

Read Ephesians 1:3-14

1. As we conclude this section on the spiritual blessings we have in Christ, what are one or two things that come to mind that have remained with you the course of the studies?

- Grace and peace
- Blessing God = praising God
- Apostle and Saint
- In Christ (union with Christ)
- To the praise of his glory = ultimate purpose is for God's glory

v4 – Chosen by God before the foundation of the world (predestined/elected)	v5 – Adoption as God's sons (children) – much more to come
v6 – God's grace given to us	v7-8 – Redemption (bought at a price). Forgiveness. Abundant grace.
v9-10 – Know and understand the "big picture". God's purpose = summation of all in Christ	

Eph 1:11-12 - In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory.

Eph 1:13-14 - 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, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

2. Reread the passage once more. Who is Paul referring to in v11 and v13?

V11 –Specific "we" – the Jews	V13 –General "you" – Gentiles (non-Jews)
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- Unity is a main theme in the book of Ephesians that we will come to study further in due time
- Jews and Gentiles did not get along within the Church – hostility and division between them

Notice that for the first time in the epistle, Paul makes a distinction among the believers. Until now he has spoken of all believers, but here he contrasts "we" (v11) and "you" (v13). As the context suggests (v12-13), the "we" refers to Jewish Christians, and the "you" to Gentile believers.

3. Define inheritance. What is the Christian's inheritance (c.f. Rev 21:1-4)?

Inheritance

- Type of possession to come
 - Allot, portion
- Wealth that flows down, it is rightly due
- It is a right or privilege of a son or daughter
- Entitlement, not earned

Rev 21:1-4

- Focus in this verse is God. God will be with his people. His people will be with him
 - The Christian's inheritance is God himself. They will possess him forevermore.
- Heaven is the believer's inheritance, free more sin, guilt, death for they are no more.

Consider the rendering of Eph 1:11 in the New English Translation (NET). What does Paul want us to understand from this verse (c.f. Deut 4:20; Deut 32:8-9; Eph 1:18)?

*Eph 1:11 (NET) - In Christ we too have been **claimed as God's own possession**, since we were predestined according to the one purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to the counsel of his will*

Two sides of the same coin regarding "inheritance" or "possession"

- We've already seen this idea of man's inheritance
- Now to examine this idea of God's inheritance
- These two translations give us a fuller picture of what Paul will have us understand

Explore the idea of God's inheritance further through the verses:

Deut 4:20 - Israelites are God's inheritance

Deut 32:8-9

- Nations (Canaanites, Jebusites... etc) are allotted their inheritance
- However, the Lord's portion (his inheritance) are his people

Eph 1:18 - The saints of God are his glorious inheritance

The owner is what makes an object valuable.

- Cherished Stamp collection
- Family passed down fine China

SUMMARY

1. For the Christian, our inheritance is God and heaven (and the benefits of it), eternity spent with our creator.
2. The verse is also understood from God's claim:
 - a. He is inheriting, claiming his possession (his people)
3. NET - Translation philosophy (Formal equivalence vs Dynamic Equivalence)
 - a. **Formal** equivalence tends to emphasize fidelity to the lexical details and grammatical structure of the original language. **Dynamic** equivalence employs a more natural rendering but with less literal accuracy.

4. Reflect on what it means that God works all things according to the counsel of his will (c.f. Psa 135:4-8; Rom 8:28)?

How does this tie into the idea of predestination (c.f. Eph 1:4-5)?

5 minute question

Psa 135:4-8

- God has his purposes which are unknown/beyond our understanding – He does what he pleases purposefully
 - Chose Israel has his possession, randomising them from Egypt.
 - Causes the clouds to rise, lighting to come down

Rom 8:28 –God's purposes. We may not understand them but know he is for us.

Eph 1:4-5 –God's purposes are predetermined, thoughtful intention behind them. I.e. Our predestination.

