



This assumption implies that the letter was written probably while Paul was in prison in Rome in the early 60s, or -- more likely -- prior to that when in prison in Caesarea (late 50s). Colossians was written at the same time and Ephesians is closely connected to it, sharing substantial vocabulary and writing style often not found elsewhere in the Pauline section of

section (to the recipients) in the beginning segment, “To the saints who are in Ephesus and are faithful in Christ Jesus” (NRSV), many of the earliest manuscripts of this document do not contain the words “who are in Ephesus.” Many scholars have taken to as a signal that this document was written as a “circular” letter, that is, these words ἐν Ἐφέσῳ were intentionally left out of the original composition, so that, as the letter was read to different congregations in different cities, the appropriate reference would be inserted orally by the reader. That this kind of thing was done in the ancient world can be demonstrated with other writings outside the New Testament. Although not everyone concurs with this view, it is highly probable that such an understanding correctly assesses the text situation.

This then complicates the identification of when, where, to whom, by whom. The document itself doesn’t provide the personal details about either the author or especially the intended readers as one finds in Romans, 1/2 Corinthians, Galatians etc. How to account for this occasions a wide diversity of responses. Without going into detailed elaboration of the options, let me simply state my convictions on this. In spite of some serious problems, I tend toward the more traditional view point of Pauline authorship and thus see the document written as a part of the later writing ministry of the apostle Paul in the late 50s to the 60s before his death in the middle 60s of the first Christian century. Ephesians belongs to the so-called [Prison Letters](#) of Paul that include Philipians, Colossians, Ephesians, and Philemon.

of the New Testament. The letter was intended to be read to a variety of churches, with Ephesus being one of primary ones. Largely because of this, but not entirely, the letter is broader in scope and less personal.

It was carried to Ephesus along with Colossians and Philemon by the representatives of Paul from his place of imprisonment. This would have included Tychicus (Eph. 6:21; Col. 4:7-8), along with the converted slave Onesimus (Col. 4:9). Perhaps others were in the group as well.

Paul’s relationship with the Christian community at Ephesus reaches back to the beginning of the 50s on the second missionary journey. The Christian community at Ephesus had its beginnings with a brief stop by Paul at the end of the second missionary (Acts 18:18-22), where Priscilla and Aquila stayed behind and developed the work in the early 50s. On the third missionary journey, Paul spent over two years in ministry (Acts 19:8,10; 20:31) from about 53 to 54 AD. In the traditional understanding of Ephesians, Paul is now writing this letter to them either from Caesarea (58-59 AD) or from Rome (61-62 AD).

The Christian community at Ephesus enjoyed a lengthy ministry from the apostle Paul, and also from the apostle John who spent most of his later years (60s to 90s) in ministry there. The Christian movement gradually made significant impact on the city and by the third century AD had become a major center of Christian activity. Thus the work of Paul and

John laid an important foundation for a witness for Christ that would last for hundreds of years in this area.

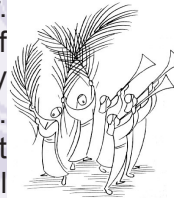
Internal History. The time and place markers inside 1:3-14 are limited. The extensive use of the

Aorist tense Greek verb underscores either the coming of Christ into this world, His death on the cross, or the moment of conversion for the believer. Thus, these references will be treated in the exegesis of the passage below.

b. Literary

Genre. Ephesians is an ancient letter. As such it bears great similarity to most of Paul's other letters in the New Testament. The standard elements, listed below, can be identified.

But Ephesians possesses some distinctive traits as a letter also. One of the distinctives surfaces in the Proem of 1:3-23. It divides itself into two parts, vv. 3-14, and vv. 15-23. A lot of content is packed into these twenty verses, but in the original Greek text all this material is contained in but two sentences. The two core expressions carry a huge amount of expansion elements that are attached: 1) "praise be to God..." (v. 3), and 2) "I do not stop giving thanks for you..." (v. 16). The second part, vv. 15-23, contain the usual elements of thanksgiving and intercession that typify most of the *Proema* in the letters of Paul. Part one, vv. 3-14, stands as an eloquent praise song to God with tones of formal liturgical structure. The roots of this reach back, not into Greek origins, but rather into Hebrew beginnings. Andrew Lincoln (*Word Biblical Commentary*, Logos Systems) provides a helpful synopsis of this:



This opening passage with its outburst of praise has the form of an extended blessing or berakah ("Blessed be God, who has ..."); the OT and Jewish worship provide the background for this form. Εὐλογητός, "blessed," is frequently used in the LXX to render the Hebrew *bārūk*. C. Westermann (*The Praise of God in the Psalms*, tr. K. R. Crim [London: Epworth Press, 1966] 87-89) has shown that in the OT the earliest form of berakah occurred when an individual responded simply to an act of God's deliverance or provision (e.g., Gen 14:20; 24:27), that later it became associated with the cult and was used in Israel's corporate worship (e.g., Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple begins and ends with the berakah formula in 1 Kgs 8:15, 56), and that a further stage of development is evidenced by the use of the berakah to conclude the books of the Psalter (Pss 41:13; 72:18, 19; 89:52; 106:48). Such eulogies remained dominant in Jewish worship and can be found in the Qumran literature (e.g., 1QS 11.15; 1QH 5.20; 10.14; 11.27, 29, 32, 33; 16.8), in Zechariah's prayer of Luke 1:68-75, and in rabbinic Judaism where they were the most characteristic formulae for prayer, as

prayers such as the *·Ahābā Rabbā* and the *Šēmōnēh ʿĒsrēh* show. The form of the latter, the *Eighteen Benedictions* of the synagogue service, can be seen from the first benediction:

Blessed art thou, O Lord our God and God of our fathers, God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob, the great, mighty and revered God, the most high God, who bestowest loving-kindnesses, and possessest all things; who rememberest the pious deeds of the patriarchs and in love will bring a redeemer to their children's children for thy name's sake. (*The Authorized Daily Prayer Book of the United Hebrew Congregations of the British Commonwealth of Nations*, tr. S. Singer [London: Eyre and Spottiswoode Ltd., 1962] 46).

