

EPHESIANS: LIVING IN ALIGNMENT WITH OUR HIGH CALLING

Part I: Our High Calling In Christ, Ephesians 1:1-3:21

B. God's Astounding Process Of Qualifying Us For The Millennial Kingdom (Ephesians 1:7-13a)

I. Introduction

- A. After describing the astounding goal of our high calling of God in Christ in Ephesians 1:1-6, Paul described in Ephesians 1:7-13a the astounding process by which God qualifies us believers for His Messianic Kingdom.
- B. We view this passage for our insight and edification (as follows):

II. God's Astounding Process Of Qualifying Us For The Millennial Kingdom, Ephesians 1:7-13a.

- A. Referring to God's Beloved Son in Ephesians 1:6b ESV, NIV, the Apostle Paul added that positionally in Christ we believers have redemption through His blood, that is, through His substitutionary death for us on the cross. The word rendered "redemption" is the Greek term *apolytrosis*, the release or deliverance from a state of slavery, which in this context means release from bondage to sin, Eph. 1:7; Bib. Know. Com., N. T., p. 618.
- B. Paul "further defined" this redemption as "the forgiveness of sins," the believer's immediate release from the hold of sin the instant he trusts in Christ, *Ibid.*
- C. As a consequence of this release from bondage to sin through the substitutionary death of the Son of God on behalf of the sinner who is saved by grace through faith, Paul described how God graciously decided to install the believer in Christ into His future, blessed Millennial Kingdom, Ephesians 1:8-10 (as follows):
 1. God has made known to us who have been released from sin's power and forgiven our sins the formerly hidden blessings of His will in line with His good pleasure that He purposed in Christ, Ephesians 1:8-9.
 2. That purpose was to be implemented literally "unto the dispensation of the fullness of the times" where the term "dispensation," *oikonomia*, is an "administration" of the "fullness of the times" of the Millennial Kingdom when God's purposes will be fulfilled, Ephesians 1:10a; *Ibid.*
 3. At that age of the Millennial Kingdom (Revelation 20:1-6), all things spiritual and material will be under Jesus Christ and His reign on the earth, Ephesians 1:10b; 1 Corinthians 15:27; Colossians 1:20; *Ibid.* "This does not suggest that everyone will be saved," but that "sin's disorder will be removed and universal peace will be established," Isaiah 2:2-4; 11:1-10; *Ibid.*
 4. Then, to complete the gathering of all things spiritual and material under Christ's headship in His coming Kingdom, God has appointed believers in Christ to participate in His Millennial Kingdom, Ephesians 1:11:
 - a. The King James Version phrase "we have obtained an inheritance" translates the single Greek verb *eklerothemen* that in this context means "we were appointed or obtained [something] by lot," *Ibid.*
 - b. Since Paul refers to "we, who were the first to hope in Christ," he likely meant Jewish believers, for the Gospel was to the Jew first and then to the Gentile, Ephesians 1:12a; Romans 1:16. Thus, Jews who believed in Christ will be trophies of the grace of God by being included in the Millennial Kingdom, of necessity being resurrected or translated at the rapture to enter that Kingdom, Ephesians 1:12b.
 - c. However, Paul added that his readers, many of them Gentiles, would also be included in Christ's Kingdom by having believed the Gospel of salvation, Ephesians 1:13a. God had determined that not only Jews, but also Gentiles who have trusted in Christ will participate in Christ's Kingdom, going through the rapture of the Church to qualify to participate in that era of great blessing! (*Ibid.*, p. 618-619)

***Lesson:* According to the good pleasure of God's will, He has determined that in Christ's coming Millennial Kingdom, all things spiritual and material will come under Christ's headship. Accordingly, God has arranged that in Christ's work of the cross to provide redemption and forgiveness of sins, effectively liberating all who believe in Him from the power and stain of sin, and to qualify them, Jew and Gentile alike, to participate in Christ's coming Millennial Kingdom all to the praise of the glory of God's infinite grace. Accordingly, we believers in Christ MUST participate in the rapture of the Church either to be resurrected from the dead or to be translated into glorified bodies, only to return with Christ at His Second Coming to earth to enter into His Millennial Kingdom!**

***Application:* (1) May we realize that God the Father has planned from eternity past to send His Beloved Son to the cross to provide redemption and forgiveness for us who believe in Christ. He has then directed that we participate in Christ's Millennial Kingdom by means of the rapture that we might exist as trophies to the glory of God's unmerited favor. Thus, we must eternally thank and praise God for His goodness to us! (2) May we also realize how blessed we are to have such a destiny so as to make our central focus in this life our eternal future with Christ.**