Whom Do You Worship?
Ephesians 1:3-14

How many of you've seen the movie "Secretariat." It's a true story about the amazing thoroughbred who won the Triple Crown in 1973. He set records that still stand today. One of my favorite scenes is at the end, with the story of Secretariat at The Belmont Stakes. Secretariat set a fast early pace, which no one thought he could maintain. But he did. Chic Anderson, the announcer said, “Secretariat is widening now! He is moving like a tremendous machine!” He won by 31 lengths, the fastest 1½ miles on dirt in history.

Paul was a *theological Secretariat, a theological thoroughbred*. And Ephesians 1:3-14 is sort of like his *Belmont Stakes!* He writes *like a tremendous machine as he exalts the Triune God.* He starts off in verse 3 with a general, topic sentence, and then widens out with phrase after phrase, to touch on various redemptive themes, *without stopping for a period!*

This is a long (202 words), complex, and glorious sentence (one sentence in Greek) that oozes with God-centered worship. One writer quipped that this is the "*most monstrous sentence conglomeration that I have ever found in the Greek language*" (E. Norden, in Obrien).

This is relevant for a variety of reason. Here's one reason it is important: you were made for praise. And we must have the right object of worship.

Look around and you will find expressions of praise: *young teenage girls screaming at boy band concerts; sports fans exalting the virtues of their team, paying big money for tickets, and adjusting their schedules for the games; dads getting fired up about going to Home Depot to work on a new project; adulterers praising their mistresses; consumers praising their favorite stores, television watchers praising their favorite new series, and coffee drinkers commending their favorite coffee shop.*

Humanity has never had a problem praising something or someone.
In regard to functional idols (money, sex, work, etc), we like to take good things in creation (food, work, relationships, sex) and substitute them for Creator, turning those good things into god things, thereby committing idolatry (Rom 1).

This is no small matter. Romans 1 says that this failure to worship God is at the heart of sin.

Your sin problem is fundamentally a worship problem.

On top of these expressions, there are millions praising false gods of other world religions.

Idolatry can also happen as people have the wrong view of God. God has revealed himself in his word, and worship is a response to that revelation. We are not to worship the God of our imagination, but the God of the Bible. We are required to believe what the Bible says is true, not what we want the Bible to say is true.

In Ephesus, they had numerous objects of worship, from Diana to the Emperor.

The question then (and today) is not, "Do I worship?" The question is, "Whom do I worship? Whom do we worship?"

We should praise the Triune God. We should praise Him for who he is, and what he has done.

Consider: (1) The Language of Praise, and (2) The Reasons for Praise

#1: THE LANGUAGE PRAISE (3-14)

Unfortunately this passage generated a lot of debate because it mentions the concepts of election and predestination. While this discussion in itself isn't a bad thing, I think we can miss the spirit of this text. The spirit is one of worship.

Let's look at the big picture of the passage for a moment, as we consider this theme of praise.
Look at the note of praise struck in verse 3, and how it ends of verse 14
with praise. Paul begins with an outburst of praise to God in a typical
Old Testament/Jewish style of an extended eulogy (berakah). Why
bless God? He says because God "has blessed us with every spiritual
blessing in the heavenly places." (1:3). The phrase "every spiritual
blessing" shows the wide-ranging scope of God's blessing to his
people. In the following verses Paul mentions blessing after blessing.
Verse 14 rounds out the sentence appropriately, "to the praise of his
glory."

Observe the Trinitarian nature of the passage. The opening verses are
Trinitarian, as Paul mentions God the Father and the Lord Jesus
Christ, and speaks of "every spiritual blessing" (alluding to the work
of the Spirit). Further, though the structure shouldn't be forced too
woodenly, there is an emphasis on the work of the Father in verses 3-6,
then the work of the Son in verses 7-12, and then the work of the
Spirit in verses 13-14. Paul is calling us to praise the Triune God
from whom all blessings flow.

Notice also how our spiritual blessings are "in Christ." It appears
eleven times in these verses. The great salvation that God has provided
is centered in the person and work of Jesus Christ. It is only through
our union with Christ that we have these spiritual blessings. He is to
be exalted by believers.

