

Ephesians 1E

- We throw the word “grace” around frequently, and so we should
 - God’s undeserved favor for us is a miracle that makes all other blessings possible
 - Truly, we can’t talk about grace enough
 - Because we will never comprehend all that God’s grace has accomplished for us, not until we’re with Christ
 - So in the meantime, it’s good to spend time studying what the Bible says about His grace
 - The key to wrapping your head around God’s grace is to separate His grace on the cross in saving us from sin from the other blessings of His grace we’ve received
 - For example, last week we moved to studying Christ’s work on our behalf, and we found what we expected to find
 - That Christ’s part in God’s plan of grace centered on His sacrifice for our sin
 - His atonement ransomed us out of slavery and set us free to serve God without fear of death
 - But earlier in Chapter 1 of Ephesians we discovered that God’s grace began long before we were even born
 - The Father chose to save us even before our sin had been conceived, before the foundations of the earth
 - That’s a different form of God’s grace
- Then we saw how God’s grace in Christ move forward from there
 - The believer’s ability to understand the word of God is evidence of grace in our lives
 - God grants to His children the capacity to comprehend the wisdom of Christ found in the word of God
 - And by the grace of Christ, Christ directs our steps in life so we may live according to the counsel of His will

- Both of these experiences are evidence of the grace of Christ in our lives, Paul said
 - If you've seen the arm bands that ask "What Would Jesus Do?", then you need not wonder anymore
 - If you read His word and listen to His counsel, then you will know what Jesus would do
- So the grace of Christ moves beyond saving us through His death to grant us the means to live a life that pleases Him
 - So today let's continue forward looking at more of God's work in bestowing grace upon God's children
 - We pick up in the middle of Paul's impossibly long sentence in vs.3-14
 - We're at the end of v.10 as Paul is giving a new work of grace found in Christ
 - Let's reread that verse and continue forward to v.12

[Eph. 1:10](#) with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him [Eph. 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, [Eph. 1:12](#) to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory.

- We discussed the first part of v.10 last week, as you remember
 - We learned that the word of God is God's grace to us in Christ for the purpose of God's administration of our lives
 - The word administration can also be translated management or dispensation
 - So we could say that the Lord provided us with the Bible so He could dispense His grace into our daily lives
 - That by His word, He could manage us during the time we live in a sinful body in a fallen world
 - The enemy and the world and even our own flesh are trying to pull us away from God and against His will

- But the word of God is the spiritual manager in our life to defend us against those enemies and guide us into righteousness
- Paul goes to say that management carries the Church forward until the fullness or completion of this age
 - The word of God manages us for a time
 - Once we escape this earth and enter into the presence of Christ, we leave this sinful body behind
 - In the process, we will gain a complete understanding of God's will and His Kingdom
 - At that point, we won't need management in the same way, since our sin nature will be completely gone
 - We will always have the word of God, but we won't be fighting against it in that future day
- Of course, as I said last week, in order to gain the benefits of this administration, we must endeavor to read the word and obey what it says
 - Just like a human manager in our workplace, the word of God can only help us if we listen to what it says and commit to following its orders
 - Many believers fail to attend to the word of God
 - And many more fail to heed what they read
 - As James warns, we must be doers of the word, not merely hearers
- And so now we move into the next half of v.10 to see the next way in which Christ offers us His grace
 - Christ is at work to show us grace in summing up all things in Himself
 - To understand what Paul is saying, we need to take a closer look at the words he's using
 - The Greek word for summing up is *anakephalaioo*, which means to bring together
 - Paul says Christ will ultimately bring together everything in God's creation, both in heaven and on earth

- This is another manifestation of God's grace to us in Christ's work
- But what does it mean that Christ is bringing all things together
- First, we need to remember how all things became divided in a sense
 - When Adam sinned in the Garden, he brought about the consequences for sin, which the Lord explained to Adam beforehand

Gen. 2:16 The Lord God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely;

Gen. 2:17 but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die."

- The Lord told Adam that the consequence of eating the forbidden fruit would be death
- Specifically, the Lord meant that Adam's spirit would experience spiritual death, meaning his spirit would become separated from God
- This was the moment that humanity's nature became fallen and separated from fellowship in peace with God
- Moreover, when the Lord came to Adam in the Garden, the Lord responded to Adam's sin with a second act of judgment: a curse

Gen. 3:17 Then to Adam He said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat from it';

Cursed is the ground because of you;
In toil you will eat of it
All the days of your life.

Gen. 3:18 "Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you;
And you will eat the plants of the field;

Gen. 3:19 By the sweat of your face
You will eat bread,
Till you return to the ground,
Because from it you were taken;
For you are dust,
And to dust you shall return."

