

Guaranteed Inheritance

Topic

Believer's redemption and inheritance

Theme

God redeems believers and gives them a sure inheritance.

Desired Response

The learner will share with others the joy of redemption and the hope of a bright future.

Materials

- Visuals 8, 9.

Scripture Focus

Ephesians 1:6–14

Summary

Paul taught that believers, whether Jews or Gentiles, have been redeemed by the blood of God's Son. Together they are in Christ and share in God's inheritance. The indwelling Holy Spirit guarantees they will receive the full benefits of their inheritance in Christ.

Outline

I. Why God Blessed Us (Eph. 1:6)

II. How God Blessed Us (Eph. 1:7–14)

A. Redemption (1:7–10)

1. Its means (1:7b)
2. Its meaning (1:7c)
3. Its measure (1:7d–10)

B. Inheritance (1:11–14)

1. For the Jews (1:11, 12)
2. For the Gentiles (1:13, 14)

Memory Verses

"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory" (Ephesians 1:13, 14).

GETTING STARTED

LESSON 2

Grand Plans, Grand Failure

ASK: When have your grand plans failed? How did you respond?

ASK: What steps do you take to make your grand plans as sure as possible?

God has grand plans for believers, and His insurance program is out of this world. Paul talked about God's grand plans and what God did to guarantee they come to pass.

Insurance by the Numbers

Some have said the only certainty in life is uncertainty. Others have made such uncertainty their business. Around 6,000 insurance companies in the United States employ close to 3 million people to provide protection against all kinds of future uncertainties. Customers for such insurance companies spend over 1.3 trillion dollars annually on insurance premiums.

ASK: What can insurance not protect you against? (Q1)

ASK: When has your insurance disappointed you? (Q2)

God doesn't sell insurance to protect against the unknown; He offers a certain solution instead. Paul wrote about our redemption and sure inheritance in Christ. Both should help us face the future with joy and peace.

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

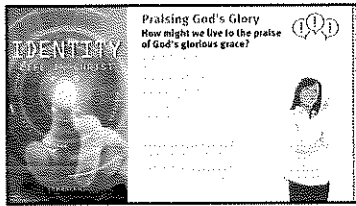
Searching within ourselves to find a reason why God saved us is futile. God didn't save us because we merited salvation, nor did He save us because our sincerity, talents, or potential impressed Him. Why, then, did God save us and endow us "with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. 1:3)? Why did He plan from before creation to do wonderful things for us (1:4, 5)?

I. Why God Blessed Us (Eph. 1:6)

The answer to the question of why God planned to bless us lies in verse 6: He predestinated us "to the praise of the glory of his grace." Our salvation and accompanying status as God's children clearly demonstrate the gloriousness of God's grace, the undeserved favor He shows to us. By grace, God reached out to us, plucked us out of our misery and ineptitude, and adopted us into His family.

God graciously accepted us in Christ, "the beloved" (1:6). God regards us now as having the merits of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 5:21; Col. 2:10). We are also joint-heirs with Christ, meaning we will inherit blessing from God the Father.

Praising God's grace isn't just a good idea or a nice response, rather it is the number one reason God saved us. God expects us to live to the praise of the glory of His grace.



DISPLAY: Visual 8—Praising God’s Glory. **ASK:** How might we live to the praise of the glory of God’s grace? (Q3) *By sharing the gospel; by testifying of God’s enabling grace; by thanking God for His grace; by depending on God’s grace every day; by discipling others to appreciate God’s grace.*

II. How God Blessed Us (Eph. 1:7–14)

In verse 7, Paul began his description of what we possess in Christ. From the entire description, we learn that redemption in Christ relates us to God as His children and qualifies us for a fabulous inheritance.

A. Redemption (1:7–10)

Redemption is the first of our possessions in Christ. Paul wrote, “In whom we have redemption through his blood” (Eph. 1:7). The verb “have” is present tense, meaning we possess redemption right now. There is nothing left for us to do to shore up our redemption.

READ: Hebrews 9:22. **ASK:** Why did our redemption require the shedding of Jesus’ blood? (Q4) *Remission of sins demands a blood sacrifice. Only the blood of the sinless Son of God qualified as the price of our redemption.*

“Redemption” includes a release from slavery by paying a ransom. Christ paid a ransom to deliver us from the bondage and consequences of sin (Mark 10:45). “Redeem” means “to loose from something.” Before we trusted in Christ, we were slaves to sin. When Christ redeemed us by His blood, He emancipated us from our slavery to sin.

