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C0422 -- June 2, 2004 -- Ephesians 1:7-8 -- Redemption, Wisdom, and Insight

Last week, we looked at the Goal of Predestination and Election of the Father, namely, the Praise of the Glory of His Grace (1:6). We said that the phrase “to the praise of the glory of His grace” was used almost identically in verses 12 and 14. It is used in verse 6 of the Father, in verse 12 of the Son, and in verse 14 of the Spirit. It is the resounding goal of the plan of redemption. The ultimate goal of the plan of redemption is not the salvation of men but to praise the Trinity. What this means is that the plan of salvation is primarily a revelation of God’s character. It is to the praise of His glory. The word glory is *doxa* and it has the basic meaning of “weight”. It refers to one’s reputation which is based on one’s character. Whether you knew it or not this is God’s ultimate purpose, to glorify Himself. One means of glorifying Himself is through salvation, but He also glorifies Himself through the angelic conflict and through nature. So, what God is doing is revealing His essence to creation. The means through which He does this results in maximum glorification of God, a *sine qua non* of Dispensationalism. Remember, Dispensationalism is not primarily about a number of dispensations; Innocence, Conscience, Human Government, Promise, Mosaic, Grace/Church, Millennium.

SALVATION BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH						
Innocence	Conscience	Government	Promise	Mosaic	Church	Millennial
			ISRAEL ≠		CHURCH	
PROGRESSIVE REVELATION						

Dispensationalism basically has three core elements:

- 1) A consistent normal interpretation of all of Scripture including prophecy
- 2) A distinction between God’s program for Israel and God’s program for the Church
- 3) God’s ultimate purpose is to glorify Himself

So, what verse 6 is emphasizing is this third element, that God’s ultimate purpose is to glorify Himself. This is so important that the Holy Spirit made this the resounding truth

through this sentence (vv. 3-14). The details of the redemptive package are therefore revelatory devices designed by God before the foundation of the world in order to bring glory to Himself! What does it mean then that this praise is to *the glory of His grace*? This is a difficult phrase but what it means is that God is glorified for His reputation which displays grace. We looked at the word *grace* way back in v. 2. It's the Greek word *charis* and it means "God's unmerited or undeserved favor in providing salvation for sinners." Here it focuses on how God the Father displayed grace. He displayed grace by pre-planning our destiny to be the destiny of Christ and securing that by actively electing us so that we would be holy and blameless before Him in love forever! That is the kind of reputation which God the Father is to be praised for and which brings glory to Himself.

"that He freely bestowed on us". The word *freely bestowed* come from the Greek word *ekaritosen* which is only used twice in the NT (Luke 1:28; Eph. 1:6). The interpretation of this word is different for Protestant and Catholic theology. Is Paul talking about the infusion of grace into individuals in the process of justification (Catholicism) or is he talking about the revelation of God the Father's grace in the plan of salvation? The latter is preferred. These people are already saved individuals. Paul calls them *saints* in v. 1. What Paul is saying is that God the Father freely bestowed His grace upon saints in the person and work of Jesus Christ. We compared the Roman Catholic and Protestant views of Justification by way of a chart which we'll briefly review and then we'll turn to the controversial James 2.

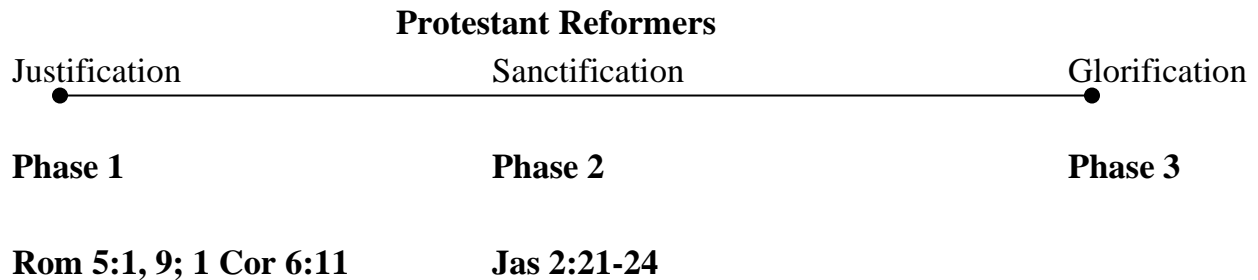
	<u>Protestantism</u>	<u>Roman Catholicism</u>
1.	Forensic	Legal Fiction
2.	Synthetic	Analytic
3.	Imputation	Infusion
4.	No Human Merit	Congruous Merit
5.	Faith Alone	Faith + Works

