

just looking all over for somebody who'll say "Lord, I'm fed up with it. I've tried my own prescription for happiness here. You made me! I'm special! God don't make no junk! So take me! Use me to the best of Your ability."

Now in order to get a little more specific, let's take a look. Dig into the text for a few minutes.

In the first fourteen verses we'll get the overview. Here is the master plan of the apostle—God's master plan revealed by the apostle.

We picked two verses out of this. Just star the two verses that are before us. We'll see the encompassing of the master plan in verses 10 and 11 when we get there.

Ephesians 1:10-11

with reference to a plan for the fullness of the times, to bring everything together in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth in Him. In whom also our lot is cast having been decided upon beforehand according to the design of the one who is working all things according to the purpose of His will,

Dr. Bill Bright who was the founder of Campus Crusade for Christ (CRU), an international organization reaching college students, wrote a book called *Revolution Now*. In it he said:

(Revolution Now by Bill Bright)

“Thoreau said, the mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation. We are in danger of deceiving ourselves as we say that man will work it out all right. For as we scan the pages of history, doubts arise.

The common denominator of young and old seems to be disillusionment. They have goals but no purpose, they have spokes but no hub. In education and in business, they are learning how to make a living, but not how to live. One man said “I tried everything that life has to offer but all I see is one guy trying to outdo another in a futile attempt at happiness.” (source unknown)

Now what the apostle wants to tell us is, “Look, my plan is the best plan. My plan has one great objective. Believe it or not, my plan is designed for maximum happiness and fulfillment and success. Now put that down and don’t believe anything short of that!”

Joshua 1:8

This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth; you meditate in it day and night, you’re careful to observe all that is written therein: you’re going to make your way prosperous, and you’re going to have good success.

God wants us to be successful! He wants us to be fulfilled! He wants our life to be the best life in the whole world!

Now some people come from legalistic backgrounds and

they've been in bondage all these years and they're thinking all the fun things are things that God's not involved in.

Life according to His plan is fantastic! But we have to understand what it is in order to cooperate with Him. The master plan has **THREE POINTS**:

1. We're going to see **SELECTION** by God the Father—verses 4-6.
2. **SALVATION** provided through the Son—verses 7-12.
3. There's the **SEALING** by the Holy Spirit—verses 13 & 14

Isn't that easy?

SELECTION by the Father,

SALVATION by the Son,

SEALING by the Spirit.

Three points to this **MASTER PLAN**.

v. 1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints who are in Ephesus, and who are faithful in Christ Jesus.

“Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints who are in Ephesus, and who are faithful in Christ

Jesus.”

The customary greeting in those days was the man who wrote it gave us his name and his title.

Why does he call himself the “apostle” here?

There’s no controversy in the epistle. He only used this title when he was going to be teaching and when he didn’t want his authority to be doubted or questioned.

Obviously he’s encompassing all of truth in this. And so he wants us to know that he knows what he’s talking about. He’s an authority in the field. He’s “an apostle of Christ Jesus.”

Notice next it’s “by the will of God.”

Has Paul had a life that’s been filled with a bunch of roses and a whole lot of fun? Has he ever been out of the will of God?

After that experience on the road to Damascus when he saw that bright light shining around him and the Lord spoke to him, the Lord said something to him. Remember what it was?

“Saul, Saul, it’s kind of hard for you to be kicking against the goads.”

What’s that? Kicking against the restraining sovereign hand of God!

“Look Paul! You’re not lined up to My will going off here to Damascus to wipe out these Christians. The Christians, the people who are related to the living Christ are now My people! Open up your mind to see My plan Paul! And once you get your life in alignment with Mine plan, we’re going to blow them away.”

After that little visit with Ananias and a couple of weeks sitting at his feet, just a quiet believer in Damascus, he went off for some period of time to study and went up to Jerusalem and touched the world of his day with the message of the risen Christ.

He never got over it but he sure quit fighting it on that road that day as he gave himself over to the Lord.

“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God,”

He has a right to speak. He can tell us he’s living his life in the will of God.

Now he’s going to write “the saints”—who are they?

The saints are believers—anybody who knows Jesus Christ is a saint.

Where do these saints and what is true of them?

These saints are in Ephesus. Remember that’s not in the earlier manuscripts. They could be in Colossi.

They are saints who reside here on the earth—that's their earthly address—"who are faithful in Christ Jesus."—that's their heavenly address.

