

EPHESIANS: PRECISION THINKING FOR ACCURATE THEOLOGY

SESSION 3 | EPHESIANS 1:7-12

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

- Verses 3-6 included on sessions 1-2
- 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."
- Verse 11 –
 - The grammatical structure of the sentence is: *being predestined in Christ (according to the of him who worketh all things according tot he counsel of his will), we obtained an inheritance*.

- It has already been determined in verses 4-5 that the **being predestinated** is something that concerns the Jewish nation. This can be further verified in v. 11 by asking, *who has obtained an inheritance by predestination?*
- The also inheritance is mentioned in v. 14., with an interesting change of pronouns from **ye were sealed** (v. 13) to **our inheritance** in v. 14.
- Compare Galatians 3:14-18, especially 18.
 - The Jewish nation has been given an *inheritance of promise*, not based on Law whatsoever.
 - While *possession of the land* was based on law, *inheritance of the land* was based on promise.
 - Romans 4:13-14 solidifies this argument.
- Some Calvinists use the last phrase of the verse (**who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will**) to build a fatalist worldview on every event and occurrence of life. This is making the phrase say more than it actually says. God does work **all things after the counsel of his own will**, but it does not follow that "There are no accidents in your life. Nothing has been left to chance. Every economic downturn, every phone call in the middle of the night, every oncology report has been sent to us from the God who sees all things, plans all things, and loves us more than we know" (Kevin DeYoung, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevin-deyoung/all-things-in-fact/>).
- The **counsel of his own will** and the *direct work of God's hand* are not the same.
- Verse 12 –
 - The purpose of being predestinated to an inheritance (v. 11) is so that the Jewish nation should be to the praise of his glory.
 - The reference is to **we...who first trusted in Christ**.
 - This phrase is very important in determining the identity of the first person plural used in vv. 3-11.
 - There is no conceivable way in which the Ephesians were the first to trust in Christ. It is only the Jewish believers of Jerusalem who were the first to trust in Christ (See John 1:49, Matt. 16:16, Jn 12:13, etc.).