Another distinctive trait of Ephesians is its circular letter nature. As discussed above under **External History**, the letter was intended to be read in more than one Christian community. Thus the usual nature of a letter as an "occasional letter," produced in response to specific needs of a specific group of Christians, is not found in Ephesians. Rather the treatment of broader, more timeless spiritual principles typifies Ephesians, since it is not attempting to address unique circumstances in the Christian community at Ephesus to the exclusion of other places.

Some older commentators have seen in this an impersonal tone and thus have questioned Pauline authorship. But just the opposite is the case. The circular nature of the letter necessitates the less personal focus of the letter. Indeed, some have suggested that Ephesians may have been intended as a "cover letter" for Colossians and Philemon, since the three documents were carried to their destinations by the same individuals at the same time. With it being read first to a congregation, a rich spiritual tone would be set for the reading of Colossians and Philemon.

Literary Context. Now for the literary setting of our passage. The Ephesian letter follows ancient letter writing patterns reasonably close and thus falls into the following divisions:

Praescriptio (introductory materials): 1:1-2

The sender, recipients and greeting are contained in these initial two verses.

Proem (prayer expressions): 1:3-23

Comprised of two major sections, this passage

Notes:

Verses 3-6 contain both the foundational expression and the first set of expansion elements focusing on God the Father.

Foundational Expression: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Εὐλογητὸς ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ). As noted above in the [Literary Genre](#) discussion, this line introduces a prayer of praise in the pattern of the ancient Jewish *berakah* (sometimes transliterated into English as *berakoth*) tradition. At the beginning of one of Paul’s letters it served to create a tone of prayerful praise for the reading of the letter to the respective congregation. Combined with the *Benedictio* prayer (cf. Eph. 6:18) at the end of the letter, it helped enclose the contents of the letter in prayer to God. This imitated the pattern of early Christian worship that began and ended with prayer. Such was the inheritance of Christians from their Jewish synagogue roots.

Whether this prayer was composed by Paul or whether he incorporated an already existing Christian prayer cannot be determined with certainty. Over the years of scholarship the dominant view has been the latter, with a small segment of scholars seeing this as taken from an early Christian baptism prayer formula. But in more recent scholarship, the view of this as a Pauline composition is gaining ground. The importance of a conclusion here has to do with interpretive procedure. If it was pre-existing material, effort needs to be made to surmise original meaning over against adapted meaning in Paul’s usage. The procedure is rather similar to interpreting the Psalms with the *Barakah* structure. If not, then such exploration is unnecessary. Our working assumption is that this is fundamentally a Pauline construction, although elements may very well have been taken from pre-existing Christian prayers.

The core expression is a word of praise to God. “Blessed” is Εὐλογητὸς (*eulogetos*) in the Greek. Ralph Martin (*Pillar NT Commentary*, Logos System) observes:

Within the New Testament ‘blessed’ always refers to God,³⁵ who is praised as creator (Rom. 1:25), as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 1:3; 11:31; and Eph. 1:3), and as the one who is over all, the Messiah (Rom. 9:5). While it has been claimed that the term signifies that God is ‘worthy of praise’ (rather than that he is actually *praised*), so that the ‘eulogy expresses a delicate prompting to ponder what God has done and to ascribe to Him the glory which is His due’,³⁶ here Paul *actually*

ascribes praise to God³⁷ (cf. 2 Cor. 1:3) for his mighty salvation.³⁸ Gratitude and thanksgiving once more well up within the apostle as he recalls God’s marvellous salvation plan in Jesus Christ. At the same time the whole paragraph, which is a paean of praise, is intended to instruct the readers and cause them in turn to respond by magnifying and glorifying God, who is worthy of their adoration. Paul’s eulogies do not express a wish; they describe a fact (‘Blessed is God’),³⁹ as he proclaims that God is the source of blessing.

The linking of God the Father to Jesus Christ the Son is prominent and gives the prayer its distinctive Christian orientation: “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ). It is through that connection that God has accomplished His intention of providing salvation to all humanity.



The Expansion Elements in vv. 3b-6 now elaborate on this foundational expression. These elements break down into smaller units of expression.

First: “who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places” (ὁ εὐλογήσας ἡμᾶς ἐν πάσῃ εὐλογίᾳ πνευματικῇ ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις ἐν Χριστῷ). Paul moves from the adjective εὐλογητὸς to the verb εὐλογέω in Aorist participle form εὐλογήσας in order to shift direction. God is now the source of blessing rather than its object. The completed action nature of the Aorist participle sees this blessing as having been accomplished, rather than as something continuing. Thus the focus is on the blessing achieved in the redemptive work of Christ on the cross.

Out of that accomplishment flows “every spiritual blessing” (ἐν πάσῃ εὐλογίᾳ πνευματικῇ). The Greek noun εὐλογία now defines God’s action toward us. The core idea of εὐλογία, “blessing,” is to speak well of. But, as Hermann Beyer (Kittel’s *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Logos Systems) observes, “Of few words in the NT is it so plain as of εὐλογέω and εὐλογία that they do not take their meaning from secular Greek but from the fact that they are the renderings of Hebrew words which acquired their religious significance in the OT and other Jewish writings.” Beyer then quotes Sigmund Mowinckel to the effect: “The Heb. ברכה does not merely signify ‘blessing’ or ‘a blessing,’ but also ‘being blessed’ or ‘being filled with blessing,’ as well as the concrete blessings which ensue, e.g., good fortune, power, etc.”

Thus every positive thing that comes to us comes from the hand of God as a spiritual blessing. Note James’ view of this (Jas. 1:17): “Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.”

These blessings are based “in Christ” (ἐν Χριστῷ) and “in the heavenly places” (ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις). The first qualifier is relatively clear. Our blessings from God are the outgrowth of our spiritual union with Christ. Our existence is completely “in Christ” and thus everything from God flows out of that relationship. The possibility of union was set up at Calvary; it was realized in our faith commitment to Christ.

