

## The Ingathering

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**Taken in part from an outline by B.H. Carroll**

### **Ephesians 1:1-14**

#### **V. 3**

We come now to this bible statement which declares that God is blessed by us because he blessed us. This item extends from verse 3 to verse 14.

A little fact that those of us who do not know much Greek should know here is that this entire exposition by Paul is in the Greek aorist tense. The reason this is important and glorious to us is that when the aorist is used in scripture written in Greek, it indicates a condition that has no bounds and we should think of its use here as referring to something that took place in the past and is still going on without any boundaries. That is, God blessed us in some time long in the past and that blessing is not bounded by time, distance, or anything else. And as I said, the aorist tense goes all the way through this teaching here from verse 3 through 14. We will be able to see the force of this presently.

#### **I. Vv3-14**

◆ Now let us analyze a sentence twelve verses long (vv. 3-14). Some of the most important teachings in the bible are missed when teachers fail to follow a thought and keep the connection all the way through a long statement like this one Paul has made. The grammatical construction is really difficult, making a clear analysis very hard, because the apostle, like a world-class giant, piles mountains upon top of mountains (of God's deep things) in his thoughts.

#### ◆ **Analyze as follows:**

- Place where he blessed us? He blessed us in heavenly places.
- Time when he blessed us? Before the world was.
- In whom he blessed us? In Christ – we were not there personally.
- In what he blessed us? In all spiritual blessings; temporal blessings are not taken into account at all.

#### ◆ **How did God bless us** then and there, that is, in heaven before the world was?

- **In election, predestination, and grace.** That is how he blessed us before we existed; in his purpose of election, in his predestination, and in his grace. We notice how frequently he brings in both predestination and election, and

therefore as he blessed us in election and predestination we want to see what those words mean.

- So, looking at the **first one – election**. What is it? Abstractly it means choice. Concretely there may be an election of a nation, like Israel, for a national or typical purpose, but that is not what he is discussing here. He is discussing the election of individuals, or persons.
- When did this election take place? Before the world was. Since it took place then, and since we were not existing then, in whom did it take place?
- We were elected in Christ.
- To what end were we elected? That we should be holy and without blame, or blemish, in love. That is what the text says about the election.
- ◆ The **other term** used is “**predestinated**.” First, what is it? It is **to determine beforehand or “predetermine.”**
  - Who were predetermined? The individuals that were chosen.
  - Unto what were they predetermined? Unto adoption as sons.
  - Through whom were they adopted as sons? Through Christ.
  - According to what was this predetermined adoption as sons through Christ? It was according to the good pleasure of his will. It could not be according to anything in us; it was determined by the Lord as something that was done before we came into being.
  - To what end was that predestination? To the praise of the glory of his grace.
- ◆ Summarize: How far we have gotten, now! He blessed us – where? In heaven. When? Before the world was. In whom? In Christ. In what? All spiritual blessings. How could he do that then and there? In election, predestination, and grace. What is election? Choice toward individuals. When was this choice made? Before the world was. As we were not there then, in whom was it made? In Christ. To what end? That we should be holy and without blame (or blemish) in love. He blessed us at that time by a predetermined intent. What does that mean? To decree beforehand. Concerning whom? The particular individuals that were elected. Unto what? Unto adoption as sons. Through whom? Through Jesus Christ. According to what? According to the good pleasure of his will. To what end? To the praise of the glory of his grace.
- ◆ That brings in **another term – grace** – in which he then blessed us. What is grace? Unmerited favor. How is that bestowed? Freely, gratuitously. I once heard a man say, “free gratis, for nothing, without charge.” That is the way it is bestowed. As we were not there, in whom was it bestowed? In Christ, the beloved. The blessings that I am to receive as a Christian were not bestowed upon me, the

hateful, but in Christ, the beloved. I will get to them by getting into him, and be complete in him.

◆ So far we have analyzed that sentence to the point that we now need to look at the details of these blessings that the Lord has brought to us through election, predestination and grace. **The first specification is adoption.**

- **What is adoption?** Adoption is a form of law by which one not naturally a child is legally made a child and heir. Just as if a father should go to the Orphans' Home and select a little orphan, with nothing in it to recommend it, take that child according to the forms of law and receive it into his family, so that under the law it will inherit just as much as if it were born in that family. That is adoption. When does adoption take place?
- **It is not like election and predestination.** We were predestined to adoption; when the time comes we get it. We are all children of God by faith, but as John expresses it, "**As many as received him, to them gave he power** to become sons of God, even as many as believed on his name."
- So our adoption takes place at the time when we believe, and when we receive Christ as our Saviour. Predestination took place way back yonder in eternity, but the fruitage, the adoption, takes place in time.
- **How am I to tell when I am adopted?** Whenever in the heart of a believer there comes a filial feeling toward God, (see Galatians 4:4-6)

◆ **Summary:** In heaven, before the creation of the world, he blessed us in all spiritual blessings, but he blessed us then in election, predestination, and grace. Later the election, predestination, and grace brought forth the fruit of adoption, because God planned it that way. He elected us, foreordained us unto adoption as sons through Christ unto himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.

