

INTRODUCTION AND EPH. 1:1-14

By Ashby L. Camp

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Introduction

I. Authorship

A. The letter was written by the Apostle Paul (1:1, 3:1) when he was in prison (3:1, 4:1, 6:20). This probably refers to his first Roman imprisonment, which puts the date around A.D. 61.

1. I say the site of his imprisonment probably is Rome because the letter has a number of similarities with Colossians and both Ephesians and Colossians were delivered by Tychichus (Eph. 6:21; Col. 4:7). That suggests that Ephesians and Colossians were written around the same time.

2. Though there is debate about whether Paul was imprisoned in Ephesus or Rome when he wrote Colossians, I'm with those like F. F. Bruce, Peter O'Brien, Markus Barth and Helmut Blanke, Donald Guthrie, and D. A. Carson and Douglas Moo who think Rome is more likely.

B. A number of modern scholars deny that Paul was the author, as they also deny that Paul authored Colossians, but their reasons for doing so do not stand up to scrutiny. The most complete recent defenses of Pauline authorship are in Peter O'Brien's *The Letter to the Ephesians*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999) and Harold Hoehner's *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002). See also the discussions by Markus Barth in *Ephesians 1 – 3*, AB (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1974), by Clinton Arnold in Gerald F. Hawthorne and others, eds., *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 240-242, and by D. A. Carson and Douglas Moo in *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 480-486. O'Brien concludes his investigation of the question with the following (p. 46-47):

In our judgment the traditional view has the most evidence in its favour. 'It is not unreasonable to think of Paul re-expressing, developing and modifying his own thoughts for a different readership facing a different set of circumstances' [quoting Arnold]. The onus of proof is upon those who must establish that Paul was incapable of this versatility. We agree that 'the best explanation . . . seems to be that the same man wrote Colossians and Ephesians a little later, with many of the same thoughts running through his head and with a more general application of the ideas he had so recently expressed' [quoting Carson, Moo, and Morris].

II. Geographical Destination

A. This is a perplexing issue because of the following facts.

1. The words "in Ephesus" in 1:1 are not present in manuscripts that generally are regarded as the most reliable. Specifically, they are not present in P⁴⁶ (Chester Beatty Papyrus II), which is the oldest manuscript of Ephesians dating to around A.D. 200, in Codex Sinaiticus, or in Codex Vaticanus, the latter two being great Bible manuscripts of the fourth century. In addition, it seems the text of the letter that was known to Tertullian around A.D. 200, to Origen in the first half of the third century, and to Basil of Caesarea in the fourth century did not contain "in Ephesus" in 1:1. That is why the phrase is put in brackets in the standard Greek New Testament (Nestle-Aland 27th ed.).

2. The letter seems too impersonal to have been sent to the church in Ephesus, since Paul had spent much time there, and parts of it suggest that Paul did not know the readers personally (1:15, 3:2, 4:21).

3. On the other hand, the participial expression (τοῖς οὖσιν) in 1:1 is followed by a place name when used in prescripts of other Pauline letters (Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Cor. 1:1; Phil. 1:1), a diverse group of later manuscripts include "in Ephesus," no manuscript has a place name other than "in Ephesus," and even the oldest manuscript (P⁴⁶) that lacks "in Ephesus" in 1:1 has the title or superscription "To [the] Ephesians."

B. As Carson and Moo state (p. 490):

In the end we must probably conclude that we do not know for sure for whom the letter was originally intended. The evidence of the great mass of the manuscripts and the improbabilities of the other views may drive us back to the view that it was meant for the church at Ephesus. If we feel that the absence of characteristic Pauline expressions of warmth (that would be expected in a letter to a church where he had spent as much time as he did at Ephesus) and of references to concrete situations are significant, then we will probably think of some form of circular letter. But we are left with difficulties whatever view we adopt.

C. I am inclined to think the phrase "in Ephesus" was not in the letter originally. Its absence leaves one with a translation something like, "Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints who also are [called] believers in Christ Jesus." This is a bit awkward but not impossible.

1. My guess is that this letter was intended for a group of churches in Asia Minor (perhaps not including Colossae and Laodicea, see Col. 4:16), which accounts for it being the most general and least situational of Paul's letters, but was first presented to the church in Ephesus. Copies were sent out to other churches from Ephesus, and the

association of the letter with Ephesus got set fairly early, as indicated by "To [the] Ephesians" being in the title of P⁴⁶, which lacks "in Ephesus" in 1:1.