They are also ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις. In [Paul’s use of this term](#) (5x in Ephesians alone), the concept underscores the realm of the heavenly over against the earthly. The point of the expression here is that these blessings have a heavenly origin rather than an earthly one. They, therefore, are lasting, profound, and immensely satisfying.

Second: “just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love” (καθὼς ἐξελέξατο ἡμᾶς ἐν αὐτῷ πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου εἶναι ἡμᾶς ἁγίους καὶ ἀμώμους κατενώπιον αὐτοῦ ἐν ἀγάπῃ). His having blessed us in Christ is linked to divine choice. God chose us; we didn’t choose Him. That choice was deliberate and definitive (ἐξελέξατο). His intention in that choice was that we should be holy and blameless in His presence. The language of temple sacrifice used here underscores our being made acceptable to stand in the presence of a holy God.

This choice was “in him,” that is, in Christ. The selection by God came through Christ and our redemptive relationship established by Christ’s death.

When did God make this decision? Paul declares, “before the foundation of the world” (πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου). Before God even created the world, He had made up His mind to choose followers of Christ to become His own children, redeemed and worthy to stand in His presence. Thus the pre-existing Christ was given the ultimate task of redeeming sinful humanity at the time of God’s choosing. Despite the can of worms that Enlightenment rationalism has opened since the sixteenth century, the text merely affirms God’s intention, not some sort of Calvinistic dogma that is often read into the text as a foreign element. It is “us” the believing community that God chose, not “us” as individual believers. This is Paul’s meaning here. What a powerful affirmation to largely Gentile communities of faith in the mid-first century world: you have been chosen by God long ago in God’s decision, not through some human circumstance. And it’s remains a powerful affirmation to us even today.

The prepositional phrase “in love” (ἐν ἀγάπῃ) can modify either “to be” (εἶναι) before it, or “having destined” (προορίσας) that follows. Most take it to modify the infinitive εἶναι that precedes it. Thus the divine intention for us to be holy and blameless is in the context of love. God’s love showered upon us



through Christ; that love flowing out of our inmost redeemed being now toward people around us -- this is the context of our acceptability before God. Divine love plays a central role in God's actions toward His people.

Third: "He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved" (προορίσας ἡμᾶς εἰς υἰοθεσίαν διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰς αὐτόν, κατὰ τὴν εὐδοκίαν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ, εἰς ἔπαινον δόξης τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ ἧς ἐχαρίτωσεν ἡμᾶς ἐν τῷ ἡγαπημένῳ). This very long Greek participle phrase reaches back most likely to the verb ἐξελέξατο, "he chose," in v. 4 (cf. [Block Diagram](#) for details). It could be understood, however, to go back to the initial participle εὐλογίσας in verse 3b with the Greek article ὁ governing both participles. If so the idea would be "who blessed us...who destined us..." More likely, though, this participle προορίσας modifies the verb ἐξελέξατο and creates the thought pattern "He chose us...after having destined us..."

Key to the meaning of the participle phrase is the verbal expression προορίσας "having destined." What was God's plan when He made those choices so long ago? It was His determination to adopt us sinners as His children. "He destined us for adoption as his children..." (προορίσας ἡμᾶς εἰς υἰοθεσίαν). The rich concept of spiritual adoption we explored in the previous Bible study on [Gal. 4:1-7](#). This was God's design from the very beginning, long before He even created the world. Once He had this design in place, He then made the decision to choose us to be re-tooled spiritually according to this design as His sons.

This was done both "through Jesus Christ" (διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ) and "for Himself" (εἰς αὐτόν). Once again the central role of Christ as the channel through whom God worked is emphasized. God's determination was to have children, His own children who would reflect His character and values. As the Father whom the children address as Ἀββᾶ, "Abba," His desire is for close, intimate relationship with them. As we believers walk in harmony with our Father, we experience profound relationship of blessing from His hand.

Even further, this pre-designing work of God took place "according to the good pleasure of his will" (κατὰ τὴν εὐδοκίαν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ). God was guided by His own choices that brought Him pleasure. No one forced this choice on God. Noth-



ing compelled Him to create this design of spiritual sonship. He wanted to because He enjoyed doing it.

Finally, this pre-design work of sonship by God redounds to "the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved" (εἰς ἔπαινον δόξης τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ ἧς ἐχαρίτωσεν ἡμᾶς ἐν τῷ ἡγαπημένῳ). As discussed [Summary of the Rhetorical Structure](#) section, the prepositional phrase εἰς ἔπαινον δόξης... functions somewhat as a threefold refrain in the prayer of praise with its repetition in vv. 6, 12 and 14. It serves as one of the "boundary markers" signaling shifts of thought in this long sentence.

Grammatically here, it is tied to προορίσας ἡμᾶς, "having designed us" in verse 5. God's pre-designing us for sonship underscores His wonderful grace that merits our continuing praise. This unmerited favor by God reflects who He is and how He works. In a beautiful, but untranslatable pattern, Paul plays off the idea of grace. It is this glorious grace (χάριτος) that He "graced" (ἐχαρίτωσεν) us with in the Beloved One. The verb form ἐχαρίτωσεν is effectively translated by the NRSV as "freely bestowed."

Christ who is the object of God's love again becomes the context in which divine grace is poured out in large measure upon the believing community. The use of the Aorist tense verb ἐχαρίτωσεν underscores the central action of that pouring out of grace as the cross.

