

This New Testament lesson opens with praise to God for God's blessings, together with thanksgiving and prayers that these spiritual graces maybe continued. In the beloved Son, Christians have, since the beginning of the world, been given a holy destiny as God's children. God has lavished forgiveness of sins and the riches of grace upon those in Christ, the one in whom all things in heaven and earth will find fulfillment. Those who have placed their hope in Christ have been marked with the seal of the Holy Spirit, the pledge of redemption. Hear now these words from Ephesians.

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. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will - to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.

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, in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. 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, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession - to the praise of his glory.

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

John 1:1-5

The gospel opens with a hymn to God's Word, the expression of God's very being and the creative power of all life, who has now become flesh and lived among us. The word is the light of all humankind, and was witnessed to by John the Baptist. Although the world made through the Word did not recognize him, those who did believe have been given the right to become children of God. The law came through Moses, but grace and truth come through the only son, who makes the Father known. Hear now these words from the Gospel of John.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

Liturgist: This is the gospel message of our Lord and Savior

**All: May the reading and the hearing of Your word inform our minds, comfort our souls, and guide our feet.**