

Ephesians 13-09-29b

We resume our study now in Ephesians chapter 1. We're looking at a structural way to sort of get a grip on what is being said here. And there really is a purpose in it. It's one thing to identify a structure or to even impose some sort of order on information that's given to us, but there is a purpose in it.

You can see over in the right-hand column of our chart that we've established that there is a so that. There is a purpose. And you and I, as we look at this chapter, there is a so that.

It ought to make a difference to us. It's not just academic information. It's not just a puzzle to solve or a set of concepts to observe.

We should come away from this equipped. We should come away from this changed. We should come away from this with some fresh insight and some fresh motivation and perhaps some fresh tools to live the life to which we have been called.

So keep that in mind. I don't want to bog down in details. I've purposely not done a lot of exegesis here.

We haven't parsed Greek verbs or anything, which is a temptation, because as most of you know, I did both my short and my long exegetical papers in seminary on the last half of this chapter because it's just such a knock-it-out-of-the-park chapter. It's one of the great chapters of the Bible, and I love every Greek word that's in it. But that doesn't really serve our purpose.

Our purpose is to grasp what the apostle is reaching and taxing the limits of language to express. When you start talking about God the Father and what He has done for us in the Lord Jesus Christ, it is almost beyond the abilities of even a genius like the apostle Paul to express. But He's done a beautiful job under the inspiration of the Spirit, and it is here for us.

We should come away not just with a chart, but with an excitement about the things that God has done, what we possess in Christ, and what that means tomorrow and the next day and the next day. So keep an eye out for those things. And when we look at our final column over here, so that, this is our bread and butter.

These are our tools. This is the machete we're going to hack our way through the jungle with. This is the destination.

This is the purpose. This is what God wants us to know about our position in Christ. It ought to make a difference.

It's not enough to be a Christian. We want to actively prosecute our Christianity. We want to be reflecting the glory of God in an active and meaningful way.

It's not static. This whole thing moves. Look at the movement that you see as we fill in these little rows and columns here.

It moves from eternity past and what God has already done. Having done these things, He is doing things for us now for a purpose that is now and in the future. It flows.

It moves from eternity past into the present and into the eternal future. It is as dynamic and powerful as God Himself. So even though we're sort of mechanically addressing this just to try to get our minds wrapped around it, don't get lost in the fog.

If the chart starts messing you up, forget the chart and just listen to the concepts. God has done things in the past. He planned.

He provided. He purposed and destined things in the past. So that He could do some things in the present and He's got an ongoing present and future purpose.

Just look for those things. That's what the three columns really mean. What does that do? It gives us an appreciation for God.

How gracious, how incredibly merciful and glorious He is to even think of us. Remember what David says, What is man that you're mindful of him? Are the son of man that you visit him, that you come down and incorporate him into your purpose? We have been made a little bit lower than the angels, but we're going to be raised up and crowned with glory and honor in Christ. In Christ.

And it's all about the Lord Jesus Christ. And if we don't come away, having looked at this chapter, with a greater, more profound, deeper and more meaningful appreciation for the Lord Jesus Christ, then we've really missed it. And it's probably my fault.

But we've missed it because that's what this chapter is about. In Him. In Him.

The Lord Jesus Christ. Our Savior. Our Redeemer.

He is our peace. He is our forgiveness. He is our righteousness and sanctification.

Without Him there is nothing. Life has no purpose. Life has no destination.

Life has no origination without Him. So I want to emphasize that these things we're looking at are just the means to an end. It's not an end in itself.

Don't say, boy, I'm sure glad I got that chart filled out. Say, I am glad I have a Savior by the grace of God the Father that has done these wonderful things for me. So we've already now looked at verses 3, 4, 5 and 6. We've gone into verse 7. This is our third row now.

It says in verse 7, In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins,

according to the riches of His grace. Verse 8, Which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence. Verse 9, Having made known to us the mystery of His will.