Wow! What a celebration of the Heavenly Father. Certainly He deserves our praise and adoration. He merits our words of exaltation lifted up to Him in worship. These words may be raised with great joy, or they may be equally lifted up with profound reverence and reflection. Whether through gospel song or high liturgical anthem we must praise Him!

b. Praise to the Son, vv. 7-12

Greek NT

7 ἐν ᾧ ἔχομεν τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν διὰ τοῦ αἵματος αὐτοῦ, τὴν ἄφεσιν τῶν παραπτωμάτων, κατὰ τὸ πλοῦτος τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ
8 ἧς ἐπερίσσευσεν εἰς ἡμᾶς, ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ καὶ φρονήσει,
9 γνωρίσας ἡμῖν τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ, κατὰ τὴν εὐδοκίαν αὐτοῦ ἣν προέθετο ἐν αὐτῷ
10 εἰς οἰκονομίαν τοῦ πληρώματος τῶν καιρῶν, ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι τὰ πάντα ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ, τὰ ἐπὶ τοῖς οὐρανοῖς καὶ τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἐν αὐτῷ.
11 ἐν ᾧ καὶ ἐκκληρώθημεν προορισθέντες κατὰ πρόθεσιν τοῦ τὰ πάντα ἐνεργοῦντος κατὰ τὴν βουλήν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ
12 εἰς τὸ εἶναι ἡμᾶς εἰς ἔπαινον δόξης αὐτοῦ τοὺς προηλπικότητας ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ.

Notes:

This second stanza shifts emphasis to the work of the Son that the Father pre-planned. Once more a core expression lays the basis for all the expansion elements.

Foundational expression 1: “In him we have redemption” (ἐν ᾧ ἔχομεν τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν). This Greek relative clause links back to “the Beloved One” at the end of verse six. All through the first stanza of praise to the Father allusion is made to the work of the Son. Adoption is the closest reference to that work, but now the metaphor shifts from son to slave and the liberation of that slave.

The creation of the possibility of sonship by Christ on the cross now enables us to possess liberation

NASB

7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace
8 which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight
9 He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him
10 with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him
11 also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will,
12 to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory.

NRSV

7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace
8 that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight
9 he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ,
10 as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.
11 In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will,
12 so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory.

NLT

7 He is so rich in kindness that he purchased our freedom through the blood of his Son, and our sins are forgiven.
8 He has showered his kindness on us, along with all wisdom and understanding.
9 God’s secret plan has now been revealed to us; it is a plan centered on Christ, designed long ago according to his good pleasure.
10 And this is his plan: At the right time he will bring everything together under the authority of Christ – everything in heaven and on earth.
11 Furthermore, because of Christ, we have received an inheritance from God, for he chose us from the beginning, and all things happen just as he decided long ago.
12 God’s purpose was that we who were the first to trust in Christ should praise our glorious God.



from the death grip that sin and Satan had over us before adoption. The Roman slave market was an all too familiar scene to Paul’s first readers. Individuals were bought and sold by the Roman lords with little regard for the individual slave. What was possible in rare instances, especially for the better educated slaves, was to purchase their freedom after saving up sufficient funds. Paul turns to this imagery of liberation as his means of describing conversion. Additionally, the

metaphor has rich heritage in Jewish background, as Ralph Martin (*Interpretation Commentary*, Logos System) notes:

Redemption looks back to Israel's bondage in Egypt and God's deliverance (Deut. 15:15) and to release from Babylonian exile in Second Isaiah (Isa. 43:3; 52:3).

It is in the massive expansion elements to this core phrase that we sense the richness of Paul's thoughts.

Expansion elements. Three key expansion elements elaborate on the idea of liberation in Christ. The first is rather short and to the point. The second is an appositional phrase. The third is massive with extensive elaboration. The first and third are prepositional phrases in the Greek.

First: "through his blood" (διὰ τοῦ αἵματος αὐτοῦ).

The purchase price for liberation of the sinner is the blood of Christ. The sacrificial thrust here emphasizes the dominance of the Jewish heritage for the metaphor of redemption. Jesus' death on the cross as the sacrificial

Lamb of God became the means through which our liberation is achieved. This concept of the sacrificial blood of Jesus is a common theme in Paul's writings:

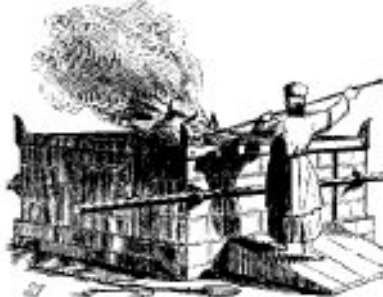
Rom. 3:25. "whom God put forward as a sacrifice of **atonement by his blood**, effective through faith."

Rom. 5:9. "Much more surely then, now that we have been **justified by his blood**, will we be saved through him from the wrath of God."

Eph. 2:13. "But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been **brought near by the blood of Christ**."

Col. 1:20. "and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by **making peace through the blood of his cross**."

Clearly Paul sees the spiritual potency of Christ's blood in connection with the Jewish temple sacrificial system laid out in the OT. This negates the useless speculative aspects of his sacrifice as a "ransom" to be paid to some unnamed entity in order to accomplish salvation for human kind. The OT principle of "life being in the blood" (cf. Lev. 17:11) sufficiently



explains the spiritual potency of Christ's blood. As the perfect sacrifice, Christ's blood accomplishes an eternal redemption from sin, rather than an annual one as was the case with the animal sacrifices in the Jewish temple. This is the central point of the book of Hebrews in the New Testament.

Second: "the forgiveness of sins" (τὴν ἄφεσιν τῶν παραπτωμάτων). Redemption, τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν, is now defined as forgiveness of sins by the appositional phrase τὴν ἄφεσιν τῶν παραπτωμάτων. The sacrifice of Christ "sends away" our sins, the literal significance of ἄφεσις from the verb ἀφίημι. Col. 1:14 is very close in thought: "**in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins**" (ἐν ᾧ ἔχομεν τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν, τὴν ἄφεσιν τῶν ἀμαρτιῶν). The use of παραπτωμάτων in Ephesians for 'sins' highlights the deliberative rebellion against God's will, while ἀμαρτιῶν in Colossians emphasizes failure to measure up to God's standards. As 1 Peter 2:24 declares, "**He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.**"

Third: "according to the riches of his grace that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory" (κατὰ τὸ πλοῦτος τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ ἧς ἐπερίσσευσεν εἰς ἡμᾶς, ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ καὶ φρονήσει, γνωρίσας ἡμῖν τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ, κατὰ τὴν εὐδοκίαν αὐτοῦ ἦν προέθετο ἐν αὐτῷ εἰς οἰκονομίαν τοῦ πληρώματος τῶν καιρῶν, ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι τὰ πάντα ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ, τὰ πάντα ἐπὶ τοῖς οὐρανοῖς καὶ τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἐν αὐτῷ. ἐν ᾧ καὶ ἐκληρώθημεν προορισθέντες κατὰ πρόθεσιν τοῦ ταῦτα ἐνεργούντος κατὰ τὴν βουλήν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸ εἶναι ἡμᾶς εἰς ἔπαινον δόξης αὐτοῦ τοὺς προηλικιώτας ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ). No way under Heaven exists for us to stack up so many qualifying phrases etc. onto an English verb. But it was considered good quality Greek in Paul's world.

