

Ephesians pt 2 (1:7 – 14)

In verse 5 we learned that it was God's pleasure to adopt us. If Paul had in mind the Roman version of adoption then we need to see that culture's idea of adoption. In the Roman world a man was subject to his father as long as his father lived. It didn't matter to what heights he attained in the eyes of the public, his father was still his lord. A father could even order the execution of his son. When a man decided to adopt a son he would offer to make a payment to the real father. The real father would sell his son and then buy him back again. This went back and forth until the third purchase in which the real father no longer purchased him back. The adopted son took on a whole new status. So complete was the change in the eyes of the Roman world that even his previous debts had to be cancelled. It was as if he had died and been born again the son of the one who purchased him. We can see the obvious parallel to being born again, a new creation in Christ Jesus.

The long passage of praise continues in verse 7:

Eph 1:7-8 (NIV) ⁷In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace ⁸that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding.

Redemption is a theme that runs throughout the Old Testament (Psalm 130:7). The firstborn sons were the Lords and had to be purchased back from God. That buying back was called redemption (Numbers 18:16). The Greek term *lutron* from which redemption is derived means a ransom. The idea of Jesus' blood being our ransom payment is very clear in New Testament doctrine (Matthew 26:28). But who is being paid? The debt is owed to God. Our sin makes us indebted to God's divine justice. The soul that sins shall die. Thus, blood, the life of the flesh, is the only acceptable payment. Without the shedding of blood there can be no remission of sins. The sin debt is paid and the slave is set free.

In verse 7 we have the connection of the blood of Christ, redemption, and forgiveness of sins. All are in accordance with the riches of God's grace. It was gracious of God to choose us, gracious to provide redemption through sending His only Son. When you consider our condition when He began to apply His grace toward us, you can understand the word lavished. To take a rebel and make him or her a son, to transform them, to make them co-heirs with Christ, to include them as co-laborers of His holy work in the earth, to prepare a place for them to be eternally in His presence, all of that is a lavishing of the riches of His grace.

But it was not some random, haphazard choice. It was done with all wisdom and understanding. He knows what He can make of us. He will transform us into the image of His own Son. He knows He can finish what He started and it will all be to the praise of His glorious grace.

If that weren't enough to praise God about, Paul continues with the revelation of the mystery:

Eph 1:9-10 (NIV) *9 And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, 10 to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment--to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.*

See 3:6 Paul is driving at the unity of Jew and Gentile believer. There is one new man when they come into faith in Christ. Paul saw that God had this special moment in time when Christ was to be born. In that perfect point in history, the times of the Gentiles would begin. It was prophesied by Daniel – the exact time when the Messiah would be cut off. This pivotal point in history brought about the fulfillment of many obscure passages in the Old Testament that talked of the Gentiles becoming children of God. In Paul's day the Jewish converts to Christianity couldn't quite grasp what a radical shift had taken place. There was a new Deliver – Jesus Christ. Like the deliverer, Moses, many followed who were not Jews and were absorbed into the Jewish people. This time there is not an assimilation of Gentile into Judaism but all are assimilated into Christ.

Eph 1:11-12 (NIV) *11 In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, 12 in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory.*

The Jewish brothers were the first to believe. They were chosen before the creation of the world, just as the Gentiles were. God is working out the fulfillment of that which He willed. For what purpose? That we might be to the praise of His glory! His glory is the radiance of His character. His character is just and yet gracious, loving and yet holy. The fact that God could take rebels and make cause their lives to express praise of His glory is a miracle of transformation that makes a caterpillar into a butterfly look like a cheap parlor trick. Think of it! Saul the Christian killer is writing this. Incredible!

Eph 1:13-14 (NIV) *13 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession--to the praise of his glory.*

First those Jews at Pentecost and the beginnings of the church in Jerusalem, and then out to the Gentile world. They heard the word and entered into Christ and Christ into them. Peter and Paul both pointed to the evidence of the Holy Spirit being exhibited in the new Gentile believers as proof that God had accepted them. The Holy Spirit is called 'the Promise of the Father' by Jesus. (Luke 24:49)

The Holy Spirit is called a seal. A seal was an official stamp in hot wax that bore the emblem of the official. The official is God and the image is His image in you. That image is the fruit of the Spirit. That fruit shows you that God is going to finish the work He began. The term here is very much like that of an earnest deposit that a person

Commented [Q1]: 49 I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."
Luke 24:49 (NIV)

would put down when they wanted to buy a house. It holds the deal until escrow closes. In this case, escrow closing of is our redemption. This redemption is not referring to the blood of Jesus for it is speaking of something in the future. It is the future redemption of our bodies. Romans 8:23 (NIV)²³ *Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.* That is when we get transformed to an eternal dwelling that can stand in the presence of Jesus in all His glory. That too will be to the praise of His glory. Our lives in these fleshly bodies are to be lived to the praise of His glory, and the future bodies that will worship before the visible throne of God will also be to the praise of His glory. When our bodies are transformed we can receive the full payment. It is God that has placed the earnest deposit on your new home. You don't have the house yet, but trust God, (He's the only One you can fully trust) you will receive the purchased home filled with all the fullness of God. You couldn't take it in the body you are in now. That is why you only have a deposit.

Why did this need to be addressed?

How many times does Paul write, "in Him" or "in Christ" etc in these first 14 verses?

Have you ever written a page of praise to God for all the wonderful things you see Him doing? It would be a great exercise.

In this passage there are two types of redemption. What are they?

Can you imagine what it will be like to have a new body that is filled with the Holy Spirit, not just a deposit?