There is a major movement right now called Evangelicals and Catholics Together (ECT). Chuck Colson and J.I. Packer are two such Evangelical who are working with Catholics such as Richard Neuhaus on this. In fact, Evangelicals have been working with Catholics since the late 60's (currently Catholics are working with Muslim clerics and Charismatic Christian groups as well). In 1995 leaders from both groups signed an identical statement on justification. The statement said that justification was "by grace through faith because of Christ". This means that Christ makes possible justification. This is in perfect harmony with the Council of Trent but NOT what Protestantism teaches about justification. Any good Roman Catholic could sign that statement because it is in agreement with the Trent.

But if it's in agreement with Trent then how could Evangelicals sign it? Simply by compromising doctrine for the sake of unity. Protestantism rejects that Christ makes possible justification and affirms that Christ is our justification! If the Reformers were wrong then we ought to all pack up our bags and return to Mother Church because the entire Reformation was about how a man is justified. These Evangelicals compromised the truth for the sake of unity. Essentially these leaders are saying that there is no difference. But I'm going to show you that Roman Catholicism is another religion.

Catholic theology taught that God could not call the ungodly righteous. They said that was a **Legal Fiction**. The Reformers said that Rom 4:5 declared that God justifies the ungodly and that justification was therefore **Forensic**. Forensic means that justification is a legal declaration. Second, Catholics taught that justification was **Analytic**, meaning that God had to analyze the person to see if they actually were righteous before God could call them righteous. Protestant Reformers rejected this saying that justification was **Synthetic**, meaning God added something to the sinner, there was a synthesis. What was added to the sinner was Christ's righteousness. Catholics taught that the way a person actually became righteous was by **Infused** grace through the sacraments. Through the sacraments grace was infused into the human heart so that it actually became righteous. That way God could analyze the individual and find actual righteousness to merit the merit of Christ. Protestants rejected this on the basis of Rom. 4:3 and other passages that say that God added Christ's righteousness to the sinner through **Imputation**. Imputation simply means crediting to one's account. Christ's righteousness was credited to your account the moment you believed. Catholics therefore believe in **Congruous Merit**, that we cooperate with God in our justification, which is a process. Protestant Reformers rejected this saying that there is no human merit cooperating with Christ's merit. It is Christ alone + nothing. Finally, Catholic theology taught that it is **Faith + Works**, both are essential to the process of justification. Protestant Reformers said "no", it is **Faith Alone** in Christ alone. It is faith + nothing. The controversy surrounding this final point is Paul's teaching in Romans 4: Justification by Faith Alone and James 2: Justification by Works. Catholics solve this dilemma by saying that there is one justification and it is a process of faith + works. Protestant Reformers solved this apparent dilemma by saying that there are two justifications; justification before God and justification before men. So, the difference is that Catholics merge the two passages and Protestants separate the two passages.

Phase 1



The reason Protestants do this is because of the context of James. James never doubts that his readers are believers (cf. 2:14; 1:2, 16, 19; 2:1, 5; 3:1, 10, 12; etc.). James never says that just because a man's faith is dead that he never had faith. If you saw a corpse, you would not assume that the corpse never had life, would you? No, you'd assume that the corpse once had life and now it is dead. In the same way just because someone doesn't have works now doesn't mean that they never had faith! That is James' analogy. The analogy supports the fact that the person once did have a living faith!