Right? And you can already see some little clues, some little keywords here, can't you? About how we're going to fill in our third row. And Paul is giving these things to us in the order that he does for emphasis. He wasn't sitting here with a chart like we're filling out.

But conceptually, and I was talking to somebody about this earlier in the week, people in the past were intellectually more exercised. They didn't have computers. They didn't typically even have pencils and paper in the ancient world.

And people from childhood were skilled and were trained and were exercised in holding concepts in their mind, especially in Greek. Anybody that studies the Greek language will tell you that concepts are fluid and move around. English is a very order-dependent language.

We want our subject at the beginning, our verb in the middle, and our object at the end. In Greek, it's case-based and tense and voice and mood-based. And you can scatter things all over the map.

And to do that requires sort of a mind whiteboard, a mind chalkboard, where you can write things down and hold them. And people's memories and their conceptual apparatus was just much more fulsome and much more developed than ours is. Ours is atrophied through disuse somewhat.

So, again, our chart here is designed to kind of help us have the mind that the hearers in the first century would have had, who would listen to this being read. I would just stand up here and read this in Greek to you, who are Greek-speaking people, and your minds would sort of fill in these boxes for you. And the causes and conditions and successions and relations would form themselves in your mind because you've done this from childhood.

People didn't walk around with any kind of computerized equipment, much less did they even have tablets. They didn't have a big cheap tablet and a pencil. They did it all in their minds.

I covet the day when God upgrades our hardware and we can do this in our minds again, as people in the ancient world did. Even people in the early days of this country did. You think about these guys who gave these tremendous speeches and things, our founding fathers, and in many cases they weren't working from notes.

The intellectual capacity was so much greater. So here, don't worry too much about, right now, the order in which Paul is giving these, although it is critical and there's a reason for it. But let's just see if we can find the relationships.

That's what we're looking for here is the relationships. The emphasis is going to come by the order, but the relationships are established by the verbs. And so when you see in verse 9, having made known to us the mystery of His will, that's going to be in our third column.

I'm sorry, the third row, first column. You're going to have a hard enough time without me messing up the numbers. Third row, first column.

Having made known to us the mystery of His will, that's verse 9. That's what He has already done. These other things in verse 7 and 8 aren't going to take place until the mystery of His will is revealed. Make sense? Can't go execute the plan if nobody's told you the plan.

Although people try. And it's just chaos. Having made known to us the mystery of His will, that's verse 9. And look at the rest of that verse.

According to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself. This isn't just random. God has a purpose in it.

And He has a desire, He has a will. There's something He wants to get done. That's all in the first column, third row.

Having made known to us the mystery of His will, the good pleasure that He purposed in Himself. And God's good pleasure in a way is His purpose. He takes pleasure in accomplishing His purpose.

All of us do. Do you have anything that you want to get done? And once you get it done, isn't it gratifying? Wow. Wanted to get the house cleaned? Got it done.

Wanted to get the garden weeded? Got it done. Wanted to get the car fixed? Got it done. Whatever it is we tackle, there is a pleasure in successfully, even if it's an unpleasant task, we're glad that it's done.

We've accomplished our goal. Now the second column here, what is it that God has done? We're actually kind of moving backward because this is in verse 8. If you look at the end of verse 7, "...the riches of His grace He has made to abound toward us in wisdom and prudence." God has made His grace riches abound, but in a specific way. He didn't just turn a bucket over in heaven and out comes grace.

The riches of His grace have abounded to us in a specific way, by a specific means. So in the has column, this is row 3 there, "...He has made His grace riches abound," how? "...by means of, in the sphere of, wisdom and prudence." And the translations are good enough for now. We can talk about prudence later.

What is prudence? What does it mean when you're prudent? It means that you don't just take some piece of instruction and run with it, incautiously or without some care. If you're prudent, you're thoughtful. You do things, but you think about it.

You don't do it in a vacuum. You don't do it without some thought, some consideration, some

planning. There is wisdom that comes from God, but we have to be careful about applying it.

