

EPHESIANS CHAPTER 1:5-14 - FULL, ETERNAL AND GLORIOUS BLESSINGS

BOARD: Your favorite Christmas music? [my favorite stations: 88.1FM; 710 AM]

Were any of your ancestors riders on the Mercy Trains? 1854-1929, Charles Brace saw the poverty, addiction, and health epidemics in the eastern cities leaving tens of thousands of orphans and unwanted children on the streets. 30,000 in NYC in the 1850's. Gangs. Ran a shelter, but overwhelmed. Idea to send them to rural areas for adoption. Placed 200-300 thousand kids. Conditional. Some of us may be descended from or related to one of these. Wonderful freedom in a new, loving relationship.

- I. A FILIAL BLESSING - vs. 5, 6 - "In love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved . . ."
 - A. Adoption defined
 1. Dictionary: "to choose or take as one's own" - "to become the legal parent(s) of another's child"
 2. Scripture: natural (Ex. 2:10), national (Ex. 4:22) and spiritual (I John 3:1) - [an aside: How do you ladies react to the author of Scripture being so sexist, always referring to believers as sons and brothers?](#)
 3. Confession of Faith: "All those that are justified, God graciously gives, in and for the sake of his only Son Jesus Christ, to make partakers of the grace of adoption, by which they are taken into the number, and enjoy the liberties and privileges of children of God, have his name put upon them, receive the spirit of adoption, have access to the throne of grace with boldness, are enabled to cry, "Abba, Father," are pitied, protected and provided for, and chastened by him as by a Father, yet never cast off, but sealed to the day of redemption, and inherit the promises as heirs of everlasting salvation. (with proof texts) - [The Muslims have 99 names for God, but not one is "our Father."](#)
 - B. Adoption sourced: "in love, predestined . . . according to the good pleasure of His will . . ." Deut. 7:7,8; John 15:16 - [Why do we have such a hard time believing, accepting, and loving the whole idea of predestination? Both verses 5 and 11 mention it. Paul and the Ephesians didn't have a problem with it. We learned last time that it was necessary for ANY of us to be saved, being spiritually dead in sins and in Satan's family, taken captive of him. "We love Him, because He first loved us." "good pleasure" means delight. Geoffrey Wilson - "his gracious resolve to save the elect was wholly grounded in the free delight with which he fore-loved them \(Romans 8:29\)"](#)

- II. A REDEMPTIVE BLESSING - vs. 7, 8 - "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence . . ."
- A. "In Him" - all of grace, all *in, through* and *of* Christ - The necessity of a Mediator - Hebrews 2:17
 - B. "redemption through His blood" - How do you answer the critic's criticism that calls Christianity a pagan religion because of the centrality and necessity of blood sacrifice? Sin pays wages which must be paid. Redemption (apolutrosis): "deliverance by ransom" - Hodge
 - C. "the forgiveness of sins" - How do other religions resolve the sin issue? Islam: sincere contrition/repentance; Hinduism: ditto; Judaism: ditto; OT sacrifice was just a phase that "evolved" after AD 70.
 - D. "riches of His grace" - Not a meager pittance, but an infinite amount
 - E. "in all wisdom and prudence" - Some commentators ascribe this to the wisdom and understanding believers have as the Holy Spirit instructs us in all things related to our salvation - "we have the mind of Christ" as Paul says. Others ascribe this as the infinite wisdom God used in planning and perfecting our salvation. E. K. Simpson - "here [Paul's] outlook is theocentric throughout. He is contemplating the 'purpose of the ages', divinely decreed and incapable of frustration, a ground-plan formed in eternity by omniscience and a palatial structure, erected in time, like some vast pyramid, from base to topstone, presided over by a Master-builder who cannot err. It is that sublime spectacle that draws forth his impassioned doxology. Divine wisdom may be seen in the ordering and overruling of events, in the graduated timing of interpositions and dispensations, and in the governance of individual lives and histories to subserve its own transcendent ends."
- III. AN UNVEILED BLESSING - vs. 9, 10 - "having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth - in Him."
- A. "having made known to us the mystery of His will" - Who likes a good mystery? What makes a good mystery? What has God revealed to us? The glory of His plan to prepare a Bride for His Son. This isn't a crime mystery; it is a Grace mystery: I Peter 1:8-12
 - B. "according to His good pleasure" - God delights in His purposes and glory - Sinless pride vs. sinful pride
 - C. "that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times" - The appropriate time - the perfect time

D. “gather together all things . . .” - Christ rules heaven, earth and the church; Satan has been defeated; Christ intercedes for us; prepares a home for us; will judge sin and make things RIGHT and RIGHTEOUS in eternity.

IV. A BEQUEATHED BLESSING - vs. 11, 12 - “In Him [whom] also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.”

A. “In Him also we have obtained an inheritance” - What is Paul referring to here? Salvation now and salvation in eternity. Again referring to adoption: God’s children will inherit the farm. I Cor. 2:21, 22. It can also mean that we are God’s heritage as sons and daughters reflecting His glory, as OT Israel was His ‘peculiar possession.’

B. “being predestined . . .” - Paul is not afraid of exalting God’s glory

C. “according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will” - Nothing is left to ‘chance.’ God sovereignly, purposely, lovingly, and mercifully orchestrates His plans.

D. “that we who first trusted in Christ” - The Apostles or the Jews - distinct from those who would later believe. Are there different classes of Christians? Yes, in the sense of seniority.

E. “should be to the praise of His glory” - In the end, all glory will resound to God alone, but what about right now? Am I giving Him the “glory due unto His name?”

V. A GUARANTEED BLESSING - vs. 13, 14 - “In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.”

A. “In Him you also trusted” - Paul now adds the Gentile Ephesians - all who were “first fruits” of the Gospel

B. “after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation”

C. “you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise” - What are the many options of explaining what “sealing” means? Speaking in tongues, spiritual gifts, renewed mind, renewed affections, circumcision of the heart, etc.?

D. “who is the guarantee of our inheritance”

- E. “until the redemption of the purchased possession” - Heavenly home redemption
- F. “to the praise of His glory” - Not the praise of the preacher’s glory, or the praise of the believer’s glory

VI. APPLICATION

- A. Glory in your God - Psalm 29:1,2 - “Praising God is one of the highest and purest acts of religion. In prayer we act like men; in praise we act like angels.” - Thomas Watson
- B. Rejoice in all things - Philippians 4:4 - Thomas Watson, “Who should be cheerful, if not the people of God? They are no sooner born of the Spirit, but they are heirs to a crown.”
- C. Look upward - Colossians 3:1 - Thomas Gurnall, “Nothing is more contrary to a heavenly hope than an earthly heart.