- Because of Adam's sin, the Lord pronounced a curse upon the physical earth

- A curse means to condemn to destruction
- This curse impacted the planet and all that comes from it
- Therefore the ground (i.e., the earth itself) and all that comes from it was doomed to undergo destruction
- When we look back at the Creation account in Genesis 1 & 2 we discover that plants, animals and the human body find their origins in the ground
 - Since these things come out of the ground, they too are cursed
 - Plants wither and die, animals kill one another or grow old and die
 - And of course, the human body dies eventually as well
 - One day, even the earth itself will be destroyed as the curse requires

2Pet. 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.

- Meanwhile, the earth and all that it contains bears up under the weight of the curse
 - The entire creation is longing to be restored, to be brought back together with God
 - It's as if nature itself recognizes that it's in need of godly repair by the grace of Christ

Rom. 8:18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

Rom. 8:19 For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God.

Rom. 8:20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope

Rom. 8:21 that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

- So as a result of Adam's disobedience to the word of God, the spirit of mankind and the physical creation fell under judgment, separation from God

- We were cast into darkness and became enslaved to the enemy who had conspired to bring us down
 - But as we learned last week, the grace of God in Christ has freed us from slavery to that enemy
 - His blood on the cross purchased us back from the enemy and set us free from condemnation
 - So now by faith our spirit has been restored to the Father in peace, because His wrath against our sin was poured out on Christ instead
- But Paul says God's grace in Christ accomplishes even more for our sake by summing up or bringing together all things on earth and heaven
 - Now that we understand what was divided as a result of Adam's sin, we can understand what Christ reconciles by His grace
 - First, He has reconciled us to the Father by giving us a new spirit by His grace
- Furthermore, Christ will one day reunite the spirit of every believer with a new, glorified body, as Paul says

Phil. 3:20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;

Phil. 3:21 who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.

- The Bible calls this day the resurrection, the day we receive a glorified, sinless body in which we will live forever
- That day will be the summing up of our spirit with a new body
- Later in the Kingdom on earth, the Lord will return the animal kingdom to the way it once existed

Is. 65:17 "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth;
And the former things will not be remembered or come to mind.

Is. 65:18 "But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create;
For behold, I create Jerusalem for rejoicing
And her people for gladness.

Is. 65:25 "The wolf and the lamb will graze together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox; and dust will be the serpent's food. They will do no evil or harm in all My holy mountain," says the Lord.

- According to Isaiah, the coming Kingdom will include animals just as our current world does
 - But in that coming day, the animal kingdom will be restored back to its original state before the curse
 - They will not hunt each other or harm mankind
 - By the grace of God in Christ, they will return to an existence of harmony and peace
- Even more, the Lord will by His grace reconcile the fallen earth to Himself by eliminating the burden of the curse
 - In Revelation 21-22 the Bible describes this future world

Rev. 21:1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea.

Rev. 22:3 There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him;

Rev. 22:4 they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads.

- John wrote that in this future world, there will no longer be a curse
- The curse John mentions is the same one God pronounced in the Garden after the Fall
- The Creation is restored by Christ, brought back to its intended state by the grace of Christ
- How did Christ accomplish this work of grace for us?
 - The Bible says that as Christ hung on the cross, he took the curse upon Himself

Gal. 3:13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us – for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree” –

Gal. 3:14 in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

- Jesus was hung on a tree, referring to the wood of the cross

- And in doing so, He took upon Himself the curse for all Creation
- Having paid the price of the curse, Christ restores the earth from the effects of the curse
- Finally, there is yet one more way the Lord sums up everything by His grace
 - The Bible says Christ will put an end to sin through judgment
 - When we talk about sin, the concept of summing up means to bring sin to its proper end
 - Beginning with the author of sin, the devil himself, and the death that the devil produces
 - In a day to come, the Lord will sum up Satan

Rev. 20:10 And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

1Cor. 15:25 For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet.

1Cor. 15:26 The last enemy that will be abolished is death.

- The Lord has no plan to redeem Satan, since the Bible says that the Lord doesn't give help to fallen angels (Hebrews 2:16)
- Instead, the Lord brings Satan together with the judgment He justly deserves
- So Christ sums up things on earth and in heaven by judging Satan
 - The enemy's fall began in Heaven, according to Ezekiel 28, when Satan defiled the heavenly tabernacle with his rebellion
 - He was cast to the earth where he brought sin into the Garden according to Genesis 3
- Christ addressed both through His sacrifice on the cross
 - After His resurrection, Hebrews says Christ entered the Heavenly tabernacle where He spilled His own blood to cleanse it from Satan's rebellion

Heb. 9:11 But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation;

[Heb. 9:12](#) and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.

- In this way, Christ's blood summed up (or reconciled) things in heaven
- And in a day to come Christ will do away with Satan entirely, thereby reconciling Satan to judgment
- Finally, Christ sums up those who belong to the enemy, those who die in unbelief

[Rev. 20:12](#) And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds.

[Rev. 20:13](#) And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds.

[Rev. 20:14](#) Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.

