

In Him (1:10c)

The two words, “*In Him*,” tie in with the first statement of verse 11.

Ephesians 1:11—also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will,

In Him (1:10c) also we have obtained an inheritance, (1:11a)

In the Greek, the phrase, “*we have obtained an inheritance*,” can also be interpreted “*we have been made a heritage*,” or, “*we were made an inheritance*.” Regardless of which rendering we choose, the passage does not contradict what is taught elsewhere in Scripture. Certainly, in Christ we have an inheritance (Acts 20:32; Ephesians 1:13-14; Ephesians 5:5; Colossians 1:12; Colossians 3:23-24; Hebrews 9:15; 1Peter 1:3-4). In fact, we are “*fellow heirs with Christ*”—which means that what He owns we own as well (Romans 8:16-17). He is also, at the same time, our inheritance in the sense of being our very “*life*” (Colossians 3:4)—a rich inheritance indeed.

“*In Him*” we were also made God’s inheritance, causing many scholars to render Ephesians 1:11a as, “*we were made an inheritance*.” Ephesians 1:18 verifies this interpretation:

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,
(Ephesians 1:18)

How could you have been placed into Christ (after repenting and believing while depraved), Christ being God’s Son, and not be the Father’s inheritance? Jesus, on many occasions, spoke of the Father gifting believers to Himself—to Jesus (John 6:37, 39; 10:29; etc.). These believers, of course, were gifted to the Son after they repented and believe while depraved.

Just think what this means! We are valued so highly in God’s eyes that He views us as His very own “*inheritance*.” I don’t know about you, but when I think “*inheritance*” I think “*special*.” In fact, an inheritance is something to be cherished. God views us in this manner (as something very special—beings possessing great value) because we are sons. Why then should we consider ourselves as worthless sinners saved by grace, who are less than second-class citizens of the Kingdom? If we do so, we have bought a lie. God, through Paul, says we are His “*inheritance*” (Ephesians 1:11), “*holy and blameless before Him*” (Ephesians 1:4). Let’s bask in the joy and freedom of this truth and never look back!

having been predestined according to His purpose (1:11b)

We discovered in Ephesians 1:5-6 that once God placed us “*in the Beloved*” (after we exercised personal repentance and faith while depraved) we were “*predestined to adoption as sons*.” We were given this future destiny of one day receiving a new “*body*” (Romans 8:23) and being conformed to the image of God’s Son (Romans 8:29—in body) in conjunction with being born again/saved. Therefore, New Testament believers are predestined when they are saved/justified—not beforehand from eternity past. All that we discussed in Ephesians 1:5 concerning predestination is reaffirmed in verses 11-12, for in verse 11b Paul states that the New Testament believer has “*been predestined according to His purpose*.” Verse 12 states that purpose. We will tie Ephesians 1:11b in with Ephesians 1:12 shortly, but before doing so we must deal with the phrase:

who works all things after the counsel of His will, (1:11c)

Ephesians 1:11c does not teach that all events are determined by God's will. "Works," from the root word *energeo* (to be at work, to work, to do), can also be interpreted "energizes." Thus, God "*energizes all things after the counsel of his will.*" In Colossians 1:29 we read:

And for this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me. (Colossians 1:29)

"Works" in this case is *energeo*, so we can view the verse as:

And for this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily energizes within me.

This energizing is from God. Even in Philippians 2:13 and 1Corinthians 12:6 (along with other passages), Paul teaches that God works in (energizes) those who are His. But does all "energizing" come from God? Not according to 2Thessalonians 2:9:

that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, (2Thessalonians 2:9)

"Activity" in 2Thessalonians 2:9 can be viewed as an energizing, being derived from the Greek *energeia*, meaning "operative power." Hence, Satan energizes whomever he can in an attempt to thwart God's ultimate plan (the plan described in verse 10). Also read Ephesians 2:1-2, realizing that "working" is from the Greek *energeo*. Since both God and Satan are in the business of energizing mankind, the believer must plug himself into the proper energy source by yielding to God's indwelling presence (Romans 6:13).

