

Eph ch 1 vs 7-

I pray that you are enjoying this book of Ephesians as much as I am, because here we are so fresh into the book having only traversed the 1st 6 vs so far and already so much has been given to us in the light of what we have in Christ. and We've only cracked the tip of the iceberg, yet we've already discovered that we've been blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.

Paul with in the 1st 4 vs of the 1st ch has already dipped us into the doctrine of election and what it means to be chosen of God. and Yes we acknowledge that the bible is filled with invitations to the unbeliever to place their faith in Jesus Christ, to exercise their free will to choose to believe that Jesus was crucified for the sin of the world. and That the only way that they can be justified freely of their sin is to place their trust in the finished work of the cross. However we also acknowledge the fact that God in His foreknowledge, before the foundations of the world chose who it was that He would spend eternity with, you say how do these things come together and I tell you I have no idea.

How these 2 truths intertwine I'll never know with in my finite being, however to God it's not a problem. He understands the balance perfectly, our job is to simply preach the gospel to every creature, to throw out the nets into the sea of humanity and pray that God brings about such a harvest that our nets begin to break and then we'll pray God strengthen our nets. But we have to trust what the bible says even when we don't get it because the bible tells us that with out faith it's impossible to please God, and if it were with in our grasp to understand everything then we wouldn't need faith.

Now, all that having been said I really don't think that when Paul wrote what would one day be seen as vs 4 of ch 1 of the book of Eph, that he desired that the main focus of that statement be drawn to the doctrine of election. I think that that was the secondary or peripheral issue that he was making, it was more or less a lead in; I think the main emphasis that he was making was on the fruit of election. Why it was that you and I were elected, and that was so that we might be holy and blameless before God. You see the given in the text is that you were chosen, he's writing to Christians, so he never really seeks to explain the doctrine of election here or the concept of predestination, but rather he explains why it is that you were chosen and what it is that you're predestined for. and The fruit of election is holiness and blamelessness, if you as a "Christian" are leading a life that accords with worldliness than you're not right with God and you need to repent because the out cropping of election or the evidence of election is holiness.

I'm not saying we never stumble; I'm talking about a consistent willful disobedience to the desires of God for your life, so the manifestation of election is holiness and blamelessness and the purpose of predestination (vs5) is adoption as sons by Jesus Christ, having been brought in to all the benefits of adult son ship being able to draw from and appropriate the riches that are ours in Christ immediately upon conversion in order that we might lead those lives that are holy and set apart to Him. and He has done all of these things for us according to the good pleasure of His will, we were created for the good pleasure of God and you'll never be satisfied in this life until you find yourself submitted to His will for your life, doing those things that are pleasing to Him. and What's the primary motive behind it all; the blessings, election, predestination, holiness, blamelessness, and adoption? To glorify the grace of God, God's primary purpose in saving you and saving me (and His desire to save you if you don't know Jesus) wasn't because of the fact that God had pity on us and so He desired to help us out. The reason He saves us is to the praise of the glory of His grace, to glorify and magnify the grace of God. and It's by His grace that He has accepted us, not in and of ourselves, but in the Beloved, who is Jesus Christ

If you're not in Christ you're not accepted before God, and it doesn't matter how strict of a morally disciplined life you live, how religious you are, or all the sacrifices you make. It's all pointless (eternally speaking) if you're not in Christ. As a matter of fact the bible says that to obey is better than sacrifice so if you want acceptance before God, don't try and gain it through making all kinds of sacrifice, but rather just be obedient to the word of God and believe on Jesus Christ for the remission of your sin. and You can tell that to somebody the next time they begin to tell you what all they do and how they figure their a pretty good guy so God's going to accept them. If you're not in Christ you're not accepted, God will not allow the death of His Son to be in vain, and there is no acceptance before God apart from Christ, Jesus said, *"I am the way the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."* Because notice in vs 7 It's....(read vs7-14)

Vs7

In *Him* we have redemption; that is in the Beloved of whom the prior vs is referring to, again that being Jesus Christ and The "We" that is referred to here are those of us who are the elect, those who have placed our trust in Jesus and the redemption that we have is only in Christ. and That word "redemption" means, *"liberation procured (or acquired) by the payment of a ransom"* (from The Online Bible Thayer's Greek Lexicon). In other words you've been set free in Jesus, (and there's a couple of different applications of this word "redemption" based upon the context of where it's found), but here we find it in reference to the freedom that you have been given in Christ. and Though the freedom you've been given has come freely to you don't ever be deceived, though it's free, it wasn't cheap, it cost God dearly, He couldn't have paid a higher price, and we'll talk a little more about the price that it cost Him in a minute.

