

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. Eph 1:7-10 ESV

In him we have redemption through his blood

Paul now moves on to another of the great and wonderful doctrines of our faith, all the while building up and strengthening the Ephesian church. Here he raises Redemption. Redemption is a marvellous topic for us to consider, and a very large one also. It may be too large to do it justice here, but if we can distill it to its essence, we will find cause for great delight, and greater praise to God for His mighty acts. Redemption is the language of the marketplace. It is the act of purchasing back something which has been lost, by payment of a ransom. 1 Co 7:23 tells us, "*You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men.*"

This concept was much more familiar to the Ephesians than it is to us today. Slavery was commonplace in ancient times, and slaves could be bought and sold like livestock or property. Also, a person could sell themselves into slavery to settle a debt that they could not financially repay. Depending on the size of the debt, it may be for a period of time, or for life.

We owe a debt to God, but we have no ability to pay this debt due to the infinite size of it (consider [Mat 18:23-27](#)). The price set by God for our ransom was nothing less than our death ([Gen 2:16-17](#)) for our sin and disobedience. We owe God our obedience. But our death, while it may have settled our debt to God, would still result in separation from Him. What we need is someone sufficiently "wealthy" to pay the debt on our behalf, to purchase us *back* to God. We need a Redeemer.

Redemption was a concept well known to the ancient Israelites also. It was part of the Law of Moses ([Lev 25:25-34](#)). The Old Testament book of Ruth illustrates redemption in practice amongst the Israelites ([Rth 4:3-10](#)).

In the Israelite culture of the day, the redeemer had three rights:

1. To purchase back the forfeited inheritance for a family member who was forced to sell his land because of poverty ([Rth 4:3-5](#)).
2. To ransom his kinsman from slavery to a foreigner ([Lev 25:47-49](#)).
3. Avenge the death of a slain family member as a point of honour ([Joh 8:44](#), [Heb 2:14-15](#)).

By the eternal plans and purposes of God, there is One who is sufficiently "wealthy" to pay our debt; Jesus Christ. Being the only one who ever fully and totally obeyed the Law, living a completely sin-free life, He is able to pay the debt on our behalf. His blood, His death meets the ransom price ([Mat 20:28](#), [Gal 4:4-5](#), [Rev 5:9](#)). But death had no power over Him, because He was sinless ([Rom 1:4](#), [Rom 6:9-10](#)).

The debt owed by the person being redeemed is not simply cancelled, but paid in full. Once this debt is paid, there is nothing more owing. The wonderful truth of this gives us absolute confidence in the grace of God. Nothing more remains to be paid, because the blood of Jesus has *paid in full* the debt we owed. Biblically, the purpose of redeeming someone was that they would be *forever* redeemed, *never to return to the marketplace*. This then removes all striving, all works to pay back God, or earn His favour. There is nothing more that needs to be done. We rest entirely on and in Christ. Blessed be the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!

The forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us

How thickly can it be piled on? Every phrase, almost every word is soaked in the grace of a loving and sovereign God. We are not even one-third of the way through the first chapter of Ephesians, not yet five-percent through the letter, and we are overwhelmed by God's goodness toward us. If it were a river, we would be over our heads and swept away by a raging torrent of love, mercy and grace (see [Eze 47:1-5](#)). Is there no end to His grace towards us? Thank God, no!

The heart of natural man is always in rebellion against God. Our thoughts, our intents, our actions are always against Him. Modern man likes to look through his rose-coloured glasses with misty eyes and feelings of great pride that he is getting better with every generation. Humanists have convinced themselves, and much of the world, that mankind is on an evolutionary journey away from the primitivity of the apes, and on towards a perfection that befits such a noble creature as himself. But it takes only a cursory glance at the history of mankind in general, and in particular the past one hundred years, to realise that the ape world is much more "humane" to their fellow apes than man is to his fellow man. We invent ever more violent and cunning ways to harm and destroy each other, all the while congratulating ourselves on our wonderful progress. We have almost limitless faith in toothless organisations that they will maintain peace in African nations, while watching live-on-TV news reports of the atrocities inflicted on various races and groups that occur directly under their jurisdiction. We happily pay \$200, \$300, \$500 for the latest name-brand sports shoe that we know full well was made for 50¢ in a slave labour shop in Asia.

There is no limit to the selfishness, the smugness and the hypocrisy of modern man. Those who recognise and despise it in themselves may attempt to address the issues, often by pressuring others to do what they don't actually do themselves. Consider the enormous quantities of natural resources consumed by Climate Change campaigners in their determination to make the common man feel guilty about not turning off that extra light. No, we like to feel good about ourselves, and if we can't feel good about ourselves, then we will make everyone else feel bad about themselves. We pile guilt upon guilt on each other, when our real problem is the guilt we carry with us every moment of our lives. We are, at heart, evil not good ([Gen 6:5](#), [Jer 17:9](#)) in spite of our warm fuzzy feelings about ourselves. Is there a solution? *Rom 7:24-25 Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!*

The only remedy for guilt is forgiveness. Many religions attempt to achieve forgiveness through sacrifices, good works or self-denial, as if man could ever do enough to counter-balance the infinite guilt he carries. They are only destined for failure and bondage. There is only one way. Only the blood of the perfect, spotless and sinless Lamb of God can wash away guilt. Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins. God has decreed a death penalty for those who sin, requiring blood as the payment. Jesus Christ has poured out His precious blood in death, on our behalf, as the payment of the penalty ([Mat 26:28](#)). For those who will acknowledge their sinfulness and guilt before God, and accept the payment He has made, there is forgiveness, there is reconciliation to God, there is peace with God and there is confidence of eternal security in Him. What more could we require? What else can achieve such infinite riches for us at such a tiny price from us? If this doesn't overwhelm us with humility, joy, love and gratitude to God, then we need to take stock of ourselves and see if we haven't forgotten our First Love and fallen from great heights ([Rev 2:4-5](#)).