2. At some point, the letter's association with Ephesus found its way into the text of 1:1, the participial phrase τοῖς οὖσιν making it easy to believe "in Ephesus" mistakenly had been dropped by a copyist. The addition of "in Ephesus" in 1:1 leaves one with a translation like, "Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints who are in Ephesus, [the] faithful in Christ Jesus."

D. Whatever their specific locale(s), it is clear that the audience is comprised predominantly of Gentile Christians. Their ethnic background is shown by the way they are addressed in 2:11 and 3:1, by the depiction of their past as religiously deprived in comparison with that of Israel (2:11-13), and by reference to their past Gentile lifestyle (4:17).

III. Purpose

A. As noted above, Ephesians was not sent to deal with a specific situation in a particular congregation. It has a wider initial audience and thus has a more general purpose, but there is disagreement among scholars as to what that purpose is.

B. I think there is something to Peter O'Brien's assessment of the matter (p. 57):

Having addressed a specific problem in Colossians, Paul has remodeled his letter for a more general Christian readership. He writes Ephesians to his mainly Gentile readers, for whom he has apostolic responsibilities, with the intention of informing, strengthening, and encouraging them by assuring them of their place within the gracious, saving purpose of God, and urging them to bring their lives into conformity with this divine plan of summing up all things in Christ (1:10). Paul wants to 'ground, shape and challenge' his readers in their faith. In other words, the main purpose of his letter is '*identity formation*'.

The Letter

I. **Prescript** (1:1-2) – *Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints who also are [called] believers in Christ Jesus: ²Grace to you and peace from God our Father and [the] Lord Jesus Christ.*

A. Paul identifies himself as an apostle of Jesus Christ, meaning one who was called and sent by the Lord Jesus. He is a fully authorized messenger on Christ's behalf. And his apostleship was "by the will of God," not by personal ambition or human appointment. He is God's chosen instrument for ministering to mankind, especially the Gentiles.

B. He is writing to the "saints," which is more literally translated "holy ones" or "sanctified ones," meaning those set apart for God. It is Paul's regular description of

Christians (Rom. 1:1; 1 Cor. 1:1-2; 2 Cor. 1:1; Phil. 1:1). It does not refer to some super-holy subset of the community of faith. In my translation of the text (without "in Ephesus"), that is specified: the saints are those who believe in Christ Jesus.

C. Paul desires for them continuing "grace and peace" from God the Father and the Lord Jesus. Grace refers to the unmerited favor that God lavishes on us in many different ways. Peace with God and each other is ours through Christ.

II. Praise to God for his work in Christ (1:3-14) – ³*Blessed [is] the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms in Christ,* ⁴*inasmuch as he chose us in him before [the] foundation of [the] world that we might be holy and blameless before him, in love* ⁵*having predestined us for adoption as sons for himself through Jesus Christ, in accordance with the good pleasure of his will,* ⁶*to the praise of [the] glory of his grace with which he highly favored us in the Beloved.* ⁷*In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of transgressions, according to the riches of his grace* ⁸*which he lavished on us, with all wisdom and insight,* ⁹*having made known to us the mystery of his will, in accordance with his good pleasure which he purposed in him,* ¹⁰*for [the] administration of the fullness of the times, [namely] to bring all things together in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth [brought together] in him.* ¹¹*In him we were also allotted an inheritance, having been predestined according to [the] plan of him who works out all things according to the purpose of his will,* ¹²*in order that we, who have hoped beforehand in the Christ, might be for [the] praise of his glory.* ¹³*In him you also, having heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and having believed in him, were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,* ¹⁴*who is a down payment of our inheritance, [vouching] for [the] redemption of [God's] possession, to [the] praise of his glory.*

A. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is also our Father (1:2), is said to be "blessed," which is a way of saying he is praiseworthy (1:3a). He is then described as the one who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms in Christ (1:3b).

1. God has blessed those in Christ, meaning he has bestowed on us various benefits. Those benefits are identified by the phrase "every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms," the nature of which is specified in vv. 4-14.