Paul also points out that our salvation is ultimately for God's glory.
Look at the phrase, "to the praise of his glorious grace" in verse 6, and
the phrase "to the praise of his glory" in verses 12 and 14. Why did
God choose to bless us with this great salvation? That he may be
glorified. God saves people for his glory.

The passage also highlights the grace of God in salvation. We don't
deserve these blessings of salvation; we didn't earn it. Paul speaks of
"glorious grace" (6), and "the "riches of his grace which he lavished
on us" (7-8). Those who have received these riches should praise the
Giver of them.

Incredibly, these verses highlight the eternal scope of salvation. This
passage goes from "before the foundation of the world" (4), to "as a
plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and on earth" (10). It goes from eternity to eternity. We join in with Moses in praise, "From everlasting to everlasting, you are God" (Ps. 90:2b)

Paul also speaks of being blessed in "the heavenly places," a phrase only used in Ephesians. I think this gets at the "already not yet" aspect of our salvation. Now, we are linked with the heavenly realms because of our relationship with God. We have the benefits of salvation now, but also anticipate them in the future, in which we will praise him with all nations.

**Finally, note who should share in this praise: both Jew and Gentile.** Following these words of praise, Paul stresses that these blessings already described in verses 3-10 are for both Jew and Gentile believers (11-14). In verses 4-14 the same people are in view (O'brien). In almost every verse, Paul speaks of "us or "we” to refer to the people of God. "They are for you, if you are in Christ!

**App:** So, this passage is about praising the Trinitarian God. All of it, from prison! His body was in prison, but his heart was in heaven. Regardless of your circumstances, God is worthy of praise. Now, let's look at the reasons he's worthy.

#2: THE REASONS FOR PRAISE

Paul reminds his readers (and us) that we should bless God for the spiritual blessings we have received. He reminds us that we have been: (1) Chosen by the Father, (2) Redeemed by the Son, and (3) Assured by the Spirit. Each section is summarized with the phrase, "to the praise of his glorious grace," or “to the praise of his glory” (vs. 6, 12, 14)

## #1: CHOSEN BY THE FATHER (3-6)

This amazing passage highlights God's gracious election of sinners for salvation. Paul says that God "chose us" (4) and that he "predestined us" (5). For some people these words scare them and make them tense up. But they shouldn't. These are Bible words. We shouldn't fear these words. They should inspire awe and worship.
The idea of God choosing a people to display his glory isn't new. The Bible is a book of election.

- God chose to create the world for his glory.
- God chose Abraham to bring blessing to the nations (Gen. 12:1-13).
- God chose the nation of Israel that they may be a light to the nations (Deut 7:6-8, 14:2; Isa 42:6-8).
- Further, Jesus chose his twelve disciples to bear fruit and multiply (John 15:16).
- Paul adds that God chose what is "low and despised in the world ... so that no human being might boast in his presence" (1 Cor 1:28a, 29).
- In Ephesians, as in other NT texts (cf., Rom. 9-11; Acts 13:48; Titus 1:1; 1Pet 1:1; 2 Pet 1:10) we read that God chose individuals for salvation. The believers make up the church – both Jew and Gentile.

Our statement of faith states this doctrine well under “God's Purpose of Grace”: *Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners. It is consistent with the free agency of man, and comprehends all the means in connection with the end. It is the glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, and is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable. It excludes boasting and promotes humility.*

Some argue that election here is primarily corporate rather than individual. While I do want to emphasize the corporate purpose of our salvation, as Ephesians makes clear, I don't accept this argument. God did choose a corporate body, but that corporate body is made up of individuals. In fact, the passage speaks about how individuals experience salvation: "redemption," "forgiveness," and sealing" of the Holy Spirit following belief are all individual experiences. So it's not an "either/or" but a "both/and." That individual is then made part of the corporate body of believers. God chose a people for himself and that people are made up a believing, redeemed, forgiven members.

