through the Book of Ephesians



That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works. (Psalm 26:7)

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BLESSED BE
the God and Father
of our Lord

Jesus Christ,
who has blessed
us with

**EVERY SPIRITUAL
BLESSING**

in the heavenly places

IN CHRIST,
just as

HE CHOSE US
in Him before
the foundation of
the world, that we
should be holy and
without blame before
Him in love.

Ephesians 1:3-4

Ephesians Chapter 1

EPHESIANS 1:1

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus:

Paul opens this epistle by identifying himself as an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God. That is important, because Ephesians is not built on personal opinion, private insight, or religious tradition. Paul writes as one divinely called and commissioned, and from the beginning the letter carries the weight of God's authority.

Ephesians is one of Paul's prison epistles, written during his Roman imprisonment, and it stands apart from letters such as Galatians or Corinthians because it is not primarily corrective in tone. Instead, it unfolds great doctrinal truths about the believer's identity in Christ, the church as the body of Christ, and the eternal purpose of God.

Paul addresses the readers as saints, the faithful in Christ Jesus. "Saints" speaks of their position—set apart unto God. "Faithful" points to their life of trust and perseverance in Christ. As in the other epistles, identity comes before instruction. Before Paul tells believers how to walk, he reminds them who they are.

The phrase, "in Christ Jesus," introduces one of the great themes of the whole epistle. Ephesians is a book about spiritual union with Christ. Every blessing Paul unfolds in this chapter is

found in Him, never apart from Him.

This letter also seems to have had a wider audience than one local congregation alone. The absence of many personal greetings, despite Paul's deep history in Ephesus, supports the idea that it was intended to circulate among the churches of Asia Minor. That broader purpose helps explain the sweeping, church-wide emphasis of the epistle.

EPHESIANS 1:2

Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul's greeting is brief, but full of theology. Grace is the root of the gospel, and peace is the fruit. Grace is God's undeserved favor toward sinners, and peace is what flows from being reconciled to Him through Christ.

Paul consistently puts grace before peace because peace with God can never be found apart from grace from God. Peace is not found in the degree of our faithfulness to God, but in the unshakable faithfulness of God to the gracious commitment He has made to us.

These blessings come from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. From the outset, Paul anchors the Christian life in divine provision, not human performance. Christianity does not begin with what we do for God, but with what God has done for us in Christ.

This greeting also anticipates the structure of the whole epistle. Chapters 1–3 emphasize the believer's position in Christ, while chapters 4–6 unfold the believer's practice in Christ. Grace and peace are necessary for both.

EPHESIANS 1:3

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who

has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

With verse 3, Paul moves from greeting to praise. In fact, verses 3–14 form one long sentence in the original language—a cascading doxology celebrating God’s saving purpose from eternity past to eternity future. Paul begins not with human need, but with divine blessing.

When Paul says, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,” he is offering praise to the One who is worthy of all blessing. Then he declares that this same God “has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.” God is the fountain; believers are the recipients.

Notice the language carefully: God has blessed us. These are not merely future benefits that may someday belong to believers. In Christ, they are already secured. The Christian is not trying to earn spiritual wealth; he is learning to live from wealth already given in Christ.

The phrase in heavenly places speaks of the unseen spiritual realm where Christ is enthroned, where believers are blessed, and where spiritual conflict also takes place. Ephesians will return to this realm again and again. It is the sphere of our blessings, our position, and our warfare.

In a city known for wealth, influence, and spiritual superstition, Paul reminds the saints that their true riches are in Christ. Ephesians is a book about our riches in Christ, our position in Christ, and our walk because of Christ.

EPHESIANS 1:4

According as he has chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

Paul now reaches back before creation itself and tells us that

God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world. Salvation is not an afterthought with God. His redemptive purpose did not begin when man sinned. It reaches back into eternity past.

The key phrase here is “in Him.” Christ is the center of election. God’s saving purpose is never presented as detached from Christ, but always as centered in Him. All who are in Christ share in what God purposed in Him.

Paul also gives the purpose of this choosing: that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. Election is not given as a license for passivity or speculation. It is tied to transformation. God chooses a people for holiness, blamelessness, and love.

This truth should humble believers, not make them proud. It should move us to worship, not argument. To know that God set His gracious purpose on His people before the world began is meant to produce gratitude, reverence, and a desire to reflect the character of Christ.

EPHESIANS 1:5–6

Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he has made us accepted in the beloved.

