

EPHESIANS: PRECISION THINKING FOR ACCURATE THEOLOGY

SESSION 2 | EPHESIANS 1:4-

GOD'S BLESSINGS ON ISRAEL | 1 CORINTHIANS 1:3-12

- Verse 3 included in session 1.
- Verse 4 –
 - Our interpretation of v. 3 should be confirmed in the pronouns of v. 4 (and beyond). If, therefore, the Jewish believers are "us," then do the descriptions of vv. 4-12 align with this interpretation?
 - Who, then, has been **chosen...in him before the foundation of the world** to be **holy and without blame before him**? For the answer, consider Deuteronomy 7:6-7, Psalm 33:12, 135:4, Isaiah 41:8, 65:8-10, Matthew 24:22, 24, 31, 1 Peter 1:1-2, etc.
 - Were the Jews chosen to **be holy and without blame**? See Leviticus 19:2, Isaiah 26:2, 1 Peter 1:16, 1 Peter 2:9, etc.
- Verse 5 –
 - Are the Jews those who are **predestinated...unto the adoption of children**? The standard Reformed Theology conclusion is that God has predestined certain people to be adopted as His children and left the rest to be damned. Is such a conclusion merited here?
 - Consider Romans 9:4 -
 - There is not a single passage in the Bible that gives **the adoption** to all believers. Rather, this is a matter that is related to Israel, as this passage unequivocally declares.
 - The believers of Israel currently have the **Spirit of adoption** (Rom. 8:15) but are **waiting for the adoption** itself (Rom. 8:23).
 - Galatians 4:5 also restricts the **adoption of sons** to those who **were under the law**.
 - While most Christian theologians consider adoption to be part of general Christian doctrine in the church-age, such a theology doesn't align with this verse, nor the others about adoption.
 - By surmising that adoption is *being brought into a new family*, they then proceed with eisegesis to prove their assumption.
 - However, adoption as sons is not *being brought into a new family* but is about a son who was *born into the family* receiving the legal right to manage the affairs of the household.
 - In the church age, we are not born into the family and later receive full rights. Rather, we are gifted eternal life by grace through faith, and receive the full rights of the relationship immediately.
- Verse 6 –
 - The Reformed/Calvinist position works overtime to claim that my predestination and your damnation is **to the praise of the glory of his grace**. I fail to see the praiseworthiness of such a doctrine, or the graciousness of the same.

- However, if the Jewish nation is in view, then His selection of this nation is **to the praise of the glory of his grace**, because it does not involve the damnation of others, as is inherently necessary in Calvinism.
- Has (or will) God made Israel to be **accepted in the beloved**? (The verb allows for either a past tense or a future tense interpretation). Consider Isaiah 45:25 and Jeremiah 23:6.
- Verse 7 - The Jewish nation has **redemption through his blood**. It has not yet *received* this redemption, but the redemption is promised to the nation (see Zech. 9:11 and Rom 11:26).
- Verse 8 –
 - In the grace of God, the Jewish people became the recipients of **abounding wisdom and prudence**.
 - The word **prudence** is φρόνησις [phronesis], based on *phren*, a word related to mental ability and understanding.
 - Hebrews 6:4-5 (interpreted correctly as a message to the Jewish nation) gives this same testimony.
 - Romans 3:1-2 also speaks of the abundance of wisdom and knowledge that was given to the Jewish nation.
- Verses 9-10 –
 - These verses are related to verse 8. The **wisdom and prudence** which has **abounded toward** the Jewish nation is most evident in that, to them God has **made known...the mystery of his will**.
 - This is not, in my opinion, the mystery of the church age (which was *not* made known to the Jewish nation, but rather to Paul when he was *outside* the Jewish nation).
 - Rather, the mystery spoken of here is **that in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ**.
 - This dispensation is a yet-future time when **all things** will be **together...in Christ**, including all things **in heaven, and which are on earth**.
 - This is not descriptive of our day, but is descriptive of the coming Messianic Kingdom.
 - Most modern versions have shown themselves allergic to the word *dispensation*:
 - The ESV says "a plan for the fullness of time," though the Greek has no connection to plans and planning.
 - The NASB refers to "an administration suitable to the fullness of the times." While "administration" is closer, it is not as clear as *dispensation*. The HCSB also uses "administration."
 - The NIV avoids the term altogether, saying, "the mystery...to put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment."
- Verses 11-12 – stay tuned!