But there's a KEY WORD there. What is it?

"FAITHFUL"

That says a lot. Just day-in-day-out, hanging in there.

God's like that and He wants us like that. Taking up our cross daily and being willing to follow Him.

"FAITHFUL"—that says it all!

Saints in Christ Jesus.

Look at the next verse.

v. 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

It's interesting about these verses in all of Paul's epistles, they're always the same. They never change.

We never have Paul coming across with the Hebrew greeting

“Shalom!” and then “grace.”

It’s always “grace” and then “peace.”

Is that just a happening or is there something significant to that? Something terribly significant.

We’ll not know peace until we’ve had an experience of His grace. And we’ll not know His grace until we get off our high horse and we’re willing to let God do it His way.

We’ll never experience His unmerited favor until we come as a recipient of that and be willing to take it to ourselves.

Having experienced it, we’ll have “peace” on **THREE LEVELS**

INWARD,

OUTWARD, and

UPWARD.

Peace UPWARD—“may peace through the blood of His cross” (Colossians 1:20).

Peace INWARD—“I’m not anxious for anything anymore” (Philippians 4:6).

Peace OUTWARD—“Great peace have they which love thy law, nothing shall offend them.” (Psalm 119:165)

Paul says:

Acts 24:16

herein do I exercise myself to have a conscience always void of offense toward God and toward men.

Isaiah 26:3

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee.

v. 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ.”

Paul is so excited about what he’s getting ready to say. He has to sing the Doxology before he gets there! Isn’t that neat?

Is it hard for us to praise the Lord? Have you done it today? Have you rejoiced in His goodness? Are you just overwhelmed with His grace?

We can tell someone’s spiritual temperature by are they on their knees, they praise the Lord, if they rejoice in His

goodness.

Ruth Harms Calkin says in one of her books:

(Lord, Could You Hurry a Little by Ruth Harms Calkin)

*Be Thou exalted, Lord,
in thine own strength;
so will we sing and praise thy power.
Yes, Lord, yes!
David's prayer is my prayer;
Be exalted in my day-by-day agenda,
In my motives and dreams
My priorities and goals.
Even in my failures, Lord
As you turn them into stepping stones
Toward spiritual growth.
Be exalted in my worship and praise
In my sobbing and singing.
Be exalted in my secret thoughts
My emotional responses.
Be exalted in my daily routine
The delays, the unexpected emergencies
The disappointments that often come.
Lord God, as you are exalted
In heaven and on earth
Be exalted in Your home—[that is] my heart.
(source unknown)*

Is He happy there? Are we glad He's there? Well tell Him so!

Paul starts with this third verse with one sentence that ends in verse 14.

That's why this passage is so difficult to tear apart. This is one sentence—the rest of it—to talk about.

That one sentence starts right here at verse 3 and it goes clear down to verse 14. Just one sentence and yet it encompasses the master plan.

He starts and he's getting so excited about what he's going to say, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ"

WHY?—because He "has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ."

That's the new sphere of operation. That's why Solomon had such a rough time. Life was "under the sun." It was all down here.

When we get our focus up there and what we have to look forward to, we know life changes.

For the guy who's not a Christian, the cosmos is his whole center.

It's "eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die!" It's living down here!

For the guy who comes to know the Lord, he's in a new orbit. Everything he's looking forward to is up there in the heavenlies. And the person he loves the most is up there!

And so that whole sphere causes us to recognize we're pilgrims passing through looking for a city!

As we look at that third verse and we hear him start out with the Doxology, when is the last time our heart started to sing? And we praised God and we soared into the realms of glory and ecstasy over the joy of all that God has done for us?

That takes our spiritual temperature when we start talking about that. Makes us want to sing "Count your many blessings, name them one by one."

Our blessings center in the fact that God has a big plan. And when we understand that big plan, it sure gets us excited.

1. We've been selected by the Father,
2. We've been saved by the Son, and
3. Sealed by the Spirit.

That's why he's bursting forth in praise.

Now let's look at it a little bit more closely here.

v. 4 Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him.

“Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him.”

There’ve been so many books written on the doctrine of election and pre-destination. Let God handle it when we get there.

The simplest explanation to that is, God loved the whole world. He created us because He loved us. He loved the whole world and He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever would be willing to cooperate with His plan for saving them, He’d save them.

