



Pilgrim Home Baptist Church

NT 260 2022 • GOD'S EVERLASTING PROMISE • EPHESIANS 1:3-14 • 7/17/2022

MAIN POINT

From the beginning of time, God promised to redeem the world through the promise of Jesus Christ.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What is the most significant promise you have ever made to another person? Were you able to keep it?

How does the person making the promise determine our ability to believe his or her promise?

Our ability to trust a promise is completely dependent on the identity of the person making the promise. For example, you would never marry a person who could not honor his or her promise to be faithful, nor would you lend money to someone who had no intention of paying you back. All of us have broken promises. However, God is not like a man that He should lie (Nb. 23:19). God is incapable of breaking His promises because He is utterly faithful and has the ability to accomplish all He purposes. Before time began, God made an everlasting promise to redeem the world through Jesus. We see echoes of this promise in the earliest chapters of Scripture (Gen. 3:15). In His nature God exerts complete control over time and upholds His promises. We can hold fast to His promises because God is able and faithful (Heb. 10:23).

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ EPHESIANS 1:3-6.

When did God determine to set His affection on us? Did He have any reason to choose us over any other people? What caused Him to choose us?

How do these verses show that Jesus was always God's "plan A" to redeem a people to Himself? How are all the people of God a part of this redemption story?

What does it mean for God to have adopted us into His family? What do we receive as God's sons?

According to verse 6, why has God chosen to redeem people at all? What makes God's promise praiseworthy?

The psalmist wrote, "Our God is in the heavens, He does all that He pleases" (115:3). From eternity past, God chose to redeem us—not because of any merit foreseen in us, but because it pleased Him to do so. Before any of us had done good or evil, God set His affection upon us. This is the essence of grace that finds its fullest expression in the person and work of Christ. God has always promised Jesus, He did not change His mind after another plan did not work out. And God did all this to the praise of His glorious grace. God's promises should always lead to our praises.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ EPHESIANS 1:7-10.

What benefits of salvation do we experience right now? What does the fact we need to be redeemed tell you about us?

What did Paul mean when he wrote about the mystery of God's will (v. 7)?

How is Christ the primary means through which God brings His promises into effect?

God sent Christ into the world in the fullness of time (v. 10, Gal. 4:4-5) to be born of a woman to live a perfect life, die a substitutionary death in the place of sinners, and be raised on the third day in victory over sin and death. In doing this, Jesus made manifest the everlasting promises of God to His people. Though presently we experience some of the benefits of our adoption as sons, God's promise will be fully realized when Christ returns again for His people.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ EPHESIANS 1:11-14.

How do we enter into the future promises of God?

How is the Holy Spirit a down payment on a promise that will be fully realized later?

For many, considering the future return of Christ leads to unending and unhelpful speculation. Why should the promise of Christ instead give us unwavering hope?

According to these verses, what is our inheritance through Christ? What aspect of this inheritance is most exciting for you and why?

Just as we pay a down payment on a larger purchase to signify our intent to pay in full at a later date, God has sent the Holy Spirit into our souls to seal His deposit and make us ready for the day Jesus will return. On that day, God will restore all of His fallen creation, and all people will recognize Christ as the Lord of the universe. God's promises will be perfectly experienced in the new heaven and earth, where we will reign with Christ forever.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

Read 2 Corinthians 1:20. How does knowing every promise of God is fulfilled in Christ inspire you to love and trust Him more?

**How should God's promises shape the way we worship Him? How we read the Bible?
How we pray?**

It has been said that the kingdom of God is "already, not yet." How should we live right now in anticipation of eternity?

PRAYER

Praise God for not being limited in His ability to deliver on His promises to us, and thank Him for fulfilling His everlasting promise in Christ. Pray that God's promises would cause you to cherish His goodness and hold fast to Him.

