

Every Spiritual Blessing – Part 5

Introduction

a. objectives

1. subject – Paul extols the spiritual blessings that God the Father has lavished on the elect
2. aim – to cause us to praise God that we are the recipients of such grace and blessing
3. passage – Ephesians 1:3-14

b. outline

1. The Spiritual Blessings of the Father (Ephesians 1:3-6)
2. The Spiritual Blessings of the Son (Ephesians 1:7-12)
3. The Spiritual Blessings of the Spirit (Ephesians 1:13-14)

c. opening

1. the **fundamental** nature of the passage
 - a. here, Paul is **patricentric**, because he wants to *elevate* the focus of the blessing of God from the *specific work* of the Son or the Spirit to the **divine decree** of the Father over it all
2. the **decree** at the heart of this passage
 - a. the divine decree = the eternal wisdom of God, in which he has foreordained all things that come to pass, for the purpose of his own glory
3. the **Trinitarian** roles at the heart of this passage
 - a. the Father (**vv. 4-6**) – the blessings of *election* and *predestination*
 - b. the Son (**vv. 7-12**) – the blessings of *redemption* and *inheritance*
 - c. the Spirit (**vv. 13-14**) – the blessing of *sealing*
4. the **structure** of the this final section (*i.e.* this “sentence” in English) – as good **exegesis**
 - a. **part #1:** “*in him you also*” = the **beginning** of the blessing (*i.e.* “*in him*”; cf. **v. 4b, 7, 11, 13**)
 1. “*also*” = you also have *received*; you also have been “*blessed*” with ...
 2. *i.e.* a new blessing within the framework of the decree of the Father over us
 - b. **part #2:** “*when you heard ... and believed in him*” = the **means** of the blessing
 1. **note:** a *parenthesis* – you can “*lift*” this part out and the sentence still makes sense
 2. *i.e.* a summary of the *means* of this final blessing (**see below**)
 - c. **part #3:** “*were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit*” = the **substance** of the blessing
 1. “*promised*” = what God had preordained and revealed that he would do for his own
 - a. outlined as a part of the divine decree, the command of the Father over the Spirit
 - b. outlined as a part of the eternal ministry of the Son (**John 15:26**)
“But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me.”
 2. *i.e.* the *substance* of this blessed work as it relates to us, specifically (**see below**)
 - d. **part #4:** “*who is the guarantee of our inheritance until ...*” = the **assurance** of the blessing
 1. *i.e.* the *security* that this blessing affords us as we wait for its consummation (**see below**)

III. The Spiritual Blessings of the Spirit (Ephesians 1:13-14)

Content

a. the blessed works of God the Holy Spirit (vv. 13-14)

1. **blessed work #5: sealed**
 - a. the **means** of the blessing (**v. 13b**)
 1. the two (2) main parts of the means of this blessing outlined by Paul here:
 - a. “*you heard ...*” = an audible reality; you were made aware; you came to understand
 1. more than just the casual hearing of something (**e.g. background noise**)
 2. the conscious absorption of information that you see to be of personal value
 3. here, the hearing of the “*word of truth*” or the “*gospel of your salvation*” (**synonyms**)
 - a. the “*good news*” (*i.e.* gospel) of a truth *more valuable* than other information
 - b. the gospel = the message that 1) human beings are sinful and in need of redemption; 2) the death of Christ substitutes for the ransom of sinners; and 3) those who trust in Christ for their righteousness by faith alone will be saved (**Together for the Gospel**)

4. thus, the fundamental Christian doctrine outlined by Paul in **Romans 10:13-14, 17**

"For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? ... So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ."

 - a. the first means of this blessing is by the audible hearing of the good news of Christ
 - b. **note:** preaching is not limited to the work of professionals – all Christians preach
 - b. "you believed ..." = an embraced reality; you assented; you trusted; you accepted as true
 1. a lot more than just accepting facts or assenting to an intellectual concept
 2. a form of **radical trust** whereby the facts *invade* every aspect of your existence
 - a. **e.g.** all forms of self-righteousness are abandoned, a sense of utter dependency upon Christ is embraced, an unconditional surrender of loyalty to all else is assumed, etc.
 3. thus, the fundamental Christian doctrine outlined by Paul in **Romans 10:9-11**