So it’s whosoever will.

But because God is a God of omniscience—that is all-knowing—He knew ahead of time what we were going to do way before we were ever born and way before eternity, time ever started. So when we walk through the door He could just simply say “I told you so.” But when we turn around and look up at the door it says “Chosen in Him before the foundation of the world.” He knew all about it.

That’s far easier than trying to get into some of this mess and get Christians all stirred up about whether they need to go out and share their faith with others because they might run into

somebody who's not a part of the elect. That's the most disturbing thing!

Don't worry about that. Get out there and love them for Jesus and live life before them and the results will come. They'll either come to know Him or they'll reject Him. And that's their choice. That's not ours. We did the best we could. We shared with them our life and our witness.

“Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world,”

What does that tell us about God? That tells us that He loves us so much that He'd do anything for us. That He put His stamp on us. He chose us.

By the very fact that we were chosen does **THREE THINGS** doesn't it?

1. It gets our **SECURITY** to go sky high.

If we were that important that He chose us, we don't have to worry about Him un-choosing us and changing His mind.

Secondly:

2. That should minister to our **SELF-IMAGE**.

We're really important to God.

3. And it also should minister to our CONFIDENCE. It's like playing a neighborhood game of football. There's always that one kid that's the last guy chosen and they aren't a very enthusiastic choice.

It really does something to them. To know that their buddies can do without them.

God's not like that. Is He? It's important to Him to choose us. He loves us so much. He loves us completely.

Ruth Harms Calkin says in one of her books:

Sometimes dear Lord, You don't seem to love me at all.

And the Lord answers:

Sometimes dear child, you seem to ignore the eternal fact.
(source unknown)

That says it well. The eternal fact is He loves us! And we're important to Him! He chose us! He selected us!

That has Paul so excited he couldn't stand it!

He chose us to be on His team—that individualizes the choice.

He chose us to be part of His family. He chose us to be His children.

This text tells us before the worlds were created, He chose us because He wanted us! He wanted us to be a part of His team

Just like the NFL and the NBA have their draft choices and they have their blue-chippers that get a big contract. We're a number one draft choice as far as God's concerned.

He would have chosen us if we were the only one to be chosen because He loves us. He cares about us. He chose us to be a part of Him.

v. 5 In love having decided upon us beforehand for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ for Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,

“In love having decided upon us beforehand for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ for Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,”

We'll always find every time choice is involved, it's in the context of LOVE.

God makes the choice in love. He's motivated by love to do that.

Romans 5:8

God commended his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Now what does it mean “having decided upon us beforehand for adoption as sons”?

We’re supposed to be born in the family when we become a Christian.

When we come to know Jesus Christ and we open our life to Him, we are born again by the Spirit into God’s family. We are a little child.

We go out of the family of Adam and we go into the family of Jesus Christ—that’s converting, that’s new birth.

Paul has another way of speaking about the Christian’s relationship to the Lord Jesus and to the Father.

He speaks of this as “adoption as sons.”

Now the term “adoption” in the Bible is not like we use adoption. We say go down to the adoption agency and get a child who is not born into our family, bring that child into our family, adopt them. That is not the biblical concept of adoption.

The new birth is designed to take a person who was out of the family and bring him into the family.

Adoption on the other hand is to take a child in the family and to give him all the right of an adult.

It is the order of the *toga virilis*. It is the time when they come before the legal authorities to declare: “This my son is now to have all the rights of adulthood. This my son is heir to what I possess as his father.”

So the emphasis is upon inheritance. It’s upon the will. We are adopted as sons and daughters in the family.

Peter picked up on that in:

1 Peter 1:4

unto an inheritance that is undefiled, reserved in heaven for us, and it will not fade away.

So we are His INHERITANCE.

Notice that it’s “according to the good pleasure of His will.”

It’s interesting in the Bible that the things that are really good for us are the things we really don’t want to do.

For instance, exercise.

The normal human tendency is the moment we awake and we have 17 excuses why we don’t need to hurt our body. It hurts!

Paul says, “I treat my body roughly and I make it serve me.”
(1 Cor. 9:27)

That's not normal human nature.

Ever notice that in regard to giving in the New Testament, it has the same thing?

“Every man according as he purposes in his heart, so let him give not grudgingly (or of necessity). For God loves a cheerful giver.” (2 Cor. 9:7)

We can think of 76 reasons why we're disqualified of giving of our financial resources to benefit the kingdom of God, can't we?