But 1st I want to focus for just a minute upon what kind of people it is that God redeems and in ch 2 we are reminded of what we were like when God, out of His abundant grace, redeemed us, notice with me the 1st 3vs of ch 2 (read). Notice vs 12 (read) in ch 4 we're reminded that before we were in Christ we walked in the futility of our minds, our understanding being darkened, we were alienated from the life of God, because of ignorance and blindness of heart, and we were given over to lewdness and all uncleanness with greediness.

These are the types of people that God redeems, why, because these are the only type of people that exist, the bible is clear that there is none that are righteous, no not even one, but that we have all gone astray having turned aside to our own ways. That's why Christ gave Himself for us, as we read Titus 2:14 *"that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works."* Notice again the emphasis on the fruit of redemption and election, purity, freedom from lawlessness, and a zeal for goodness and good works. and So sinful man is who Christ came to redeem, you remember when Jesus called Matthew the tax collector and Matt so overwhelmed with joy invited Jesus to dinner and he invited all of his buddies over as well so that they might meet Jesus. He was doing the work of an evangelist; the bible tells us that the house was filled with tax collectors and sinners. But when the Pharisees saw it, we read that they said to His disciples, *"Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?"* and When Jesus heard that, He said to them, *"Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.' For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."*

Now Jesus wasn't saying that they were righteous, or that they themselves weren't in need of a Savior, because later on He tells us that they were blind to their need, they were self deceived thinking that their religion was going to gain them acceptance before God. But you see that's the deal, until a person sees his or her need for redemption, they see no need for a Redeemer, until someone sees that they are hopelessly enslaved to sin, they won't seek release from it. But when the scales fall from their eyes and they can see the hopelessly desperate situation that they're in, then they're ready for the harvest and then they'll cry out to the Redeemer Jesus Christ Because they realize they're enslaved to sin.

In the Roman Empire there was some 6million slaves, and they could be bought and sold like used cars or anything else. But their only hope for freedom was that someone would buy them for the exclusive purpose of setting them free. They could be freed, but their freedom came at a price and that's the picture that we have in Jesus.

We were all enslaved to sin and there was no way that we could ever hope to pay the price of our freedom, it was never even within our grasp. and Jesus Christ purchased you for the exclusive purpose of setting you free, free from the law Gal 5:1, free from the bondage of sin (Rom ch 6) free from the power of Satan (Gal 1:4), and free from the grip of the world (Col 1:13,14). and What was the price that He paid for you, (look at vs 7, read until blood) it was His own blood; it wasn't the blood of sinful man that could make atonement for our sins. Nor could the blood of bulls and goats; the sacrificial system of the OT was simply a foreshadowing of what was to come. A way that the innocent could make a covering for the guilty, the just for the unjust, but they were simply looking forward to the ultimate sacrifice; the bible tells us that the substance is of Christ.

We read in Heb 10:1-4 *“For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.”* But we read in Lev 17:11 that it's the blood that makes atonement for the soul. Why because the life of the flesh is in the blood and it has to be life for life and so even as by one man (Adam) sin entered the world and was passed on to all men. Even so through one Man (that is Christ) the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many. That is, as many as will believe, because as we read in Heb 9:12 that *“with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.”* Peter tells us that we *“were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”*

What is the end result of that redemption that is appropriated to all who believe, vs 7 tells us, it's the forgiveness of sins. Or the release from the debt of sin, the idea is that of the carrying away of your sins. Which reminds us of the one-day of the year that every Jewish believer looked forward to in the OT, the day of Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. and On that day Israel's sins would be in essence carried away by faith, and they would receive atonement for their sins.