Body without Spirit = dead corpse

Faith without Works = dead faith

James wants us to have a living faith. That is, a faith that produces works. That's why James' epistle is about being a doer of the word and not a hearer only! Catholics take this out of context and import something totally foreign to James' argument. They have a real problem with Paul who says that grace and works are contradictory. It's either grace alone through faith alone or nothing according to Paul in Romans 11:6.

“in the Beloved”. The preposition *en* denotes close relationship. Thus, God the Father freely bestowed grace upon us by putting us in relationship with *the Beloved*. The Beloved is of course, God the Son. Now we move to verses 7-12: God's Redemption in Christ. God the Father is the Planner, God the Son is the Executer of the Plan, and the Holy Spirit is the one who Secures the Plan. Together they form an impenetrable defense against any created scheme of destruction. The Triune God has safeguarded us, His possessions, by way of a grace through faith salvation

b. God's Redemption in Christ (1:7-12)

(1) Redemption: Forgiveness of Sins (1:7)

Greek Text: 1:7 evn w-| e;comen th.n avpolu,trwsin dia. tou/ ai[matoj aurtou/ th.n a;fesin tw/n paraptwma,twn kata. to.n plou/ton th/j ca,ritoj aurtou/

Translation: 1:7 in whom we have the redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of the sins, according to the riches of His grace

evn w-| e;comen th.n avpolu,trwsin, “in whom we have the redemption”. **evn w-|**, “in whom” is masculine and therefore refers back to the “in Him” of verse 6. The “in Him” of verse 6 was God the Son, the Beloved one, and therefore “in whom” refers to Jesus Christ. We have redemption in Jesus Christ. **evn**, “in” is a dative of location or sphere, meaning that redemption is in connection with Christ. Col. 1:16 is an excellent example of the prepositions *en*, *dia*, and *eis* in close relation so that each can be distinguished. *en* refers to internal connection, *dia* refers to an external means, and *eis* refers to the goal. **e;comen**, “we have” is present tense the redemption and forgiveness are present (Phase 1) and ongoing (Phase 2) possessions of the Christian.

avpolu,trwsin, “redemption” is an important word. It is used ten times in the New Testament (Lk. 21:28; Rom. 3:24; 8:23; 1 Co. 1:30; **Eph. 1:7, 14; 4:30**; Col. 1:14; Heb. 9:15; 11:35). Seven of the ten uses are by Paul, three of which are in Ephesians. In Eph. 1:7 it refers to the present possession of all believers. In 1:14 and 4:30 the context indicates that it refers to our future possession at the believer’s glorification (eschatological redemption). The word **avpolu,trwsin** is composed of two words, the preposition *apo* and the noun *lutrosin*. The preposition *apo* means “away from” and the noun *lutrosin* means “loosing.” So, the word means “to loose away from.” The way this takes place is through a payment. This is like the purchase of a slave. So, the word comes to mean “a releasing effected by payment of ransom to God”. The clearest scriptural words declaring this concept are found in Rev. 1:5 in the words ***released us from our sins by His blood***. There are several other Greek words translated as “redemption” in the chart below:

Greek Words	English Meanings	References
<i>agorazo</i> (verb)	To buy, to purchase in the market (or slave market)	1 Cor. 6:20; 7:23; 2 Pet. 2:1; Rev. 5:9; 14:3-4
<i>exagorazo</i> (verb)	To buy out, to purchase out of the market (or slave market)	Gal. 3:13; 4:5; Eph. 5:16; Col. 4:5
<i>lytron</i> (noun)	Ransom, price of release	Matt. 20:28; Mark 10:45
<i>lytroomai</i> (verb)	To ransom, to free by paying a ransom price	Luke 24:21; Titus 2:14; 1 Pet. 1:18
<i>lytrosis</i> (noun)	Act of freeing by paying a ransom price	Luke 1:68; 2:38; Heb. 9:12
<i>apolytrosis</i> (noun)	A buying back, a setting free by paying a ransom price	Luke 21:28; Rom. 3:24; 8:23; 1 Cor. 1:30; Eph. 1:7, 14; 4:30; Col. 1:14; Heb. 9:15; 11:35