And so is a hard, hard discipline because we earned it, we want to hang onto it. And after all, tough times might come and we're going to need it!

God didn't choose us grudgingly. He didn't say “Oh, if they hadn't made such a miserable mess in the garden in the first place and done all this stuff and been so stiff-necked and stubborn and rebellious! They wouldn't have been grumbling in the land of Israel, they wouldn't have been wanting to have the leaks and garlics of Egypt.”

God didn't do that. He loves us unconditionally. He turns right around and just keeps on loving. And He loves us.

And it was “the good pleasure of His will” to select us.

And note this, the selection also involved the price. He knew

that with that selection His Son was going to have to choose to come and take the cup of sin to provide the basis for the relationship or the selection would be null and void.

So it has to be in accordance with His “good pleasure.”

Isn't it interesting that now because we've been adopted into His family, we are in the family on the same level as His Son Jesus Christ.

We are each an “heir and a joint heir with Jesus Christ” (Romans 8:16 & 17).

Near, so very near to God,
Nearer I could not be.
For in the person of His Son,
I'm just as near as He.

Dear, so very dear to God,
Dearer I could not be;
For in the person of His Son,
I'm just as dear as He.
(source unknown)

God was excited about this choice!

Like old David took Mophibosheth, that crippled kid, and brought him in to sit at his table. He was proud to have him there and to take the responsibility for him.

God, too, pictured as an old man running to get His arms around a foul-smelling prodigal, draw him unto Himself and provide for all his needs.

Our heavenly Father wants us, He needs us. We are His.

Dr. Donald Grey Barnhouse was telling a story about a wealthy customer who wrote to a Mr. Beatty that his dearest granddaughter was going to have a birthday.

He wanted to give her something very, very special:

Five times in the letter the customer spoke of the granddaughter as his dearest. So the old man looked at me and said:

“I prayed and asked the Lord to give me an idea. I noticed how many times, dearest, appeared so I underlined it, and I sent my customer the sketch and told him what I proposed to do. He was greatly pleased and thought my idea was wonderful”

Mr. Beatty sent him a ring with stones so beautifully cut that the light scintillated from them. Across the top of the ring, the first stone was a diamond, the next an emerald, then an amethyst, a ruby, a second emerald, a sapphire, and then a topaz.

I looked at it and asked, “Why do you have two emeralds?”

He smiled and said, “Because there are two e’s in dearest.
(source unknown)

He took the first letter of each of the stones and spelled out

“dearest” across the top of that ring. God the Father has a ring on His hand too, and He’s saying “You’re my dearest. You’re my son. You’re my daughter. I love you so much I chose you. I chose you before the foundation of the world.”

v. 6 to the praise of His glorious grace which He freely bestowed upon us in the Beloved.

“to the praise of His glorious grace which He freely bestowed upon us in the Beloved.”

“in the Beloved” is another way of saying “in Christ.”

That brings us to the second part of the plan.

SELECTED by the Father but **PURCHASED** by the Son.

It’s God the Father saying “Hey, I want him!”

God the Son says “You know the price for him is Me!”

“Go ahead and get him.”

The Son says “I’ll go ahead and get him. I’ll pay the price.”

That’s the focus of the plan.

SELECTED by the Father—now watch this. These next verses are really fantastic!

“to the praise of His glorious grace which He freely bestowed upon us in the Beloved.”

v. 7 In whom we are having our redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of His grace,

“In whom”—that is Christ—“we are having our redemption through His blood,”

What’s the word “redemption?”

That’s the word for PURCHASE.

That’s the word for saying “I want that one and I’ll pay the price for that one in the marketplace.”

The marketplace of sin. We were sold under sin.

God the Father says “I want him! I want her!”

God the Son provides redemption. What’s the price?

“through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of His grace,”

Notice that the “forgiveness of our trespasses [is] according to the riches of His grace”?

His grace has to run out before His forgiveness does.

His grace isn't going to run out.

So there's always abundant grace to handle the problem of sin.

v. 8 which He lavished upon us in all wisdom and insight.

“which He lavished upon us in all wisdom and insight.”

Why do we have those two words “wisdom” and “insight” there?

“Wisdom” helps us to understand what He's doing.

“Insight” teaches us how to cooperate with what He's doing.