What would happen would be that after the high priest sacrificed a bull for his own sin, he would take 2 kids of the goats of the children of Israel, and he would cast lots over them. and The one that landed on what would decide the Lord's goat, it would be sacrificed as a sin offering where by the shedding of blood would take place for the sins of the people. Then the high priest would lay his hands on the head of the other goat and confess the sins of the people over that goat which was symbolic of laying the sins of the people on the scapegoat.

Then that goat would be led out into the wilderness and turned loose in a place where it could only wander off never to find it's way back to camp, and what that represented to the people was the fact that their sins had been carried away never to return them or be imputed to them again and they were clean before God.

The picture there or the typology is obvious, in that act was the ultimate foreshadowing of exactly what God would do in the person of Jesus Christ, because as awesome as that concept was we know and they knew, and God sure knows that animals could never atone for their sin or ours. But God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son and on His Son the sins of the world was laid. and He was the perfect fulfillment of Yom Kippur becoming both the blood sacrifice and the scapegoat, shedding His blood as a sin offering and carrying away our sins so that they will never be imputed to us again. That's why the bible has so much to say concerning the completeness of the forgiveness of God, Ps 103:12 "*As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us.*" Isa 43:25 "*I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; And I will not remember your sins.*" Isa 44:22 "*I have blotted out, like a thick cloud, your transgressions, And like a cloud, your sins. Return to Me, for I have redeemed you.*" Mic 7:19 "*You will cast all our sins Into the depths of the sea.*" and In Matt 26:27-28 we read where Jesus "*took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."*"

The redemption price of our sin, was the blood of Jesus Christ and it's through His blood that we receive the forgiveness or the carrying away of our sin and it's *according to the riches of His grace*. Time won't permit me to get into this but take note of the fact that it's not *out* of the riches of His grace or *from* the riches of His grace that He forgives, but it's *according* to the riches of His grace. What does that mean, if I were a multimillionaire and I contributed \$.50 to a worthy cause I would be giving *out* of my riches, but if I contributed say \$250,000 or maybe even more I would be giving according to my riches, do you see the difference. God doesn't forgive out of His grace, but according to His grace, His unlimited and vast supply of grace. and He freely lavishes us with His grace, in other words where sin abounds grace abounds more, you can't out sin the grace of God. You can never be so morally base that you exceed the endless measure of God's grace, now that's not a license to sin, again Rom ch 6 and remember the fruit of election is holiness, but when we fall God's endless supply of grace is there to restore us and tells us now go, and sin no more. That's the grace of God, I'd encourage you to read John ch 8 vs 1-11 on your own time in regards to that issue.

Vs8

Now there's a couple of understandings of this vs, the Greek supporting either one and what indicates the various understandings is if you take this vs to conclude his previous thought or be linked with what he just said or if you see it as a lead in to what he's about to say in vs 9. Now I personally don't see it as a contentious issue because I agree with both perspectives, and the 2 views are that 1 sees this reference to wisdom and prudence or understanding to be speaking of God. That He has done all of these things according to His wisdom and understanding, I'd agree with that. The other is that the wisdom and understanding that this is in reference to is that which is available to us in Christ and Paul emphasizes this by saying in vs 9 that it's through the wisdom and understanding or discernment that God has given us in Christ that we are able to know the mystery of His will. and I agree with that as well.

James said if any of you lack wisdom then just ask God for it and He will give it to you, why, because it's available to us in Christ. But where does this wisdom come from, that God gives us? It comes from God's word, you're not just going to wake up one day and be spiritually wise concerning any given circumstance, if you want wisdom, and discernment and God is going to give it to you in and through and He's going to direct you to His word. Concerning whatever given circumstance you're in. Heb 4:12-13 *"For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account."* You want wisdom, you want discernment, do you want to see things for the reality of what they are? Then go to God's word and He'll show you, He'll give it to you. So either way you want to understand this vs I'm on your side,