Remember Paul says in another epistle, he says, I've got a lot of privileges as an apostle, but I don't exercise them. The wisdom is, as an apostle I have the right to lead about a wife. I have the right to expect support from you all as I go about doing my apostolic work, but I do not exercise that.

Why? Because not only am I wise in knowing what are the rights and privileges of an apostle, but I am prudent realizing that if I were to place those obligations on you, it would be a distraction, and it would make it more difficult for you to understand the higher and greater things that you need to know from God. So I have not exercised these privileges, even though I could, because I'm prudent. I know that there is a higher and grander purpose than me making sure I get every bit of my apostolic perks.

All things are lawful, that's wisdom. In Christ, do what you want, but all things are not edifying, that's prudence. I have the right to do certain things, but what is the effect going to be on those around me? Maybe even though wisdom tells me it's okay, eating meat offered to idols, if somebody, my neighbor is going to be offended, even though my wisdom tells me it's fine and I can do it, you lay a piece of meat in front of a rock for an hour, the rock happens to be a carved idol, but it's just a rock, that is perfectly good meat.

Wisdom tells me, you know, the sheep got let down, arise Peter, kill and eat. What God has called clean, let no man call common. Well, these people are calling meat common, because it laid in front of a rock for an hour, and now it's in the marketplace, it's kind of like the showbread that was in the holy place, and now it's out there to be eaten by the priest.

Well, people got a religious burr under their saddle about eating this meat, because this is a sacrifice to idols. How could you bring that into your house? How could you have anything to do with it? How could you touch not the unclean thing? And, you know, they're not maybe as far along. And so prudence says, even though wisdom allows it, prudence says, let's not cause a younger believer, a weaker believer to stumble.

Do I need the meat? Can I get along without it? I can get along without it, and I'm not potentially harming a fellow believer or putting an impediment or a distraction in their path. Let's just not make that an issue. Wisdom and prudence, that goes in that center box there.

He has made His grace rich as it bound to us by means of and in the sphere of wisdom and prudence. It's a wonderful two-part gift. It's really fun at Christmas or your birthday.

You open up a box or you open up one of these gift sacks. When you look inside, there's one gift. You pull it out, and you start to set it aside and say, look again, and there's something else in there.

It's a twofer. You get a two-for-one. There's a double benefit in there.

And some of these things, people are so generous, you just keep pulling one thing after another after another out, and you think, wow, this is just like a cluster bomb of a gift. It's a gift that keeps on giving. It's like a bottomless sack of goodies.

Well, this is His grace, riches abounding. Look at those three words. He has made the riches of His grace.

It's not a little bit of grace. It's not a trickle of grace. It's not a tablespoon full of grace.

It's an abundance of grace. It's an abundance, and it abounds. The riches abound.

I saw this past week where some person who chose to remain anonymous and wisely so won like a \$400 million Powerball out there in North Carolina. There's a bunch of states, and somebody won the thing. The guy had been sent out by his wife to buy hot dog buns.

He went to the convenience store. They were out of hot dog buns. He had a \$20 bill in his hand, no hot dog buns.

He walked by the machine, you know, with the lottery stuff, and he said, Ah, what the heck. It was only the second time in his life he had ever bought a lottery ticket. And he just plunked down the 20 and said, Give me the Powerball, and he won it, \$400 million.

That's riches abounding. That's abundant riches. That's what Paul is getting at here.

He's stretching the limits of his Greek vocabulary here. God has made His grace abound to us. It's a treasury.

It's inexhaustible. But where and how? We say, well, you know, that sounds great in the abstract, but I'm still down here slogging along. I'm doing my job.

I'm paying my bills. I'm getting into trouble and trying to fix it. Other people are troubling me, and I'm trying to endure it.

What is this riches and abundance? You know, it sounds great on the page, but where is it? Well, he tells us where it is. It abounds to us in wisdom and in prudence. We understand the facts and the realities.

