

Every Spiritual Blessing – Part 4

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*
 1. in redemption: the forgiveness of sin, the revelation of the eternal plans of God to save a people, and the unity of everything in heaven and on earth
 - a. redemption is the work of Christ to accomplish all that the Father purposed in “correcting” the Fall – to rescue a people within a fallen world as *the first step* in “reversing” all of the effects of sin in creation (*i.e.* restoring everything corrupted by Adam’s sin)
 2. in inheritance: the **completion** of the work of redemption

II. The Spiritual Blessings of the Son (Ephesians 1:7-12)

Content

a. the blessed works of God the Son (vv. 7-12)

2. **blessed work #4: inheritance (vv. 11-12)**
 - a. the definition of inheritance
 1. **note:** the language of this verse parallels **v. 7**
 - a. the phrase “*in him*” or “*in Christ*” is repeated eight (8) times – it is the **theme** of this section
 - b. it implies something in Christ, but it also has the sense of *in the Father’s plan*
 - c. *i.e.* through Christ, the Father’s eternal plan regarding an inheritance is **fulfilled**
 2. inherit = to come into possession of or receive, especially as a right or divine portion; to receive from an ancestor at death as a right or title descendible by law or genetic transmission
 - a. **lit.** to take ownership of something belonging to someone else, either by deed or death
 - b. inheritance = that which is received; the “thing” (n.) that passes down as inherited (v.)
 3. inheritance as a **human reality** – due to the fact that humans are **corporeal** creatures
 - a. we are creatures composed of a *physical* body – created *directly* by God from the earth
 - b. we are creatures *united* as both physical and spiritual – we are both mortal and immortal
 - c. we are creatures *dependent* upon the physical world – we are not self-existent
 - d. we are creatures built to *enjoy* this physical world – we are “creative” with resources
 - e. we are creatures who *own* – we take possession of “things” to the exclusion of others
 - f. we are creatures who *die* – we must “hand over” what we possess at death
 1. **i.e. you never see a hearse pulling a U-Haul trailer**
 - g. thus, the concept of an inheritance is strongly encoded within the very nature of what it means to be **human** – we understand the idea of receiving the possessions of another by right or decree simply because we live in a physical state, need stuff, and own stuff

4. inheritance as a *historical-redemptive* reality – based on God’s purposes in creation
 - a. we were ordained to take “*dominion*” over the created world (**Genesis 1:28**)
 - b. but, in the Fall, our ability to *completely* “dominate” this world was removed from us
 1. **i.e.** there is much in the world we cannot control (**e.g.** weather)
 2. **i.e.** death forces us to relinquish control (**e.g.** of our possessions)
 3. **e.g.** the “banishment” of Adam and Eve from the Garden (**Genesis 3:24**) signaled the end of our ability to eat from the Tree of Life and take control over our *longevity of life*
 - c. so, in the Law, God established *inheritance* regulations (**e.g. Num. 27:8-11**)
 1. starting with Abraham and the Promised Land – an “inheritance” granted to Abram and his posterity within the primary covenant of God, and continued in the Mosaic covenant
 2. a series of legal standards with a deep **theological** basis – an irrevocable gift based on the special relationship between the benefactor and the recipient (**i.e.** father and son)
 - d. finally, in Christ, God the Father “passes down” everything that is of value to him to everyone that is in relationship to him
 1. the benefactor is the Father, out of the abundance of his “possessions” (**see below**)
 2. the recipient is the Son, out of his everlasting intimate relationship with the Father
 3. the co-recipients are those who are “*in Christ*,” adopted as sons and daughters (**v. 5**)
 - a. **i.e.** our participation in the inheritance is **indirect** (we have “*obtained*” it in him)
- b. the *nature* of this inheritance (**see also Romans 8:14-17**)
 1. **question:** what is it (exactly) that we are entitled to as the heirs of God?
 - a. or, what does God *possess* that could be “transferred” to us? (**note: more than reward**)
 - b. **side #1:** the *restored physical world*, in which we (the elect) are able to take perfect dominion over and complete the Genesis creation mandate (**Romans 8:18-22**)