**A. The Nature of Election**

Let me make a few more observations about the nature of election in this text.
First, we must admit that there is great mystery in the doctrine of election. This passage speaks about what God was doing

- "before the foundation of the world" (4).
- It speaks of his eternal, secret purposes (5, 10), and
- He works all things according to "the council of his will" (11).

We must admit mystery here. God is God and we are not. Deuteronomy reminds us "the secret things belong to God" (29:29).

So we might disagree about the finer points of this mystery, and we can still fellowship and serve together. It is difficult for finite creatures, with a three ounce fallen brain to comprehend how this doctrine relates to God's love for all people, his impartiality, as well as how it relates to human beings' choices. We should be okay with mystery.

When we see mystery, it should be a cue to start worshiping.

Second, while we want to affirm mystery, we should also affirm the other attributes clearly affirmed in this text. In this text we see that God is: perfectly loving (4), eternally sovereign (5), gloriously gracious (6-8), and infinitely wise (8).

God can do whatever he pleases (Psalm 115:3), and whatever he does is always consistent with who he is.

While we may not know everything about the mystery of election, we can trust in what we do know about the nature of God himself.

*God is sovereign.* God's choosing is simply one expression of God's eternal control over all things. Notice the language of God's sovereignty, as Paul mentions:

- "predestination" (5, 11),
- God's "good pleasure" or "purpose" (5, 9),
- God's "will" (5, 9, 11),
- His "purpose" "purpose of him" (9, 11),
- His "plan" (10)
• **God is gracious.** God’s choosing is an expression of God’s grace to sinners (cf., Rom. 11:6, 2 Tim. 1:9). God didn’t choose us for anything good in us.

• **God is wise.** God’s choosing is an expression of his infinite wisdom.

• **God is loving.** and election is an expression of God’s love for his children. Paul says, “in love he predestined us…” (4-5).

*Third, while all of our questions about human being’s responsibility (or will) aren’t answered in this passage, we should note that this passage itself shows the necessity of personal belief in the gospel.* Look at verse 13. One must believe. Remember, this is the same sentence!

Election and faith belong in the same sentence, and it's a sentence that only God could write. We may not understand this, but we fully embrace it.

By the way, you embrace truths that are mysteriously woven together like the **deity and humanity of Christ** and the **divine-human authorship of Scripture**.

Someone once asked Spurgeon how he reconciled God's sovereignty and man's responsibility, and he responded, **“I don’t have to reconcile friends.”**

Someone asked another pastor about this "problem" and he replied, **“That’s not my problem. That’s God’s problem.”** Just believe both truths and let God harmonize them.

Some get the wrong idea about election. **It shouldn’t cast doubt in whether or not you are welcome to come to Jesus.** All may come.

That’s the invitation. Rus Moore says, **“God is not some metaphysical airport security screener, waving through the secretly pre-approved and sending the rest into a holding tank for questioning. God isn't treating us like puppets made of meat, forcing us along by his capricious whim. Instead the doctrine of election tells us that all of us who have come to know Christ are here on purpose.”**
(Moore, Adopted for Life, 34). *Come to Jesus! When you come, thank him for drawing you!*

Another question that is often raised concerns the need for **evangelism**. But election doesn't lessen the need to tell people about Jesus. Election gives hope to evangelism.

When Paul was discouraged in Corinth, Jesus said, "Do not be afraid. Go on speaking. For I have many people in this city" (**Acts 18:9-10**). Some people will believe when you speak the gospel!

The **hardest of people** can be converted because it's not about the quality of your presentation but the power of God: India, villages, Jersey, Duke, bowling alley. You should fear no one because of this. And, because God is sovereign, you should assume that God has placed you where you are so that you can be the messenger for those you are with.

- Further, there are numerous examples of missionaries/pastors who affirmed the doctrine of election (Carey, Fuller, Paton, Brainard, and more). John Calvin said, "The Lord orders the ministers of the gospel go far out to scatter salvation throughout all the regions of the earth." The Lord, who is the judge of all the earth, orders us to go make disciples of all nations.