For instance, maybe this is brand new. Maybe we've never understood God the Father's master plan.

That we were **SELECTED** by the Father in love, **SAVED** by the Son through His death on Calvary.

“Wisdom” now would be “Hey! I understand what you're doing God!”

And “insight” is “I want to cooperate! So I'll do what I need to do in the situation to cooperate with Your master plan!”

Then comes LIFE ABUNDANT.

v. 9 Having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Him

“Having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Him”

There’s that phrase again: “according to His good pleasure.”

What is the “mystery of His will”?

The Father knew before the worlds were created that man was going to fall into sin and the whole plan was worked out before eternity.

INCLUDING our choice! Our selection.

It was all worked out and Paul is sharing it with us here.

Here comes the KEY VERSES—verse 10 and 11.

v. 10 with reference to a plan for the fullness of the times, to bring everything together in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth in Him.

“with reference to a plan for the fullness of the times, to bring everything together in Christ, the things in the heavens and

the things upon the earth in Him.”

God get ahold of this and get ahold of it LOUD AND CLEAR.

The center hub, the focal point, the axis on which the whole plan revolves is not an experience. It’s not an institution. It’s not an organization. It’s the PERSON of JESUS CHRIST!!

“Christ is all and in all!” (Col. 3:11b)

The Father’s plan is to have Jesus Christ at the center of everything!

That’s why we take issue with our dear charismatic friends. They’re taking another member of the Godhead and they’re putting them in the focal place—the Spirit of God—and that belongs only to Jesus Christ!

The Spirit of God was designed to give glory, to point people to Christ! Not himself to take the focal point! That belongs to the Lord Jesus and to Him alone. That’s His plan!

Recognize that fact and it’ll keep us from the cults, the doctrinal errors and a lot of the stuff that’s going around. It’s confusing and misunderstanding to so many.

It’s the pleasure of the Father “with reference to a plan for the fullness of the times, to bring everything together in Christ, things in heaven and things upon the earth in Him.”

Here's a principal:

With our focus on the Person of Jesus Christ we'll never miss the Father's plan.

Philippians 2:10-11

“that every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.”

Colossians 3:11

...Christ is all, and in all.

Revelation 19:11

When the heavens are open, on a white horse comes one riding out with King of kings, Lord of lords, Jesus Christ to set up His kingdom to rule and to reign.

v. 11 In whom also our lot is cast, having been decided upon beforehand according to the design of the one who is working all things according to the purpose of His will,

“In whom”—Who? CHRIST—“also our lot is cast,”—we threw it in with Him. We said we're going with You when we decided to receive Him—“having been decided upon beforehand according to the design of the one who is working all things according to the purpose of His will,”

“having been decided upon beforehand” is in the PERFECT TENSE.

That has PAST, PRESENT and FUTURE ramifications.

In the PAST when we receive Christ, a plan was implemented.

In the PRESENT we’re experiencing it.

The FUTURE ramifications are we’re soon going to be like Him for you’re going to see Him as He is. (1 John 3:2)

It’s all focused on the PERSON of Jesus Christ.

Now why do we sing:

Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way!
Thou art the Potter, I am the clay.
Mold me and make me After Thy will,
While I am waiting, Yielded and still.
(source unknown)

Some people don’t read Paul Tournier. He’s a Swiss psychiatrist. He has some great things to say.

He has dealt with a lot of the human dilemma, a lot of the suffering and the hurt. This is what he says:

(Fatigue in Modern Society by Paul Tournier)

For this [that is the plan of God for your life] it is necessary to choose, to sacrifice a great many things. It is not necessary only to do what appears to be good, useful, or noble, but rather to do that which God wants. Remember David, when God kept him from building the Temple! It is a fine undertaking to want to build a temple for God, but to construct it when God does not want it, and when it is not God's chosen time, is time wasted. It is disobedience, not obedience. How many well-intentioned disobediences do our lives contain? That is the problem!

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Are we in align with the Master Plan? That's the question.

Burton Osborne in his book says:

I do not know why God allowed me such a long journey through the darkness of error and sin. It's infinite and unfathomable designs are full of mercy and love for all who seek Him. That is God's plan. I do understand that the divine artist burns well with charcoal with which He traces His mysterious plan.

(source unknown)

v. 12 with a view to our being to the praise of His glory who had first placed our hope in the Christ.