Let's break down the pieces and discover the richness of Paul's ideas here.

"according to the riches of his grace that he

lavished on us“ (κατὰ τὸ πλοῦτος τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ ἧς ἐπερίσσευσεν εἰς ἡμᾶς). God’s unmerited favor is not a divine attitude. Instead, it is a divine action which was poured out in great quantity at the crucifixion of Christ. We, who as believers stand under that flood of grace, are the recipients of God’s blessing. Thus the redemption that we possess is measured by the generous portions of God’s grace abundantly poured out on us.

“with all wisdom and insight “ (ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ καὶ φρονήσει). What is unclear here is whether this prepositional phrase goes back to “he lavished” (ἐπερίσσευσεν) or whether it qualifies the participle that follows “having made known“ (γνωρίσας). The NRSV and NASB link it to the participle, “with all wisdom and insight He made known...” But the NLT links it to the verb: “He has showered his kindness on us, along with all wisdom and understanding.” The somewhat similar “in love” in verse 5 reach back rather than forward; I suspect this phrase does the same, thus favoring the NLT translation. Accompanying this generous dose of God’s grace is spiritual wisdom and insight. God’s grace gives us some sense!

“he has made known to us the mystery of his will“ (γνωρίσας ἡμῖν τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ). Paul uses somewhat esoteric language here, possibly to counter the same sort of false thinking that was present at Colossae and is addressed in that letter. Greek philosophy at certain points revelled in being able supposedly to grasp the invisible world and its dynamics through a “superior knowledge.” Possibly this kind of thinking was influencing some Christians in this region of the Roman province of Asia Minor where Ephesus and Colossae were located. Paul uses that language, but redefines it into simple terms.

Who knows the mind of God? No one but Jesus. And as the Prologue of the Gospel of John so dramatically points out (Jhn 1:18), “It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father’s heart, who has made him known.” Christ has uncovered the Heavenly Father’s intentions and previous to Christ they were not understood clearly or precisely. 1 Peter 1:10-12 reminds us that the prophets only had a fleeting glimpse into that divine plan that we now have full understanding of:

10 Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that was to be yours made careful search and inquiry, 11 inquiring about the person or time that the Spirit of Christ within them indicated when it testified in advance to the sufferings destined for Christ and the subsequent glory.

12 It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in regard to the things that have now been announced to you through those who brought you good news by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things into which angels long to look!

This action of having revealed the will of God to believers is qualified several ways.

It took place “according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ “ (κατὰ τὴν εὐδοκίαν αὐτοῦ ἣν προέθετο ἐν αὐτῷ). The revelation of God’s will centers in Christ and reflects God’s pleasure in making Himself and His plan known to His people. He isn’t in the business of hiding Himself from His people.

It took place “as a plan for the fullness of time“ (εἰς οἰκονομίαν τοῦ πληρώματος τῶν καιρῶν). God’s timing in disclosing His will was focused on proper management of time. When the moment was proper in God’s determination, Christ was sent into this world as Redeemer. Not before; not later. Rather, when the time was right.

It took place in order “to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth“ (ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι τὰ πάντα ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ, τὰ ἐπὶ τοῖς οὐρανοῖς καὶ τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἐν αὐτῷ). What God lost in the fall of Adam and Eve He seeks to reclaim through Christ. His purpose in revealing His will is to sum up everything in Christ. That is, Christ becomes the stack pole around which everything in Heaven and on earth revolves. He is “the chief point” as the word typically meant in non-religious usage.

Foundational expression 2. The next relative clause in Greek (vv. 11-12) may very well signal a second major section in the praise to the Son section (cf. the [Block Diagram](#) for illustration of this). On this assumption, we not only possess redemption (ἔχομεν τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν) in Christ, but we also have become heirs (ἐν ᾧ καὶ ἐκληρώθημεν). As God’s adopted children we acquire access to His riches of grace and love. For a more detailed treatment of this see the previous study on [Gal. 4:1-7](#).

Expansion elements. The idea of having become an heir of God is developed with a lengthy participle phrase, “having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory“ (προορισθέντες κατὰ πρόθεσιν τοῦ τὰ πάντα ἐνεργοῦντος κατὰ τὴν βουλήν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸ εἶναι ἡμᾶς εἰς ἔπαινον δόξης αὐτοῦ τοὺς προηλπικότας ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ). Once more the idea

of pre-designed shows up with the participle προορισθέντες. This business of being made an heir of God is no after-thought by God. It was a part of His original plans that were developed even before He created the world.

This pre-designing activity by God was done according to divine purpose (κατὰ πρόθεσιν). God is the great Architect of the universe whose actions

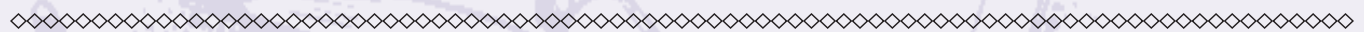
always follow a plan (τὴν βουλήν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ) and have a purpose behind them (εἰς τὸ εἶναι ἡμᾶς). He knows what He is doing. He knows where He is headed. What is His purpose in making us heirs? “so that we, who were the first to set our hope



on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory“ -- that is His purpose. Paul saw himself and those of his day as the first generations of Christians who focused their expectation of eternity on Christ. But they would be only the first to do so; many others would come after them. And what would be the accomplishment of this growing stream of believers? God would be praised as more and more people realized that divine transforming

grace in their lives.