COMMENTARY

| EPHESIANS 1:3-14

1:3. Praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: This section often is called "the doxology" because it recites what God has done and is an expression to Him of worship, praise, and honor. Similar doxologies are found in 2Co 1:3 and 1Pe 1:3. In this majestic section, Paul wrote of the blessings that belong to the church through the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God has blessed us with all of the blessings in the heavenly realms. These blessings include our union with Christ; being seated with Him in the heavenlies; and our adoption, redemption, and

election. All spiritual gifts and service abilities also flow out of these spiritual blessings that God gives to every believer at the time of salvation.

1:4. He chose us in Him: The idea of divine election flows out of the important theme of spiritual union, for election is “in Christ.” The doctrine of election is one of the most central and one of the most misunderstood teachings of the Bible. At its most basic level, election refers to God’s plan whereby He accomplishes His will. The meaning of election is best understood as God’s Sovereign initiative in bringing persons to faith in Christ, resulting in a special covenant relationship with Him. This theme serves as a foundation to the entire opening section of Ephesians, which includes the phrases: God “chose us” (v. 4); “predestined us” (v. 5); and “predestined according to the purpose” (v. 11). Paul’s focus on the Christ-centered character of election is vitally important. God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world. This indicates the centrality of the gospel in God’s plan for history. We are chosen to be holy and blameless. Holiness and blamelessness are the results, not the basis, of God’s election.

1:5. He predestined us: All of God’s blessings are in accord with sovereign predestination, which is purposeful and grounded in love. Predestination refers to the consistent and coherent intention of God’s will, an eternal decision rendering certain that which will come to pass. Adopted through Jesus Christ: Through God’s purposeful love, believers are adopted into God’s family. Adoption is the legal declaration that we are God’s children with all of the rights, privileges, and duties belonging to believers.

1:6. The ultimate purpose of God’s redemption plan is the praise of His glorious grace. Grace is God’s free favor to the undeserving. Believers are given grace simply because God is gracious.

1:7. Redemption in Him means that believers have been bought with the price of Christ’s blood (1Co 6:20; 1Tim 2:6; 1Pe 1:18-19) and have been redeemed from sin, Satan, and the misery of sinful self. The result of redemption is a sending away or banishment of our sin debt, resulting in complete forgiveness.

1:9. God’s grace has been lavished upon believers in accordance with the mystery of His will. Paul does not mean that God’s will is secret in the way that the mystery religions of Asia Minor taught. The mystery religions held that the divine expectations were fundamentally hidden from all but an enlightened few, whereas for Paul “mystery” meant the revelation of a component of God’s plan so that it now can be understood by all (3:2-13). Specifically the mystery involved the fulfillment of God’s plan to bring everything together in the Messiah.

1:10. Days of fulfillment: The goal of history is based on God’s divine purpose concerning the crucified redeemer, Jesus the Messiah—for whom, through whom, and in whom are all things.

The goal is to establish a new world order of which Jesus Christ is the acknowledged Head (v. 22). He is the head of a reunited universe. He now rules and reigns from God's right hand; one day He will establish His kingdom and bring in the new heavens and the new earth, fulfilling and finalizing God's redemptive purpose. This is what is involved in bringing together things in heaven and things on earth in Him.

1:11. Received an inheritance: Paul discusses the end result of redemption from a standpoint that stretches from eternity past to eternity future. The recipients of this inheritance are people whom God has chosen and predestined. They come to faith in Christ not by chance, coercion, or unaided choice, but by the enabling of God's Spirit. Building on OT themes, Paul envisioned those who have received this inheritance as standing in continuity with the covenant people of OT times.

1:13. Sealed with the promised Holy Spirit: The Holy Spirit was promised by the prophets and by Jesus (Joel 2:28-29; Jn 14:15-26; 16:5-16). The Spirit is described as both a seal showing ownership, and as a pledge pointing to future redemption. Though believers have not yet experienced redemption in full, God will bring about final redemption (life in His immediate presence) for all who have received the Spirit (Eph 1:14).