

Christians: God's Heritage

"In whom also ye were made a heritage, having been foreordained according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after counsel of his will; to the end that we should be unto the praise of his glory ..." (Eph., 1:11f).

It is interesting to observe that while Paul writes elsewhere that Christians are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, the reverse is stated here (Rom. 8:17). It is Christians who are the heritage of God. Peter says the same. *"Ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light"* (1 Pet. 2:9). In Exodus 6:7 God told Israel, *"I will take you to be my people."*

Paul tells that we *"have been foreordained to be God's heritage, which foreordination is wrought according to the counsel of his will."* God's eternal purpose was determined before the world existence (*"even as he chose us in his before the foundation of the world"*-- Eph. 1:4). The church is the revealing of His eternal purpose, purposed in Christ (3:10f). It is difficult to see how, in view of what the Ephesian writer has said about the church, that any man could dare to call the church God's "afterthought." The church was neither an "afterthought" nor an alternative solution should the Jews reject the Kingdom Christ offered them. The church is that kingdom and is all Christ offered His nation. It is all He will ever offer them.

The purpose of God when He designed and purchased the church was *"to the end that we should be unto his glory"* (1:12). This same words appear in verse fourteen. The world reflects the majesty and the glory of God as the Psalmist said: *"The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament his handiwork."* The beauty and working of any created thing reflects on the one who designed it and Christians, as God's creation, are to reflect the glory of God. *"Even so let your light shone before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your father who is in heaven."* *"That ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you"* (Matt. 5:16; 1 Pet. 2:9).

The phrase *"unto the praise of his glory"* first is spoken of *"we who had before hoped in Christ"* (12). This is likely the Jews for the gospel was first preached to them and for many years they were the only people who were part of the church. The second instance that *"unto the praise of his glory"* appears in this section includes the Gentiles as well. *"In whom ye also, having heard the word of the truth of the gospel of your salvation, in whom having also believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is an earnest of our inheritance, unto the redemption of God's own possession,*

unto the praise of his glory" (1:13f). This "ye" in this text had heard and believed the gospel and received their salvation ... just as was promised at Pentecost (Acts 2:38f).

Keep in mind, that the foreordination and sealing with the Holy Spirit of promise is an action which take place *"in whom"* God has summed up all things -- Jesus Christ. We are a new creature in Christ (2 Cor. 5:7). It is in Christ that we are the workmanship of God.

A created thing reflects upon its creator. If it functions well, it sheds a favorable light but if it malfunctions, it is a reflection against the maker. The pure, holy, loving serving Christian honors Christ who has made us. But when Christians live unholy, unthankful and careless lives, we reflect, but in a negative way, upon our Lord. Let each of us determine that we will glorify our God *"whose we are and whom we serve."*

Jim McDonald