We know what God has done in Christ, and we know what to make of it, what to do with it, when to apply it, when to hold it in reserve, when to do it in the now, when to expect it in the then. Prudence. We have perspicacity.

We have perception. We understand that maybe now is not the time. Got to have patience.

How many times does Scripture say you have need of patience? You have need of endurance. You've got to wait. Delayed gratification.

Our whole salvation is one big delayed gratification, isn't it? Jesus died on the cross. We accepted Him as Savior. Why aren't we in glory with the angels, resurrected and, you know, living off the fruit of the tree of life and so on? We have to be patient.

We are learning by waiting. God teaches us in the interim. There is value in the delay.

Has to be. Otherwise God wouldn't put a delay. But He makes the riches of His grace abound to us.

How much can we appreciate God's solutions to problems when we have no problems? If we didn't understand the deleterious, corrupting influence of sin, how could we appreciate the greatness of our deliverance from it? There is value in the delay. There is value in the wait. And God gives us in the riches the treasury of His grace.

He makes it abound by giving us wisdom, which is the factual information, the knowledge of how things work and what is related to what, and prudence, which is careful and a beautiful application of those things, knowing when and how. Then you move back up to verse 7 to get the so that. Why did God make wisdom and prudence abound to us, having made known to us the mystery of His will? The mystery of His will, this is the content of that wisdom, right? And prudence.

It's all of the things that pertain to His will. What do we get from that? He did all these things. Having made known to us the mystery of His will, He made the riches of His grace abound to us in wisdom and prudence, so that, verse 7, in Christ we would have redemption through His blood and the forgiveness of sins.

So, we say, you know, all of these wonderful riches of grace are great, but I'm down here slogging through the circumstances of life. Where's the so what? The so what, the reason that we spend time learning the Word of God, meditating on the Word of God, prayerfully seeking to apply the Word of God in our lives, is to lay claim to this so that redemption through His blood and the forgiveness of sins. And again, this is sort of a twofer.

We have redemption. We were redeemed at the point of our salvation. Our sins were forgiven at the point of our salvation, but we are daily reclaimed out of the world.

We are daily forgiven of the impediments and the deadening effects of sin, whether it's our sin or somebody else's sin, or just the inherent sin in the world. All you've got to do is watch the news to get depressed. All you have to do is look around in our culture to be mashed down and think, what's the point? It's all swirling in a downward direction toward the great three-inch drainpipe of human civilization.

What are they going to do? It's beyond hope for the dead. It's beyond hope for the economy. It's beyond hope for the moral fabric of the country.

It's beyond hope for the international economic interrelationships. It's beyond hope that wars could be reduced. It's beyond hope that the Middle East problem can be solved.

Well, we are redeemed. We are reclaimed. We are brought into God's world, God's economy, God's thoughts and intents daily.

How? Wisdom and prudence. Wisdom and prudence diminishes and causes to recede into the background these details of life, these circumstantial realities, and brings to the fore the divine and higher realities. It is a deliverance.

We are redeemed. We are bought out of the world. We don't have to dwell in the shadow.

We walk in the light as He is in the light, and we have fellowship with Him and He with us. 1 John 1.7, The blood of Jesus Christ His Son keeps on cleansing us. We have forgiveness.

We have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins daily. It's not just a positional truth from the past. It's not just a by-and-by of resurrection and regeneration.

It's now. God has made known to us the mystery of His will. He has imparted to us this wisdom and prudence so that we can claim and exploit redemption and forgiveness every single day.

Are you down? Are you bogged and laden and slowed and choked up with the cares of this life, with the actions of other people, with the downward descent of circumstances and events in life? Think about this. There is a practical solution. It is divinely energized.

It happens in Christ. There is an active redemption. There is an active forgiveness, cleansing, separation from these deadening, destroying effects of sin.

That's what forgiveness is. It's a release. The whole word *aphiemi* in Greek means to release.

It lets go. The barnacles on the hull of your ship are removed. The clamoring zombies hanging on to the last helicopter out are shot off of the rails.

