

TO THE PRAISE OF HIS

GLORY

EPHESIANS 1:3

- Blessings are abundant in God – literally, the word is all over the text. “Every” should be taken for what it is, as in, there was nothing held back from us when God blessed us with the life, work, death, and resurrection of His Son.
- The verse actually functions as a sort of topic sentence for the rest of the letter, as Paul goes about explaining just how rich we are as a result of our adoption into God’s household (see also 1:18-19, 3:8, 3:16ff).
- Just pause for a moment and take in what he is saying is ours in Jesus Christ!

PREDESTINED

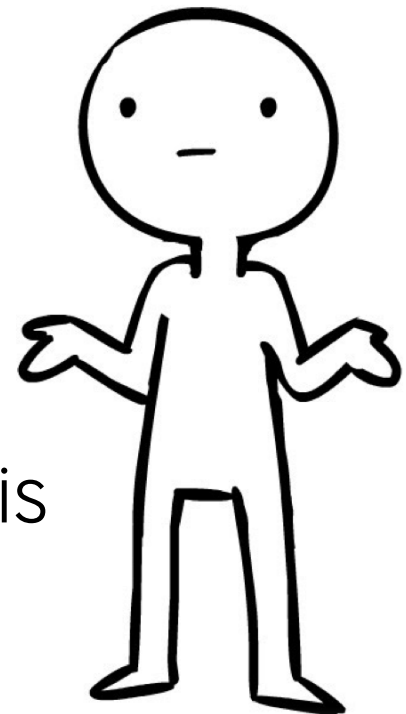
- Paul writes as if predestination is assumed. Notice that he is not ashamed of the word, or feels the need to qualify himself repeatedly. The Calvinistic, deterministic version of predestination simply did not exist in Paul's mind.
- Obviously, personal culpability with regard to sin is a key part of the gospel message (Isaiah 59:2, Eph. 2:1-3, 4:22, 5:8, 5:15). In addition, we must choose, of our own free will, to come to God through Christ (Eph. 4:20-24, 1:13).
- So, predestination must mean something other than the typical Calvinistic explanation...

EPHESIANS 1:4-11

- First, individual predestination is not what is being discussed. The “us” is referring, most likely, to the Jewish apostles. The “you” of verse 13 is referring to Gentile converts (see 2:11-13).
- Paul speaks of predestination again in 3:8-11, calling it the “eternal purpose.” He also uses the same term, “administration”, in 1:10 and 3:9, which means the “administration suitable to the times” was the revelation of the Christian message to the Gentiles.
- In other words, Biblical predestination is not personal, but general, referring to the plan (Rom. 8:29-30, Acts 2:23, 1 Peter 1:20-22, Is. 9:1-4).

BUT WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

- It's easy to see subjects like this as too complicated to be really useful or practical. Does it really matter what we think about predestination? What's the benefit or application?
- In actuality, this is a key point in Paul's argument in Ephesians 1. We are deeply, monumentally, mind-blowingly rich because of God's predestined plan. The gospel was not an afterthought, an accident, or a Plan B. It was a masterfully crafted solution to the problem of sin.
- The mission and message of Jesus Christ is the VERY BEST thing that God could have come up with.



TO THE PRAISE OF HIS GLORY

- This is one of the great phrases of the Bible. It explains that our greatest purpose is to promote His glory. The first Jewish converts to Christ showed God's faithfulness to the promises of Abraham and the covenant with Israel. His grace to the Gentiles continues to be the evidence of His immense and undying love for all mankind.
- God is not egotistical, by the way. It is simply a part of His nature and character to promote truth – whether it is moral truth, scientific truth, or the truth of His divine supremacy. He cannot deny His own glory (1:17) with false modesty or comparisons.



The gospel provides the answers we've been looking for. With all "wisdom and insight" (vv. 8-9) the mysteries of human origin, purpose, and ultimate destination have been revealed. This is why the Gentiles were so eager to believe (v. 13).

SEAL AND PLEDGE

- According to verses 13 and 14, the Holy Spirit has multiple roles, functioning as both the tool that seals us in Christ and the foretaste of our reward in heaven.
- “Sealed” – Be careful not to assume that this means we can never be lost (Gal. 5:1-7, Rom. 11:17ff). Rather, the “seal” in this context refers to a stamp. This means we are confirmed, approved in Him.
- “Pledge of our inheritance” – Like a foretaste or sampling, the Holy Spirit is how we experience a little bit of heaven here on earth, in worship, prayer, knowledge, and communion with God.