2. Paul is saying in v. 3b that God is praiseworthy because he has given to Christians every spiritual blessing that exists in heaven. As vv. 4-14 make clear, Paul is referring specifically to the blessings that flow from the redemptive work of Christ. Those blessings are labeled "S/spiritual" because it is the Spirit of God who makes them a reality in people's lives by impressing Christ's work on their hearts.

a. As Andrew Lincoln states in *Ephesians*, WBC (Dallas: Word Books, 1990), 19, "The blessing consists of God's saving activity in Christ and this fullness of divine blessing can be described as 'spiritual,' not because it belongs to a person's inner, hidden life but because it is bound up with the Holy Spirit." See also, O'Brien, 95-96; Ernest Best, *Ephesians*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 113-114.

b. Gordon Fee writes in *God's Empowering Presence* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 666-667:

As elsewhere, pneumatikov" is an adjective for the Spirit, that is, "pertaining to or belonging to the Spirit"; thus "pneumatikov" blessings" mean "Spirit blessings, blessings that pertain to the Spirit." . . . [T]his is Paul's way of expressing in a condensed form what he spells out further in this letter and everywhere else – that the Spirit is the present means whereby God appropriates to the believing community the "blessings" that flow from the redemptive work of Christ.

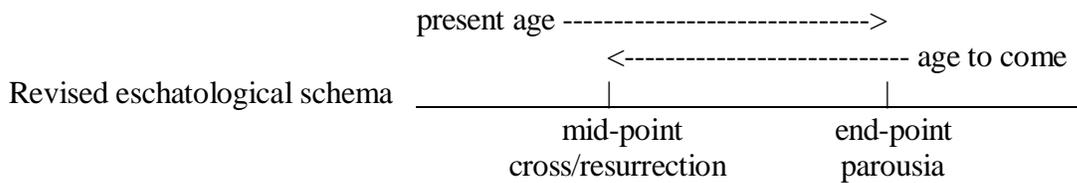
3. There is, of course, an "already / not yet" aspect to the blessings we have been given in Christ. There is a sense in which they are a present possession, something we have already begun to experience, but there is also a fuller sense of the blessings that awaits the consummation of the kingdom at Christ's return.

a. For example, Paul says in v. 5 that God predestined those in Christ for adoption as his sons. There is a sense in which we already have been adopted as sons of God (e.g., Rom. 8:14-15; Gal. 3:26), but there is a fuller sense in which our adoption as sons awaits the resurrection of our bodies at Christ's return (Rom. 8:23, 8:11). He says in 1:7 (and Rom. 3:24 and Col. 1:14) that Christians presently have redemption, but 1:14 and 4:30 make clear that redemption in its fullest sense is still future (see also Rom. 8:23). Peter O'Brien comments on 1:14 (p. 122): "Redemption, which is a present 'spiritual blessing' at 1:7, here signifies the final deliverance (cf. 4:30), when God takes full and complete possession of those who are already his."

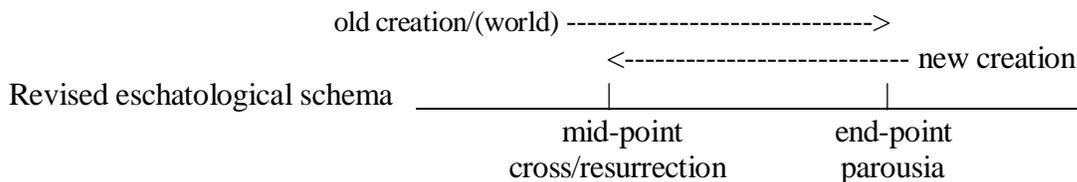
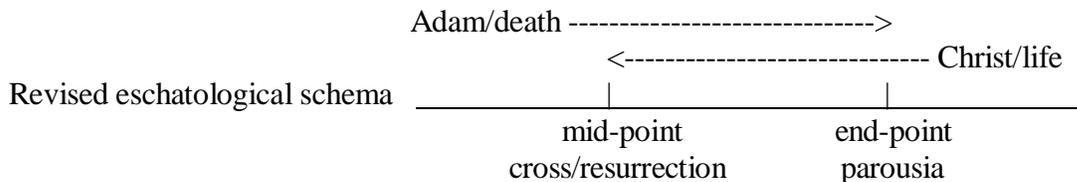
b. This concept of the "already / not yet," sometimes called "inaugurated eschatology," is a fundamental perspective of the New Testament. Thomas Schreiner writes in his book *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 802:

We have seen in this book that the already-not yet pervades the NT and is crucial for understanding NT theology. God's promises have been fulfilled with the coming of Jesus Christ, in his ministry, death, and resurrection. The resurrection of Jesus Christ and the pouring out of the Spirit signal the arrival of the age to come. Even though the new creation, the new exodus, and the coming age have arrived, they have not been consummated. Death has not yet been extinguished as the last enemy. Satan still afflicts the people of God, and suffering still characterizes the existence of God's people. Not only so, but Christians still struggle

Dunn comments (p. 464): "The key point is that in the gap opened up between the two comings of Christ, the ages overlap. The beginning of the age to come is pulled back into the present age, to begin with Christ's resurrection. But the present age has not yet ended, and will persist until the parousia." That is shown as follows:



The following diagrams are refigured in terms of Adam-Christ and old creation-new creation.



e. See also C. Marvin Pate, *The End of the Age Has Come: The Theology of Paul* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995) and the discussion in Dunn, 461-498.