1. Its means (1:7b)

Christ’s blood provided for our redemption from sin (Eph. 1:7). The apostle John wrote that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin (1 John 1:7). When Jesus instituted the Lord’s Supper, He told His disciples that the cup represented His blood, which He shed for the remission of sins (Matt. 26:28). Note that only Jesus’ blood could purchase our redemption. We can’t gain redemption by shedding our own blood. Our blood has no power to purchase redemption.

ASK: What might we gain from remembering the awful state from which God redeemed us? (Q5) *We keep a fresh perspective on the greatness of the gift of redemption; it prompts us to praise God’s glorious grace.*

2. Its meaning (1:7c)

Paul explained the practical meaning of redemption by assuring the Ephesians and us that Christ’s redemptive work provided for “the forgiveness of sins” (Eph. 1:7). Although redemption includes more than forgiveness, forgiveness is basic to its meaning.

The word “forgiveness” in the original language means “to carry away.” In the Old Testament, the priest sacrificed a goat and then confessed Israel’s sins over a second goat. The live goat was released into the wilderness. The goat never returned to the Israelites, providing a picture of their sins being sent away for good. When God forgives our sins, He sends them away never to be discovered or discussed again.

DISPLAY: Visual 9—Redemption and Forgiveness. **ASK:** God's forgiveness of sin is true forgiveness. What characterizes true forgiveness? (Q6) *No grudges are kept; neither side mentions the offense again; love flows freely; the forgiven expresses gratitude to the forgiver.*

God forgives for eternity the believing sinner the moment he or she comes to Him through faith in Christ. Every believer in Christ stands justified. The believer enjoys a right standing in God's sight because God has forgiven all his or her trespasses.

READ: 1 Peter 1:18–22. **ASK:** What has redemption done for us (vv. 21, 22)? (Q7) *Our faith and hope are valid because God has redeemed us. Because we are redeemed, we are pure in God's sight, and can truly love one another.*

3. Its measure (1:7d–10)

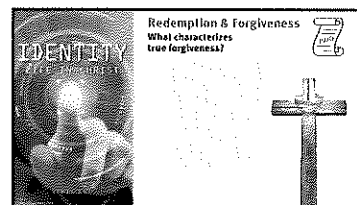
The last phrase of Ephesians 1:7 says we have been redeemed “according to the riches of his grace.” God doles out forgiveness neither meagerly nor regretfully; His forgiveness pours out of His storehouse and engulfs us. God's forgiving grace abounds toward us.

ASK: What did God communicate to us by abundantly pouring out His grace toward us? (Q8) *God communicated both His desire to share His grace and His more than sufficient ability to meet our need for forgiveness.*

As an example of God's rich grace in operation, Paul cited God's wisdom and prudence in making “known unto us the mystery of his will” (1:8, 9). The word “mystery” in the New Testament refers to a truth hidden in the Old Testament but revealed in the New Testament. God revealed His will according to His good pleasure (1:9). He delights in His plans concerning all things and all persons.

But what was this mystery revealed in the New Testament? Verse 10 provides the answer. It was God's plan to unify all things in the person of Christ. The “dispensation of the fulness of times” identifies the end times, or more specifically, the millennial Kingdom. When Christ establishes His Israel-based Kingdom on earth, He will exercise authority over all Heaven and Earth. His Kingdom will be a one-world government, and He will be the absolute ruler. He will banish Satan and strike down the unregenerate people left on earth at His coming. All things and persons, including both Jews and Gentiles, will be in the realm of Christ's rule.

Note that Paul's emphasis on unity of believers is not teaching that the church has replaced Israel or become the new Israel in God's grand plan. In this current age, all believers, whether Jew or Gentile, are part of Christ's church (Eph. 2:11–22). When Christ returns to establish His Kingdom, however, God will literally fulfill the New Covenant, Land Covenant, Abrahamic Covenant, and Davidic Covenant He specifically made to Israel in the past. God will regenerate Israel (New Covenant; Jer. 31:31–34), gather them together (Land Covenant; Deut. 30:1–3), give them the entire Promised Land (Abrahamic Covenant; Gen. 15:18–21), and set up Christ to rule from David's throne (Davidic Covenant; 2 Sam. 7:12–14). Israel will be a distinct nation of believers living in the Promised Land with Christ on their throne and enjoying specific privileges in fulfillment of God's promises to them.



See RBP's adult course called “Why Dispensationalism Matters” (RBP0145) for a comprehensive Biblical explanation of the distinction between Israel and the church in God's grand plan. Call 800-727-4440 or visit regularbaptistpress.org to order.

ASK: How should we respond to the revelation of the culmination of all things in Christ? (Q9) *We should live confidently in this life, focus on things with eternal value, presently surrender to Christ's authority in their lives, and tell others the truth about the future.*

B. Inheritance (1:11–14)

Paul continued his discussion of last days, moving from the general to the specific by describing the inheritance for the Jews and then the Gentiles.

