

# Ephesians #1

## Sitting in our Blessings

### I. Introduction:

Paul is writing some profound theological truths to a group of believers that he knows well- the church at Ephesus. It is not addressing a particular issue or problem. He is revealing the “riches of divine mysteries” and then making practical application about how to live out those truths.

In chapters 1-3, he is stressing the heritage (our theological roots) that we have in Christ. And then in chapters 4-6, we see how to live out our lives in light of those heady truths.

Chapters 1-3: The Work of God

Chapters 4-6: The Walk of the Christian

*Special Note: Last week, I incorrectly taught that Paul wrote three Prison Epistles (Ephesians, Colossians and Philemon). He in fact, wrote four Prison Epistles (Philippians is also a Prison Epistle).*

### II. Eph. 1:3-14

This first section of the letter is one long sentence containing 278 words. It provides a glorious introduction to the book in the form of a hymn of high praise to Yahweh for our redemption and a summary of all things we have in Christ. It is like an overture to an opera.

This sentence (“super sentence” or “cumulative sentence”), is preserved in English as one sentence in bible translations such as the ASV. The KJV translates it in three sentences and the NIV uses eight sentences to render the Greek.

This one long sentence can be divided into three sections:

vs. 3-6: highlighting the work of God the Father

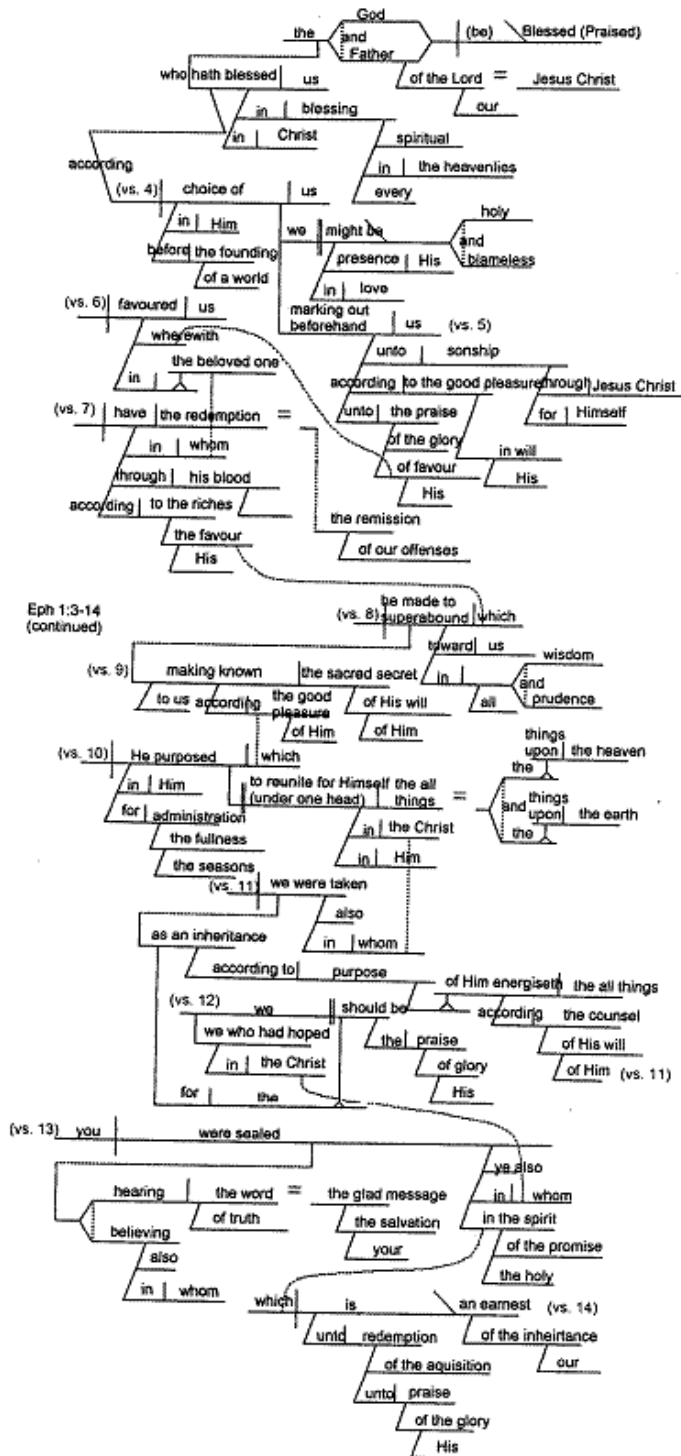
vs. 7-11: showing the work of the Son

vs. 12-14: emphasizing the work of the Holy Spirit

The subject is Yahweh and the verb is “blessed be” or “praise to.” Then there is a long list of modifiers (phrases and clauses) that explain why we should be praising Yahweh and what we should praise Him for.

Notice how the clauses all fit together into a cogent thought. (This diagram is found in Teleiosministries.com)

Eph. 1:3-14



III. A Closer look at vs. 3-6: The Work of the Father

A. "Blessed us with every spiritual blessing"

While it is true that these blessings are enjoyed by individuals, Paul has the church as a whole in mind. It is a community that is being blessed.

Every blessing we receive, we receive it in Christ (because of Him, through Him and for His glory.)

B. "Choose us in Him" and "predestined us to be adopted"

Chosen/predestined: It literally means "to know before." There are two major ways to understand this concept:

1. He chose or decided beforehand (the Calvinistic theological view)
2. He knew who would choose (the Arminian theological view)

Regardless of how this verse is understood, it is clear that the Lord is at work and our salvation is His doing.

