

Everything Is Heading Toward Christ

The Verse Behind Ephesians 1:10

Ephesians 1:10 - "That in the dispensation of the fulness 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."

Sometimes we read a verse like this, understand the basic idea, and keep moving.

God is going to gather everything together in Christ. Sounds straightforward enough.

But what does Paul mean by **"the fulness of times"**?

What has been scattered?

What does it mean for everything to be gathered together in Christ?

And is Paul only talking about something that will happen far off in the future, or has this gathering already begun?

Because Ephesians 1:10 isn't just telling us how history ends.

It's telling us **what history is about.**

Everything God is doing is moving toward one Person.

Jesus Christ.

What Ephesians 1:10 Is Saying

"That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ."

The phrase "**fulness of times**" speaks of God's appointed time reaching its intended completion.

This isn't history stumbling blindly toward some uncertain ending.

God has a purpose.

God has a timetable.

God has an end goal.

Paul has already told us in the previous verse that God has made known "the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself."

So Ephesians 1:10 is explaining that mystery.

What is God's purpose? To **gather together in one all things in Christ**.

Not around Christ as though He were merely an important religious figure.

Not beside Christ as though He were one option among many.

Everything is gathered **in Christ**.

Christ is the centre
of God's plan.

Christ is the
meaning of history.

Christ is the One
through whom
creation is restored,
heaven and earth
are reconciled, and
God's purpose is
completed.

God's end goal is not simply to improve humanity.

It's not merely to repair society.

It's not even just to rescue individual sinners and take them to heaven.

God's purpose is much bigger.

It is to bring **everything under the rightful headship of Jesus Christ**.

What Does "Gather Together" Mean?

The expression translated "**gather together in one**" carries the idea of bringing separate things together under one head.

Think about what sin has done.

Sin separates.

It separated Adam and Eve from God. It brought division between Adam and Eve. It brought conflict between Cain and Abel. It divided nations. It divided Jew and Gentile. It brought conflict between humanity and creation. It brought death into the human experience.

Everything sin touches becomes fractured.

We see it everywhere.

Sin scatters.

- Broken relationships
- Broken families
- Broken nations
- Broken bodies
- Broken minds
- Broken fellowship with God

Christ gathers.

- Sin divides - Christ reconciles.
- Sin brings disorder - Christ restores the rightful order.

That is why Paul doesn't say God will gather everything together in human wisdom, political cooperation, religious effort, or social progress.

He says everything will be gathered together **in Christ**.

Because **Christ alone** can undo what sin has done.

Where the Scattering Began

To understand the gathering, we need to go back to where the scattering began.

In Genesis 1, creation existed under God's order. God created the heavens and the earth. He filled the earth with life. He made humanity in His image. Everything had its proper place under God.

Then sin entered.

Adam didn't merely break a rule. He **rejected God's headship**. He chose independence from God. He listened to the serpent's voice instead of God's Word.

Romans 5:12 - "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin."

Sin entered through one man, and the consequences spread through the entire human family.

Creation itself was affected.

Romans 8:22 - "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now."

Creation is groaning because creation is **out of order**.

The world is not functioning as God originally intended.

We feel that groaning personally. Our bodies age. Relationships break down. People hurt one another. Nations fight. Creation produces storms, disease, decay, and death.

We can pretend everything is fine, but nobody really believes it.

Something has gone terribly wrong.

The Bible tells us what went wrong. Creation rejected God's order through sin.

But **Ephesians 1:10** tells us what God is doing about it. He is gathering everything back together in Christ.

Babel Shows Us Humanity Scattered

Another important picture appears in Genesis 11.

Humanity gathered together at Babel, but they weren't gathered under God. They were united in **rebellion**.

"Let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name."

That sounds familiar, doesn't it?

Humanity wants unity, but without God. We want peace, but without Christ. We want a kingdom, but we want to sit on the throne.

At Babel, God confused their language and scattered them across the earth.

Genesis 11:8 - "So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth."

Human rebellion produced **scattering**.

But God's answer to Babel eventually appears in Christ.

At Pentecost, people from many nations heard the wonderful works of God in their own languages. Acts 2 doesn't erase national distinctions, but it shows people from different nations being brought together by the Holy Spirit through the gospel of Christ.

Babel scattered humanity in rebellion. Christ begins gathering people together through redemption.

God's Promise to Abraham

Right after Babel, God called Abraham. That wasn't accidental.

Genesis 12:3 - "And in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."

Humanity had been scattered among the nations, but God promised that blessing would come to **all the families of the earth** through Abraham's seed.