B. Specifying the blessings

1. Before the creation of the world, God chose those in Christ, those he foresaw would believe in Christ of their own free will, to enjoy the benefits of salvation, one of which is to be holy and blameless before him (1:4). It is those "in Christ" who are destined for blessings, and one enters into (and remains in) Christ on the basis of faith.

a. Calvinists, of course, see this differently. They believe that God in eternity chose certain individuals for salvation *unconditionally*. Rather than choosing for the blessings of salvation those he foresaw would meet the condition of faith, God in eternity determined which individuals would believe and thus be saved. He then, in conformity with that choice, *irresistibly* caused those individuals to believe. All those who were not chosen to believe were doomed to damnation; it is *not possible* for them to be saved because God has chosen not to create faith in them.

b. This debate has gone on for centuries and is a much larger topic than can be addressed here. Let me just say that many devout, intelligent, and highly educated people are Calvinists. I think part of what drives them to their conclusion is the notion that salvation becomes a human accomplishment unless one's faith is fully determined by God. They reason that if we are free (in a libertarian, noncompatibilist sense)² to choose to believe in Christ, then salvation rests upon our good work of believing. As Jerry Walls and Joseph Dongell put it in *Why I Am Not a Calvinist* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 77: "If faith is viewed as *our part* in the process of salvation, then salvation must be viewed as a cooperative affair, and we should then describe ourselves as *self-saviors* in part."

c. I think this Calvinist fear rests on an improper understanding of faith. As Walls and Dongell explain (p. 78):

The Bible itself does not describe faith as a work that accomplishes a task, or as a deed that establishes merit, or as a lever that forces God to act. Instead, we find that genuine faith is something quite different. As Paul's treatment of Abraham shows, the patriarch's faith had no power over God, earned no merit before God and stood as the polar opposite to honorific deeds. Abraham believed God, and righteousness was "credited" to him, not paid to him. God alone justified Abraham freely on the basis of Abraham's faith (Rom. 4:1-6). Since by *its very nature* faith confesses the complete lack of human merit and human power, it subtracts nothing from the Savior's grace or glory. By its very nature, faith points away from all human status and looks to God alone for rescue and restoration.

d. What ultimately is at stake in this disagreement is the character of God. If God determines human decisions and actions in a way that makes it impossible for a person to decide or act contrary to that determination, then God necessarily is the author of sin and evil, which strains to the breaking point the claim that he is wholly good. Arminianism, which takes its name from Jacob (or James) Arminius, a Dutch theologian of the late 16th and early 17th centuries, does not begin with free will; rather, its notion of free will flows from the biblical portrait of God as unconditionally and unequivocally good.

² Calvinists believe in a "free" will that is compatible with determination (and thus is called compatibilist free will). They believe that God determines what one will choose so as to render it impossible for one to choose otherwise but that he does so by making one want that choice. Roger Olson writes in *Arminian Theology: Myths and Realities* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 75:

In compatibilist free will, persons are free so long as they do what they want to do – even if God is determining their desires. This is why Calvinists can affirm that people sin voluntarily and are therefore responsible for their sins even though they could not do otherwise. According to Calvinism God foreordained the Fall of Adam and Eve, and rendered it certain (even if only by an efficacious permission) by withdrawing the grace necessary to keep them from sinning. And yet they sinned voluntarily. They did what they wanted to do even if they were unable to do otherwise. This is a typical Calvinist account of free will.

e. For further study, see Roger E. Olson, *Arminian Theology: Myths and Realities* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006); Chad Owen Brand, ed., *Perspectives on Election* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2006); Jerry Walls and Joseph Dongell, *Why I Am Not a Calvinist* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004); Robert E. Picirilli, *Grace, Faith, Free Will Contrasting Views of Salvation: Calvinism & Arminianism* (Nashville: Randall House, 2002); Clark H. Pinnock, ed., *The Grace of God and the Will of Man* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 1989); Robert Shank, *Elect in the Son: A Study of the Doctrine of Election* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 1989).