Predestination here is connected to adoption. Paul is not describing cold, abstract theology, but the loving purpose of God to bring believers into His family through Jesus Christ. Those who are in Christ are not merely rescued from judgment; they are brought near to God as His children.

Adoption is a rich word. In Paul’s world, it carried the idea of full family standing, recognized sonship, and inheritance rights. In Christ, believers are not simply admitted into the house of

God. They are brought into the family, through adoption and with privilege, acceptance, and future inheritance.

Paul says this is according to the good pleasure of His will. God was not reluctant to save. He delighted to save. Redemption and adoption do not arise from divine hesitation, but from divine pleasure and purpose.

Then Paul tells us the ultimate aim: to the praise of the glory of his grace. Salvation magnifies grace. The gospel is not ultimately man-centered, as though the highest thing were simply our happiness. It is God-centered. He saves in such a way that His grace is put on display.

And then comes one of the most cherished expressions in Ephesians: accepted in the beloved. The believer's acceptance is not rooted in personal merit, spiritual performance, or moral achievement. It is rooted in union with the Beloved Son. God does not merely tolerate those who are in Christ; He receives them in the One He perfectly loves.

EPHESIANS 1:7–8

In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; wherein he has abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;

Paul now turns from God's eternal purpose to Christ's historical redemptive work. In Him we have redemption through His blood. Redemption speaks of release by the payment of a price. We were not merely improved, advised, or redirected. We were bought back by the blood of Christ.

This redemption includes the forgiveness of sins. The cross is not only where payment was made; it is also where pardon was secured. Through Christ, the believer is fully forgiven.

Paul says this redemption and forgiveness come according to the riches of His grace. Grace is not scarce in Christ. God does

not save reluctantly or in thin measure. His grace is rich, abundant, and overflowing.

Verse 8 adds that He has abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence. The plan of salvation is not impulsive or careless. At the cross, grace is not opposed to wisdom. God saves in a way that fully satisfies His righteousness, displays His mercy, and reveals His perfect wisdom.

EPHESIANS 1:9–10

Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he has purposed in himself: that in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:

Paul now speaks of the mystery of God's will. In Scripture, a mystery is not something spooky or irrational. It is a divine truth once hidden and now revealed by God. It is not discovered by human reasoning alone; it must be made known by revelation.

Here the mystery centers on God's great purpose in Christ: that in the fullness of times He will gather together in one all things in Christ, both in Heaven and on earth. History is not random. It is moving toward a God-ordained climax with Christ at the center.

This gives Ephesians a cosmic scope. The gospel is certainly personal, but it is never merely private. The same Christ who saves sinners is the Christ in whom all things will finally be brought into their proper order and unity.

Again Paul ends the thought with "even in Him." He does not allow us to think of God's plan, mystery, or future apart from Christ. Everything begins in Him, unfolds through Him, and culminates in Him.

EPHESIANS 1:11–12

In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who works all things after the counsel of his own will: that we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

In Christ, believers have already obtained an inheritance. Ephesians is filled with the language of spiritual riches, and here Paul reminds us that salvation is not only deliverance from wrath, but entrance into a glorious inheritance bound up in Christ Himself.

This inheritance rests on God's purpose. Paul says He works all things after the counsel of His own will. That does not mean human beings are reduced to puppets, but it does mean history is not out of control. The God who saves is the God who rules.

Once again Paul returns to praise: "that we should be to the praise of his glory." The redeemed are not only recipients of grace; they are trophies of grace. A saved people become a display of the glory of God.

The more clearly believers grasp who they are in Christ, the more worship rises naturally. Assurance, humility, gratitude, and praise belong together.

EPHESIANS 1:13–14

In whom you also trusted, after that you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that you believed, you were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

These verses show how the blessings of verses 3–12 become personally experienced. The Ephesians heard the word of truth, the gospel of their salvation, and believed in Christ. The gospel must be heard and believed.

Paul then says they were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise. The sealing of the Spirit speaks of ownership, authenticity, security, and preservation. God marks His people as His own, and seals them to guarantee they are kept in Christ.

The Holy Spirit is also called the earnest of our inheritance. That word carries the idea of a pledge, down payment, or guarantee. The Spirit's indwelling presence assures the believer that what God has begun, He will complete.

