

Series: Ephesians
Title: Mystery from the Beginning
Text: Ephesians 1: 1-14
Date: 1-31-2013
Place: SGBC, New Jersey

Our text tonight is Ephesians 1: 1-14. We will take an overview of these 14 verses, taking them verse by verse. Now verses 1-2 are the greeting of this letter.

Illustration: An epistle is a letter like you receive in the mail. When you begin reading a letter it is good to see who wrote it and to whom it is written. When reading scripture, it is important to do the same.

Ephesians 1: 1: Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: 2 Grace *be* to you, and peace, from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ.

The writer of this letter is 'Paul.' And Paul tells us some things about his office. His office is 'an apostle of Jesus Christ.' All apostles were called by Christ Jesus directly. There were only 12 apostles, Paul being one of them. They were given gifts for that time in the early church, so folks would listen. There are no apostles today. Preachers today do not have the gifts the apostles had.

Paul tells us his call to that office was 'by the will of God.' Christ is God. He called Paul, gifted Paul, sent Paul, and called out his sheep thereby. A false messenger, then and now, is one who has not been sent of Christ. All true messengers of God, then and now, are made so by the will of God, sent by Christ, not by man's will.

The people to whom Paul writes this letter are 'the saints at Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus.' Every believer is a saint. A saint has been sanctified and made a saint by the Lord, not by man—by God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit—God gets all the glory. Every believer is "faithful in Christ Jesus." Christ gets the glory. Our faithfulness is due to the faith OF CHRIST—Ga 2:20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Be sure you get this: it is very important to always see that these letters in scripture—epistles—are written only to believers—not to unbelievers or to the world—to believers.

Then Paul's prayer for them is in v2: '**grace and peace from the Father and the Lord Jesus.**' All grace and all peace come from the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Proposition: Salvation is by God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. These first 14 verses declare it plainly. I will give you our divisions as we read our text.

Divisions: 1) Salvation is by God the Father—**Ephesians 1: 3: Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ: 4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: 5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.; 2) Salvation is by God the Son--**7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; 8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; 9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: 10 That in the dispensation of****

the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; *even* in him: 11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: 12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. 3) Salvation is by God the Holy Spirit--v13 In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, 14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

I. SALVATION IS BY GOD THE FATHER

Ephesians 1: 3: Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ:

God “hath blessed us.”

Paul and the saints at Ephesus are the “us.” All believers are included. Those who have been blessed of God know and glorify God because it is God who hath blessed us. God is the Author and giver of all blessings. God alone can bless. If he does not bless then we shall not be blessed, if God blesses us then none can alter it—we are blessed. God blesses whom he will. He is not obligated to bless anyone.

Romans 9: 15...I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy,...16 So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.

With What?

What did God bless his children with?—“all spiritual blessings.” God hath blessed us, his individual children, with every blessing that God can give. These blessings are spiritual, such as: wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, redemption, peace, divine inheritance, eternal life. All spiritual blessings that God could give God hath blessed us with.

Where and When?

Where and when did God do this? “IN heavenly places”: God who is spirit, in spiritual places, blessed each individual child with all spiritual blessings.

“IN Christ: According as he hath chosen us IN him:” that means then and there Christ was with God. Christ is God—God the Son—the second person in the trinity. So God chose God. God the Father chose God the Son. God the Son agreed to become the Man and Mediator, Christ Jesus. (It is in this sense that God is the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ.)

All spiritual blessings were given to us in Christ, according as God hath chosen us in Christ. All spiritual blessings were ours right then because Christ is all our spiritual blessings: Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, Redemption, Propitiation, Justification, All. There was no possibility Christ would fail in what he agreed as our Surety to do for us—in Christ God saw us as Christ.

When was it? “BEFORE the foundation of the world:” Before there was earth, when there was no carnal, no temporal, no sin, no realm of flesh and sin and death, when there was no Mt. Sinai, no old covenant, no old covenant precepts or carnal ordinances, no touch not, taste not, handle not, entered in.

God blessed us with all spiritual blessings putting us in Christ “that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.” All God’s elect were then, in Christ, what we are now, in Christ, and what we shall be ourselves perfectly when he makes us perfect in final glory. From the beginning we were what we are and what we shall be in the end.

All this was done by God the Father before the world was made. If God gave us all spiritual blessings in Christ in spiritual places before the foundation of the world, that must mean that carnal, earthly, temporal fleshly things have nothing to do with making us the righteousness of God in spirit and in truth. Things we do in our flesh must have nothing to do with making us holy and without blame spiritually. That is right—nothing.

Someone will say, “But we fell into sin preacher!” Yes, but God, knowing beforehand that we would fall in Adam, “predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself.” The Father predestinated us to be adopted as his own children through Jesus Christ. He predestinated the time, the season of his love, when he would cross our path with this glorious good news and when he did, because we were sons he sent forth the Spirit of his Son, whereby we cry Abba, Father.

Why did the Father do all this?

First, it was “according to the good pleasure of his will:” not our will, not your will, not mom and dad’s will, not the preacher’s will. “According to the good pleasure of his will.” Secondly, it is “to the praise of the glory of his grace.” God saves so that all his children shall praise him and give him all the glory for showing us this free, unmerited, unsought, sovereign, unchangeable grace.

The Result of this Blessing

“Wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.” I hear people loving to tell you when they accepted Jesus as their personal Savior. But the right, the honor, the glory goes to God the Father—“he hath made us accepted in the beloved, Christ Jesus.” So you see salvation is by God the Father.