You're trying to escape, and all of the... I just saw this last night. All the zombies are hanging on, and, oh no, we can't get away. There's too many of them.

We don't have enough lift. We are delivered. The weight and the drag and the destructive, corrupting influence of sin is removed.

Forgiveness isn't just sort of an abstract legality. It's a practicality. We need for these things to be removed.

We need for them to let go of us. Remember that? Laying aside every weight and the sin that so easily besets us. How can you run a race when you've got a 50-pound sack of sweet feed on your shoulder or rolled oats or whatever it is? This is what I think of when I think of a weight.

I think of moving all that feed. We'd go to the feed store, throw it in the truck, come home, pull it out of the truck and carry it into the barn. 50-pound sacks.

When you're a 13-year-old scrawny kid, that stuff is heavy. Well, I couldn't run with that stuff. I could barely stand up.

Laying aside every weight and the sin that so easily besets us. Afi-Ami. Get it disattached.

Get it released. Now we can run with patience, with endurance, the race that is set before us. Forgiveness is a practicality.

If you're down, if you're fighting depression, think about the release. Where does it come from? Wisdom and prudence. God organized this stuff in eternity past when He decided to make known to us the mystery of His will.

And the mystery of His will is something we're coming to right here in the middle of this beautiful menorah, this beautiful seven-branch candlestick. We have looked at these first three branches now. Again, in the first row there, God having chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, chosen us in Christ.

He decided that there would be a population and He would deliver the church in particular in Christ. This is what Paul is focusing on. This is not even the humanity at large.

This is us in this age. He's writing to the saints and faithful in Christ Jesus. This is a message for the church.

Is there redemption and many other things for Israel? Yes, but that's not what is in view. Us here is you and me, those in the age of the church, chosen us in Him. This doesn't pertain specifically to Israel.

They're going to catch up. They're going to be in Him later on, but they're not in Him yet. Never have been in Him.

There's no passage of Scripture that says anything about Israel being in Christ. They're not there yet. They will be, but it's future for them.

We have it now in Him before the foundation of the world. This is the mystery that even though God started with Israel, this glorious status of relationship with Christ would be given first to the Gentiles. How many times do you see the last shall be first, the first shall be last, the elder shall serve the younger, the younger is going to prevail, the younger is going to receive the

inheritance.

Jacob is going to cross his hands with Ephraim and Manasseh. It's unexpected. We didn't see it coming.

It's a mystery. This is the mystery. God having chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world.

This is row one. God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places. This is your possession right now.

Every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places belongs to us, at least in prospect, in potential, depending on whether or not we claim it, so that we can be holy and blameless before Him in love. Holy and blameless before Him in love. The second row, having predestinated, having pre-purposed us in Christ.

If any man be in Christ, he's a new creation. In Christ we have these things. Having predestined us in Christ.

Middle of the second row, God has adopted us as sons unto Himself and has accepted us in the Beloved, so that we should be to the praise of the glory of His grace. Everybody got those first two rows? Everybody with me? The one we just covered now, God, in verse 9, having made known to us the mystery of His will, that had to come first, can't do these things without this mystery having been revealed. With the will of God not being communicated, we couldn't do these things.

But with this communication, God having made known the mystery of His will, the purpose that He purposed in Himself, He's got an objective here, He has made His grace riches abound to us by means of, in the sphere of wisdom and prudence. This is the operational skills that we use, so that we have redemption and the forgiveness of sins in the active ongoing sense. We have them in the past at the point of salvation, but we exploit them, we claim them, we work them, we use them in the present.

I need redemption today. I need to be bought out of this world. I need to be separated from it and released from its drag today.

Now verse 10, what is the mystery of His will? What is the purpose that He purposed in eternity past? You see this in verse 9, having made known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself. Here's the mystery, this is the big row four, this is the center, this is the center post of this beautiful candlestick and it's Jesus Christ. What else would you expect? He is the great central theme here that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, in Christ.

