

THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS

"The Fullness of Times"  
Ephesians 1:8-10

Introduction

1. Near, so very near to God, nearer I cannot be, for in the person of His Son, I'm just as near as He (repeat with word "dear").

2. Our position in Christ has given us all spiritual blessings (v. 3). Included is our election (v. 4), predestination (v. 5), adoption (v. 5), acceptance (v. 6), redemption (v. 7), and forgiveness of sins (v. 7).

3. Now, grace is a communicable attribute of God whereby the blessings of God reach us (vv. 2, 6, 7). Self-effort cannot do what grace has done. This text tells more of the products of grace.

*Transitive - moves toward  
Intransitive - moves toward God*

1. GRACE HAS ABOUNDED v. 8.

The aorist tense of the verb indicates the historical moment of salvation. It was then that grace was shown to be superabundant. It overflowed in two directions:

a. In all wisdom

This is something intellectual and satisfies the mind. It refers to knowledge which grasps things as they are (v. 17). It is applied knowledge. Note there is one "all" for the two nouns and it is singular. It speaks of every kind of wisdom.

b. In all prudence

Understanding which leads to right action is called prudence. It is practical and effective. The word is found frequently in the New Testament (Mark 8:33; Rom. 8:5; Col. 1:9; 3:2).

2. GRACE HAS PROPOUNDED v. 9.

a. As knowledge

To "make known" is what grace has done. Hence, the idea of discovery is evident. Now we are able to enter into God's thoughts and understand His ways. Adam

had perception in the domain of nature (Gen. 2:19, 20), but now whatever displays His character and Christ's glory He makes known to us. He makes known to us secrets about His Son. That is what is nearest to His heart.

b. As mystery *(that which was made known unto us which was not known)*

In Scripture this term does not mean what is unintelligible, but what was formerly unknown. It is now an open secret. The word is found six times in Ephesians (Here, 3:3; 4:9; 5:32; 6:19). Here it notes that God's will is now revealed to the believer.

3. GRACE HAS EXPOUNDED vv. 9, 10.

*dispensation (royal (Biblical) Covenant) vs Covenant*

a. By measure v. 9

The mystery made known here is measured by God's own good pleasure. It springs in His own delight. Moreover, it is purposed or sovereignly ordered in Himself. Due to God's character and being, He could never be accused at this action. However, the optimum value of the mystery is thus exhibited.

b. By detail v. 10

1) As a dispensation. This word has often been misunderstood. Literally it signifies a stewardship or administration. It is not a particular time period or age, but the management of a house. We believe in seven dispensations of stewardships (innocency, conscience, human government, promise, law, grace, kingdom). This one is "fullness of times" and refers to the kingdom.

2) As a consummation. The verb "gather together" means to sum up (Rom. 13:9). Hence there is coming an administration where all things will be consummated in Christ. The hours of shame and sorrow will be exhausted. Israel's blindness will be gone, Gentile rule put down, church's weakness set aside, Satan's liberty shackled - it will be a time when Christ's leadership is unquestioned. This all presumes our Lord's return to earth in glory. Then heaven and earth will be a united system. This is not an unbiblical universalism, but the universal reign of our Lord.

Conclusion Grace saves and keeps saved. But grace also instructs. Here it has exploded in wisdom and prudence to reveal God's ultimate goal for Christ and the church. Our future is as bright as the Lord Jesus. The chaos of men will ultimately be harmony in Christ. That is the mystery opened for us by grace. Amen.