- The most famous example was the Apostle Paul! Interestingly, in **Romans chapters 9-11**, Paul speaks about election in detail, but the chapter in the middle (**chapter 10**) is about the necessity of evangelism for people to come to saving faith in Christ (cf., 10:14-17). In that section, he is burdened for lost people (9:1-3; 10:1), and love compelled him to proclaim the gospel to everyone.

Go tell someone about Jesus, and believe that God will save sinners through the proclamation of the gospel.

Again, this passage is primarily focused on God's activity in salvation. Some texts that we will expound will have a heavier emphasis on human responsibility. But we don't have time to try to
harmonize all of these passages. And that's not Paul's purpose either. His purpose is to praise the God who saves sinners.

**Fourth, our election is in Christ.** We are chosen in the "Chosen One" (Luke 9:35; 23:35). Bruce says, "He is the foundation, origin, and executor: all that is involved in election and its fruits depends on him." O'brien summarizes, "Election is always and only in Christ." We weren't chosen for anything good in us. We are accepted by God because he chose to put us in union with Christ.

**Finally, in light of these things, election should humble us** (cf., 1 Cor. 1:27-30). The proper response to that God has chosen us for salvation is one of awe and worship and obedience to God.

\[
\text{Election shouldn't anger you, nor should it inflate you.}
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\[
\text{It should humble you.}
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No one should be cocky when talking about the doctrine of election.

For those who want to argue against this truth, Paul says, "Who are you oh man, to answer back to God?" (Rom 9:20). Don't be arrogant. You don't talk back to the potter as the pot. For those who embrace this doctrine, but walk in pride, they haven't gotten it either.

This doctrine should put us on our face in worship to the sovereign, wise, loving, gracious, mysterious God, who has chosen us in Christ.

So those are five points about the nature of election:

• It's mysterious,
• It's consistent with God's nature,
• It's consistent with human responsibility,
• It's in Christ, and
• It should humble us.

**B. The Goal of Election**

Paul reminds us here of God's purposes in choosing a people: (1) holiness, and (2) adoption.
Holiness. Paul says he chose us “that we may be holy and blameless before him” (4). God’s purpose is to bring us into conformity to Jesus (Rom. 8:29-30).

It is only in Christ that we are holy positionally. We can stand before God because of Christ. In Christ the blame is removed, and his righteousness given to us. God sees us as holy as his Son is holy, if we are in him. We have that status. It’s mind boggling.

Now, we have the responsibility of pursuing holiness practically. Ephesians chapters 4-6 will teach us about this.

- Yes you! Appearances: lampshade; 1600’s powdered wig; priestly collar; pastor – Me in NY. no! Jedi Knight - Pharisee

It is difficult to tell if the phrase “in love” goes with what is before it, which would mean that we are to be “holy and blameless and lived in love” (O’brien), or if it goes after it, referring to the motive/attitude of God in adoption. I tend to go with the latter, though the former is also true. The focus seems to be on God’s activity. In love, God has chosen us for adoption.

Adoption. God chose (“predestined”) a people to be holy. And God chose a people (“predestined”) for sonship. His people are part of the family of God.

According to J.I. Packer, "Adoption is the highest privilege the gospel offers." John Murray says “Adoption is … the apex of redemptive grace and privilege” (in Trevor Burke, Adoption into God’s Family, 62). What a privilege to know God as Father. In these few phrases, Paul gives us a mini-theology of adoption.

He tells us of the “what” of adoption. What does it mean to be adopted? It means to have all the rights and privileges that belong to the Father’s children. The word is a compound word meaning "to place a son." Paul uses the word for “adoption” only five times in the NT, each time to those familiar with the Roman context of adoption (Rom. 8:15, 23, 9:4, Gal. 4:5, Eph. 1:5). Romans were familiar with
adoptions. Perhaps the most famous was Julius Caesar's adoption of Octavian, whom we read about in Luke 2:1 (Burke, 62). You can imagine being adopted by a Roman ruler. Paul says, "That's nothing compared with being adopted by the Father of glory!"