5. What do you think it means that that the Jews were the first to hope in Christ (c.f. John 1:11-12; 4:22; Acts 13:45-46)? How do you think this relates to the way the Jews are called to live (c.f. John 15:7-8)?

5 minute question

Jews had the OT, the promises of God and the prophecies. They were and are still anticipating this messiah.

John 1:11-12 –Jesus comes to the Jews (his own people).

- His own people did not believe them
- But those that did believe were given the right of adoption

John 4:22 – Salvation is from the Jews (Messianic saviour)

Acts 13:45-46 –Jews had “first dibs” on the gospel and messiah. It was rejected and then presented to the Gentiles.

John 15:7-8 –Abide in Christ’s teaching. The Father is glorified by the fruit (lifestyle, deeds) that comes from the disciples.

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6. Note the presence of "also" in verse 13. This provides the continuity and marks the discontinuity between the two groups of believers. Summarize verses 11-14, compare and contrast on how Gentiles now share in this blessing:

Have one or two people share their summaries.

Through the gospel message, Gentiles (us) now have access to the same God, the same saviour and inheritance that the Jews were privileged with. We have been marked by God, given a deposit by his Spirit as a confirmation of this future possession.

- Revealed first to the Jew (by the law, promises and shadows of Christ) and then heard by the Gentiles
- The end result is the same, to glorify God

7. God's spiritual blessings for believers are based not only on the sovereign election of the Father (v3-6) and the redemptive work of the Son (v7-12), but also on the seal of the Holy Spirit. What do you think is the significance of this seal that comes through the hearing and believing of the proclaimed gospel (c.f. 2 Cor 1:21-22)?

DO NOT MISS THE WORKING OF THE TRINITY in this entire section.

Significance of seal of the Holy Spirit

- Distinguishable mark (Revelation – God’s Mark vs The Mark of Beast, Levitical law and ceremonies)
- Guarantee of authenticity
 - Letter sealed with the family emblem
- Unbreakable promise
- Holy Spirit is God
 - God is our confirmation
- Pledge (engagement ring)
- Consideration for completion

2 Cor 1:21-22 – Guarantee, and seal of God’s establishment of us in Christ.

The Holy Spirit is our _____ **DOWN** _____ **PAYMENT** _____ of the inheritance that is to be acquired (hint; see the footnote for *guarantee* in v14).

Remembering what we covered earlier about inheritance, the phrase “until we acquire possession of it” can also be rendered “until God redeems his possession” (ESV footnote). For the Jew, the term “inheritance” and “possession” brings forth imagery of a chosen people being claimed by God as his portion. By association in Christ, Gentiles have also been claimed by God as his inheritance (v18) and we have a foretaste of this present reality now through the Spirit’s confirmation in our lives.

As sons and daughters of the most high, we fix our eyes on things unseen, eagerly anticipating our future inheritance; where for all of eternity, God will be our portion and God’s portion will be with redeemed mankind, his treasured possession (c.f. 1 Pet 2:9; Mal 3:17; Rev 21:1-4).

8. Reflect on this truth, you are God’s inheritance, his treasured possession. How does this impact you personally?

- What is your response to this?
 - Do you seek to desire Christ above all? It is urgent and evident in your actions and life?
 - Do you treasure God? How is this made known?
- Do you live in a way that reflects this preciousness?
 - Mourning over sin
 - Setting mind on above
- You are treasured and taken care of

Eph 1:11-14 (NET)- In Christ we too have been claimed as God’s own possession, since we were predestined according to the one purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to the counsel of his will so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, would be to the praise of his glory. And when you heard the word of truth (the gospel of your salvation)—when you believed in Christ—you were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit, who is the down payment of our inheritance, until the redemption of God’s own possession, to the praise of his glory.

Christian, be reminded today that you have been claimed by God; redeemed at a great cost, by the blood of the sacrificial lamb (v7). The unfolding of your salvation was predetermined long before the foundation of the world and ultimately finds its climax in the glory of God. This is where your identity, worth and life is found. To God be the glory forever, amen.