Does this relate to us? You’d better believe it! We as modern believers are the redeemed and the heirs of God, just as Paul’s generation of believers were. Praise be to God!



c. Praise to the Spirit, vv. 13-14

Greek NT

13 ἐν ᾧ καὶ ὑμεῖς ἀκούσαντες τὸν λόγον τῆς ἀληθείας, τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς σωτηρίας ὑμῶν, ἐν ᾧ καὶ πιστεύσαντες ἐσφραγίσθητε τῷ πνεύματι τῆς ἐπαγγελίας τῷ ἀγίῳ, 14 ὃ ἐστὶν ἀρραβὼν τῆς κληρονομίας ἡμῶν, εἰς ἀπολύτρωσιν τῆς περιποιήσεως, εἰς ἔπαινον τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ.

Notes:

This final segment in some ways continues the previous one, and yet shifts directions as well. The “in him also you...” (ἐν ᾧ καὶ ὑμεῖς) links back to “in Christ.” But the shift from “we” to “you” signals a new direction as well. Additionally, the introductory phrase is suspended in mid air in order to insert a couple of expressions. It is then restated in the shorter form ἐν ᾧ καὶ in order to resume completion of the relative clause. The Greek syntax is very complex and utterly impossible to reproduce in English. The above English translations adopt several ways of treating the Greek, all of which are legitimate.

By the time the verb for the relative clause surfaces, ἐσφραγίσθητε, it becomes clear that the Holy Spirit is now the primary focus of attention. The qualifiers in front of it address our response to the preaching of the Gospel. Those following the verb elaborate the role of the Holy Spirit in the sealing activity. Yet the

NASB

13 In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation -- having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, 14 who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God’s own possession, to the praise of His glory.

NRSV

13 In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; 14 this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God’s own people, to the praise of his glory.

NLT

13 And now you also have heard the truth, the Good News that God saves you. And when you believed in Christ, he identified you as his own by giving you the Holy Spirit, whom he promised long ago. 14 The Spirit is God’s guarantee that he will give us everything he promised and that he has purchased us to be his own people. This is just one more reason for us to praise our glorious God.

close link between Christ and the Holy Spirit is to be seen in the two prepositional phrases. The sealing took place “in him,” that is, in Christ. Additionally, it was done “by the Spirit.” This connection must not be lost.

Foundational declaration: “In him you also... were marked with the seal...” (ἐν ᾧ καὶ ὑμεῖς...ἐν ᾧ καὶ ...ἐσφραγίσθητε...). The ancient idea of sealing focused largely on the signet ring stamping of warm wax on important documents by people in authority. This sealed the rolled up document scroll from all but those authorized to break that seal for later reading. The seal became a protection of the document, as well as an indication of its importance and official nature. When people were “sealed” in the ancient world, namely slaves, a brand mark of ownership would be branded somewhere on the body of the slave. Thus the “sealing” action is God putting His mark of ownership on believers in their conversion. It protects them and underscores their importance.

Expansion elements. This core idea is then developed from the human and from the divine perspectives.

Our role in this sealing: “when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him” (ἀκούσαντες τὸν λόγον τῆς ἀληθείας, τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς σωτηρίας ὑμῶν, ἐν ᾧ καὶ πιστεύσαντες). A twofold response is laid out: hearing and believing. The Aorist participles stress an initial conversion response. The Gospel was preached by Paul and others to the Ephesians (cf. Acts 18:19-21; 19:1-20:1). As a part of that ministry, Luke notes that “the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed” (Acts 19:20).

The Word of Truth means much more than that it is correct, accurate logically. In the Jewish and early Christian world, truth was God (cf. John 14:6). For something to be true, it must authentically reflect God, both His character and purpose. Thus the Gospel as the message of salvation is true because it genuinely reflects God. This was the message preached to the Ephesians, and the message they responded to by placing their faith in Christ. We

face the same situation today. Salvation comes only through Christ and that message must be proclaimed that genuinely reflects God’s way and actions.

The divine role in this sealing: “the promised Holy Spirit, who is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God’s own people, to the praise of his glory” (τῷ πνεύματι τῆς ἐπαγγελίας τῷ ἁγίῳ, ὃ ἐστὶν ἄρραβὼν τῆς κληρονομίας ἡμῶν, εἰς ἀπολύτρωσιν τῆς περιποιήσεως, εἰς ἔπαινον τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ.). The promise of the Holy Spirit reaches back to the prophecies that Peter quoted from Joel 2:28-32 on the Day of Pentecost (cf. Acts 2:17-21), “In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh,...”

Paul then declares that the Holy Spirit is also the divine guarantee of our inheritance (ἄρραβὼν τῆς κληρονομίας ἡμῶν). In 2 Cor. 5:5 Paul uses the same image for the Holy Spirit and with similar meaning: “...God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee” (...θεός, ὁ δούς ἡμῖν τὸν ἄρραβῶνα τοῦ πνεύματος); cf. also 2 Cor. 1:22. God gave us His Spirit in our conversion; the presence of that Spirit is His pledge that all He possesses will one day be ours in Heaven. The Spirit’s presence now is something of an appetizer giving us a foretaste of the main course yet to come at the grand banquet for the church as the bride of Christ (cf. Rev. 21:1-22:5).

This sealing has a twofold purpose: (1) “toward redemption as God’s own people” [εἰς ἀπολύτρωσιν τῆς περιποιήσεως]; and (2) “to the praise of his glory” [εἰς ἔπαινον τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ]. Redemption now is viewed eschatologically as the Day of Judgment when God takes His people completely away from the presence of sin and Satan. See Matt. 25:31-46 for Jesus’ interpretation of this event. It is summarized in verse 46: “And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

All this redounds “to the praise of his glory.” God be praised for all that He has accomplished for us through Christ Jesus. He is worthy of our continual praise and adoration.



