

Fact Sheet for **“How Great a Salvation”**
Ephesians 1:1-14, Part II

Pastor Bob Singer
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Begin by reading Ephesians 1:1-14

As I mentioned last week verses 3-14 translate one of the longest and most complicated sentences in the Greek New Testament. But at the same time these are some of the premier verses that speak of the greatness of our salvation in Christ. I am reminded of 1 Peter 1:10-12 and “things into which angels long to look.”

We covered verses 1-4 last week. Here are some of the highlights.

1. In verse 1 Paul addresses them as saints (literally “holy ones”). Christians are called saints, not because we have done great things for God or because we don’t sin but because we have been forgiven in Christ.

2. The words referring to people in verses 3-14 are all plural (“our”, “we”, “us”, “you”).

3. In verse 4 Paul wrote that the Father chose us before the foundation of the world. This was his sovereign choice, and was not just his choice of what he knew our choice would be. And the Greek word for “chose” is where we get our word “elected” from.

4. Also in verse 4 Paul said that the goal of his choice was that we should be holy and blameless before him. This is true only because Christians are forgiven in Christ.

Now we move further into this wonderful sentence.

⁵ he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will,

The word “predestined” means “to decide on beforehand, determine in advance”. The Father predestined us for adoption into his family.

The word “purpose” can also be translated “good pleasure”. It is the same word found in the Christmas story when the angels appeared to the shepherds (Luke 2:14).

We were predestined to be adopted into God’s family according to the good pleasure of the Father’s will.

⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.

“Grace” is unmerited favor.

The Father’s provision of salvation in Christ, His choice of us before the foundation of the world, His predestining us for adoption into his family, all of which are unmerited by us, are to his praise.

The word for “blessed” here is very different than the one in verse 3. There it meant to speak well of, to praise, to favor. Here it is directly related to “grace”. We could translate this verse, “to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has graced us in the beloved.”

The beloved is a reference to Jesus Christ.

⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace,

In him (the Beloved or Christ, from verse 6) we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our sin. "Redemption" literally refers to the action of buying back a slave or captive through payment of a ransom; hence "setting free" or "release". In Christ we have been set free from having to pay the eternal penalty for our sins. This is why Peter, standing before the Jewish high priests and Sanhedrin who would warn them to stop speaking or teaching in the name of Jesus, said, "there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

And this verse says that in Christ "we have redemption". It doesn't say "we hope to have redemption". If we are in Christ eternal life is ours.

All this is according to the riches of the father's grace.

⁸ which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight

"Lavished" has the sense that the Father has made us abound in our salvation (verse 8) because of the riches of his grace (verse 7).

⁹ making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ

The Father has made known to Christians the "mystery" of his will, that which was previously hidden. He did this in accordance with his purpose (literally "good pleasure", see verse 5).

When Paul said that the Father set this forth in Christ he used an interesting word for "set forth". Literally it means "placed before". One author put it this way, "God's final aim is according to the good pleasure established from the first in Christ."¹ In other words this was the Father's plan, his purpose, and his intention.

¹⁰ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

The word translated "plan" in the ESV is translated "dispensation" in the NKJ.

Theologically "dispensation" refers to a time when God deals with people in a particular manner. Some notable examples of this are...

- Before Adam and Eve sinned
- After they sinned
- Once the Mosaic Law had been given
- Once the church began on the day of Pentecost

There will also be a time in the future when things will change again. The rest of this verse refers to that time.

The ESV "to unite" and the NKJ "He might gather together" translate one word. Here is a literal translation of that word... "to bring together under the control of one head".

In that future "dispensation" the Father will bring together all things in heaven and on earth under one head, Christ.

The Father's good pleasure (verse 9) in our great salvation in Christ looks forward to the time or "dispensation" (verse 10) when all things will be brought together under the headship of Christ.

We have looked today into things into which angels long to look. But there is yet one more piece to this sentence. Part III of this message will come next week.

¹ Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Abridged, p. 1180.