“with a view to our being to the praise of His glory who had

first placed our hope in the Christ.”

Twice!

Verse 6—“To the praise of His glory.”

Verse 12—“To the praise of His glory.”

We’re going to get it in verse 14: “To the praise of His glory.”

The Master Plan involves:

SELECTION by the Father,

SALVATION through the Son,

SEALED by the Spirit.

“to the praise of His glory”

“to the praise of His glory”

“to the praise of His glory”

v. 13 In Him you also, having heard the Word of the truth, the good news of your salvation: in Him also having believed, you were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,

“In Him”—CHRIST—“you also, having heard the Word of the

truth, the good news of your salvation: in Him also”—
WHAT?—“having believed, you were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,”

The moment we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Spirit started His function as part of the Master Plan.

The Spirit of God is the REGENERATOR. He gives life. Having given life, He SEALED us—guaranteeing eternal destiny

The word “sealed” in the New Testament has THREE MEANINGS. It denotes:

1. A FINISHED TRANSACTION.
2. OWNERSHIP, and
3. SECURITY.

“Sealed” by the Spirit—it’s like the Spirit coming along and putting the capstone on the whole thing.

This is done! The work is finished! This person is now My child!

The minute Jesus Christ comes into our life, our sins are forgiven. New life is ours, redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. The Spirit of God is the evidence. He is the SEAL that this is a finished transaction. We are GUARANTEED of our destiny.

Praise God for that.

Understand why he started with singing the Doxology? We have scraped the heavens in the Master Plan.

We were BOUGHT by the blood of Christ but we were BRANDED by the Spirt. To be clear, the work is done!

The Spirit of God coming into our life is the evidence of whether or not the Spirit of God is there.

Notice one other thing before we close.

Do we find any human works in the Master Plan?

That's the greatest argument in the world for the fact that salvation is not a joint venture.

If God had meant that our good works, our church membership, our baptism, our Catharism, our this, our that, our giving, our going here, our going there, our being a leader, and all of this would have a part in it, it would have been here in the text.

There are absolutely no human works in the Master Plan!

God's wrapped us all up as a neat little package and He says "Here! Yours for the taking."

The moment we come to know Him, by faith, an eternal transaction takes place.

Oh this is great, isn't it? Woo! It's getting good!

v. 14 Who is the first installment of our inheritance for a redemption through which you become God's property, to the praise of His glory.

“Who is the first installment of our inheritance for a redemption through which you become God's property, to the praise of His glory.”

When the Spirit of God sealed us, He's just a down payment. He's just the engagement ring.

1 Corinthians 2:9

Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man the things which the Lord hath prepared for them that love Him.

Woo! What we have to look forward to!

Are we happy now with the Spirit of God living in our life? Bringing and glorifying and honoring the person of Jesus Christ? We haven't seen anything yet.

The Master Plan has people designed for all eternity to enjoy the rest of the inheritance that's reserved for us.

The word “redemption” means we have been purchased as personal property. We belong to Him.

What is the third phrase? “to the praise of His glory.”

What’s the Master Plan?

To set the stage for our study in the book of Ephesians:

God the Father **SELECTED** us.

God the Son **SAVED** us by His own blood.

God the Spirit **SEALED** the eternal transaction whereby we become God’s property.

Here are the lessons from our text:

Lesson #1: Salvation involves all three Persons of the Trinity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

Lesson #2: The Master Plan brings everything together in Christ.

Don’t put the church there. Don’t put anything there. Just the person of Jesus Christ who longs for this relationship with us.

Lesson #3: We are bought by the Son and branded by the Spirit.

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Lesson #4: Man has no part in the Master Plan.

Lesson #5: The will of God is primary in the Master Plan for reference to it occurs in verse 1, verse 5, verse 9, and verse 11.

Lesson #6: It is required of us as sinners to taste of God's grace before we will ever know of His peace.

Lesson #7: In the Master Plan we have experienced "every spiritual blessing." Seven of them have been outlined in our study: (1) election; (2) adoption; (3) redemption; (4) forgiveness of sins; (5) God's purpose; (6) sealing; and (7) inheritance.

Lesson #8: The Father chose us "before the foundation of the world" for two purposes: (1) "that we should be holy" and (2) "that we be . . . blameless before Him" (verse 4).

Lesson #9: Verse 5 in our passage begins with "love" and ends with "good pleasure of His will." "In love having decided upon us beforehand for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ for Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will."