Greek NT

3 Εὐλογητὸς ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὁ εὐλογήσας ἡμᾶς ἐν πάσῃ εὐλογίᾳ πνευματικῇ ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις ἐν Χριστῷ, 4 καθὼς ἐξελέξατο ἡμᾶς ἐν αὐτῷ πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου εἶναι ἡμᾶς ἁγίους καὶ ἀμώμους κατενώπιον αὐτοῦ ἐν ἀγάπῃ, 5 προορίσας ἡμᾶς εἰς υἰοθεσίαν διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰς αὐτόν, κατὰ τὴν εὐδοκίαν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ, 6 εἰς ἔπαινον δόξης τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ ἧς ἐχαρίτωσεν ἡμᾶς ἐν τῷ ἡγαπημένῳ. 7 ἐν ᾧ ἔχομεν τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν διὰ τοῦ αἵματος αὐτοῦ, τὴν ἄφεσιν τῶν παραπτωμάτων, κατὰ τὸ πλοῦτος τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ 8 ἧς ἐπερίσσευσεν εἰς ἡμᾶς, ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ καὶ φρονήσει, 9 γνωρίσας ἡμῖν τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ, κατὰ τὴν εὐδοκίαν αὐτοῦ ἣν προέθετο ἐν αὐτῷ 10 εἰς οἰκονομίαν τοῦ πληρώματος τῶν καιρῶν, ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι τὰ πάντα ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ, τὰ ἐπὶ τοῖς οὐρανοῖς καὶ τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἐν αὐτῷ. 11 ἐν ᾧ καὶ ἐκληρώθημεν προορισθέντες κατὰ πρόθεσιν τοῦ τὰ πά-

NASB

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, 4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love 5 He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. 7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace 8 which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight 9 He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him 10 with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him 11 also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, 12 to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory. 13 In Him, you also,

NRSV

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, 4 just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. 5 He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6 to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. 7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace 8 that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight 9 he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, 10 as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. 11 In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, 12 so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. 13 In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in

NLT

1 How we praise God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we belong to Christ. 4 Long ago, even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. 5 His unchanging plan has always been to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. And this gave him great pleasure. 6 So we praise God for the wonderful kindness he has poured out on us because we belong to his dearly loved Son. 7 He is so rich in kindness that he purchased our freedom through the blood of his Son, and our sins are forgiven. 8 He has showered his kindness on us, along with all wisdom and understanding. 9 God's secret plan has now been revealed to us; it is a plan centered on Christ, designed long ago according to his good pleasure. 10 And this is his plan: At the right time he will bring everything together under the authority of Christ – everything in heaven and on earth. 11 Furthermore, because of Christ, we have received an inheritance from God, for he chose us from the beginning, and all things happen

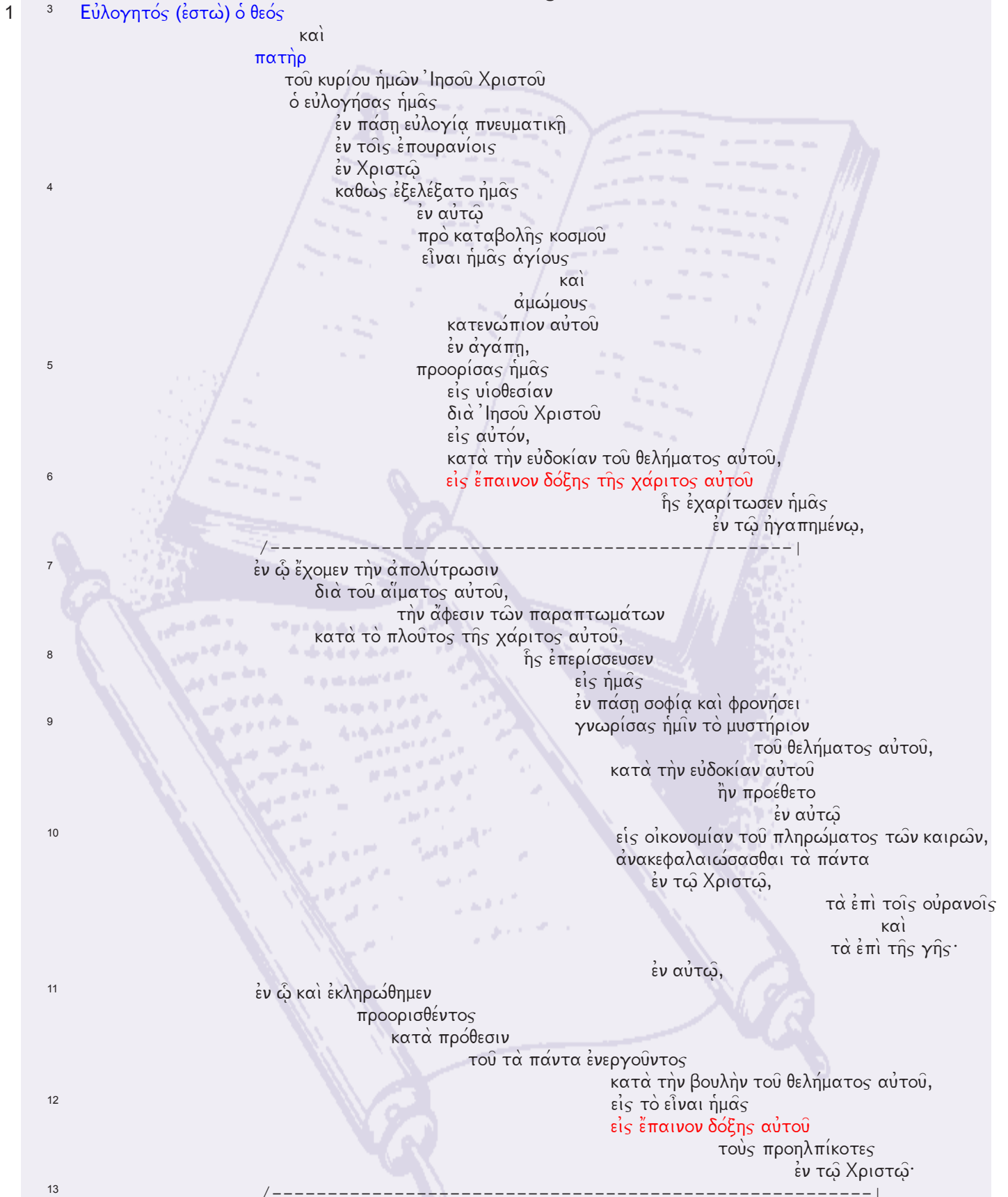
ντα ἐνεργοῦντος κατὰ τὴν βουλὴν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ
12 εἰς τὸ εἶναι ἡμᾶς εἰς ἔπαινον δόξης αὐτοῦ τοὺς προηλπικότες ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ.
13 ἐν ᾧ καὶ ὑμεῖς ἀκούσαντες τὸν λόγον τῆς ἀληθείας, τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς σωτηρίας ὑμῶν, ἐν ᾧ καὶ πιστεύσαντες ἐσφραγίσθητε τῷ πνεύματι τῆς ἐπαγγελίας τῷ ἀγίῳ,
14 ὃ ἐστὶν ἀρραβὼν τῆς κληρονομίας ἡμῶν, εἰς ἀπολύτρωσιν τῆς περιποιήσεως, εἰς ἔπαινον τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ.