We next need to consider the words "all things" in the phrase, "*who works all things after the counsel of His will.*" The "all things" here cannot mean all events or all that transpires, for Luke 7:30 states:

For the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected God's purpose for themselves, not having been baptized by John. (Luke 7:30)

We learn here that God's ultimate plan and purpose for the universe will stand even though some, on an individual basis, refuse to participate. Yet God desires that no individual perish:

The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance. (2Peter 3:9)

Clearly, if a man perishes, he perishes as a result of his own choice. God would relish the idea of having all mankind accept His Son and be a part of "*the summing up of all things in Christ*" (addressed in Ephesians 1:9-10) and the breathtaking events that follow.

Salvation involves a choice on the believer's part, which leads to another interesting topic—the "will" of God addressed in Ephesians 1:11c: "*who works all things after the counsel of His will.*"

God may will something for an individual only to see that individual reject His will for his own. Jesus substantiates this truth in Matthew 23:37 by stating:

"Oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks

under her wings, and you were unwilling. (Matthew 23:37)

Man possesses a free will to choose as he desires (read Isaiah 65:12 for further confirmation). But regardless of how few choose to obey, God's sovereign will cannot be thwarted—that of “*summing up...all things in Christ*” (Ephesians 1:9-10). Thus the phrase, “*who works all things after the counsel of His will*” (Ephesians 1:11c) refers to the fulfillment of God's ultimate will and plan—that of “*summing up...all things in Christ*” (Ephesians 1:10). Paul is in no way communicating that men are robots, unable to accept or reject God's will and purpose for themselves. Let's tie this truth to the profoundness of Ephesians 1:12.

Ephesians 1:12—to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

The Phillips translation interprets the last phrase of this verse as “*may bring praise to His glory.*” No doubt, those who have become God's “*inheritance*” (Ephesians 1:11a), and are “*predestined*” (Ephesians 1:11b) “*to adoption as sons*” (Ephesians 1:5a), will bring “*praise to His glory*” (Ephesians 1:12). What else could result if, after we receive our resurrected bodies (that to which we were predestined once we were placed in Christ after repenting and believing—Ephesians 1:5-6; Romans 8:23), we return with Christ as His holy body and bride? As we discussed earlier, if Christ glorified the Father at His First Coming, just imagine how the Father will be glorified when Christ returns with His glorified body made up of believers conformed to His image (Romans 8:29). Hence, the Son's return brings glory to the Father, reaffirming the Son's commitment to benefiting the Father, the Spirit, and others in all His ways.

Ephesians 1:13—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,

In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, (1:13a)

“*The message of truth*” (Ephesians 1:13a) is “*the gospel of your salvation*” (Ephesians 1:13a). Because “*the gospel*” is the account of Jesus, the Source of “*truth*” (John 14:6), the gospel is unadulterated truth. Truth is astounding in that it, without fail, exposes error. Thus Jesus, “*the truth*” (John 14:6), Who is also “*light*” (John 8:12; 9:5), stated:

“For everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. “But he who practices the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God.” (John 3:20-21)

Truth reveals things as they really are—without bias, prejudice, or partiality. Therefore, so long as we walk in truth, we perceive life as the Creator perceives life—the definition of wisdom. What an awesome privilege!

For truth to impact our lives, we must “listen” to what it communicates. Many people “hear” truth but fail to “listen” to what they have heard, as was the case in my own life for several years. I began “*listening*” only when my problems exceeded my ability to resolve them. Thank God that He is proficient at “allowing” difficulties to cross our paths that cause truth, which previously may have been dull or mundane, to become remarkably captivating. He knows that “obedience” (acting upon what has been heard) naturally follows “*listening*” (Ephesians 1:13a).

Where are you in regard to truth this day? Do you passionately desire to know and understand God's Word?

If you doubt what truth can accomplish in the soul of man, read Psalm 119—every word of it.

A word of warning: Salvation consists of more than just believing the gospel. God, Who established the gospel, bestows salvation only when the depraved exercise personal repentance and faith and the Holy Spirit places them "*in Christ*" (1Corinthians 12:13; 2Corinthians 5:17). Only through being placed "*In Him*" (Ephesians 1:13a) do we become members of God's family. Consequently, we are to view our Christian experience as an intimate friendship with the Creator—not an intellectual exercise in what He lived and taught.