dia. tou/ ai[matoj auvtou, “through His blood”. *dia* with the genitive means agency or means. This is the payment. The payment for redemption is Christ’s blood. Paul already told us redemption was **evn**, “in Christ”, but we might conclude from this that redemption comes from Christ’s life so Paul defines more precisely the means by which redemption takes place which is through Christ’s death.ⁱⁱ Any death will not do, for Christ to have been strangled or poisoned would not redeem. The OT was very clear that shedding of blood was necessary for forgiveness of sin. So, Christ had to die a sacrificial death which included the shedding of blood. The author of Hebrews says that “without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.” (Heb. 9:22) So, Paul says it was through **tou/ ai[matoj auvtou**, “His blood”, a genitive of possession. It was impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin (Heb. 10:4, 11). This was not just anyone’s blood, but Christ’s blood. The blood had to be holy, not *unclean* (Heb. 10:29) but *precious* (1 Peter 1:19). So, the redemption could not be made by the blood of any man. Why Christ’s blood and not just any man’s blood? For example, why couldn’t God have supernaturally created a sinless man with clean blood to be the sacrifice? Because then all men redeemed through that man would then have to pay glory and honor to that man rather than God. This is why it was necessary that God descend and become man. So, that when men are redeemed God gets

all the glory. So, the blood of the Redeemer had to be the blood of a God-man. The blood of the God-man Jesus Christ was therefore the ransom price necessary to set us free from our sins and to bring glory to God. It is not only redemption (Heb. 9:12; 1 Peter 1:18-19) that is through Christ's blood but also *propitiation* (Rom. 3:25), *justification* (Rom. 5:9), and *reconciliation* (Col. 1:20). Every aspect and phase of salvation is accomplished through the blood of Christ.ⁱⁱⁱ

th.n a;fesin tw/n paraptwma,twn, “the forgiveness of the sins”. This phrase stands in apposition to the redemption and therefore further defines it. What does it mean to be redeemed? It means to be forgiven of our sins. **a;fesin**, “forgiveness” was used of the release of prisoners. It means you have been released from the debt of sin because your sins have been sent away. You, since you are a believer *after* the cross have been released from the debt of sin. What about those *before* the cross? How does that work? Turn to Romans 3:26 to see what happened to sins *before* the cross. Here Paul uses the synonym for **a;fesin** which is **pa,resij**. **pa,resij** has the Greek preposition *para* prefixing it which means “alongside”. So, the OT believers' sins were set down beside him and they remained there enabling God to “pass by” the sins which these OT saints committed. So, the Old Testament believer's sins were not permanently cancelled until the cross work of Christ. This is why the OT believers were told to pray for forgiveness (Ps. 79:9; Matt. 6:12; Lk. 11:4). Permanent forgiveness of sins had yet to come, their sins were just sitting there next to them. The word translated “sins” or “transgressions” is **para,ptwma**, it means “false steps”. This is a different word than that which we've been meeting in 1 John for sin, *hamartia*. However, when we compare Eph. 1:7 with its parallel in Col. 1:14 we see that Paul used *hamartia* there rather than *paraptoma*. This indicates that they have basically the same meaning. The important thing about this word is that it both of them refer to more than an accidental mistake. They refer to willful acts against God's holiness. These are deeds of treachery knowingly committed against God and this sin needs to be punished. These treacherous deeds were forgiven by Christ having been Himself punished in your place.