Paul explains that promise in Galatians 3:16:

"Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ."

The **promised Seed is Christ**.

So even in Genesis, God was already revealing His plan.

The nations would
be blessed in Christ.

Those who were far
away would be
brought near in
Christ.

Those divided by
sin would be
gathered in Christ.

God's answer to human scattering was always going to come through **His Son**.

Israel Was Gathered Under God's King

The Old Testament repeatedly uses the language of **gathering**.

Israel was scattered because of rebellion, idolatry, and unbelief. But God promised that He would gather His people again.

Ezekiel 34:12 - "As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep."

The people were scattered because their shepherds had failed and because they had wandered from God. But God promised to seek them.

Ezekiel 34:23 - "And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David."

This was written long after the historical David had died. God was promising a coming **Shepherd-King** from David's line.

Jesus identifies Himself as that Shepherd in John 10:11:

"I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep."

Jesus came to **gather the scattered sheep**.

John 11:51 and 52 says that Jesus would die:

"Not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad."

There is the language again. **Gather together in one**.

Christ gathers through His death. The cross doesn't merely forgive isolated individuals. The cross creates **one redeemed people under one Shepherd**.

Christ Is the Head of All Things

The idea of gathering all things in Christ is closely connected with **Christ being the Head**.

Later in Ephesians 1, Paul says God raised Christ from the dead and set Him at His own right hand:

"Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion."

Then Ephesians 1:22 says:

"And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church."

Notice the language. **All things under His feet. Head over all things.**

This is the fulfilment of Psalm 8, where God placed all things under man's feet. Humanity lost its rightful rule through sin. But Jesus, the true Man and last Adam, has been **exalted over all things**.

Hebrews 2:8 admits that we don't yet see everything visibly subjected to Him. But then verse 9 says:

"But we see Jesus."

That is where our confidence rests.

We still see death.

We still see rebellion.

We still see nations raging.

We still see creation groaning.

But we see **Jesus crowned with glory and honour**.

The final outcome has already been secured because Christ has been raised and exalted.

The Cross Is Where the Gathering Begins

Colossians 1 gives us one of the clearest explanations of Ephesians 1:10.

Speaking of Christ, Paul says:

"For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth."

Then Colossians 1:17 says:

"And he is before all things, and by him all things consist."

Christ isn't merely part of creation. He is the **Creator**. All things were made by Him. All things are held together by Him. And all things are moving toward Him.

Colossians 1:20 - "And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself."

How does God reconcile all things? Through **the blood of the cross**.

This restoration isn't achieved through human improvement. It is **blood-bought**.

Sin created hostility.

The cross makes peace.

Sin brought condemnation.

The cross provides forgiveness.

Sin created separation.

The cross brings reconciliation.

The gathering of all things in Christ stands upon what Christ accomplished at Calvary.

Without the cross, there is no gathering. Without His blood, there is no peace. Without His resurrection, there is no new creation.

Jew and Gentile Gathered Into One

We see this gathering already happening in **the church**.

Ephesians 2 explains that Jews and Gentiles had been divided. Gentiles were described as strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

Ephesians 2:13 - "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ."

Notice that phrase again. **"In Christ Jesus."** Those who were far off are brought near.

Then Paul says Christ:

"Hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us."

Ephesians 2:15 says Christ created:

"In himself of twain one new man, so making peace."

This is Ephesians 1:10 beginning to take shape. People who were divided are being gathered into **one body**.

Not because they all share the same culture. Not because they agree on every human tradition. Not because they naturally get along. They are made one **in Christ**.

The church is a **living demonstration** of God's final purpose.

Every time believers from different backgrounds worship one Lord, trust one gospel, receive one Spirit, and live as one body, we are showing the world where history is heading.

Everything is heading toward Christ.

Things in Heaven and Things on Earth

Paul says God will gather together in Christ:

"Both which are in heaven, and which are on earth."

This is **bigger than individual salvation**.

The effects of Christ's victory reach throughout the created order.

Philippians 2:10 - "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth."

Every realm will acknowledge His authority.

This doesn't mean every person will be saved regardless of faith. Scripture clearly distinguishes between salvation and judgment. But it does mean that **no rebellion will remain forever**. No rival authority will stand eternally against Christ. No power will successfully resist His kingdom. Every enemy will be placed beneath His feet.

1 Corinthians 15:25 - "For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet."

Verse 26 - "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."

Think about that. Even **death itself** will not survive Christ's reign.

Death entered
through Adam.

Life comes through
Christ.

The grave doesn't
get the final word.

Decay doesn't get
the final word.

Satan doesn't get
the final word.