2. The church, the body of believers, was chosen by God in eternity to be holy and blameless before him. We are now without fault or blemish, not in ourselves but because God in his grace has made us that way, and we will be declared as such when we are presented before him for judgment (Col. 1:22; Eph. 5:27). Of course, God desires that we live up to that calling, that we be in practice what we are through his grace.

3. In love³ God predestined those in Christ for adoption as his own sons (1:5a). God has chosen us to be his children; we are family! Parents, you know the difference between the child down the street you may love and the child who is your own son or daughter. You are bonded and committed to your own child in a unique way. Our marvelous God has chosen to be bonded and committed to us in an analogous way.

4. This predestining was all done in accordance with the good pleasure of his will (1:5b), meaning he freely purposed this familial relationship to his delight. The proper and intended result of which is that he be praised for the glorious grace with which he highly favored us in Christ (1:6).

5. In Christ we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of transgressions (1:7a-b). In accordance with the riches of God's grace which he lavished on us (1:7c – 8a), we have been delivered from his just judgment on our sins through the sacrificial death of Jesus on the cross.

6. The riches of grace that God lavished on us include all wisdom and insight (1:8b).⁴ These were given in his making known to us the mystery of his will for the administration of the fullness of the times (1:9a, 10a),⁵ which is to bring all things together in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth [brought together] in him (1:10b).

³ With RSV, NIV, NAU, ESV, TNIV, Ernest Best, and John Muddiman, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, BNTC (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2001), I take "in love" with what follows rather than with what precedes.

⁴ See O'Brien, 107-108.

⁵ I am swimming against a strong tide of commentators in connecting v. 10a to v. 9a. Best, for example, writes (p. 137), "Since [v. 10a] does not reveal the content of what God makes known it cannot depend on v. 9a." It seems to me, however, that v. 10a explains that the mystery in question pertains to God's will "for the administration of the fullness of the times," the content of which is specified in v. 10b. Perhaps I can claim Max Turner as an ally, but his exposition is not detailed enough to make that clear. In any event, I don't believe the difference affects the overall meaning of the passage.

a. God, in accordance with what he was pleased to purpose in Christ (v. 9b), made known through the inspired teaching of the apostles and prophets the mystery of his will for the handling of the end of history, for the management of the completion of the ages, the content of which is to unify heaven and earth in Christ.

b. O'Brien writes (p. 114): "The aorist infinitive 'to bring all things into unity' points not to the past, but signifies purpose: the summing up of all things is the goal to be achieved. This is not to suggest that the implementation of the divine plan is not already under way. . . . But the summing up awaits the consummation which will occur at the end."

c. Max Turner comments in "Ephesians" in G. J. Wenham and others, eds., *New Bible Commentary*, 21st Century ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 1226:

The mystery God has made known to us is the central implication of what he 'set forth in Christ' . . . that is, in his ministry, death and resurrection-glorification. . . . The content of the mystery is God's intent 'that the universe, everything in heaven and on earth, might be brought into unity in Christ' . . . Essentially then, God's 'blessworthiness' is affirmed on the grounds that he has shown us in Christ and in the church the beginnings of his master-plan to restore the cosmos to himself, and to the harmony lost through rebellion and consequent alienation.

d. The eternal state, which will come about in conjunction with Christ's return, will be a redeemed and transformed creation, a "heavenized" creation from which sin and all its consequences have been expunged.⁶ The curse will have been lifted (Rev. 22:3), and creation itself will have been freed from its slavery to decay (Rom. 8:20-21). It is what the Bible calls the new heavens and new earth (2 Pet. 3:13; see also, Isa. 65:17, 66:22; Rev. 21:1-3), the divine utopia in which Christians will dwell forever in resurrection bodies and in which there will be no evil, no death, no mourning, no crying,

⁶ There is a debate over whether the present earth will go out of existence and be replaced with a completely new earth or whether the present earth will continue in existence in a radically transformed state. I believe the entire creation is going to be renewed or redeemed (see Rom. 8:18-25). It will be radically altered but it will still in some sense be "this creation" that comes out on the other side of that transforming process. I think Grudem has it right when he states in *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 1160-1161:

