

In verses 3-14 Paul is piling one glory upon another as he unfolds the blessings which are ours as the result of God's grace. God has caused them to abound to us.

God's Purpose to Glorify Himself

The first and most important thing to see in these three verses is that they begin and end with God's ultimate purpose to glorify himself. Verse 12: "We were destined and appointed to live for the praise of his glory." Verse 14: he has guaranteed our inheritance to the praise of his glory. The most basic fact you can say about the righteousness of God is that he has an unwavering commitment to his own glory. Everything he does, he does to heighten the intensity with which his people praise him for his glory.

1. THE BASIS OF OUR INHERITANCE

1:11-13

A. FROM GOD'S VIEWPOINT

1. Predestination
2. Power
3. Preeminence

B. MAN'S VIEWPOINT

1:12

There is tension when we speak of God's sovereignty and man's responsibility. We are to believe God predestined us and elected us and not for any other reason than God's perfect pleasure. Man cannot reconcile how this actually can work, so he comes up with a man centered view of the gospel. Man's mind is so finite and cannot fathom the infinite mind of God especially of these kinds of doctrines. Man needs to believe God as His revealed truth is brought forth, even if his mind can't understand it. Man, on his part, is to have faith. We know that faith comes from God as it is granted from Him, and when it comes to us, we exercise that faith in trusting God for His work of salvation. Repentance is also a gift of God that we are to practice as we turn from our sin and to Christ. So man is to repent and believe. This is what we see in this text. But notice, it is near the end of the sentence after we have seen God's plan that started before creation. He is the one who has put us in His plan and enabled us now to believe His great truth of the Gospel. He requires faith from us and He supplies it.

1. We who first trusted
The we are the Apostles and the other Jewish believers. These are the first ones to heed the call. Paul is including Himself in this group saying that they heard the Gospel and responded in faith. Paul and His Jewish people became followers of Christ as He relates to the Gentiles in Ephesus.
2. You also trusted
The Gentiles are the YOU. After the first group became believers, the Gospel was taken out to Gentile cities and many became believers too. They are fellow heirs. They put their faith in Christ. This is the means that God uses for salvation to be appropriated.

C. THE MEANS

1:13

1. The Word of truth, the gospel of your salvation
people whose inheritance God guarantees are the people who believe the gospel (v. 13). ("You who have believed were sealed.") There is a direct connection between believing God's Word and living for the praise of his glory. One of the greatest ways to honor people is to trust them. And since God is committed to his own honor above all things, therefore he is utterly committed to those who trust him.

You cannot be a Christian apart from the Word. God does His work through the Word.

Acts 8:4, 2 Tim 4:2, 1 Thess 2:13, 2 Thess 2:13-14

2. The Holy Spirit

The Word alone is not enough. 1 Thess 1:5 not in Word only but in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Nobody can believe the Gospel unless the Holy Spirit changes the nature of the person.

Man receives the Word and the Spirit quickens him.

The Holy Spirit regenerates us, convicts us and brings us to saving faith.

1 Cor 12:3, Acts 16:14, Eph 2:1,4, 1 Cor 2:12

3. Man's response

Faith is man's response to God's elective purpose. In election, God gives His promises, and by faith men receive Him. That is how God made it possible for the elect to come to Christ.

a. Heard

Rom 10:17

b. Believed

God persuades the will. He makes the Word attractive to us. God doesn't force our will.

We are given the ability to understand. He leads us to repentance. He leads us to belief.

We not only hear it but we believe it.

Rom 10:10-11

c. Trusted

This can be translated hope. We place our hope, our confidence, our trust in every respect in Christ.

2. THE EARNEST OF OUR INHERITANCE

1:13-14

A. GOD'S SEAL

What Does "Sealed" Mean?

The sealing is an official mark of identification that was placed on a letter or document. The seal was made from hot wax which was placed on the document and then impressed with a signet ring. It was now identified with being under the authority of the person to whom the signet ring belonged.

