SERIES ON EPHESIANS, PART 8

TITLE: "AN INHERITANCE DESIGNED FOR THE PRAISE OF GOD'S GLORY"

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LOCATION: SUNDAY SCHOOL AT SANTA CLARITA BAPTIST CHURCH

I. Introduction

II. Memory Verse:

Ephesians 1:3

> 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.

III. Main Idea – Christians gain an everlasting inheritance solely because of our union with Christ. This inheritance is part of God's carefully design plan so that we will be to the praise of His glory. <u>We, then, must make praising God the highest priority of our lives</u>.

IV. The Text (11-12)

A. Our everlasting inheritance (11a) – *In Him also we have obtained an inheritance*

- "*obtained an inheritance*" is only here in the New Testament, meaning "to be assigned a heritage [literally: by lot]"
- In the Old Testament, casting lots often determined who would be assigned land (or other allotments)
- The *inheritance* refers to all of the blessings we receive in Christ (see Hebrews 6:17 for a strong parallel)

B. God's sovereign plan (11b) – *having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will*

- One may ask, "How assured are we that we will receive this inheritance fully?"
- Paul's answer uses 5 words to convey that "we have absolute assurance" in strong, mutually reinforcing terms:
  - *predestined* – the time (or better, before time) at which God's will has already been settled: literally "determined beforehand" (see also 1:5)
  - *purpose* – the determinative design behind God's plans (see also 3:11; Romans 8:28)
  - *works* – all-powerful energy God uses to accomplish His will
  - *counsel* – deliberate, thought-out plan coming from God's *will*
  - *will* – God's fundamental, inviolable, sovereign volition

C. Out ultimate goal (12) – *to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory*

- "*first to hope*," used only here in Scripture, is literally "to hope before," and does not necessarily imply "first"
- Because this verse applies to all Christians (not just those in Paul's day, or just to Jews), it probably refers to Paul's team, along with all believers who already had hope in Christ before he wrote the letter to the Ephesians
- "*to the end*" means "for the purpose," clearly giving Christians a "purpose statement": to praise God's glory!