Lesson #10: We are safe and secure in the Beloved, that is our Lord Jesus Christ.

Lesson #11: The redemption price for our salvation is the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Lesson #12: Peter tells us in 1 Peter 1:4 that we are "to obtain

an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you” (NASB).

Lesson #13: The seal of the Holy Spirit guarantees a finished transaction.

Lesson #14: The Holy Spirit is “the first installment of our inheritance” (verse 14). He is the engagement ring. He is the guarantee that there is much more to follow. What a glorious anticipation of eternity!

Here’s a poem to close. A good sermon has an introduction, three points and a poem. That’s the way it’s done.

This is a very convicting one.

When I stand at the judgment seat of Christ
And He shows me His plan for me,
The Plan of my life as it might have been
Had He had His way, and I see

How I blocked Him here, and I checked Him there,
And I would not yield my will—
Will there be grief in my Savior's eyes,
Grief, though He loves me still?

He would have me rich, and I stand there poor,
Stripped of all but His grace,
While memory runs like a hunted thing
Down the paths I cannot retrace.

Then my desolate heart will well-nigh break
With the tears that I cannot shed;
I shall cover my face with my empty hands,
I shall bow my uncrowned head...

Lord of the years that are left to me,
I give them to Thy hand;
Take me and break me, mold me to
The pattern Thou hast planned!

Martha Snell Nicholson

(<http://www.mercydrops.com/Snell.htm>)

Father, perhaps there are those who have yet to put their personal faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. We ask in the stillness of this moment they would realize that Your focus is on the person of Christ. And it's what we've done with Jesus that determines our eternal destiny. To have the Son is to have life and not to have the Son is not to have life. We pray that You'll make that very clear and plain for cooperating with that part of Your plan. Then Father we would pray for those who are believers, that they realize that Your plan didn't stop when they came into the family. That You adopted them as sons, putting their name on the line for the inheritance and You treated them like Your own Son. You also have a plan and purpose for their lives to make them into the image of Your Son. And we pray that You might enable them to comprehend a little more fully that plan and be open and pliable, broken, eager, to be cooperative in whatever You're doing. Lord we

know and we ask for wisdom. We also ask for insight as we study and our eyes are open to behold wonderful things out of Your truth, we would be quick to be doers of the Word and not just hearers only. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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A Practical Study of EPHESIANS

HEAVEN'S PLAN for Life on Earth

“What It’s Like Living According to God’s Plan”

Key verse 5:17 — *“On this account, do not be foolish but be understanding what the will of the Lord is.”*

STUDY NUMBER ONE – THE MASTER PLAN – EPHESIANS 1:1-14

KEY VERSES 1:10, 11

v. 1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints who are in Ephesus, and who are faithful in Christ Jesus.

v. 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

v. 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ.

v. 4 Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him.

v. 5 In love having decided upon us beforehand for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ for Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,

v. 6 to the praise of His glorious grace which He freely bestowed upon us in the Beloved.

v. 7 In whom we are having our redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of His grace,

v. 8 which He lavished upon us in all wisdom and insight.

v. 9 Having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Him

NOTES

NOTES

v. 10 with reference to a plan for the fullness of the times, to bring everything together in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth in Him.

v. 11 In whom also our lot is cast, having been decided upon beforehand according to the design of the one who is working all things according to the purpose of His will,

v. 12 with a view to our being to the praise of His glory who had first placed our hope in the Christ.

v. 13 In Him you also, having heard the Word of the truth, the good news of your salvation: in Him also having believed, you were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,

v. 14 Who is the first installment of our inheritance for a redemption through which you become God's property, to the praise of His glory.

QUESTIONS:

1. Read Ephesians 1:1-14 and in your own words pull out the main thought of this passage.

2. What has God done for us, according to verse 3?

3. When did God the Father choose us, according to verse 4?

4. What is our position in Christ, according to verse 4?

5. What two things are ours, according to verse 7?

6. What is God's "plan," according to verse 10?

7. What happens to us when we believe, according to verse 13?

8. What happens to us, according to verse 14, as a result of our becoming a Christian?

9. What verse in the study has meant the most to you?

10. What lesson have you learned from this study?

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: Salvation involves all three Persons of the Trinity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

LESSON #2: The Master Plan brings everything together in Christ.

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