Paul speaks of this continuing until the redemption of the purchased possession. There is an already-and-not-yet dimension to redemption. Christ has purchased His people fully, yet the final and visible completion of that redemption awaits the future. What He purchased, He will surely claim in full.

And again Paul ends with the same refrain: "unto the praise of his glory." The whole sweep of salvation—from eternal purpose, to present grace, to future inheritance—exists to magnify the glory of God.

EPHESIANS 1:15–16

Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;

Having unfolded the believer's blessings in Christ, Paul now turns to prayer. Doctrine is not meant to terminate in mere information. It is meant to lead to gratitude, worship, and intercession.

Paul had heard of their faith in the Lord Jesus and their love unto all the saints. These are visible evidences of genuine conversion. Faith reaches upward to Christ, and love reaches outward to His people.

Because of this, Paul says he does not cease to give thanks for them, making mention of them in his prayers. Strong theology

does not make prayer unnecessary. It makes prayer richer and more specific.

This is also a model for us. Paul prays not only for the lost, but for believers already secure in Christ. Saved people still need prayer because they still need greater understanding, deeper maturity, and clearer spiritual sight.

EPHESIANS 1:17–19

That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,

Paul does not pray here for brand-new blessings to be invented for believers, but for their eyes to be opened to what is already theirs in Christ. He prays for wisdom, revelation, and deeper knowledge of God.

The phrase “the eyes of your understanding being enlightened” points to spiritual perception. Paul is not asking merely for sharper intellect, but for truth to penetrate the inner life. The heart must see what the mind may already know.

He prays that believers would know three things in particular: the hope of His calling, the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and the exceeding greatness of His power toward those who believe. Hope, inheritance, and power form a beautiful triad in this prayer.

The hope of His calling speaks of the certainty and future fullness bound up in God’s call. The riches of His inheritance in the saints show how precious God’s people are in His redemptive purpose. And the greatness of His power reminds us that the

Christian life cannot be lived by human strength alone.

Ephesians constantly turns the believer away from self-measurement and toward divine realities. Paul wants the saints to live not by spiritual amnesia, but by spiritual understanding.

EPHESIANS 1:20–21

Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:

Paul now defines God's power by pointing to the resurrection and exaltation of Christ. The same power at work in believers is the power God wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His own right hand.

This is resurrection power and enthronement power. Jesus was not merely raised; He was glorified and exalted. He now occupies the place of supreme honor and authority—at the right hand of God the Father in Heaven.

Paul emphasizes that Christ is far above all principality, power, might, dominion, and every name that is named. In a world fascinated by unseen powers and spiritual hierarchies, this was deeply reassuring. Christ is not one authority among many. He is far above all.

His supremacy extends not only in this age, but also in that which is to come. There is no realm, era, force, or power over which Christ is not Lord. The believer's security rests in the exalted Christ.

EPHESIANS 1:22–23

And has put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness

of him that fills all in all.

Paul closes the chapter by bringing the cosmic supremacy of Christ into direct relationship with the church. God has put all things under His feet and given Him to be Head over all things to the church. The One who rules over the universe is the One who lovingly governs His people.

The church is called His body. This is one of the great images in Ephesians. Christ is the Head, and believers are united to Him and to one another as members of one living body. The church is not merely an institution or organization. It is a spiritual organism joined to Christ.

Paul then describes the church as the fullness of Him that fills all in all. This is a staggering truth. By God's design, the church is the body through which the fullness of Christ is displayed in the world. As the head is expressed through the body, so Christ manifests His life through His people.

So the chapter ends where it has been heading all along: Christ exalted, the church united to Him, and believers anchored in eternal purpose, spiritual wealth, and resurrection power. Ephesians 1 is not merely a list of doctrines. While it tells of our positional standing in Christ, and the riches we already have, the words of Paul are also a call to worship the God who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

CHAPTER EMPHASIS

Ephesians 1 emphasizes the riches of God's grace in Christ and the believer's secure position in Him. It lifts our eyes from earthly circumstances to the eternal plan of God, showing that before the foundation of the world He chose, predestined, redeemed, and sealed believers in Christ, all to the praise of His glory. The chapter stresses that every spiritual blessing is found in Christ, that salvation is entirely of grace and not human ef-

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fort, and that the Holy Spirit is the guarantee of our inheritance. It closes with Paul's prayer that believers would deeply know the hope of God's calling, the riches of His inheritance, and the surpassing greatness of His resurrection power toward us who believe, with Christ exalted as Head over all things for the church.

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