Human rebellion
doesn't get the final
word.

Jesus Christ gets the final word.

The Fullness of Times

Paul calls this God's plan for "**the fulness of times.**"

Galatians 4:4 - "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son."

Christ came the first time at **God's appointed moment**. Not too early. Not too late. The Roman world was in place. The promises had been given. The law had prepared the way. The prophets had spoken. And when God's appointed time arrived, the Son came.

In the same way, history is moving toward another appointed completion.

Acts 3:21 - "The times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began."

God has never abandoned His creation. He is **restoring what sin damaged**.

Revelation 21 gives us the final picture. John sees: "A new heaven and a new earth."

Revelation 21:3 - "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them."

Heaven and earth are no longer separated. God dwells with His people.

Revelation 21:4 - "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death."

No more death. No more sorrow. No more crying. No more pain.

Why? Because the former things have passed away. The broken creation has been made new under Christ.

Ephesians 1:10 is pointing toward that final restoration.

Has the Gathering Already Begun?

So is Ephesians 1:10 present or future?

The answer is **both**.

Already accomplished

- Christ has already come.
- The cross has already made peace.
- The resurrection has already defeated death.
- Christ is already seated above every principality and power.
- Believers are already united with Him.
- Jew and Gentile are already being gathered into one body.
- The Holy Spirit has already been given as the earnest of our inheritance.

Still ahead

But the full visible gathering is still ahead. We don't yet see everything brought into perfect order under Christ.

We live between the **victory already won** and the **victory fully revealed**.

That is why the Christian life contains both confidence and groaning.

We're confident because Christ has won. But we groan because the world still feels the effects of sin.

We rejoice because we have redemption. But we wait for the redemption of our bodies.

We belong to the new creation. But we still live in a world where the old creation is passing away.

The promise is certain, but the process isn't yet complete.

What This Means for Us

So what should Ephesians 1:10 change about the way we live?

First, it gives us confidence when life feels chaotic.

Sometimes life looks like scattered pieces. A relationship breaks down. Plans collapse. Your body stops cooperating. The world seems to become more confused by the week. And we start wondering whether anything is actually going anywhere.

Ephesians 1:10 answers that fear. History isn't out of God's control. **Everything is moving toward Christ.**

That doesn't mean everything happening now is good. Sin is still evil. Suffering still hurts. Death is still called an enemy. But none of these things will defeat God's purpose. Christ will gather together what sin has scattered.

Second, this verse teaches us where to build our lives.

If everything is being brought under Christ, why would we build our identity somewhere else?

Why build your life around popularity when every human opinion will pass away? Why build it around wealth when wealth can disappear? Why build it around political power when every earthly kingdom will eventually bow before Christ? Why build it around your own performance when your standing with God is found in Christ?

God's plan centres on Christ. Our lives should too.

Third, this changes how we view the church.

The church isn't just a weekly meeting. It isn't merely an organisation, a building, or a collection of religious consumers. The church is **Christ's body**. It is the beginning of God's gathered people.

That means division, pride, bitterness, racism, jealousy, and selfish ambition are completely out of place in the body of Christ.

We don't create unity by pretending differences don't exist. We protect the unity Christ has already created.

Ephesians 4:3 - "To keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

We don't invent the unity. The Spirit created it. Our responsibility is to walk in a way that agrees with it.

Fourth, this verse gives us hope for the future.

Christian hope isn't pretending everything will somehow work itself out. Our hope has a name. **Jesus Christ.**

We're not trusting the progress of humanity. Let's be honest, humanity has had plenty of time to prove how well that works. We're trusting the **risen Christ.**

01	02	03
He is Lord.	He is reigning.	He will return.
04	05	06
He will judge evil.	He will raise the dead.	He will renew creation.
07		
He will bring everything into its rightful order.		

Everything Finds Its Meaning in Christ

Ephesians 1:10 - "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ."

This is God's end goal. **Everything brought under Christ.**

Creation began
through Him.

Redemption was
accomplished
through Him.

The church is united
in Him.

The kingdom belongs to Him.

The future is secured by Him.

And the final restoration of all things will take place under His rule.

Sin has scattered.

Christ gathers.

Sin has divided.

Christ reconciles.

**Sin has brought
death.**

Christ brings life.

So when the world looks chaotic, remember where history is heading.

When your own life feels like disconnected pieces, remember who holds all things together.

And when you wonder whether God's plan can really succeed, look at the **empty tomb**.

Jesus Christ is risen.

Jesus Christ is Lord.

And in the fullness of God's appointed times, everything will be brought under Him.