

## Ephesians 1:3-14

EMC Wednesday Night Bible Study - 6-17-15

### The Triune Formation of God's New Community

V. 3 has a trinitarian vibe

- "spiritual" - not of the soul, but of the Holy Spirit
- Liturgical feel

Trinitarian structure of the section

- Father electing (vv. 4-6) > "to the praise of his glory" (v. 6)
- Son redeeming (vv. 7-12) > "to the praise of his glory" (v. 12)
- Spirit sealing (vv. 13-14) > "to the praise of his glory" (v. 14)

Father

- Source of every spiritual blessing
- Verbs: "blessed us" (v. 3), "chose us" (v. 4), destined us...to be his sons" (v. 5), "bestowed upon us" his grace (v. 6), "lavished" his grace upon us (v. 8), "made known to us" his will and purpose that he "set forth in Christ...to unite all things" (vv. 9-10), and "accomplished all things according to the counsel of his will" (v. 11)
- Nouns: love, grace, will, purpose, and plan

Son:

- The sphere in which the divine blessing is bestowed
- Mentioned 15x
- "in Christ" or "in him" 11x
- V. 1 - "saints in Christ" = pregnant expression that the rest of the paragraph explains
  - It is "in Christ" that the Father has blessed us presently in time and chosen us in eternity (vv. 4-7)
  - It is "in the Beloved" that the Father has bestowed on us his grace, so that "in him" we have redemption and forgiveness (vv. 6-7)
  - "In him" the first Jewish believers became God's people (vv. 11-12) and "in him" that Gentile believers were sealed as also belonging to God (vv. 13-14)
  - It is "in Christ" that God set forth his plan to unite all things "in him" - or under his lordship
- Being a Christian is all about being united to the Son

Holy Spirit:

- "Spiritual" blessing vs. material (cf. Deut. 28:1-14)
- "in the heavenly places" - lit. "heavenlies" = The unseen world of spiritual reality
  - 5x in Ephesians: to describe the sphere in which the "principalities and powers" operate (3:10; 6:12), where Christ reigns supreme and his people with him (1:20; 2:6), and where God blesses us with every spiritual blessing (1:3)

V. 3 is a statement of general principle. Vv. 4-14 list the particulars: **past**, present, and future blessing.

### Past Blessing: Election and Predestination

V. 4 - The purposes of God for his people were determined prior to creation

- The emphasis:
  - The condition of the choosing: through Christ

- The goal of the choosing: to be holy
- The emphasis of election is our holiness in Christ - not hard determinism

Vv. 5-6 - The destiny of believers has always been preestablished: adoption

- Made by grace what he is by nature
- More than pardoned - parented. More than absolved - adopted.

## Election/predestination

### God's Nature

Father prior to king or judge or sovereign

- The communion of persons within his inner nature is said to be love (1 John. 4:8)
- Love by definition is free

He loves us and desires, wills, even commands that we love him. But he does not *determine* it.

### God's Foreknowledge

Recent innovations in Christian thought: open theism, middle knowledge, etc. ← inadequate

God is absolutely omnipresent and omniscient.

- By knowing the future does God *cause* it to happen?

Thoughts on God's foreknowledge:

- Relationship to time - eternally present
- His knowing is not causal
  - Augustine: "Just as you do not, by your memory of them, compel past events to have happened, neither does God, by His foreknowledge, compel future events to take place... God foreknows all the things of which He is the Author, but He is not Himself the Author of all that He foreknows."
- "Foreknowledge" of God is simply him speaking in terms we can understand.

### Election

I Peter 1:2 - is based on God's foreknowledge of how one responds to the call of God to salvation.

- "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him" (John 3:36)
  - Those who believe will be saved. Those who do not believe will die.

Who are the elect? Those who freely choose Christ to be their Lord and Savior

- I Tim. 2:4; John 3:16; Ezek. 33:11; II Pet. 3:9

Election is conditional upon grace being received by faith and active in love.

TULIP vs. TCURP

Monergism vs. synergism

God took the initiative, effected the plan, provided the grace, and deserves all the credit for the salvation of his people

### Predestination

Romans 8:9 - based on God's foreknowledge

- The emphasis of predestination is not so much on "who" is but rather to "what."
- John Wesley – "He that believes is not only elected to salvation, (if he endures to the end,) but is fore-appointed of God to walk in holiness, to the praise of his glory."