

**AUGUST 25, 2019**

**REJOICE**

**Ephesians 1:3-14**

### **INTRODUCTION**

I have always understood the letter of Ephesians to be Paul's doctrine of the formation of the church in the world (chapters 1-3) and the function of the church in the world (chapters 4-6). It is Paul's letter that speaks to the unity of the church: how it is formed and how it is to be expressed in the world through proper relationships with believers and unbelievers. The verses we are considering in this lesson are the foundation to all that Paul is going to write, centering the spiritual life in the sovereign work of the Lord. Actually, verses 3-14, in the Greek, is one sentence of exultation to the Lord. There is no period in this passage until the end of verse 14. It is as if Paul becomes lost in wonder and amazement as he rejoices in the fruits of God's amazing grace.

### **YOU HAVE BEEN CHOSEN (Ephesians 1:3-6)**

To be chosen for a job, a team, to be a spouse is an amazing reality. It means that from all of the possible people who could have been selected, we were chosen. Paul provides a truth that is infinitely more amazing: *God chose us in Him before the foundation of the world* (Ephesians 1:4). Before the world began he loved you. What an amazing and comforting truth. Of all of the people in the world, all underserving, ourselves included, God called your name and in choosing us He adopted us to be a part of His eternal family (Ephesians 1:5). With this in mind Paul begins with the word *blessed*, a word of praise to the Lord blessing His name. *Blessed* means to eulogize or to speak well of. God is worthy to be spoken well of, praised, because of the marvelous and mind blowing choosing of us for salvation before the world began. Not only this, but this *blessed* God has *blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places* (Ephesians 1:3). He has already, in the past, blessed us with every blessing so that we have now, every blessing of God available to us! This privileged position is not to be taken lightly. He has chosen us for the purpose of holiness (Ephesians 1:4) – to reflect His character as we live our lives in an exultation of praise for His saving grace (Ephesians 1:6).

### **YOU HAVE BEEN REDEEMED (Ephesians 1:7-12)**

The need to be redeemed speaks to our being held captive. Sin held us bound, destined for an eternity separated from the Lord. In Christ, however, we have been redeemed, set free from the bondage of the penalty of sin (Ephesians 1:7). In the moment of our confession of faith in Christ all that held us in contempt with the Lord – every act, thought and affection that was in rank rebellion against Him – in that moment of spiritual clarity, the blood of Christ was applied to our account. This was not because of our works, but because His grace lavished on us the ability to see the eternal plan and purposes of the Work of Christ for the elect (Ephesians 1:8-10). More, Christ's redemption not only cleansed our sin but changed our status from strangers (Ephesians 2:12) to sons and daughters with a legitimate right to His inheritance (Ephesians 1:11). Because of grace we now and will, at the coming of the Lord, be treated like we have always had a legitimate claim to all of the promises of God. The only worthy response to such a wonder as this is praise (Ephesians 1:12).

### **YOU HAVE BEEN SEALED (Ephesians 1:13-14)**

Believers are also called to rejoice because they have received *the promised Holy Spirit* (Ephesians 1:13). This is the blessing of God promised in Ezekiel (36:26-27; 37:14) and in Joel (2:28), which was initially poured out on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4). Now, after hearing and believing the gospel, these

Gentiles received and were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise (Ephesians 1:13). Paul uses the word *sealed* (Ephesians 1:13) to signify the permanence of the gift of salvation, indicating the Spirit to be God's seal of ownership over us. The presence of the Spirit is the down payment and the guarantee of God's promises to us in Christ (Ephesians 1:14. See also, 2 Corinthians 1:22). This does not mean that believers are free from moral responsibility. While salvation is complete and certain at the moment of faith, Christians are to live as those who are under the ownership of the Lord who chose them to reflect His character in the world (Ephesians 1:4). The Spirit of God is God within us, empowering, instructing and guiding us to live lives of praise to the glory of the Lord (Ephesians 1:14).

## **CONCLUSION**

It is helpful to see the doctrine of the Trinity at work in salvation as Paul understands God. It is God *the Father* who chooses us. God *the Son* who redeems us and God *the Holy Spirit* who seals us. From start to finish it is the Lord. We do not see the term *trinity* in the Bible, but if we are ever in need of a text to prove that God is *Three in One*, this great hymn of praise is a great place to start.