The purpose of His choosing is that we should become "holy and blameless." That is a state of being only available through grace and the work done on the cross.

C. "Adopted" and "Accepted"

Adoption: Roman law stipulated that an adopted son lost all rights and was freed from all debts to his old family. He gained all the rights of a legitimate son by birth. He in essence became a new person. See II Cor. 5:17

Accepted in the beloved ("freely given us in the One He loves"): We are enfolded or enveloped or "be-graced" by God the Father...IN CHRIST.

#### IV. A Closer Look at vs. 7-11: The work of God the Son

- A. Redemption: it means "to liberate on the receipt of a ransom" (Gaebelein). The price was His shed blood. See Heb. 9:22
- B. Forgiveness: "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sin (Matt. 26:28). See also I John 1:9.
- C. Grace "lavished" upon us: "Behold the manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us..." (I John 3:1)
- D. "Mystery of His will:" God's great plan for redemption was "hidden" until the Messiah came (Gal. 4:4). It is now fully revealed in Christ ("the times of the fulfillment"). There is also a sense in which it is "hidden" to the lost, but clear and precious to the saved (II Cor. 4:3)

- E. "Things in heaven and on earth:" coming together under one head, Christ. This term "was used for the process of adding up a column of figures and putting the sum at the top. Paul's idea is that God will make all things 'add up' in the end and right now He is in the process of coming to that final sum." (Word Bible Commentary)
- F. The plan: "Working everything in conformity with the purpose of His will"

#### **V. A Closer look at vs. 12-14: The work of God the Holy Spirit**

- A. We exist to the praise of His glory (see vs. 12 and 14). The ultimate plan is for us to glorify God in every way-now and for all eternity.
- B. Sealed/guaranteed: A guarantee was a down payment and the transaction would be noted in a sealed document. The residing Holy Spirit (see John 14:16-26) that indwells the believer, is a down payment (a "taste") of what the intense relationship with God almighty will be like for all eternity.

#### **VI. So What?**

We need to sit ("position" ourselves: marinate, think seriously about, act like they matter) in these GREAT truths. What we have in Christ is so OVERWHELMING, it will cause us to PRAISE HIM!

Let's make a conscious effort to "dethrone" ourselves and place the Lord where He belongs, on the throne of our hearts-every day!

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