

Notes on Ephesians 1:3-14

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Context for this book Paul (Saul of Tarsus) wrote the letter to Church of Ephesus while in Roman Prison [Eph 6:20]. He had visited Ephesus years earlier on his missionary trip.

Ephesus was a port town first mentioned in [Acts 18:19] where Paul entered and reasoned with the jews. They were so found of him, in that town, that they asked him to stay [Acts 18:21]. Paul did end up staying for 2 years [Acts 19:10] where he baptized several by spirit performing miracles and preaching the gospel to both jews and greeks.

Ephesus itself was a major city and a seat of Roman power, with temple to Artemis. It was a cultural hub with various prosperous merchants, philosophers and artists.

The letter itself didn't have a specific goal like the ones to Corinthians or Galatians. But it did show the special place, the saints of Ephesus had in Paul's heart. It was to affirm the grace of God, with confirmation of the gospel as well as instructions on how to raise and conduct households. There were several words of encouragement and to illustrate that both jews and gentiles had the same inheritance in Christ.

After opening the letter with greetings, Paul firmly establishes the key doctrines around *sola fide* [1,15], *sola gratia* [6,7] and *sola deo gloria* [12,14]

Verse 3 The use of blessed is using two forms of greek language. The adjective *blessed be the God* is eulogetos as our God is inherently worthy of praise while the second reference is the verb used in [Mat 14:19] when the food was blessed or [Mark 8:7] when Jesus blessed them. This adjective form is also used in [Gen 27:29] and [1Ki 10:9]. Although God has blessed with every blessing, the only one that matters is Christ Jesus, who is the promise, bringing back the covenant God made with Abraham [Gen 15:17], when God alone crossed the cut offerings of meat, symbolizing that He was to bear the repercussions of not keeping the covenant for both Abraham and God, Himself.

Verse 4 God's supreme wisdom and omnibenevolence has chosen (eklegomiai) us for His Son Jesus, even before the foundation of the world was laid, showing a preferential choice (or election), the same word used in [Acts 13:17] of God

choosing their fathers (from Egypt) and in [Duet 4:37] because he loved your fathers. . .

Verse 5 The election follows predestination, as this was predestined - which was our adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to His will and for His glory.

[Isa 14:24] "Surely just as I have intended so it has happened" and [Isa 14:26] "my plan" clearly shows the foreordained. This is an integral attribute of God and one of the doctrines across the Bible. [Act 4:28] shows that the crucifixion of Jesus was predetermined. This demonstrates God's sovereign will that governs all. It also shows his immense love for us - as all we deserve is to go to hell for our treachery, sin and rebellion.

The traditionalist or Arminian interpretation of predestination using "predestined us" to refer (us) to believers faithful in Christ, is not a complete explanation, as it fails to apply to other references like Isaiah or [Rom 8:9], where predestination starts in God's election of some in knowing and coming to Christ - to be conformed in His image.

The reference to adoption as sons is significant given the cultural context. First, it's our right to call God, Abba or Father and second, the inheritance which using the Roman and Greek cultural context meant not a weak legal adoption, as we now have, but a birth right that is transferred legally and is as solid as being guaranteed as if being born of blood and in the same family line. Use of the word son is also amazing as both men and women are treated equally in this inheritance as sons had more of the share than daughters and the adoption was primarily of male slaves or servants. This truly demonstrates the majestic promise of God.

As a believer or non-believer one can't worry too much about - if I am elected or chosen. There is a parallel truth to predestination, in [Acts 16:31] and [John 3:16] where we are called to believe in Lord Jesus and we will be saved. This is another mystery of God as if all (whosoever) who believe will be saved, then how only elect few will be saved. May be the use of the word all here refers to the subset of all elected. These two parallel truths need to be accepted and attributed to God's infinite wisdom, as simplifying the term of predestination to non-Calvinistic view simply falls short in how to interpret Romans, Acts and most of the OT.

Verses 6,7,8 The whole process of election and predestination as our being adopted sons in Jesus is all for His glory. The only way this occurs is by His grace as its a gift from God. It doesn't require any special deeds or works, but the mere act of believing that our sins will be forgiven and we will be redeemed through the blood of Jesus. We then repent knowing He died for our sins, thereby demonstrating our faith. By extending the election to all, literally, diminishes various attributes of God as well. God elected Israel. God elected Abraham over others, Isaac over Ishmael, Jacob over Esau, Joseph over his brothers and

eventually Moses out of egypt. This attribute of Him is what is carried in the predestination and election references in NT.

Verse 9 The mysteries of His will, which could be the parallel truths we looked at earlier is spoken of several times [Mat 4:11] [Luk 8:10] [Rom 11:25] which is His *hidden wisdom*, which God has made known to us.

Verse 10,11,12 Paul further emphasizes our inheritance, that we obtained via our adoption as sons, which is in heaven and earth through and in Christ. He also alludes to the upcoming themes around management of household, stewardship of resources and household affairs using the word *oikonomia*, administration. This inheritance was obtained through our listening of the gospel, which lead us to be sealed with the Holy Spirit. The promise here was also referenced in [Luk 24:49] [Act 1:4] and it is the same promise of God to Abraham. It is also the same word referred in [Esther 4:7] around the exact amount Haman had promised to pay the King's treasure.

Verse 13,14 He, the Holy Spirit was also a major part of our inheritance, here on earth, to the praise of God's glory and Christ's glory. [John 14:16] refers to a helper, comforter using the greek work *parakletos*. This is the Holy Spirit who becomes our counselor, legal assistant, judge and comforter who helps us with deeper knowledge of the truth and gives us divine strength. The references to Holy Spirit in OT also refers to helper/comforter concepts [Jud 3:10] [Exod 31:1-3]

He (the Holy Spirit) is our pledge - as in downpayment, an earnest our Lord has provided on earth, while the full payment awaits in heaven. A more prosaic/simpler form is used in [Gen 38:17,20] when Judah leaves a pledge with Tamar - a signet, cord and staff.

In summary, this part of chapter 1, sets up the doctrinal background needed to understand our place in God's family as adopted sons through Christ Jesus and the abundant inheritance on earth and in heaven.