Vs9

Now this word "mystery" is misleading to us, because in our culture we tend to link the word "mystery" with "mysterious" or "eerie" as if it's a suspense novel and no one really knows who done it. But that's not at all what this word implicates, the word "mystery" in the scriptures according to the Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words denotes *"that which, being outside the range of unassisted natural apprehension, can be made known only by divine revelation, and is made known in a manner and at a time appointed by God, and to those only who are illumined by His Spirit. In the ordinary sense a "mystery" implies knowledge withheld; its Scriptural significance is truth revealed."*

So the mystery is something that has always been apart of God's plan, but it was beyond the comprehension of man, and it wasn't until God gave man a supernatural means of wisdom and understanding that he was able to see what has always been there. and Since we've already spoke of the good pleasure of God, we'll move right on here to what it is that in this case He took pleasure in and that is in revealing to man a deeper insight into His will. and What is it that has always been apart of His will but wasn't able to be seen until these last days, God having now revealed it to us?

Vs10

What's the ultimate culmination of the will of God? That in the fullness of the times which we talked about in Galatians, the fact that God is never late, but all things happen at exactly the right time. Not to early, but not to late, but rather in the fullness of the time, God's heavenly eternal plan, unfolds on earth in the fullness of time. You thought you just decided to get this morning and come to church but in reality God purposed that in the fullness of time you would be here this morning. God doesn't have random plans by which He instigates by the throwing of a dart on a list of to do's, He operates in the fullness of time.

The foremost, primary work and plan of God as it pertains to time and space was the bringing forth of His Son, and when did He do it? Gal 4:4, when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son. Right when all the events that had happened in the past and would happen in the future were ripened perfect for the entrance of Jesus Christ into this world, God sent forth His Son. and In that same divine timing God is going to gather to gather all things, both Jew and Gentile alike, something that the Jews were blinded to but now God had revealed, that they would all as one be gathered into the Messiah, with Him ruling and reigning on the throne. Which has taken place spiritually already and will take place physically during the millennial kingdom and on throughout eternity. Jesus Christ will settle every issue; He will wrap up history, as we know it, tying up all loose ends, issuing perfect justice and mercy. Sin is tearing everything apart, but in Christ, God will gather everything together in the culmination of the ages.

Vs11

This inheritance is what we've been speaking of, all that Christ has are ours in Him, and again we see here how predestination seems to deal with the purposes of God's people. Remember election dealing with people, predestination dealing with purpose, the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will. and I love the way that that phrase strikes my heart, He works all things according to the counsel of His will.

The bible says that there safety in the multitude of counsel, and God works all things according to the reasoned counsel of the Godhead, God's will has with in it perfect counsel, when God said let us make man in our image, according to our likeness back in Gen 1:26, who was He talking to? He was reasoning with in and responding to the counsel of His own will and that's the way He works all things, I love that, because to understand it another way this is saying hey, God is in control. He's got it all worked out not some of it, not a significant portion but He kind of let that one part go, no, He works all things according to the counsel of His will.

Vs12

This seems to be a reference to the Jews, "we who 1st trusted" because Romans tells us that salvation came to the Jew 1st and then the Greek, or the gentile and so here we see a similar comment we who 1st trusted in Christ, to the praise of His glory.

Vs13-14

I wish we had the time to spend on these vs and should the Lord will maybe we'll take the time to look at them in a little more detail at our next gathering. But what we see hear is that upon receiving Jesus Christ having heard the gospel, the Holy Spirit indwells you becoming a seal upon your life. and In that culture when they would ship something you would place your seal upon that item and that would testify of the fact that you owned it, it was yours. If the king was sending a letter they would seal it with wax and the king would place his signet on it and that meant this is the king's and so you'd better not mess with it, that seal also guaranteed security or protection. and We also see in vs 14 that the Holy Spirit is the guarantee of our inheritance, He's the down payment of what's to come, you've been put on lay away, spiritually speaking, and the Holy Spirit is God's down payment on you, He owns you, you were bought at the price of the shed blood of Jesus Christ and So that you know He means business, and that He will back up His promise to you, He gives you the Holy Spirit. and When He comes for you individually or takes us corporately as a body and the physical aspect of the redemption is complete (because it was spiritually complete at the cross, Jesus said it is finished), but it will all be again to the praise of His glory.