after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation -- having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, 14 who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.

him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; 14 this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

just as he decided long ago. 12 God's purpose was that we who were the first to trust in Christ should praise our glorious God. 13 And now you also have heard the truth, the Good News that God saves you. And when you believed in Christ, he identified you as his own by giving you the Holy Spirit, whom he promised long ago. 14 The Spirit is God's guarantee that he will give us everything he promised and that he has purchased us to be his own people. This is just one more reason for us to praise our glorious God.

Greek NT Diagram



ἐν ᾧ καὶ ὑμεῖς...
 ἀκούσαντες τὸν λόγον τῆς ἀληθείας,
 τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς σωτηρίας ὑμῶν,
 πιστεύσαντες
 ἐν ᾧ καὶ...ἐσφραγίσθητε
 τῷ πνεύματι τῆς ἐπαγγελίας τῷ ἁγίῳ,
 ὃ ἐστὶν ἄρραβὼν τῆς κληρονομίας ἡμῶν,
 εἰς ἀπολύτρωσιν τῆς περιποιήσεως,
 εἰς ἔπαινον τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ.

14

Summary of Rhetorical Structure

With but a single core declaration in this very long sentence, a semantic diagram is not overly helpful in analyzing the thought flow of the passage. The visual representation achieved in the Block Diagram is adequate to sense how the ideas are put together.

The foundation to the entire passage comes in verse one with the single core declaration: “God be praised...” (Εὐλογητὸς ὁ θεός). The [genre](#) of the passage is that of a letter [Proem](#) in the creative manner that the apostle Paul adapted this segment of an ancient Greek letter. This core statement is fairly typical of most of the Proema in the [Pauline letters](#). Its wording is unique, but the core idea is similar.

The major dividing signal in this material is the threefold repetition of the prepositional phrase with slight modification:

verse 6a: “unto the praise of the glory of His grace” (εἰς ἔπαινον δόξης τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ)

verse 12b: “unto the praise of His glory” (εἰς ἔπαινον δόξης αὐτοῦ)

verse 14c: “unto the praise of His glory” (εἰς ἔπαινον τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ)

Although they don’t come at the absolute end of each unit grammatically (cf. above Diagram), they approximate it and thus become a signal of a break point in the thought flow. The central person in each section moves from God the Father (vv. 3-5) to the Son (vv. 6-12) and then to the Holy Spirit (vv. 13-14). As such, this passage comes closer to being a Trinitarian expression than virtually any other passage in the New Testament. We sense the rich insight into the very nature of God Himself in this word of praise.

As is displayed in the Block Diagram, the words of *praise to God the Father* occupy the first several sub-units down to the substantival adjective, “in the Beloved One” (ἐν τῷ ἠγαπημένῳ) at the end of verse six. The heart of the praise to the Father is focused on Him “who blessed us...” (v. 3b; ὁ εὐλογήσας ἡμᾶς). This Greek participle phrase is then extended by a series of qualifiers defining different aspects of that divine blessing that came in Christ; this continues all the way to the end of verse six.

The *praise to the Son* (vv. 6-12) is bounded by two prepositional phrases: “in the Beloved One” (ἐν τῷ ἠγαπημένῳ) and “in Christ” (ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ). The load beam carrying the weight of the thoughts praising the Son is the Greek relative clause “in whom we have...” (ἐν ᾧ ἔχομεν...). It runs from verse seven to the end of verse twelve where a similar relative clause is introduced in verse thirteen. This extra long relative clause is then expanded greatly with a number of profound insights about the role of the Son as the provider of redemption.

The *praise to the Holy Spirit* (vv. 13-14) is introduced almost indirectly at first. An elliptical relative clause ἐν ᾧ καὶ ὑμεῖς (in whom you also ...) is put on the table, interrupted by qualifying phrases in the sentence pre-field and then resumed. Christ continues to stand as the antecedent of the relative pronoun, but with the re-introduction of the relative clause ἐν ᾧ καὶ ... ἐσφραγίσθητε (in whom you also have been sealed...), the work of the Holy Spirit as the “sealer” is highlighted. Several expansion units define the Holy Spirit as worthy of praise. The shift from “in whom we...” in vv. 6-12 to “in whom you also...” in vv. 13-14 further serve as topic markers.

As a result of this lengthy and rather complex sentence, we are exposed to one of the greatest praise expressions to God found anywhere in the Bible. The grammatical structure of the sentence is not uncommon for ancient Greek, but is a translation nightmare for English Bible translators. We just can’t pack that much idea expression into a single English sentence!