That's why we spent all of last Sunday looking at in Christ, all things in Christ. These branches

we're looking at are held up and are essentially bound to Christ. It's Him.

And it was God's purpose way back in the past, all of this predestinating, all of this organizing of wisdom and prudence, all of this redemption and forgiveness was purposed in the past and it wasn't revealed in the Old Testament. They had inklings, they had glimmers, they had adumbrations, they had echoes and foreshadowings but the mystery is revealed in Christ. Why do you think God made it a mystery? Why didn't He tell everybody it was going to happen? Isn't prophecy saying what's going to happen before it happens? Guess who else is reading the Bible? Your whole fallen angelic host, Satan, Lucifer, is the most profoundly intelligent creation ever to leave the hand of God and he missed it.

God interleaved it. It was there and even puny humans could figure it out if they were faithful and obedient and God the Holy Spirit would reveal. Men spoke as they were moved and carried along by the Holy Spirit Peter tells us in the Old Testament but it was the elephant's tail, it was the elephant's knee, it was the elephant's trunk, it was the elephant's ear and the mystery was not revealed until the Apostle Paul.

He is the steward of the mystery and he's talking about it here and he says, I have been given the greatest message in all of human history, Jesus Christ, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. That's how he's going to close this chapter. So right here in verse 10 we have the center.

The center row is the mystery. What is the mystery? All things united in Christ. All things in Him, through Him, by Him.

Christ is the fullness of Him who fills all in all. He's going to repeat this down in verse 23. That's our great center post.

Verse 10, the mystery, all things united in Christ. Things in heaven, even God's heavenly purposes that we don't even know about with the angels and things that happened before human history began. We've just been given tantalizing little bits and clues and hints.

All of those things. I would love to learn how human history folds into and is a part of angelic history and prehistoric history, if you will. All things in Christ.

The fullness of the times. And notice, in Him, fullness of times, look at verse 23, fullness of Him who fills all in all. You can't fully understand verse 23 without verse 10.

You can't understand verse 10 until we get to verse 23. It is the great center post. Well, we've seen our first three branches over here.

Let's quickly take a look at the other three. Starting in verse 11. In Him, also, we have obtained an inheritance.

This is something we have. This goes in the center column, right? This is what God has done for

us. He has given us an inheritance and we have it.

We have obtained an inheritance. Verse 11a. Being predestined.

Having been predestined. We already saw that back up there in our second row, right? This is another having been predestined. We have obtained an inheritance.

We have it now. God has given us an inheritance because having already pre-purposed us for this. So, in your fifth row there in the center, we have obtained an inheritance.

First column, God having predestined us according to the purpose of His will. According to the purpose of His will. And what is the so that? Well, look at verse 12.

So that, does it make sense? God having predestinated us has given us an inheritance. So that, verse 12, we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. I cannot tell you how many commentaries, print how many pages, trying to explain we who first trusted in Christ.

They generally come down saying, well, this is Paul or this is the initial apostles because we who first trusted in Christ, we Jews in Jerusalem, the early church was Jewish the day of Pentecost. Then it expanded out to the Gentiles. And so we who first trusted in Christ, and the reason they have to try to figure out that this is some early subset or the first ones at Pentecost or shortly thereafter is because there is a common understanding and I've mentioned it before, that, have you ever heard this? Salvation in every age has always been by exactly the same means, faith in Christ.

And they used to tell me in Sunday school, they told me in seminary, they told me in church, even Abraham and Enoch and Adam and all these other people, they trusted in Christ. And they, salvation in every age, it's just a dictum, it's an absolute, it's a law of Bible knowledge that all salvation in every age is, because what does it say? Neither is there salvation in any other. There's none other name given under heaven among men, whereby we must be saved.

It's all in Christ. So Abraham got saved by personal faith in Christ. Moses was saved by personal faith in Christ.