II. SALVATION IS BY GOD THE SON

Redemption and Forgiveness

Redemption and forgiveness is by Christ—“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.” We sinned and sold ourselves into bondage; we were captives to our sin nature and we were captives to the justice of the law. It was by the obedience of Christ giving his life for those God gave him that we are free.

Notice it said, “God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” As God the Son, he is equal with the Father. But Christ made himself a servant. He walked this earth as the Man and Mediator, Christ Jesus, fulfilled the law by his obedience throughout his whole life to his God and his Father. He fulfilled all that was written: went places and did things during his earthly ministry because it must be fulfilled. When he was baptized of John he said, “Thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness.’ Thus the law, Satan, men’s courts, all examined the Lamb and found him spotless.

Christ fulfilled the law by laying down his life and satisfying justice—obedience, even unto death, the death of the cross.

Galatians 3: 10 For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do

them. 11 But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, *it is* evident: for, The just shall live by faith. 12 And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. 13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that hangeth on a tree: 14 That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

So now we have forgiveness, according to the riches of his grace. He did it freely for us, by his grace—oh, can you put a price on his grace! The law has nothing whatsoever to say to those who are in Christ Jesus. We have fully and completely fulfilled the law through faith and in Christ we are righteous and the law was not made for a righteous man. Through faith in Christ we establish the law. (Rom. 3:19-26). Redemption means we are free from the law, oh happy condition!

The Mystery from the Beginning

By Christ the mystery of his gospel is revealed to us—“Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself.”

Everything about our salvation and the worship of God is a mystery to the natural man because all worship is spiritual. It is hidden to the natural man. Adam fell into the realm of flesh, of sin and death and separation from God. What caused his nature to become sin? Did God put something into Adam? No. God removed something. God removed his Spirit. Sin is the transgression of the law. But the nature of sin is the absence of the Spirit of God. You and I were born the first time in flesh, without the presence of the Spirit of God. Every man in that state is only has a mind for fleshly things—even in regard to spiritual things—all he can see is the dead letter fleshly things.

Romans 8: 5: For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. 6: For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. 7: Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. 8: So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. 9: But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

1 Corinthians 2: 14: But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

The law is spiritual—that is, this entire word of God is spiritual. It can only be understood spiritually. Without spiritual eyes all a man sees in it are literal things. And you cannot discern the spiritual by looking at what is written as literal. I do not spiritualize the word, the law is spiritual. (2 Corinthians 10: 3-5)

- Everything about the worship of God is spiritual.

John 4:23: But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. 24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

John 6:63 It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

- The new birth is spiritual.

Romans 2:29 But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

- The kingdom of God is not of this earth, but spiritual

John 18: 36: Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.

The mystery revealed is that Christ is gathering all in Him—Christ is the Key—“That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.” Read that text again then read Galatians 4. The dispensation of the fullness of times is right now in this gospel age.

Galatians 4: 4 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, 5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. 6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. 7 Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

The mystery revealed in us who believe is that Christ has taken all the old covenant out of the way, and brought us back to what we had with the Father in him in eternity—oneness.

Paul is laying a foundation for something he will deal with in chapter 2. Paul feared that carnally-minded religious men, like they do today, would enter the church at Ephesus, emphasizing the old covenant law/fleshly religion. They would claim to be preaching grace but would bring back in rules from the old Mosaic covenant given on Mt. Sinai, beggarly elements/ordinances from the old covenant given on Mt. Sinai, distinctions between Jew and Gentile given on Mt. Sinai, circumcision and uncircumcision given on Mt. Sinai, and Sabbath days and diet restrictions given on Mt. Sinai.

Do you realize that nothing from the old covenant given on Mt. Sinai ever made a sinner holy and without blame? It was not given for that purpose and no one was ever made holy and righteous by anything given to man on Mt. Sinai—never! And nothing from that old covenant now applies to the believer in Christ.

God the Father gave us all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ before the foundation of the world. Then we fell in Adam and were separated. God gave the old covenant to teach us our need of Christ. Then in the fullness of times, God the Son, Christ Jesus, has come and fulfilled all that was written—completely abolishing the old covenant and putting away all our sins. Now we are one with God the Father in Christ the Son and in Christ we have all spiritual blessings which God the Father gave us from the beginning. There is no more Jew and Gentile, circumcision or uncircumcision, we are one in Christ. God is not calling out his elect Jews and his elect Gentiles now, he is calling out his elect from the four corners of the earth.

Ephesians 2: 11: Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; 12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: 13: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. 14: For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; 15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in

himself of twain one new man, so making peace; 16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: 17 And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. 18 For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

III. SALVATION IS BY GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT—v13: In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.

The Gospel and Faith

Ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation—heard it preached in truth; heard it revealed in truth by the power of the Holy Spirit which is the only way a man can hear in spirit and in truth. We believed because the Spirit gave us faith. (Eph 2: 8, 9)

Then the Spirit sealed us--“in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise. “ The seal of the eternal covenant is not circumcision, not baptism, not even our outward graces, but the Spirit of God (Rom. 8:9, 14-16; 1 John 3:24; 4:13).

The Holy Spirit himself is the guaranteed of our inheritance—“Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.” The Holy Spirit is the guarantee of our inheritance. He is the foretaste—the first-fruits, the down payment on our inheritance. We shall have the Spirit until the redemption—this is that last redemption of our bodies from the grave. It is sure because we are Christ’s purchased possession. ALL TO THE PRAISE OF HIS GLORY!

Salvation is by God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Brethren, we have in Christ all spiritual blessings which God the Father gave us from before the foundation of the world. Do not look back to the old covenant, to mt. Sinai, seek Christ above and rest in him.

Amen!