1. For the Jews (1:11, 12)

Ephesians 1:11 and 12 relate to Jewish Christians and their inheritance. Paul, a Jewish Christian, used “we” to refer to Jewish Christians (1:11, 12) in contrast to “ye,” a reference to Gentile Christians (1:13). Jewish Christians “obtained an inheritance” in Christ. Paul did not identify this inheritance but merely wrote that it is “in Christ.”

How had Jewish Christians obtained this inheritance? Verse 11 explains that the inheritance resulted from “being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.” Three facts leap at us from Paul’s teaching. First, God had a predetermined plan, or purpose, concerning Jewish Christians. Second, God acted to carry out that purpose. Third, His purpose originated in His sovereign will. In this verse, as in other verses, predestination and the sovereignty of God go hand in hand.

READ: Ephesians 1:12. **ASK:** Why did God devise a plan for Jewish believers? (Q10) *To be to the praise to His glory.*

The Jews were the first to trust in the Messiah (the Christ). Although Israel as a nation rejected her Messiah, the Lord Jesus, God extended His grace to individual Jews. He planned that individual Jews would have the opportunity to trust in Christ and receive an inheritance. This participation of saved Jews in God’s inheritance magnifies His glory.

2. For the Gentiles (1:13, 14)

Gentile Christians also received an inheritance. The italicized word “trusted” in verse 13 indicates that the KJV translators supplied the word to replace an omission in the text. However, because of the context (see “obtained an inheritance” in verse 11) and the parallelism of verse 13, many Bible teachers believe the words “obtained an inheritance” would be more appropriate than “trusted.” Verse 13 would therefore state, “in whom ye also obtained an inheritance, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.”

Paul wanted the Ephesian church to know that Gentile believers in their midst had received the same inheritance as the Jewish Christians. This happened after they “heard the word of truth,” which Paul called “the gospel of your salvation” (1:13). Since all believers from this current Church Age are “joint-heirs with Christ” (Rom. 8:17), all that is Christ’s is theirs too.

ASK: Why is certainty about a future inheritance such an attractive prospect in our world today? (Q11) *The world can offer only temporary hope. Every person must face death eventually. Only the message of salvation offers eternal hope.*

Since God has promised an inheritance for His people, both saved Jews and saved Gentiles, we know our inheritance is secure. But how secure are we? In Christ, we are totally secure! Paul wrote that we are sealed with the Holy Spirit (1:13). God sealed the Gentile Christians with the Holy Spirit in response to their faith in Christ. Jewish Christians have the same seal.

ASK: How should knowing that the Holy Spirit is the keeper of our spiritual inheritance affect our hope for the future? (Q12) *All believers should rest assured that their inheritance in Heaven is secure and can never be lost.*

Verse 13 calls the Third Person of the Trinity “that holy Spirit of promise.” Because He is holy, He infuses in us qualities that honor God and denounce sin. Because He is the Holy Spirit of “promise,” we recognize that He lives in us in fulfillment of Jesus’ promise to send Him to us. Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would reside in us permanently (John 14:16, 17). True to Jesus’ promise, at Pentecost the Spirit came to reside permanently in believers in the Church Age.

But what is sealing? The apostle Paul answered this question in the first part of Ephesians 1:14: it is “the earnest of our inheritance.” An earnest is a down payment, and essentially a down payment is a promise of more to come. God has done great things for us already, but He also has great things in store for us.

The sealing with the Spirit will last “until the redemption of the purchased possession.” The purchased possession is the believer’s body. As children of God, we already have received rich blessings, but our bodies have not yet been redeemed. They are still subject to the ravages of sin, sickness, and dying. The indwelling Spirit, however, will remain in us until we receive our glorified bodies at the Rapture. We don’t have to fear death, for we can look beyond death to a far better life.

READ: 1 Corinthians 15:51–58; Philippians 1:20, 21; 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18.

ASK: What aspect of heavenly life in a glorified body do you find most appealing? Why? (Q13)

MAKING IT PERSONAL

Contemplating the Future

ASK: What has characterized your outlook on the future? (Q14)

ASK: How should contemplating your future in Christ affect your level of joy? (Q15)

Encourage your learners to look to the future from God’s perspective. God has grand plans for believers that are certain to come to pass. As believers, we should not be characterized by despair and hopelessness as we contemplate the future, even if the world seems to be falling apart around us.

Sharing God’s Plans

ASK: Name two people you know who need to hear God’s plan of redemption. (Q16)

ASK: What will you do to share God's grand plans with those individuals?
(Q17)

Memory Verses

Encourage your learners to memorize Ephesians 1:13 and 14. Give them an opportunity to say the verse in class next week.