

This is a Great Mystery

A Study of Ephesians

Week 5 – Ephesians 1:10-14

Prayer

Dear Lord, even though you are not confined by time, you carry out your plan of salvation in time. You do this for us. Thank you for fulfilling everything in Christ at the perfect time so that we would have confidence that, even now, you control all things, even time itself. Send your Spirit to work in our hearts today. Amen.

From Last Week

- Key words from last week
 - Ransom/redemption
 - Blood (for sacrifice and forgiveness)
 - Forgiveness/pardon
 - Abundance (of grace)
 - Mystery (of God's plan of salvation)
- Do we need more discussion on any of these terms?

Verse 10 – εἰς οἰκονομίαν τοῦ πληρώματος τῶν καιρῶν, ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι τὰ πάντα ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ, τὰ ἐπὶ τοῖς οὐρανοῖς καὶ τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἐν αὐτῷ.

For the arrangement of the fullness of the times, in order to bring all things together in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth in him.

1. First phrase is difficult; translations do different things with it.
 - Part of the reason it's a little strange is that the second word, οἰκονομίαν, is the word we use for stewardship. That's a strange way for us 21st century English speakers to use the word; all the same, that's the word the Holy Spirit wanted to be used here. It can be translated as "arrangement" or "order" or "plan," all of which seem to work a little better. Thoughts on that?
2. "Fullness of time" is the Bible's way of saying that things happen at exactly the _____ time.
 - See how the term is used in **Galatians 4:4** and **John 13:1**.
3. ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι τὰ πάντα ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ - "in order to bring all things together in Christ"
 - What does "all things" refer to? Look at **Psalms 8:6-8** and **Colossians 1:16-20**.

Verse 11 – ἐν ᾧ καὶ ἐκληρώθημεν προορισθέντες κατὰ πρόθεσιν τοῦ τὰ πάντα ἐνεργούντος κατὰ τὴν βουλὴν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ

In him we also have received an inheritance (or we have been chosen), **having been predestined according to the plan of the one who works everything according to the purpose of his will...**

4. ἐκληρώθημεν – this is an interesting word that has to do with the outcome of casting lots. This is the only place it's used in Scripture, but it gives a neat insight to the translation.

- There are two main ways to take it:
 - Either you are appointed by lot—you are chosen (See **Acts 1:23-26**)
 - Or you receive something by lot—you obtain it
- In what way can either translation fit the context? Which do you prefer?

- Casting lots was probably something like throwing dice or drawing straws or even a coin toss. Given our view of those modern comparisons, does that make God’s “choosing” or “giving of an inheritance” purely up to chance? Look at **Proverbs 16:33** and **Proverbs 18:18**.

- 5. τοῦ τὰ πάντα ἐνεργοῦντος – the one who works everything
 - If God has a plan, you might think that he just sits back and relaxes as he watches everything unfold. But that’s not true; he continually works! It brings to mind Romans 8:28. He acts through all things so that his will can be accomplished. What comfort does this verse bring to you?

Verse 12 – εἰς τὸ εἶναι ἡμᾶς εἰς ἔπαινον δόξης αὐτοῦ τοὺς προηλπικότας ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ.

...so that we, who were the first to put their hope in Christ, would be for the praise of his glory.

- 6. This is fun to do—if I were to take the word order in the way the Greek presents it, this is what it would sound like: “So that the being we for the praise of his glory the ones who put their hope in Christ.”
- 7. It’s easy to see Paul and the early Christians as “those who were among the first to put their hope in Christ” (τοὺς προηλπικότας). In what way could we say that we are included in that group?
 - How is a Christian’s hope different from a non-Christian’s hope? Consider **Hebrews 11:1**.
- 8. ἔπαινον δόξης αὐτοῦ came up in verse 6, too. Look there and see what brings about the praise of God’s glory in each verse.

What comments and questions do you have?

Verses 13 and 14 – ἐν ᾧ καὶ ὑμεῖς ἀκούσαντες τὸν λόγον τῆς ἀληθείας, τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς σωτηρίας ὑμῶν, ἐν ᾧ καὶ πιστεύσαντες ἐσφραγίσθητε τῷ πνεύματι τῆς ἐπαγγελίας τῷ ἁγίῳ, ¹⁴ ὃ ἐστὶν ἀρραβὼν τῆς κληρονομίας ἡμῶν, εἰς ἀπολύτρωσιν τῆς περιποιήσεως, εἰς ἔπαινον τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ.

You were also in him when you heard the word of truth—the gospel of your salvation. Also in him, when you believed, you were sealed by the promised Holy Spirit ¹⁴ who is the down payment of our inheritance until the redemption of the possession, to the praise of his glory.

9. What assumptions does Paul make about the God's Word when he calls it the "word of truth" and "the gospel of your salvation"? For instance...
- What do the Ephesians find when they read the Word?
 - What can the Word accomplish?
 - Other things?
10. This is the first mention of the Holy Spirit in Ephesians. What does it mean to be sealed by the Holy Spirit? Think of different reasons why we put a seal on things today.
- Look ahead to **Ephesians 4:30**. Which purpose of a seal seems to be on Paul's mind?
11. The Holy Spirit is also the "down payment of our inheritance." What does a down payment typically indicate?
12. What is the possession in verse 14? Look at **1 Peter 2:9**.
13. The "redeem" word comes up again, which might make you wonder: what's the deal? Weren't we redeemed when Christ died on the cross? Why all the talk of down payments and redemption that is yet to come?
14. Do you think Paul is willing to praise the glory of God? He uses the phrase again. We don't have a counter for this phrase but, by my count, that's at least three times in the first 14 verses. What in these verses shows that God's glory is so worthy to be praised?

What comments and questions do you have?

Closing Prayer – To the tune of "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow"

**We thank you, Father, for your grace;
For bringing us in your embrace;
For working for us at all times;
And for your blessed gifts sublime! Amen.**