The Reformed position seems preferable here, for it is difficult to think that God would entirely annihilate his original creation, thereby seeming to give the devil the last word and scrapping the creation that was originally "very good" (Gen. 1:31). The passages above that speak of shaking and removing the earth and of the first earth passing away may simply refer to its existence in its present form, not its very existence itself, even 2 Peter 3:10, which speaks of the elements dissolving and the earth and the work on it being burned up, may not be speaking of the earth as a planet but rather the surface things on the earth (that is, much of the ground and the things on the ground).

and no pain (Rev. 21:1-4). And God has revealed that Jesus Christ is the person through whom this all will be accomplished.

e. Andrew Lincoln remarks (p. 43-44):

An important part of the eulogy is the middle section which blesses God for revealing that his gracious purpose in history is all-embracing (vv 9, 10). As believers are reminded of the revelation of this mystery, they are brought to realize that the salvation with which they have been blessed centers in the same comprehensive Christ in whom God is working to restore all things. The divine election which has grasped them is shown to be God's decision to sum up all things in Christ. To be in Christ, therefore, is to be part of a program which is as broad as the universe, a movement which is rolling on toward a renewed cosmos where all is in harmony.

7. In keeping with God's eternal purpose (1:11b), we who are in Christ were (as God's children) allotted an inheritance⁷ in order that we might be to the praise of his glory (1:11a, 12a, 12c).

a. Those in Christ have been allotted an inheritance in the consummated kingdom of God. The new creation will be our home, the true promise land, and we will dwell there forever in perfect fellowship with God and one another. Paul frequently speaks of our kingdom inheritance as something yet future (1 Cor. 6:9-10; Gal. 5:21; and esp. Eph. 1:14 and Col. 3:24).

b. We who have been given this inheritance are to the praise of God's glory because our existence as heirs is a testament to the magnificence of his kindness, mercy, and grace. We have an inheritance because of his glorious purpose.

c. I think Christians⁸ are described in v. 12 as those who have hoped *beforehand* in the Christ simply to emphasize what is implicit in hope, namely that it exists prior to its realization.⁹ As Paul says in Rom. 8:24, hope that is seen is not hope. Our hope in Christ en route to the consummation, en route to the full realization of our inheritance, itself glorifies God and thus contributes to our being for the praise of his glory.

8. The recipients of the letter, who are in Christ through having believed in him through the preaching of the gospel, were sealed, as were Paul and his companions ("you also"), with the Holy Spirit of promise (1:13).

⁷ KJV, NAU, NRS, NJB, ESV, and BDAG (p. 549) reflect a similar understanding of ἐκληρώθημεν.

⁸ For arguments against narrowing the scope of "we" in v. 12 to Jews or Jewish Christians, see Hoehner, 231-234; Best, 147; and Lincoln, 36-37.

⁹ Some (e.g., Lincoln, 37 and Best, 147) contend that προελπίσειν is essentially a synonym for the simple verb "to hope."

a. They were stamped with God's identifying mark, sealed in that sense, by the gift of the Spirit. The Spirit is called "the Holy Spirit of promise" because his being given was promised in the O.T. (see Acts 2:17 which takes up the promise of Joel 2:28-32) or because he is the down payment on the promise of future blessings at the consummation, as indicated in v. 14.

b. The Spirit is described as a down payment of our inheritance (1:14). He is a foretaste of the eternal state that serves as a pledge of God's intention to fulfill his promise to redeem his people by taking full and complete possession of them at the consummation. As F. F. Bruce writes in *The Epistle to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 266: "On the day of the resurrection God will 'redeem' his own possession, and the evidence of his commitment to do so is given in his 'sealing' that possession with the Spirit."

(1) The fact Christians have been sealed with the Holy Spirit as a down payment of our inheritance (see also, 2 Cor. 1:22, 5:5; Eph. 4:30) does not eliminate the possibility of apostasy. A down payment is given to assure the *recipient* that the one giving it will fulfill his part of the transaction ("down payment" is a commercial term). It does not guarantee that the "deal" will be completed in the event the recipient defaults.

(2) The point of the sealing and down payment metaphors is to assure the saint that God will be faithful to his promise of redemption and glory, not to suggest that the saint cannot be faithless. It is assumed that the saint, the recipient of the down payment, will desire completion of the "transaction" and thus will continue in the faith. That is certainly the norm, but God leaves the saint free to abandon the faith, and the one who does so will forfeit the blessings of being in Christ. That is why Paul warns the Ephesians about being deceived into embracing a lifestyle that would bring them under wrath (Eph. 5:3-7).

c. God's plan for our eternal inheritance and his giving the Spirit as evidence of his commitment to that plan are to the praise of his glory.