

Ephesians 1:7-14

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Through Christ's sacrifice, we are forgiven of our sins and redeemed. Once we believe in Jesus, we are sealed by the Holy Spirit who comes to live within us and ensure that we belong to God forever and will inherit eternal life from Him.

In Ephesians 1:7-14, Paul describes the many wonderful benefits we gain from our position of being in Christ. *In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace which He lavished on us.*

In Jesus we have *redemption through His blood* and *the forgiveness of our trespasses*. This is our past tense salvation, our new birth. This is the beginning of our new life in Christ. If we forget this, we are prone to start trying to earn forgiveness, which is futile. It is vital to remember that we are forgiven only because of the *redemption through His blood*. We are made acceptable in God's sight only because we are *In Him*. When we are born again we are placed into Christ. This is a reality for all believers that cannot be earned, and it cannot be lost. It is received by faith.

It was *through His blood*, His death on the cross, that made our *redemption* possible. We find *forgiveness of our trespasses* because Jesus paid the penalty we owed. As the author of Hebrews wrote concerning Jesus' sacrifice:

"...through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption...how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"

(Hebrews 9:12, 14)

Our *redemption* and *forgiveness* is all *according to the riches of God's grace* (favor) *which He lavished on us*. The imagery Paul uses here paints the picture of wealth and excess. God has given us *riches*; not just given, but *lavished* on us, given in abundance, poured out to us in unrestrained generosity. To lavish someone with gifts or praise almost gives the impression of overdoing it. The giving is more than enough. Nothing is held back. That is how Paul describes *the riches of God's grace which He has lavished on us*, His children chosen from before the creation *of the world*.

Paul then describes what the ultimate goal is of Christ's work and God's redemption of those He's predestined. God desires that His children not only be born, but also grow up and receive their destiny to become *sons*, and join His Son in reigning over all (Romans 8:17b; 2 Timothy 2:12; Revelation 3:21).

Through God's *wisdom and insight He made known to us the mystery of His will*. God has answered the question, the *mystery*, of what He is up to, *His will*, what He is going to accomplish. Again, Paul attributes this *according to God's kind intention*. God acts out of *love*

and kind intention. So, according to His goodness, God purposed in Jesus with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. All things sum up in Christ. Believers are also in Christ. This great mystery includes the reality that those who rebelled (humans) can be received into Christ, then through adoption as sons be elevated to reign over creation.

This *administration* will be that of King Jesus, when He rules over the earth, which He received as His reward of inheritance for obedience (Philippians 2:9-11, Revelation 11:15). At the *fullness of the times*, when all is ready according to God's timing, Jesus will establish this eternal kingdom and put an end to sin and suffering (Daniel 7:27, Daniel 9:24). At that time, He will install His *administration*, which will include those believers who gain the reward of reigning with Him, because of their faithful service on earth (Matthew 25: 21,23).

God's original design (Genesis chapters 1-3), was for man to rule over a perfect world. But man and the earth/creation were cursed when Adam brought sin into the world. Our redemption through being born then living by faith in Jesus is how God offers to restore us and all of creation to that original plan, serving with Jesus ruling over earth (Philippians 2:8-11). So, just as creation was cursed alongside man, it will be redeemed, *things in the heavens and things on earth.*

Paul continues, *In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory.*

Again Paul emphasizes how we were *predestined according to God's purpose. He works all things* together according to the *counsel of His will.* God consults only His own purposes, for His ways and *will* are perfect. He *predestined* us because it was His *will* to redeem the fallen race of man and creation. He is sovereign and ultimately in control of the outcome.

Our *inheritance* includes the reward of reigning with Christ in His administration. This will be an administration of service. It will bring harmony, righteousness to the earth (2 Peter 3:13). Those who discharge whatever they are given to do as unto the Lord will receive this great reward of inheritance (Colossians 3:23). Only those who suffer the sufferings of Christ, rejecting the world, will receive this great reward of inheritance (Romans 8:17b). However, all believers have God as an inheritance, regardless of faithfulness (Romans 8:17a). Paul's desire is for His children to walk in faithfulness, following in all ways the path of Christ. This is so they will gain this amazing future reward, but also to escape the corruption and destruction of sin in this life.