kata. to.n plou/ton th/j ca,ritoj auvtou, “according to the riches of His grace”. Once again this is *kata* with the accusative which indicates the standard or measure. Here it is best understood as the measure. It refers to the cost of redemption. What Paul is saying is that the cost of redemption can only be measured by His grace. How much is the grace? The grace is infinite, limitless. You might expect Paul to say that redemption was *ek ton plouton tes xaritos autou*, “out of the riches of His grace”, but no, that's not Paul's point. Elsewhere Paul teaches that redemption is out of God's grace, but here he is giving how much it cost God to make the redemption. **plou/ton** is the Greek word meaning “riches” or “wealth”

(cf. Eph. 1:7, 18; 2:7; 3:8, 16). This corresponds to the amount of the grace. Grace is *charis*, a word already discussed in v. 2, 6 which means unmerited or undeserved favor. *autou* “His” is a genitive meaning possession. It’s God’s grace. Paul’s point is that for God to redeem man it cost Him the supreme sacrifice, His own Beloved Son, Jesus Christ. This reference hints at many other benefits of Christ's death that Paul did not enumerate here.^{iv}

(2) Wisdom: Mystery of His Will (1:8-10)

(a) Provision (1:8)

Greek Text: 1:8 h`j evperi,sseusen eivj h`ma/j evn pa,sh| sofi,a| kai. fronh,sei

Translation: 1:8 which He lavished upon us with all wisdom and insight

h`j evperi,sseusen eivj h`ma/j, “which He lavished upon us”. **perisseu,w** is the Greek verb well-translated as “lavished”. The riches of His grace have been lavished upon us (aorist indicative). “God poured this grace unsparingly on us”. Paul’s combining “riches” with “lavished” more than demonstrates the superabundance of God’s grace toward us. In fact, “superabundance” may be a good way to communicate the amount of grace God has given us.

evn pa,sh| sofi,a| kai. fronh,sei, “with all wisdom and insight”. **evn** “in” with the dative here refers to the area in which God has extended His grace to the believer. The debate here is three-fold; what is the meaning and relationship of “wisdom” to “insight” **sofi,a| kai. fronh,sei**? Do “wisdom and insight” refer to God or man? To what do “wisdom and insight” refer? *First*, what do the two words mean and how are they related? **sofi,a|** “wisdom” probably should be translated as “wisdom”. The Scriptures distinguish between the wisdom of men and the wisdom of God (Prov. 30:2; 1 Cor. 1-2). When wisdom is divine or finds its source in the divine it refers to a knowledge that gives one the ability to pierce through a problem and behold the best course of action. “Wisdom is the true insight of known facts or insight into the nature of things.”^v **fronh,sei** “insight” should be translated as “discretion” or “insight”. It is the ability to put into action that which is seen through the eyes of wisdom. The two are very close in meaning and have a wide area of overlap (Prov. 3:19; 7:4; Jer. 10:12). The main difference is that wisdom is theoretical knowledge and insight practical knowledge (Prov. 3:13; 8:1; 10:23). Both are necessary. “People of understanding or discretion have pleasure in wisdom because they know how it will benefit them practically.”^{vi} If wisdom is the knowledge of skill in living then insight is applying that skill in living. Wisdom gives you the course of action, insight the

willingness to take it. Summers says, “this grace of God has been extended to us in the area of moral intelligence or insight and in the area of the practical expression of wisdom.”^{vii} So, “in Eph 1:8 it has the idea of understanding the relevance of God’s revelation in the present time.”^{viii} The Lord gave Solomon understanding and wisdom in his time (1 Kings 2:35). God gave Daniel and his three friends wisdom and insight in their time (Dan. 1:17). Wisdom is compared to gold, and insight to silver (Prov. 16:16). In the OT it speaks of men coming from all over to hear the wisdom of Solomon (1 Kings 4:34). But let me show you that wisdom being translated into action. Turn to 1 Kings 3:17-28: Solomon’s Wisdom in Judgment.