It's also important to bear in mind that adoption has a familial aspect, not just a personal dimension. We are now brothers and sisters, even though we are different, because we have the same father. The church is a family of adopted brothers and sisters.

- The greatest apologetic we have is to be a family.

Now, as his children, we can call him "Abba" (Gal 4:6, Rom. 8:15), which is who Jesus cried out to in the Garden of Gethsemane (Mark 14:36). Example: Gaggy – "I don't mind because when I hear that, I know who is calling. That's my son."

He tells us the "when" of adoption, which is "before the foundation of the world" (4). If we are God's children, then we are here on purpose. It is part of God's great plan.

He tells us of the "how" of adoption, which is "through Jesus Christ." It is only in Christ that we receive these blessings. He goes on to say that God has "blessed us in the Beloved" (6b; cf., Col 1:13, Mark 1:11, 9:7). We have been caught up in the love that the Father has for the Son.

Christian Rapper Shai Linne puts it well in "Perfect Love":

    In love, He justified us, in love, He sanctifies us
    So we don't have to jump through hoops to try to make Him like us
    One thing we truly cannot fathom- we're stunned
    The Father loves us with the very love He has for His Son!

He tells us the "why" of adoption, which is "according to his purpose" or "pleasure and will" (5). We don't have all the answers. We just know that it pleased God to do so. He was delighted to adopt us. Verse six says adds that he did it "to the praise of his glorious grace" (6b). Adoption magnifies the greatness of God the Father.
An implication of God’s purpose of making us “holy” and making us his adopted children is that we have been chosen for a mission. God’s children will take on the family business, carrying out God’s mission. We will “imitate God” as beloved children (Eph 5:1). Election is privilege, but it also contains responsibility of making Christ known in word and deed.

#2: REDEEMED BY THE SON (7-12)

Next, we should praise God for the work of the Son who redeemed us. Building on what has already been said about the blessings we have in Christ, Paul now overflows with praise to God for his great redemption accomplished through Christ, the forgiveness that is ours because of his death, God’s plan to sum all things up in him, and the rich inheritance that is ours.

A. We Have Redemption

Redemption denotes liberation from bondage or imprisonment. It harkens back to Israel’s release from Egypt. When they were delivered from the Red Sea, they sang the song of salvation – so should we (Exodus 15).

Our redemption is spoken of as an event that has already taken place. Paul says, “we have redemption.” It is not that we hope to have redemption, but we have it. Rejoice in it your freedom!

Listen to how he describes it in Colossians 1:14, “the parallel book” to Ephesians:

He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.
(Colossians 1:13-14 ESV)

God has done the work of delivering us, transferring us into the kingdom of the beloved in whom we have redemption and forgiveness. (Example: Fresh Prince of Bell Aire)
Paul says that this redemption has come at a cost. It is "through his blood" (7) that we have this deliverance. This signifies the sacrificial death of Jesus. In Rev. 1:5, John says that Jesus "loves us and has freed us by his blood."

Elsewhere, he says, "you have been bought with a price" (1 Cor. 6:20), and "Christ redeemed us from the curse by becoming the curse for us" (Gal. 3:13).

You can be free from the penalty of sin, and from the prison-house of sin freely, but it is not cheap. Our freedom cost Jesus his blood. He took our place. He bore our sins in his body on the tree.

Forgiveness. Paul says that this redemption is linked with the forgiveness of sins. My friend, come to Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins. It is only in Christ that you will find forgiveness. In Mark 2, Jesus told the paralytic who was lowered through the roof by his friends, "Son, your sins are forgiven" (Mark 2:5). The Pharisees objected saying, "Who can forgive sins but God alone?" In that passage Jesus showed everyone that forgiveness was more important than physical healing, and that he has the authority as God the Son to forgive sins. Have you come to Jesus for forgiveness? Has he said, "Son, your sins are forgiven?"

If he has forgiven your sins, the pour out your heart in adoration to him. In Luke 7, we read of an unknown lady who poured out expensive ointment to anoint Jesus in adoration of him. The Pharisees (who were too self-righteous to seek Jesus for forgiveness) grumbled at this. Jesus said she was lavish in her adoration because she realized how much she had been forgiven. Those who don't realize how much they've been forgiven, do not praise Jesus like this. We too should love him greatly because we have been forgiven much!