Daniel, all, Joshua, all the Old Testament parties saved by personal faith in Christ. We're just not told how they came to understand that the personality and the personhood of the hypostatic union, the incarnation of God in Christ, but some kind of way they figured it out because hey, that's how salvation occurs. Yes, everyone is saved in and through the work of Jesus Christ.

But I personally, this is just me, dismiss it if you like, I see no evidence that Old Testament saints had a personal faith in the individual identity of the Lord Jesus Christ. I just don't see it. They had a hope.

What does Hebrews 11, 6 say? He that comes to God must believe what? In a personal Lord and

Savior, Jesus Christ? He that comes to God, Hebrews is the big coverage of the Old Testament age and how those shadows are fulfilled in Christ. But he says in the Old Testament age, without faith it is impossible to please Him. Everyone is saved by faith, but the object of that faith was more general and less clear in the Old Testament age.

Yes, you believe the promises of God for salvation that God will find a way, but the details of that are a mystery not revealed until the Lord Jesus comes. Without faith it is impossible to please Him, Hebrews 11, 6. For he that cometh to God must believe two things, that God does in fact exist, that He is, and that He is a rewarder, the benefit giver, the beneficiary of those who diligently seek Him. God says, You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart, and when you seek I will respond.

But the details of this salvation were unknown. It is a mystery ready to be revealed in the last days in which we now live. So that's my contention, take it or leave it, but it answers a question here in interpretation because when Paul says that we who first trusted in Christ, this is the church, we are the first to have the mystery of the Lord Jesus Christ and all of these benefits that we are seeing as we parse this information, we are the first to see Him in the fullness of His glory, the fullness of deity and bodily form.

What does it say in Hebrews, first chapter, in diverse parts and various ways God spoke in olden days, but in these latter days He has spoken by a son. Now we see Him. Remember Balaam? I see Him now but not near.

A star will arise. It's galactically far away right now. Something is going to come, a big light is going to strike the brow of Moab.

It's now you and I from Pentecost forward, from the disciples forward, we are the first to trust in Christ, in the revealed second member of the Trinity, the fullness of deity and bodily form. We are the first to hope and trust in Christ. So when Paul says this in verse 12, this is the so that.

God has, having predestined us according to the purpose of His will, we have obtained an inheritance so that we in the church age, we are the first in history to trust in the God-man Jesus Christ as our personal Savior should be to the praise of His glory. Isn't that great? This is our particular destiny. National Israel has a particular destiny.

The Old Testament patriarchs have a particular destiny. We as body and bride of Christ have a specific purpose in the will and plan of God. And we who are the first in human history are a special gift of God to His Son.

And we are going to reflect the glory of God the Father in the Lord Jesus Christ in a unique and special way forevermore. That He might present it to Himself a glorious church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing but that it should be holy and without blemish. White raiment, the white robed saints reflecting, nothing reflects better than white, reflecting the glory of our Lord and

Savior Jesus Christ.

That completes the five rows dealing with God. We've got two more rows and I'll give them to you real quickly. I'm a little bit over but I'm going to do it anyway.

So bear with me. The sixth row, look at verse 13. In Him, which we very well recognize, in Him, You also, notice how trusted is in italics, scratch it out, it's not there.

In Him, You also. Our first five rows, everything God has done. Five fold revelation.

Row six is You. So if you wrote God in your upper left corner for those first five rows, in the upper left corner of row six there, You. Look at the next part of verse 13.

After you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, You, having heard, having trusted, that's your having column. You, having heard, the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, in whom also, having believed, having trusted. You have heard and you responded positively, you trusted, you believed.

What happened? You were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, verse 13 and verse 14. You are marked as His purchased possession. This is what the sealing of the Holy Spirit does.

It stamps us, it marks us, it identifies us. They find jugs and other vessels and things in the dirt of Jerusalem marked holy to the Lord. Holy to the Lord.