[Rev. 20:15](#) And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

- After the Kingdom age, the Lord will serve as Judge at a trial of unbelieving humanity
- Humanity's sins will convict them before this holy court
- And like their father, the devil, these will receive the just penalty for sin...eternal separation from God
- So this is what Paul means when he says that Christ's grace toward us results in a summing up of all things on heaven and on earth
 - First, He brought us together with the Father
 - Then He brings our spirit together with a new body
 - Then He restores the animal kingdom to peace and harmony with man and with each other
 - Finally He restores all Creation with a new, peaceful planet freed from the burden of a curse yielding death, corruption and suffering
 - Likewise, Christ reconciles the guilty to their just end

- The enemy is judged and sent away forever
- And the unbeliever is justly condemned and sent from God's presence forever

Rev. 21:7 "He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son.

Rev. 21:8 "But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

- These acts are also grace to you and I
- They result in the destructive power of sin being removed from us forever
- Then in vs. 11-12 Paul gives us one more way Christ's grace is summing up things on earth
 - By Christ's obedience to the Law and His death on the cross, Christ reconciled or summed up the Jews and the Gentiles
 - Notice in vs.11-12, Paul says "we" have also obtained our inheritance in Christ
 - I trust you remember our lesson on the Father's choosing us for an eternal inheritance
 - And how that inheritance was made possible in Christ's death
 - For we were chosen to be part of Christ's Last Will and Testament so we may receive a part of His inheritance
 - But Paul's use of the pronoun "we" in these verses is meaningful
 - He's speaking of a group of which he was a part but which his readers in Ephesus were not
 - Notice how in vs.13-14 Paul switches to speaking of "you"
 - We're going to study vs.13-14 next time
 - But for now it's enough for us to notice the shift Paul makes
 - Paul is comparing the grace Christ poured out on Jews (we) in the past to the grace He grants to the largely Gentile Church (you)

- Paul says the Jews were predestined by the Father to be God's chosen people
- By His promises to Abraham, the Lord granted the Jewish people a special inheritance in the Promised Land in the future Kingdom
- The creation of the Jewish people and the covenants given to them was a special manifestation of Christ's grace
 - God promised His people they would have a Messiah
 - He promised them He would dwell among them
 - He promised them they would live forever in a special inheritance, the Promised Land
 - This outpouring of grace upon Israel separated that nation from the rest of humanity
 - They were called out to be special and distinct among all nations
 - Paul says later in this letter that Israel's predestination as God's people meant that Gentiles were strangers to these promises
 - Gentiles were outside the grace of God for a time, divided from the Jewish people
 - That's why Paul says in v.12 that the Jewish people were the first to hope in Christ
 - They were hoping in Messiah long before any Gentiles knew what a Messiah was or why someone would need a Messiah
 - Therefore, the Old Testament Jewish saints were those predestined by God to be the first to give praise to the Lord's glory
 - Christ's grace made this possible
- Yet Christ has summed up this divide as well, having brought Jews and Gentiles together in the faith
 - John says in his Gospel that Jesus' death would bring together all His children from across the earth

John 11:51 Now he did not say this on his own initiative, but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the nation,

[John 11:52](#) and not for the nation only, but in order that He might also gather together into one the children of God who are scattered abroad.

- The grace of Christ resulted in the divide between Jew and Gentile dissolving in the plan of salvation
- Now all could be saved according to God's grace
- In that way, the Lord has summed up Jew and Gentile into one body in the Church
- This summing up has some interesting parallels
 - The Jewish people were promised a special inheritance where they would enjoy the presence of God tabernacling among them forever
 - This promised inheritance is fully realized in the Kingdom
 - Yet in the meantime, the Old Testament saint in Israel received a downpayment on that inheritance
 - They were permitted to live in Canaan and they had the blessing of the glory of God living in the tabernacle
 - These blessings were down payments on the full inheritance promised for the Kingdom
 - Likewise, we will learn next week that the Gentile believer in the Church also receives these blessings in a new and better way
 - God once again dwells among His children
 - And we receive a law written on our hearts and a promised inheritance
 - These blessings are down payments on our full inheritance to come in the Kingdom
 - So Christ's grace sums up the experience of the Old Testament Jewish saint and the New Testament Gentile saint
 - We both were predestined to receive grace
 - We both received a downpayment now in the form of God dwelling among us and the promise of an inheritance in the Kingdom

- Even now, we have both been brought together into one body in the Church
- Christ, summing up everything in heaven and on earth
- Are you beginning to appreciate the magnitude of God's grace to you in Christ?
 - Christ's grace goes far beyond the cross
 - Yes, the cross is all-important in this discussion
 - But He has a plan of restoration and reconciliation that boggles the mind
 - He addresses your sinful spirit, your corrupt body, your fallen world and your needs into eternity
 - He has a plan to make all things new
 - And He has moved in your life to bring these things about for no reason except His unmerited favor toward you, a sinner
 - Truly His grace is amazing