Now, you have this kind of wisdom available to you, not a human wisdom based on pragmatism where we all get together and share our opinions to discover the best course of action, but divine wisdom graciously imparted to you which will give you the ability and motivation to apply doctrine creatively. This wisdom is based on knowledge of God’s word for God’s wisdom is found in God’s words. The Psalmist expressed this by the words, “In Thy light we see light” (Ps. 36:9). That is, all knowledge, true knowledge, is derivative of God. As every lamp that gives light is derivative of the sun so every piece of true knowledge is derivative of God. God gives true knowledge that results in wisdom and insight. But how do I attain to this knowledge or what is the beginning of gaining this knowledge so that I can have wisdom and insight? The proverb tells us that “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge” (Prov. 1:7). But what is the fear of the LORD?^{ix} It is the Hebrew word *yirah* meaning “awesome, reverence”. It is to have a reverential awe for who and what God is. This can only come when one realizes the Creator-creature distinction. If you wish to have a picture of this distinction which results in reverential awe, a true fear of the Lord, I suggest you read Job 38-42:6. The words there taken at face value form the thoughts that place the individual in the position of beginning to know. Do you have that reverential awe of who and what God is? The beginning of knowledge is not Plato or Aristotle, it is not Bacon or Hume, it is not Kant or Kierkegaard, it is not Marx or Darwin; knowledge begins with a reverential awe of YHWH, the Creator. Knowledge is not the mere assimilation of so-called facts, for even facts must be interpreted properly. God gives just that, the divine interpretation of what we might call, the facts. Notice Paul’s prayer for the Ephesian believers in Eph. 1:17 (also cf. 3:10). He desires that believers come to *epignosis*, true knowledge, accurate knowledge, real knowledge! In Eph. 1:8 Paul is telling us that God, by His grace, has lavished wisdom and insight on us.

The Sequence

Fear of the Lord → Knowledge → Wisdom → Insight → Epignosis

Second, to whom do wisdom and insight refer to, Man or God? *Wisdom and insight* do not refer to God's attributes through which His grace was lavished upon us. The adjective *pase* with *insight* never refers to God but what God gives to men. If it did it would imply limited *insight*. So, both wisdom and insight refer to what God in His grace has given us. The parallel Col. 1:9 helps us determine this interpretation. There Paul says, "For this reason also, since the day we heard *of it*, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding". This certainly speaks of Christians as recipients of God's wisdom and understanding. Why has He given us this wisdom and insight? To understand the mysteries of the universe (v. 9).

Third, to what does *wisdom and insight* refer to, what follows or what precedes? It seems best from the context to understand this as referring to what precedes so that it qualifies that which God lavished upon us, namely His grace. That is, some of the infinite grace which God lavished upon us is in the area of *wisdom and insight*. This *wisdom and insight* are what enables us to understand the mysteries and what Paul prays that believers will have (1:17; 3:10).

ⁱ Chart taken from Tom Constable's Expository Notes.

ⁱⁱ Many theologians teach that redemption is not only in Christ's death, but also in Christ's life. So, it is both the life and death of Christ that form a redemptive career of Christ. The way this works its way out logically in practical theology has to do with the believer's life after salvation. If Christ's obedience in life was redemptive then our life after salvation is guaranteed. In other words, the Christian cannot have a serious lapse into sin because Christ's life purchased obedience for the elect. This is what reformed theology means by Perseverance of the Saints. It is a doctrine finding its foundations on the idea that Christ's life of obedience, in addition to His death, was redemptive.

ⁱⁱⁱ Even our ongoing cleansing (Gk. *katharizo*) during sanctification is based on the blood of Christ (1 John 1:7, 9).

^{iv} Louis Sperry Chafer lists 33 riches of divine grace in his 8 volume *Systematic Theology*.

^v Harold Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 211.

^{vi} Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 212.

^{vii} Ray Summers, *Ephesians: Pattern for Christian Living* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1960), 19.

^{viii} Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 211.

^{ix} In the OT the "fear of the Lord" was a code word for a believer. It was a believer who "feared the Lord", who had reverential awe for YHWH.

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