There are two great words here that aim to help us feel secure in God's love and power: the word "sealed," and the word "guarantee." Let's see if we can unseal this word "sealed" and look inside. What does it mean that believers have been sealed by the Holy Spirit (v. 13)? The word is used at least three different ways in the New Testament.

1. In Matthew 27:66, the tomb of Jesus was secured by sealing it and putting guards around it. In Revelation 20:3 God throws Satan into a pit and seals it over so he can't escape. So one meaning is locking something up, closing it in.

2. Another is found in Romans 4:11 where Abraham's circumcision is called the sign and seal of the righteousness he had by faith. And in 1 Corinthians 9:2 Paul says that his converts are the seal of his apostleship. So a second meaning of sealing is giving a sign of authenticity.

3. A third meaning is found in Revelation 7:3 where the seal of God is put on the forehead of God's servants to protect them from the wrath coming upon the world.

So what did Paul mean in Ephesians 1:13 when he said that believers are sealed with the Holy Spirit? No matter which of these meanings you use the basic truth is the same.

1. If the Spirit seals shut, the point must be that he seals in faith and seals out unbelief and apostasy.

2. If the Spirit seals us as a sign of authenticity, then he is that sign and it is the Spirit's work in our life which is God's trademark. Our eternal sonship is real and authentic if we have the Spirit. He is the sign of divine reality in our lives.

3. Or if the Spirit marks us with God's seal, he protects us from evil forces which won't dare to enter a person bearing the mark of God's own possession.

However you come at this message contained in this word "sealed," it is a message of safety and security in God's love and power. God sends the Holy Spirit as a preserving seal to lock in our faith, as an authenticating seal to validate our sonship, and as a protecting seal to keep out destructive forces. The point is that God wants us to feel secure and safe in his love and power.

ML Jones speaks of the sealing as a special fulfillment which we should be experiencing in Christ.

1. Security

Matt 27:62-66

2. Authentication

1 Kings 21:6-16

3. Ownership

Jere 32:10

4. Authority

Esther 8:8-12

B. GOD'S EARNEST

Arrobon---2 Cor 1:22, 5:5-----Down payment or earnest money given to secure a purchase. Later it came to represent any sort of pledge or interest.
It is an installment that guarantees the fulness of the blessings will one day come to fruition fully.
The Holy Spirit is our pledge or earnest. We know we will see the rest of it that is reserved in heaven.

Pledge—Rom 8:11,23

Installment (Firstfruits) Rom 8:23, 2 Cor 3:17-18, 1 Cor 13:12

God's Message to Every Believer

So then, what is God saying to us when he gives us his Holy Spirit and calls him a guarantee or a down-payment? He is saying, "My great desire for those who believe in me is that you feel secure in my love. I have chosen you before the foundation of the world. I have predestined you to be my children forever. I have redeemed you by the blood of my Son. And I have put my Spirit in you as a seal and a guarantee. Therefore, you will receive the inheritance and praise the glory of my grace forever and ever. And I tell you this here in Ephesians chapter 1 because I want you to feel secure in my love and my power. I don't promise you an easy life. In fact, through many tribulations you must enter the kingdom (Acts 14:22). I don't promise always to speak in soft tones of approval, but to warn you in love whenever you begin to seek security in anything but me."

3. THE GOAL OF OUR INHERITANCE 1:14

Although our inheritance is awesome, it is not the primary purpose that God ultimately has. It is for His own sake, His own glory, as He states again.

A. REDEMPTION OF GOD'S OWN POSSESSION

He will redeem His own. This will be done and accomplished at the believers glorification when we receive full glory and redemption. and are made the perfect possession of God.

B. TO THE PRAISE OF HIS GLORY

We are saved to be restored to the intended divine purpose of creation--to bear the image of God and bring Him greater glory.

Eph 1:6, 12 Isa 43:20-21