◆ **Let's look at the next blessing that is specified.** "In whom we have redemption." What is redemption? To redeem means to buy back that which had been sold. We were sold under sin, we were in bondage, under the power of Satan, a lawful captive to Satan. **Christ proposes, as one of the blessings of salvation, to buy us back,** to redeem us. So redemption is buying back. What is the price? His blood on the cross. We notice over in 1Pet. 1:18-19 he says "...ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold, ...But with the precious blood of Christ...."

- **Redemption and adoption are both legal terms.** They relate to the external aspects of salvation, while **regeneration and sanctification relate to the internal aspects.**

◆ **The next blessing is forgiveness of our sins.**

- In our text, you can see that the two are tied together – redemption, which is the forgiveness of sins: “redemption, ...the forgiveness of sins.” I want to make a distinction between the two, because they are two aspects that represents Christ’s completed work for our salvation.
- (That idea of redemption is peculiar to these prison letters. In Colossians the word “redemption” is so interpreted, but let us **get an understanding of the distinction between redemption and forgiveness.**) **Redemption**, or buying back, **implies that we were sold under sin** and had to be bought back. **Redemption consists in loosing the bond** of sin, it consists also in remission or forgiveness of sin.
  - **Forgiveness of sin is that act of the Lord in which the debt of sin we have heaped up is wiped away.**
  - So, if we use the illustration of a slave being in a slave market and being bought by a new owner who pays the slave trader for the him, unties him and leads him out of the slave market, this is equivalent to redemption. Then, not charging him for the money paid for him is equivalent to forgiveness.
- ◆ **Now, we need to ask, according to what are all these blessings?** Our text tells us that they are “according to the riches of his grace.”
- ◆ **How are these riches of his grace made to abound in us?** By revelation of the mystery of his will. Suppose we are in sin; we do not know a thing about what took place way back yonder before the world was. We do not know that way back yonder we were elected and predestinated and have a portion in Christ. Our text says, “According to the riches of his grace which he made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, making **known to us the mystery of his will.**”
- ◆ **When was this mystery fully made known?** In the dispensation of the fulness of time.
- ◆ This brings us to **another point**. V. 10. **What object did God have in view** in all these things explained so far, in blessing us in all spiritual blessings, in election, predestination, and grace, which blessings are adoption, redemption, and forgiveness of sin? To what end?
- ◆ Here we get on Colossian ground and look at the reason for the title of this sermon: **Col 1:20** And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to **reconcile all things unto himself**; by him, *I say*, whether *they be* things in earth, or things in heaven.
- ◆ **What is this reconcile? To sum up, gather together, or re-collect all things in Christ.**

- To re-collect means that there has been a dispersion. That **dispersion took place when sin came into the world**. Not only was man lost, but the world in which he lived was accursed. Now the object was to sum up, re-collect, all things in Christ.
  - In Colossians we find the bible discusses the person of Christ: (1) in his relation to the Father; (2) in his relation to the universe; (3) in his relation to the church. All things in heaven - that includes the angels; all things in earth – that includes man. He gives two samples or specifications of this gathering together, or re-collection, which takes place here on earth (v. 12): “We who first trusted in Christ.” (v. 13) “In whom ye also trusted, having heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.” “We” and “you” that have been dispersed are to be brought together in Christ. Who are the “we”? Those who trusted in Christ before the gospel times – the Jews, with types and prophecies to guide them. Who are “ye”? Those who heard the gospel.
- ◆ **It is the purpose of all the election and predestination and foreordination to re-collect all things and to sum them up in Christ.**

**V. 11:** The inheritance then, is in Christ

- ◆ According to God’s predestinated purpose
- ◆ And according to what He counsels to do within the framework of His own will

**V. 12:** The end to be to the praise of Christ’s glory

**V. 13:** The next fruit of God’s predestination, foreordination, election, adoption, calling:

- ◆ Sealing those called with that Holy Spirit of promise

**V.14.** This sealing has twofold objectives:

1. Be a down payment to us that we are His
2. Result in praise to Christ’s glory