

Title: GOD'S PLAN AND PURPOSE, EPHESIANS 1:3-14
(Chatham, NJ; 07/12/15, AM) [Pc – Narrative Exposition]

Theme: The essence of God's plan is Jesus Christ, and it can be seen in redemption through his blood.

Purpose: To explain Ephesians' discussion of God's plan by showing its fulfillment in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Introduction:

1. Paul expounds on God's plan and purpose in this section of Scripture.
2. This is really Jesus' story; Paul proclaims him, not merely our human experience.
3. His use of "heavenly realms" reminds us of Hebrews 8:1-2 where Christ is now seated and where God dwells.
4. As related in the Gospel of John, just as Jesus elevated the disciples to see spiritual realities, so Paul elevates us to see the plan and purpose of God as revealed in Christ.
5. Through Ephesians 1:3-14 we get more than a passing glimpse into the mind of God.
6. In the original language this is one sentence, and I will take a little liberty with the ideas here to organize it somewhat.

I. God's Purpose, 5

A. Adoption and unity

1. Adoption is "according to the purpose of his will," 5
2. God has always intended to bring us orphans (as those separated from Him) into his family
3. 2:13 applies this to the Gentiles, and Galatians 4:4-7 suggests intimacy since we are no longer slaves but sons.
4. Consistent with this is God's purpose that all things be united in Christ, 10
5. As children also we obtain an inheritance – verse 11 highlights also the purpose of his will
6. He has guaranteed his purpose by the coming of the Holy Spirit

B. His purpose was redemption, 7

1. "In Him" means Christ
2. Jesus is the means by which God accomplished this purpose
3. "His blood" can be none other than the blood of Christ
4. This is "according to the riches of his grace," which he "lavished on us," 7-8
5. His purpose was to offer forgiveness for stubborn, arrogant, and sinful people
6. The mind of God is displayed in lavish generosity

II. God's Plan, 10

A. God, Beyond Time and In Time

1. "Before the foundation of the world," 4 – God had this plan in place from eternity
2. Only in our imaginations can we think of time in this way
3. But because of this we can think of Christianity as a "grand scheme of things"
4. Yet God has condescended to work in the framework of time: Paul speaks of the plan coming together in "the fullness of time," 10
5. A phrase he also used in Gal. 4:4
6. When the time was right, Christ came.
7. As always, Christ is the centerpiece, the focus of time and eternity

B. A revelation of a mystery, 9

1. God let us in on the mystery (secret) of his will: he made it known to us, 9
2. Once again, this was according to his purpose

3. This came with wisdom and insight, 8
4. Perhaps, more properly, it is wisdom and insight
5. In Christ and the cross (1 Corinthians 1), the wisdom is on display for all to see
6. Though many miss it because of the blindness caused by sin
7. Christ is the focal point

III. An Effusion of Praise

- The discussion of the plan evokes praise from Paul
- 6, “to the praise of his glorious grace” – we are blessed by it
- Once you grasp it and accept it, praise (and it’s handmaiden, gratitude) will be the natural result
- 12, those of us who hope in Christ reflect praise back to God
- 14, the guarantee of our inheritance also evokes in Paul “to the praise of his glory”

Conclusion:

1. Praise is a fitting conclusion to God’s plan.
2. Don’t look for some other plan to be revealed by God: Christ is it.
3. Adoption, redemption, and inheritance reveal a plan replete with God’s lavish grace.
4. See this grand scheme for what it is: God’s blessing in the “heavenly realms.”
5. Come and be a part of this grand scheme.