

EPHESIANS CHAPTER 1

Review of the Purpose of the Letter

The purpose of this letter is to enlighten the saints in Ephesus of the plan of God, to have them understand the blessing of God to believers (1:3) so that they would not be isolated from Jewish believers and, even though they used to be far from Christ, they have now been brought near (2:11-15) so that they would understand their purpose on earth in being the new administrators during this time under the title “ekklesia” (3:9-10). Furthermore, they must not conclude that this “ekklesia” is an afterthought or that Jews were more complete or better in some way. This new administration is in accordance with His eternal purpose even though it was not revealed previously (3:4-5, 11).

Ephesians 1:3-14 – This passage makes a clear statement concerning the spiritual blessing or, literally, the proclamation of a spiritual nature (εὐλογία πνευματικῆ). Remember that this proclamation can be something that is received through a royal decree or it can be a truth about the person that is revealed by royal decree.

Paul lists five proclamations of a spiritual nature that are given to the saints (1:3–14).

He wants his readers to understand and rejoice in all that God has done for believers through Jesus Christ. Each section could be translated with “praise”:

1. “praise God for predestining us” (1:4–6)
2. “praise God for redeeming us” (1:7-8a)
3. “praise God for the mystery of His will” (1:8b-10)
4. “praise God for His inheritance” (1:11-12)
5. “praise God for the sealing of the Holy Spirit” (1:13-14)

Ephesians 1:13-14

NASB:

In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.

Literal translation:

In Whom also you, having heard the word of truth, the good news of your salvation, in Whom also (you), having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of the promise, Who is (the) pledge of our inheritance, unto redemption of the possession, unto the praise of His glory.

English Sentence Order:

You also, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, having heard and having believed the word of truth the good news of your salvation. (The Holy Spirit) is the pledge of our inheritance, unto redemption of the possession. PRAISE BE TO HIS GLORY!

Review:

The main idea of this subordinate clause (13-14) is “you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of the promise.” Everything else supports or expounds that idea.

In the Greek text, the phrase “you were sealed” is one word: σφραγίζω sphragizō – This is about the promise, guarantee, absolute certainty of our inheritance, of our future glory.

The seal and the pledge are only as important as the one sealing and pledging. Who is the one who seals? Who is the one that pledges? What does God use to seal and to pledge? The Holy Spirit, which is in each believer, guarantees the inheritance. To question if that seal, that pledge, can be lost is not to question the one to whom it is guaranteed, it is to question the guarantor.

New Material -

How does one get sealed, obtain the pledge, obtain the guarantee of the inheritance? That is answered clearly in verse 13. “after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise,” – NASB.

You were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, having heard and having believed the word of truth the good news of your salvation. – My Translation

ἀκούω akouō – is a verb that is taken from the Greek word for “ear.” The verb does not simply mean to hear a sound, it means to hear, listen, consider, and respond positively.

πιστεύω pisteuō – the word means to be fully persuaded, to consider something as true.

The word “after” is interpretive. Both heard and believe are participles, Nominative Plural Aorist Active Participles.

There are two directions that a participle can go, Adverbial or Adjectival. In this structure, this is an adverbial participle. There are two aspects of the participle in relation to the main verb. The participle can either be contemporaneous or antecedent to the main verb. With both the main verb and the participle in the Aorist tense, the participle can be either “believing” or “having believed.”

This means that when a person hears and believes the Gospel, he or she is sealed with the Holy Spirit who is our pledge. The passive action of sealing happens instantaneously. This sealing does not happen later, and there is no other step, no other requirement. The hearing and believing are the only requirements for the sealing to take place

What is heard? What is believed? The message (*logos*) of truth, the word of truth is restated as “the Gospel (good news) of your salvation.” The good news is a message, a proclamation, a verbal (or written) proposal that introduces the facts about God and Jesus Christ.

1. Who is Jesus?
2. What did He do?
3. What does He promise?

Conclusion

Today, you have heard the gospel. If you conclude that it is true, then you are a believer, you are sealed with the Holy Spirit, you have a guarantee of an inheritance in glory, you are a child of God, an heir of God, and a co-heir with Christ.

The pledge is of God; the transaction is final; God has set His seal upon you and He knows you are His because God is the one who seals you with His Spirit, the Holy Spirit. The seal, the pledge, cannot be broken.

Overview of 3-14

This opening statement by Paul is one of the most theologically condensed sections in all of Scripture. The full analysis of each phrase, clause, and word could literally take a lifetime. We broke this down into 5 proclamations of a spiritual nature, but this can easily be expanded into more observations.

One of the most discussed topics of this section is the idea of predestination. As we stated in the text, we need to make sure that we do not jump to conclusions. The word *predestined* is better understood as “appointed beforehand” or “determined beforehand.” When we see the predetermined plan of God in relation to mankind or believers, we must ask the next two questions:

1. Who is being predetermined?

In the text, the people under the predetermined plan of God is “us.” In context, the “us” is believers.

2. What does predetermination involve?

Believers are predetermined to the classification or benefits of being believers. “He selected...”

- For us to be holy
- For us to be blameless
- For us to be adopted
- For us to have redemption
- For us to have remission
- For us to abound in grace
- For us to know the mystery of His will
- For us to be in His administration
- The first-generation Jews to be His allotment to spread the Gospel
- For us (subsequent generations) to be sealed by means of the Holy Spirit

Notice that there are no statements that indicate we were predetermined “to believe.”

We must let the Word of God stand on its own; having this passage state that the selection is for unbelievers to become believers is disingenuous to this text.

In the future, we will discuss the doctrines of Calvinism and Arminianism and why it is a false dichotomy to say you have to be one or the other. We will talk about what they say, what is right and what is wrong, and conclude what the Bible says to certain questions raised by the debate.