He has poured out this forgiveness on us *according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us*. There is an infinite wealth of grace towards us, and forgiveness is only one part of that. We have been looking at many aspects of that lavish grace, and will look at more in the passages to come in Ephesians. The list of the benefits of that grace comes at us so thick and so fast it takes our breath away, and is almost impossible to keep up with. At times we can only stand in awe and silence as we contemplate what we have so freely received. This also is good.

In all wisdom and insight

God, when He made His plans for the earth and the human race, knew the consequences, knew the rebellion that would come, knew the hatred which man would direct towards his Creator. God wasn't taken by surprise by this. His plan from all eternity was to display His grace towards us. This was not God's "Plan B," forced on Him because "Plan A" failed. This was always and only ever "Plan A." Even this speaks of the omniscience of God, and His plan of Election. This is surprising to us mere mortals who naturally expect that we would receive blessings on the basis of our worth or our works. But if the foolishness of God is higher than the wisdom of men ([1Co 1:25](#)), how much beyond us is the wisdom of God? It is beyond our comprehension and understanding. In fact, a god whose wisdom were the equal of man's wisdom would not be a god worthy of worship or trust. We could have no confidence in such a puny God. It is necessary therefore for God to be infinitely beyond mankind in wisdom, knowledge, power, majesty, etc to be worthy of worship and obedience.

Making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ

God has chosen to reveal some of His wisdom to mankind now. What was before a hidden mystery has now been revealed to those He has chosen for salvation. Paul frequently talks about the mystery of God, here in the letter to the Ephesians, but also in other letters (Rom 11, Rom 16, 1Cor 15, Col 1, Col 2, Col 4, 2 Thess 2, 1Tim 3). We will talk about that mystery more when we reach Eph 3:3. Suffice to say here that the mystery from all eternity, now revealed to the saints, is that God Himself would become man, in order to redeem sinful man (see [1Ti 3:16](#)).

We have already talked about God's purpose in salvation in Eph 1:5. This purpose was to be accomplished through Jesus Christ, and by no other means or any other person. There is no other way to God but through Christ; there is no other Mediator ([1Ti 2:5](#), [Heb 9:15](#), [Heb 12:24](#)). Were Christ to fail in any aspect of fulfilling that purpose, were He to sin in the slightest degree, then salvation forever would be beyond the reach of man, and death and eternal punishment would be our lot. Thanks be to God for the efficacy of His plans and purposes.

As a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

There is coming a time when the plans and purposes of God will be fulfilled. Creation is not destined to continue in this current sin-scarred and damaged state. It will one day be renewed and re-united to Christ. In fact, creation itself has an awareness of its damaged condition, and an eager longing for this time (see [Rom 8:19-23](#)).

Christ will return. That day has already been determined by God from before the beginning of time. As with all of God's decrees, it is assured. There will be no mistaking it when it arrives. Every eye will see Him. There will be no mistaking the

occasion; there will be no escaping it. He will return to gather His brothers and sisters, living and dead ([1Th 4:13-18](#)). He will return to judge His enemies, living and dead ([Ecc 12:14](#); [Mat 12:36-37](#), [Rom 2:15-16](#); [Rom 14:10](#), [Rom 14:12](#); [2Co 5:10](#)). It will be a time of great joy and expectation for those who belong to Him ([Luk 21:27-28](#)). For His enemies, it will be a time of terror ([Rom 2:6](#), [Rom 9:22](#), [2Th 1:7-8](#), [Mat 25:41](#), [Mat 25:46](#), [2Th 1:9](#)). He will separate those He has chosen for salvation, to spend eternity with Him, and those who are to be punished, to go to their rightful reward ([Mat 25:31-34](#)).

There will be absolute finality when Christ returns. There will be no more opportunity to repent and be saved. Those who have responded to His call during their earthly life will be taken up into heaven with Him. Those who rejected Him during this life will face only judgment and eternal punishment. And the Word of God is clear that this punishment is both real and eternal. It is not complete destruction of body and soul and ceasing to exist; it is not "soul sleep" with no knowledge, good or bad, about God; it is not figurative fires of hell. It is real, it is eternal, and it is final.

Given the reality of this, how then should we respond?

- Confidence and assurance that He is coming back for us.
- Patience and endurance in suffering and persecution.
- Continue in fellowship and encourage each other.
- Proper perspective on the relative value of temporal and eternal things.
- Determination to make the most of our time here to serve God.
- Urgency in prayer and evangelism for the lost.
- Desire to make Him known among the nations.
- Call people to repentance and holiness.

No one knows the timing of the return of Christ, in spite of many attempts to calculate it, both by mainstream Christians and cults. Jesus made it plain that the time when this event will occur is not within man's ability to calculate, and God has chosen not to reveal the time to anyone on earth ([Mat 24:36](#), [Mat 24:44-51](#), [Mat 25:13](#), [Act 1:6-7](#)). That day will come suddenly and without warning, therefore we need to be prepared, living in such a way that we bring honour and praise to God ([1Pe 2:12-15](#)).