

Possessions of God – *Ephesians 1:11-14*

Introduction – God's plan to choose, before the foundation of the world, those who would be holy and blameless and adopted as His sons by the redemptive work of Jesus Christ was fully accomplished (vv3-10). As good as the plan and provision may be, it is useless unless it can be appropriated by individuals. Hence, the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

In addition, as we consider the flow of this whole sentence (vv3-14) we begin to see that the whole plan, provision and possession by God is not primarily for us, but rather for Him: *"to the praise of His glory."*

Possessions of God (vv11-12) – The Greek word translated, *"we have obtained an inheritance,"* could just as easily, and possibly more appropriately be translated, *"we have been made an inheritance."* The strength of this view is that it has Old Testament precedence (Deut 7:6-7, Psalm 33:12, Jer 10:16) as well as New Testament significance (Eph 1:18). Jesus came to earth to get for Himself a bride, and this will be pictured for us later (Eph 5:25-27). All those who are *"in Christ"* are God's possession and heritage.

Being Predestined, All Things – Neither fate nor merit determines our destiny. And the idea that God acts capriciously is completely foreign to what Scripture declares. His loving purpose – that we should be holy and blameless (because we weren't), adopted as sons, and destined to glorify Him forever is a fixed purpose. This plan includes absolutely all things that ever take place in heaven, on earth, in hell; past, present and future. Finally, God did not simply *"purpose"* but *"works,"* that is, *"energizes"* all things according to that plan. His providence in time is as comprehensive as His decree from eternity. And this *"council of His will"* never violates human responsibility and freedom; there is plenty of room for them in the decree and its effectuation, something Scripture makes abundantly clear (Luke 22:22, Acts 2:23, Phil 2:12-13, 2 Thess 2:13).

The Purpose of Such Possession – The ultimate purpose of the plan and execution, all accomplished by God from beginning to end, is *to the praise of His (gracious – remember v6) glory* (v12). Paul and those who first believed (whether pointing to the Jews first, or simply those who first believed the gospel) have no reason for boasting in themselves. For, he will go on to say -

Sealed by God; Sealed for God (vv13-14) – *"you also..."* The giving of the Holy Spirit was the gift intended to go out and execute God's purposes among all nations, even to the whole cosmos (Acts 1:8, 2:38-39) and the Ephesians experienced this (Acts 18:19-21, 19:1-41). The gospel is preached, and God uses that Word to impart faith by the Holy Spirit (Gal 4:6-7). Faith is the supernatural indication of the seal of the Spirit. A seal was a personal sign of the owner upon that which he had received or was sending. While it is true that having the Holy Spirit provides a seal for us, it is first a seal declaring that we are His – we are owned by Him. So we are not simply sealed by God's Holy Spirit; we are sealed for God by His Holy Spirit. Water baptism expresses this truth, declaring God's possession and ownership of us

A Deposit until the Redemption of the Purchased Possession – In ancient times, the *"guarantee"* was the down payment, or pledge, securing the claim to the article in question. Again, this certainly teaches us the doctrine of the assurance of our salvation. But from God's perspective, it guarantees to Himself before everything else that He has laid claim on the object of His love, *"His purchased possession"* which always remains His *"until the redemption."* This final redemption is pointing to the final resurrection (Rom 8:23, Eph 4:30). In giving us the Holy Spirit, God is promising us our final inheritance and declaring His future, final and complete right to His own inheritance as well. We will be saved, we will persevere, He will preserve, He will complete His redemption, and all of it will be *"to the praise of His (gracious) glory."*

Look Over it All – *"Grace to you and peace,"* the letter began, and we noted that this grace and peace was the Holy Spirit (v2). If you have grace and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ it is because of God, all of God, from before the foundation of the world, redeemed by the provision of the Son, and sealed by that grace and peace in His Holy Spirit. And that means you cannot lose it – you cannot lose that grace and peace. You cannot lose Him because your Father cannot and will not lose you (John 10:28-29).

God's Energizing Love – How is this working itself out in your life? It is not by your good works any more than your good works had anything to do with your salvation. It is God *"who works all things according to the counsel of His will"* (v11). One commentator wrote, *"The scope of these words our humanity has not the capacity to contain,"* and this is why Paul will stop and pray (vv15ff).

Should We Then Evangelize? – The natural question is asked since everything seems to be predetermined anyway. But what was Paul, who penned these words, doing all his unimprisoned life? Quite the opposite of making him passive, it made him violently, almost insanely active – with hope for the world. He understood that God had predestined the ends as well as the means, that God was at work in His life and words, and that God was *"remaking the world"* (v10) through these words preached, believed, and sealed in the hearts of men and women by the work of the person of the Holy Spirit.