

# Redeemed and Forgiven According to His Gracious Riches – *Ephesians 1:7-10*

**Introduction** – There is hardly anything more important in these verses than the choice of a *preposition*. Imagine two immeasurably wealthy donors, both giving away sums of money to a charity. Both give *out of* their riches, but the first gives a paltry sum. The second gives, not simply out of his riches, but *according to* his riches, lavishing his support upon his beneficiaries. Which donor is your God? This is the basis of the argument in Ephesians 1-3; and to whom understanding is given, it causes the knees to buckle in awe.

**Redeemed According to His Gracious Riches** (vv7-8) – The sentence (vv3-14) continues. Having stated the Father's plan (vv3-6), Paul moves to address how Christ made provision for that plan. "*In Him, we have redemption...*" The fundamental idea of redemption is that of setting free that which had come to belong to another. Israel's redemption out of Egypt is our type (Ex 15:13). Israel was in slavery to Pharaoh and God redeemed them, not by paying off Pharaoh, but by crushing him and his empire. He crushed the serpent and delivered His people and He did so in a spectacular and public way. On the cross, "*through His blood*", this is exactly what Jesus did as well (Col 2:15). We were slaves to sin and Satan, and Christ set us free, crushing the power and guilt of both.

**Forgiveness of Trespasses According to His Gracious Riches** – His blood was a payment as well, a payment for our trespasses (a deviation from the path of truth and righteousness). Such payment was not due to Satan, but to God to expiate and atone for our sins. As slaves in our sin, we had nothing to offer God in payment, which is why a Substitute was given for us.

**Lavishing Gracious Riches with Precision** – Redemption and Forgiveness; these are mountains of gracious riches and yet God lavished them upon us "*in all wisdom and prudence*" effectively and perfectly accomplishing everything just as He planned. Remember, He had carefully chosen you, if you are in Christ, in love and before the foundation of the world (vv3-6). All of this occurred in Christ, the new man and representative of the new humanity (v7 – "*in Him*"). All of this occurred not simply for a number of individuals to be saved; God was rebooting the cosmos in Christ.

**The Restoration of All Things** (vv9-10) – Christianity is not a "mystery religion" with secret words and potions used to control the world, gods and goddesses to call upon and direct, hidden knowledge only for the elite. In Christ, the mystery of His will was revealed and is declared boldly by Paul and ever since (Eph 6:19). This mystery is "*according to His good pleasure*" which connects the mystery to His predestined plan of adoption for us (v5), "*which He purposed in Himself*" (v9). But it is more than that. It is the promise that the Gentiles would be fellow heirs with the Jews, of the same body of Christ (3:6). But it is more than that. The phrase, "*that He might gather together in one*" means that He has "*summed up all things*," or "*has united*," or better, "*He has recapitulated, restored, rebooted and drawn together all things*." The Jew-Gentile union is the beginning; He is creating all things new in Christ (2 Cor 5:17-19) and this has cosmic implications for this refers to "*both which are in heaven and which are on earth – in Him*" (v10 – cf. Matt 28:18). Some call it "Creation 2.0."

**That in the Dispensation of the Fullness of Times** – God administered the world through the mediation of angels, through the Mosaic covenant and the times of the Temple sacrifices until "*the fullness of times*." This is not referring to the end of our age, but up until the time of Christ's incarnation (Gal 4:4). Definitely, when Christ took the throne at His Father's right hand, the creation was remade and placed under a new authority (Psalm 2:7-8).

**The Gracious Riches Lavished upon Us** – God reveals this ultimate mystery to us because we are central to the plan. The plan to reveal the mystery was launched before the foundation of the world, it was declared in the fullness of time in the death, burial and resurrection of the God-Man, Jesus Christ, and it is the role of the church to declare these riches to the world as Good News. There is a way out for sinners trapped in their prison of sin, death, and hell and it is through the redemption and forgiveness of Jesus Christ, received through faith alone. He is freely and lavishly offered everywhere the Gospel is preached. Verse 11 has been wrongly used to preach universalism (every last person will be saved), and while this heresy does not take into consideration many other clear teachings of Scripture, it should teach us something. The present pessimistic view of history and our future that most of this present world will be lost in a great ball of fire and judgment – gives no credence to the mystery revealed and should be rejected.

**All Things Summed up in Christ** – First of all, this means that there is no secular-sacred divide in the world. Abraham Kuyper famously said, "*There is not one square inch of this world over which Jesus does not stand and say, 'this is Mine.'*" Therefore, the influence of His Lordship and His gracious riches are to be found and rightly expressed throughout culture in business, education, the arts, government, science and all of human society. Wherever His Lordship is denied, it is not evidence of a lack of Christ's Lordship, but only of our disobedience. Second, this means that all the details of our personal lives are not only under His Lordship, but find their purpose and meaning, being eternally summed up, in Christ in Whom are found these gracious riches. Simply put: it will all make sense one day.

**Ministers of This Mystery** – As we disciple the nations, we are to be active reconcilers, for we are ministering under the authority and power of the One who is reconciling the world to Himself. Therefore, if we cannot love the unlovely or pursue peace, even when sinned against, we have no credibility for speaking this great gospel-mystery to the world.