Lastly, Paul shows how God the Spirit is at work in the believer's salvation: *In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.*

Paul lays out the process of coming to faith in Christ in a detailed manner: *after first listening to the message of truth, after hearing the gospel of our salvation that Jesus died for our sins and resurrected, and not only hearing but believing this message of truth, we are put in right standing*

before God. But *having also believed*, Paul explains, we are *sealed in Jesus*. The *Holy Spirit* is our seal. He is *given* to us as a Helper and a Guide (John 14:26, John 16:13), as well as *pledge of our inheritance*. When we believe and we put our faith and trust in Jesus, we're sealed with the Holy Spirit forever, and He continually works in us.

The *end* Paul desires for these Ephesian believers is that they *who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory*. Paul is aware that a new age has dawned, an age after Jesus came to earth as a human, died, and was raised. An age in which the Holy Spirit is dwelling within humans. And these early believers are among the *first to hope in Christ*.

God justified humans by grace through faith prior to the cross (Genesis 15:6; Romans 4:3-4). But now history is on the other side of the cross, and Jesus is now known as the *Christ*, having paid for the sins of the world (Colossians 2:14). The object of *hope* for our faith is now *in Christ*.

Paul's desire is that these first believers of this age will gain all they can gain of the great rewards available for walking in faithfulness *in Christ*. Paul desires that this first generation of believers after the cross gain great reward in their faithfulness, which will be *to the praise of His glory*. God's character is revealed when His people walk in His ways (John 15:8). In this letter, Paul will exhort the Ephesian believers to live faithfully, in a manner that praises God with their lives.

Part of being *sealed* is that the Spirit dwells within us to empower us to do what God would have us do (Romans 15:13, Romans 8:26). It is the process known as "sanctification," where we are being shaped and "saved" from the power of sin in our lives, becoming more Christ-like and led by the Spirit, the continual *redemption of God's own possession*—us. We have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus, and are continuing to be redeemed in our daily lives, all *to the praise of God's glory*.

Everything that the Father, the Son, and the Spirit do are *to the praise of His glory*. God desires to see Himself glorified in our lives, which occurs when we walk in obedience.

After the Ephesian believers came to faith in Christ, and were now *in Him*, Paul notes that *you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise*. To be *sealed* in the first century pictured a scroll or letter imprinted with wax, and bearing the mark of the sender or owner. To be *sealed in Him* is to have a mark of ownership. By giving us the *Holy Spirit* to indwell us, Jesus is telling us that we are His. Having been born into His family by a new birth, we now are unconditionally accepted. Nothing can take us from His family. The *seal* of the *Holy Spirit* gives us assurance that every *promise* of God is real, and true. God promises that we belong to Him, guaranteed by the indwelling *Holy Spirit*. This is unconditional.

The Holy Spirit is also *given as a pledge of our inheritance*. God is our unconditional inheritance, as He is our Father (Romans 8:17a). We can also gain a share of Jesus's inheritance if we suffer His sufferings (Romans 8:17b; Colossians 3:23). The Holy Spirit is also a pledge to this reality.

That the *Holy Spirit* is given to us as *a pledge of our inheritance* is also *with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory*. Paul could be referring to *God's own possession* here as being the earth, and all that is in it. This seems to fit with the phrase in Ephesians 1:10, where God purposes to set up “an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth.” If so, *God's own possession* would include each believer. All this will demonstrate who God is. All will see His character, and know His nature. Accordingly, this will all contribute to *the praise of His glory*.

The Trinity is involved in every aspect of the believer's walk from the very beginning to the very end. Thus Paul ascribes *riches of His grace* to us; we are rich because *God* chose us, we are rich because He has birthed us into His family, we are now His own. We are rich because we have been redeemed by *Jesus's* blood, and we are rich because we're sealed by the *Holy Spirit* to receive the *inheritance* that He has for us.

Biblical Text

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 on us. In all wisdom and insight ⁹ He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him ¹⁰ with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him ¹¹ also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, ¹² to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory. ¹³ In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, ¹⁴ who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.