"... if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. For the Scripture says, 'Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.'"
 - c. **conversion** = a change in basic character; the spiritual change from one who is sinful to one who is righteous; the radical alteration of a reprobate into a saint
 1. **note** how the term "conversion" is rarely used in Christian parlance any longer – now, the basic idea is one of intellectual assent without any sense of outward change
 2. orthodox Christian belief assumes a conversion – a radical alteration of life from belief
2. **the blessing that Paul speaks of here comes to us through the agency of the gospel – the means of this blessing is to be converted by hearing and radically trusting the central message of Jesus Christ – it is only for the converted**
- b. the substance of the blessing (v. 13c)
 1. "sealed" = put a seal on; mark for possession; deliver safely; to stamp for security
 - a. **e.g.** in **Rom. 15:28**, Paul anticipates when the collection is securely "delivered"
 - b. **e.g.** in **Matt. 27:66**, the chief priests "seal" the tomb of Jesus and set a guard
 - c. **e.g.** in **Rev. 20:3**, the angel throws Satan into the pit and "seals" it over for 1000 years
 - d. a word which has the sense of something **unbreakable**
 2. "with the Holy Spirit" = under the direct and abiding action of the Third Person of the Godhead
 - a. the two (2) most prevalent myths regarding the Holy Spirit
 1. that the Spirit is a *force* or the non-personal actions of God in time and space
 - a. rather, the Holy Spirit is a divine *Person* (complete with intellect, will, emotion)
 2. that the Spirit is (primarily) an agent of *our* happiness or prosperity (i.e. Pentecostal)
 - b. rather, the Holy Spirit is the agent of the Father to complete *his will* over us
 3. **note John 15:26:** Jesus speaks of the Spirit as "*he*" doing the will of the Father
 - b. the work of the Holy Spirit in the *totality* of biblical soteriology
 1. he regenerates, he draws, he convicts, he infills with faith, he gathers into the church, he teaches, etc. – he "completes" the work of Christ in the elect on earth
 2. all of these things **together** accomplish our redemption (and security in it)
 - c. the presence of the Holy Spirit in the *reality* of biblical soteriology
 1. "with" (not by) = the "device" that secures us safely to the Father is the Spirit
 - a. **note also:** "*who is ...*" in v. 14
 - b. an **ontological** reality = our seal is the Spirit, not just something done "by" the Spirit
 - c. the Spirit *indwells* us as the fact of our conversion, thus our seal (**Romans 8:9**)

"You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him."
 3. **the blessing that Paul speaks of here is the sealing of our converted state – the substance of this blessing is the personal presence of the Spirit of God who creates the converted and then securely holds them in that converted state**
 - c. the assurance of the blessing (v. 14)
 1. "guarantee" = a deposit that guarantees; a pledge; an earnest deposit; a security
 - a. lit. (see ESV footnote) a down-payment; a first installment; an initial commitment to **loan**
 1. a down-payment is a portion of the purchase price advanced by the buyer to secure the prospect of a loan by demonstrating commitment to the project (**i.e.** mortgage insurance)
 - b. the presence of the Spirit in the life of the believer acts as a *surety bond* by the Father
 1. thus, this can only be for those who are *truly converted by the Spirit* (not the **apostate**)

2. “of our inheritance” = that of eternal value which the Father has willed to his Son, to which we are co-heirs with Christ by virtue of being found “in him”
 - a. two things: 1) a perfect, intimate relationship with God, and 2) a perfected, sinless universe
 - b. **note (one could argue!):** since the inheritance is associated with all three (3) Persons of the Trinity in this passage, it is the pinnacle of the *intent* of the divine decree
 1. the Father adopts, the Son creates the inheritance, the Spirit seals that inheritance for the adopted until “we acquire possession of it”
 3. **the blessing that Paul speaks of here is the sealing of our converted state until the plans of the Father are fulfilled – the assurance of this blessing is knowing that “he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ” (Phil. 1:6)**
- b. the blessed works of God**
1. in the decree of God, the Father *chooses* a people and *predestines* them to be his children; the Son *redeems* that people by forgiving their sins, establishing an eternal *inheritance* for them; and the Spirit *seals* that people out of the world to that inheritance, all to the glory of God
 2. **there is purpose in the world – how do you fit into it?**