“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.”
 - c. **side #2:** the *perfect, intimate, eternal, and all-satisfying relationship* with the Creator, in which we enjoy our Maker in a state of being whereby no barriers exist between us
 1. in this case, we (finally) inherit those things that are related to God’s *nature and character*
 - a. not heirs of *divinity* (**i.e.** becoming gods, like in Mormonism)
 - b. but, heirs of *glorification* – being transformed into a people *for (as) the glory of God*
 2. **IOW:** we are the *heirs* of the glory of God, in that God will glorify himself in and through us, drawing us into a perfect relationship with him (**i.e.** as Adam had; see **Gen. 3:8**)
 2. **the nature of our inheritance is much more than “heaven” – it is all of what God decreed to accomplish in creation that he promised to his Son, and that we (as the elect) participate in with Christ for all eternity in a perfect relationship with the Creator**
- c. the “*predestined*” nature of this inheritance (**v. 11**)
 1. **note:** this is the second use of the word “*predestined*” in this long sentence (**v. 5**)
 - a. because Paul is referring in this pericope to the *divine decree*, as before time and space
 - b. because Paul is confident that these things are not “*random*,” but planned out and purposed
 2. **note:** when we think of *predestination*, we often think (primarily) of our saved condition
 - a. **i.e.** we think of predestination only “within” the doctrine of redemption – as though we are only predestined to be “saved” from the wrath of God (in a *passive* sense)
 3. in **v. 5**, Paul says (actually) that we are predestined to be *adopted* by God
 - a. **i.e.** God purposed (in advance) to make us his sons and daughters, not just save us
 - b. **i.e.** our adoption is an *active* part of the divine decree – it was specifically purposed
 4. in **v. 11**, Paul *adds* that we are predestined as sons and daughters to receive an inheritance
 - a. **i.e.** God purposed (in advance) to give us everything he had designed in creation
 - b. **i.e.** our glorification is an active part of the divine decree – it was specifically purposed
 1. “*the counsel of his will*” = his preordained purpose; the divine decree; what God specifically and purposely set out to accomplish in creating this world
 2. **i.e.** one of the *clearest* statements that Paul believed in a divine decree
 5. **the reason for our inheritance is much more than “because we believed” – it is the very essence of what God decreed to give us (the elect) as a part of his larger purpose in Christ and in creation**
- d. the *purpose* of inheritance (**v. 12**)
 1. “*so that*” – a purpose statement; a conclusion logically drawn from one thing to another
 - a. **IOW:** *why* did God predestine the elect to receive an inheritance? *why* has God purposed to give to the elect all that he has promised to his Son?
 - b. or, what is God’s **final objective** in his divine decree?

2. “we who were the first to hope in Christ” = the first generation of those who could *directly* trust in Christ, with the *implication* of all who would trust in Christ from then on
 - a. although the O.T. “saints” trusted in the promises of God as they would eventually appear in a savior, N.T. saints trust *directly* in the One who has already come (Paul et. al. being the first generation of those able to do so)
 3. “might be to the praise of his glory” = the goal of God’s decree to predestine those who trust in Christ to an inheritance is that they would become *the object of God’s glory*
 - a. that everything would “praise” God for his power, his wisdom, his creativity, his love, his mercy, his righteousness, his justice, his everlasting nature as the Creator who is worthy of all devotion and worship (**i.e.** his glory shines forth to produce a response)
 - b. **i.e.** the absolute attention of the created witnesses to the absolute wonder of the Christ
 4. **the purpose for our inheritance is much more than “to reward us” – it is to complete the divine decree of God whereby all creation, from angels to the elect to the reprobate to the devil himself will fall down before the immeasurable glory of Jesus as it is manifest in those whom Christ has in himself**
- d. the *value* of inheritance
1. **our hope is not in escaping this world and making it to heaven – our hope is in knowing, by faith, that God has purposed us for much greater things, and our lives (even now) are all about glorifying him in anticipation of what is to come**