

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION
Ephesians: Overcoming Our Insecurities In Christ
Part I: The Believer's Secure Position In Christ, Ephesians 1:1-3:21
F. Overcoming The Insecurity Of Unjust Material Poverty
(Ephesians 1:11-12 et al.)

I. Introduction

- A. In today's world with its severe recession caused by selfish acts of powerful business and government leaders, the resulting unjust loss of material wealth by regular folk can lead not only to anger, but fear about their vulnerability to pain and trouble in this life due to such forces of evil that they cannot control.
- B. The early Jewish Christians faced an extensive trial in this realm, and Paul's words in Ephesians 1:11-12 answer this need with edifying insight for both his Hebrew readers and us today (as follows):

II. Overcoming The Insecurity Of Unjust Material Poverty, Ephesians 1:11-12 et al.

- A. When Paul wrote his Ephesian letter, his Jewish readers had typically suffered severe persecution by their unsaved countrymen, persecution that often included displacement from their homes, Acts 8:1 .
- B. As such, Paul's comments in Ephesians 1:11-12 uniquely address this suffered loss by Jewish Christians:
 - 1. Though a few Western texts read *eklathamen*, "were called" ("were chosen" NIV), the great majority read *eklarothamen*, "were appointed by lot," E. K. Simpson and F. F. Bruce, Ephesians and Colossians (NICNT), 1979, p. 34; Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 436.
 - 2. Thus, the Ephesians 1:11 verb "have obtained an inheritance" (KJV, ESV) recalls the Old Testament event where Israel's tribes were allotted by lot their homelands, *Ibid.*, Simpson and Bruce; Jos. 14:1-5.
 - 3. We also know from Paul's Ephesians 1:12b phrase "who first trusted in Christ" that he had in mind via his Ephesians 1:11-12 discussion Christian Jews like himself "who waited for the true Messiah," *Ibid.*
 - 4. This aligns with the idea introduced back in Ephesians 1:10 where Paul spoke of the union of Jew and Gentile in the coming Messianic Kingdom. Paul's thoughts had since centered on the plight of Jewish Christians who had typically lost much via persecution for their hope in the Messianic reign of Jesus.
- C. Accordingly, although Paul must theologically include saved Gentiles of the Church in His positional truth stated in Ephesians 1:11, his focus was uniquely on saved Jews in the Church who typically had suffered for the faith, including loss of property, and he offered them rich encouragement regarding it:
 - 1. In his spiritual position in Christ, the believer has obtained an inheritance by divine lot, Eph. 1:11!
 - 2. Peter who wrote to scattered, persecuted Jews in 1 Peter expanded on this theme in 1 Peter 1:3-5:
 - a. 1 Peter 1:1 used the term "strangers" of his readers, and this Greek term, *diasporas*, was the technical term for scattered Jews, here used of those persecuted for the faith, Bible Know. Com. N. T., p. 838; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978 ed., p. 1757, "Introduction To The First Letter Of Peter."
 - b. To these folk, Peter noted God has **forever reserved in heaven** an inheritance for them, 1 Peter 1:4: *tareo* ("reserved", *Ibid.*, Arndt & Gingrich, p. 822-823) appears here in the perfect passive (U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966 ed., p. 791; Zondervan's The Analyt. Grk. Lex., p. 402), so God it has been eternally, unconditionally reserved for the believer!
 - c. This heritage is "incorruptible," "undefiled" and "fadeth not away" (KJV), i.e., it is "indestructible," "unstained by evil" and "unimpaired by time," *Ibid.*, Ryrie, fn. to 1 Peter 1:4. This inheritance cannot be corrupted by foes, it is undefiled by enemies and it will last unimpaired throughout eternity unlike their access to their original earthly homes due to persecution for the Christian faith!
 - d. Also, God by **HIS power "keeps guarding"** (*phroureo* in the present participle) the believer so he will one day gain possession of this eternal inheritance in blessed contrast to the uncertainty of the believer's ever repossessing property he has lost in this life! (1 Peter 1:5; *Ibid.*, U. B. S. Greek N. T.)

Lesson: *In the believer's standing in Christ, God has forever, unconditionally reserved in heaven a divinely allotted inheritance for each believer that is indestructible, unstained by evil and unimpaired by time, and He keeps guarding the believer by His power so he will one day forever possess it!*

Application: *(1) May we rest and rejoice in God's blessed provision of an inheritance for us! (2) May we set our hearts on things above where our Lord dwells to offset the loss and failure of this life!*