

Eulogy to God

△ Eph 1:1-14

Intro

*Use of John Stott's commentary:
The Message of Ephesians

Intro to the Letter

△ v1-2

Beautiful

John Calvin's favourite letter

Samual Taylor Coleridge - 'the divinest composition of man'

William Barclay - 'the Queen of epistles';

John Stott

The letter to the Ephesians is a marvelously concise, yet comprehensive, summary of the Christian good news and its implications*

Nobody can read it without being moved to wonder and worship, and challenged to the consistency of life.*

Authorship

There have been questions since the 19th C regarding the authorship of the letter

The literary style is different then the other Pauline letter

There are historical questions

Why does Paul not mention the times that he has been in Ephesus or the people he would know?

but very subjective assesment

Do people not change over time?

Writing style adapted to the purpose of the letter?

Theological questions

Letter quite distinct from the other letters

More cosmic dimension

Heavenly places

Principalities and Powers

Less on justification

Less on reconciliation with God

More on reconciliation between Jew and Gentile Christians

But then lot of the content is very much the Paul's theology

Recipients

1. The Saints

These are God's all people

Instead of Israel as the Holy Nation now the Paul uses the term Saints, to group all those who believe in Christ

2. The Faithful

Those who not only believe in the Christ, but have out their trust in them

3. those in Christ Jesus

to be 'in Christ' is to be personally and vitally united to Christ

as branches of the vine

as members of the body

Christ's people

With Christ at the head

One with Christ and his people

4. Ephesus?

This is not found in the earliest manuscripts (2,3,4C)

It only appeared at later manuscripts

Perhaps this letter was a kind of circular letter

That the name of the church was added to each manuscript

This would then also explain the missing details of Ephesus, as it was not only intended for them

Bringing us back that the Author could well have been Paul

The Overall Message

What God did through the historical work of Jesus Christ and through his Spirit today, in order to build his new society for in the midst of the old*

Overall structure*

1. The new life which God has given us

△ 1:3-2:10

2. The new society which God has created through Christ

△ 2:11-3:21

3. The new standards which God expects of his new society

△ 4:1-5:21

especially unity and purity

4. The new relationships into which God has brought us

△ 5:21 - 6:21

harmony in home and church

hostility to the devil

Letter: combination of

Christian doctrine

Christian duty,

Christian faith

Christian life,

what God has done through Christ

and what we must be and do in consequence

Every Spiritual Blessing

△ v3-14

Describes the new life God has given us in Christ

Two halves

Praise

△ v3-14

Prayer

△ v15-2:10

For next week

These twelve verses are one Greek sentence!

He may have dictated this

And it just comes pouring out

But that does not mean that it is without structure

It is Trinitarian

God the Father - electing - 3-6

Jesus Christ - redeeming - 7-12

Holy Spirit - sealing - 13-14

God the Father - 3-6

Source/Origin of every blessing we enjoy

It is his initiative

He is the subject of most of these verses

It is he who 'has blessed us'

△ v3

who 'chose' us

△ v4

who 'destined us

△ v5

who 'graced us with his grace'

△ v8

who 'has made known to us' his will and purpose

△ v9-10

which he set forth in Christ

to unite all things in him

Mystery

Although we feel that we have chosen to be Christians

It is clear that he has chosen us first!

He has also destined us

this is not so strong a word a predestination

which we seem to associate with God planning every single details of our lives

But in indicates a real positive choice of God for us

He has singled us out for his blessing, grace and to make known to us his will and purpose

We still have to accept that choice though!

How many Christians are there that do not accept this choice

and live there lives as half hearted Christians!

God's blessing is coming through Jesus Christ

In these 14 verses

Jesus Christ is mentioned by name, title, pronoun or possessive no fewer than 15 times

The phrase 'in him' or 'in Christ' occurs 11 times

In Christ

Now we are 'In Christ', belonging to a redeemed humanity

△ v7

'In Christ' God has blessed us and in time and chosen us for eternity

△ v3-4

'In the Beloved' God has bestowed on us his grace

△ v6

'In him we have the 'redemption of forgiveness'

△ v7

'In him' the first Jewish believers became God's people

△ v11-12

The 'we' seems to refer to Jewish Christians

And 'the you' the recipients, the Gentile Christians

'In him' believers are sealed as belonging to God

△ v13-14

'In Christ' God has set forth his plan to unite all things 'in him' - that is Christ, or under his headship

△ v9-10

Summary: In Christ we have been overwhelmed by blessings

The Holy Spirit

Only mentioned by name in v13-14

His activity is assumed throughout

All the blessings are spiritual

in contrast to OT, where God's blessings were children, good harvests, abundance and leadership among nations

In Jesus we also receive material blessings, but the distinctive blessings of the New Covenant are spiritual

God's law written on our hearts by the Holy Spirit

Personal knowledge of God

Forgiveness of sins

In heavenly places - the heavenlies

△ v3 - first time mention

We see it again in relation to

Principalities and Powers

△ 3:10, 6:12

Where Christ reigns supreme and his people with him

△ 1:20, 2:6

In which God blesses us with every spiritual blessing in Christ

△ v3

The Holy Spirit is the 'seal'

The sign that we are 'in Christ' is the Holy Spirit living within us

But it is a clear sign or seal

A letter is sealed with wax and impressed with a signet ring

In the context of verse 13, the author

i.e. the content is mine - the author

So the Holy Spirit is the sign that God says to us, and to the heavenlies: he or she is mine.

I have put my stamp, my seal on this person

Conclusion

In this part we see the many blessings that God bestows on us

adoption, redemption, forgiveness, grace, knowledge of the mystery of his will, a plan for the fulness of time, to gather all things under Christ, an inheritance, a destiny

For what?

So that we live for the praise of his glory

△ v12

How do we know that we have, are or will receive(ing) this?

Because we are sealed by the Holy Spirit as a sign on us that we are his

Do we accept this?

This is what God is offering us in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit

But do we walk away, or do we accept this destiny

To Live for the praise of God's glory?

Amen