That's what the Holy Spirit does. His presence is the mark of God's ownership, God's possession, and specifically possession by the Lord Jesus Christ. We are a unique gift from God the Father to God the Son and we are marked, we are stamped holy to the Lord, holy to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Not just holy to God, but we are the purchased possession. So, our sixth row here, you having heard and having believed, second column there, were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise and marked as a purchased possession. That's verses 13 and 14.

The Holy Spirit is the guarantee of inheritance end of verse 14 to the praise of His glory so that we should be to the praise of His glory. Those are our first six rows filled in with our three columns having done a thing, a certain thing exists in the present, so that we should be to the praise of His glory. You may notice that in row five we should be to the praise of His glory.

In verse two that we would be to the praise of His glory, praise of the glory of His grace. Row one, that we should be holy and blameless before Him in love. It's very interesting now to kind of look at these concepts and see their interrelationships.

The final row, and I'll give it to you real quickly, verse 15, Therefore I also, we had five rows for God, one row for you, now we've got one row for the Apostle Paul, I also, having heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, I, Paul, having heard of your faith in the

Lord and your love for each other. This is your horizontal and vertical components, this is a healthy group. Paul, having heard, what does he do? He does not cease, in verse 16, to give thanks and to intercede in his prayers.

That's in the center there. Second column, Having heard of your faith and love, I continue to give thanks and to intercede. This is an ongoing ministry of the Apostle Paul on behalf of this group.

So that, verse 17, and the so that is going to be verses 17 through 23. This is why Paul prays. This is the purpose and the goal.

Having heard that they are a group that has this potential through their faith and their love, he prays without ceasing, giving thanks and making requests, so that, and the so that, just put in there, vv 17-23, verses 17 through 23. And that's the next section that we're going to look at. This is the great purpose of God, expanded for us.

So, interesting, is it not? If you want a fun exercise in the coming week, just pull these notes out and look at the interrelationships. There's many things I've not even mentioned that you can see if you begin to look at these. But here's the goal and here's the purpose.

Here's the so that for the whole chart and the whole diagram. We are here today by God's purpose. He purposed it in eternity past.

He accomplished all of these things and gave us opportunities in the present, so that we would possess these benefits into the future and reflect His glory. So, what? How should we then live? The great question asked by Francis Schaeffer, wrote a whole book titled this. How should we then live? Shouldn't this make a difference? When we face the normal daily struggles that God has ordained, that God has left us in.

This ought to make a difference. I say, you know, I'm not just trying to figure this out like any normal mortal human being. I'm not relying on psychology.

I'm not relying on past experience. I'm not relying on what I see other people doing in similar situations. I am a child of God and I am body and bride of Christ based on enormous destiny defining things that God did before the world began.

I have these present possessions in the Lord Jesus Christ with the power of the Holy Spirit sealing me and marking me out with a particular destiny and for a particular purpose. How can I do this? How can I navigate this circumstance, this situation, this problem, this prosperity, whatever it may be, to accomplish these so that's? What would be the course of action? What would be the nature of my thinking and my attitude that will reflect the glory of His grace, that will credit and vindicate the Lord Jesus Christ as my Savior, as the head of all things to the church, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. It just shifts the whole paradigm.

It changes our whole perspective when we view our daily lives in the light of these eternal things.

And I think that was the purpose of the Apostle Paul. I think that's the reason God the Holy Spirit inspired it.

I think that's why God has revealed to us the mystery of His will so that it makes that difference in us. Let's close here in a word of prayer. We'll pick up in this wonderful chapter next week.

Father, thank You for the truth of Your Word. Thank You for the riches of Your grace that have been expressed to us in the Lord Jesus Christ in granting us these unique opportunities, these tremendous provisions and blessings, and these almost limitless potentials. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will keep us ever mindful of these things, impress them on our hearts, help us to understand them and see their pertinence, their relevance, their application in the ongoing journey that we make through this life, the things that we encounter, the people, the places, the things, so that Your purposes will be fulfilled in us and reflect the glory of the Lord Jesus.

We pray it in His name. Amen.