The Psalmist said, "If you kept a record of sins, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness." (Ps. 130:3-4)

Do you believe what this text says about you. Keller: Debbie, Rocky
Grace. Redemption and forgiveness are "according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us" (7-8a).

Jesus has lavished grace upon us. We are the recipients of Christ's extravagant goodness and kindness. We don't have words to describe God's amazing grace.

Wisdom and Insight. God's grace is also expressed in his giving us "wisdom and insight" (8a).

God's lavish dispensing of grace in redemption, involves forgiveness, and the wisdom to known how to live in light of his saving plan (as expressed in the following verses).

B. We Have Revelation (9-10)

The climactic note of the passage is here verse 9-10, where Paul says all things will be "summed up in Christ" ("to unite all things in him," verse 9). O'brien says, "Syntactically and structurally … [this 'summing up'] is the 'high point' of the eulogy."

History is going somewhere. And by God's grace, "he has made known to us the mystery of his will." (9). He has revealed his eternal plan to us, and that plan centers on the Redeemer.

What is this plan? It is to unite all things in Christ, things in heaven and things on earth. So there is a cosmic dimension to God's plan of salvation. Now, the universe is divided, and groaning for redemption (Rom 8). Now, God's people groan in this fallen world.

Paradise was lost in Adam, but it will be restored in Christ.

Stott summarizes this well, "In the fullness of time, God's two creations, his whole universe and his whole church, will be unified under the cosmic Christ who is the supreme head of both."

#3: ASSURED BY THE SPIRIT (11-14)
On top of all the other blessings already mentioned, Paul now mentions the believer's *inheritance or heritage* (11, 14). The Holy Spirit is the guarantee of it. This too should lead us to praise.

**Verse 11**

Paul says that it is "in Christ" that we have this inheritance (11).

Apart from Jesus, our future is not hopeful. It's tragic.

The phrase "we have obtained an inheritance" is one compound word in Greek. Paul speaks of something in the future that is sure to happen. The translation here is difficult.

This could mean "we were made an inheritance (or heritage)" or "we have obtained an inheritance" (ESV).

- The former is the idea that we are God's possession, an idea repeatedly mentioned in the OT (eg., Deut 4:20, Ps. 33:12; Ps 135:4).
- The latter use is more like 1 Peter 1:3-4, "[we have] an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you" or like Colossians 1:12.

Both are great options! We are God's possession and through Christ we have received a glorious inheritance. My preference based upon the following phrases which emphasizes Jew and Gentile together as God's people, is to take it as "we are God's possession" who have been redeemed "for the praise of his glory" (so Stott, Obrien and more).

**How has this happened?** How do we have such a status and such a future?

**From a divine perspective,** it is according to God's sovereign purposes. Paul says, "having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things to the counsel of his will." (11b)

**From a human perspective,** we have *believed* (12a, 13a). Paul mentions the responsibility of people saying, "so that we who were the first to *hope* in Christ" (12a, my emphasis), and "when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and *believed* in
him…” (13a, my emphasis). Once again, we see this mystery of sovereignty and responsibility. People receive salvation when they hear the gospel and believe in Christ. I love how Paul calls the gospel “the word of truth.”

Coming to Jesus for salvation is a coming to the truth.

- Some through: intellect, tragedy, break-up, divorce, friend, parents, teammate, - Friday night? Happy.
  - God is orchestrating millions of things, maybe it's you being here to be saved! I wanted to go elsewhere to college...

Notice also, the movement from "we" (a reference to Jewish believers in v. 11-12) to "you also" (a reference to Gentile readers in v. 13), and to "our" inheritance (a reference to both groups equally in v. 14). This is anticipating the exposition of how God has reconciled us Jew and Gentile together through the work of Christ, in Eph 2:11-22.

It is true that everything said in the previous verses are true for Jew and Gentile (O'brien, 116), but Paul is stressing making a different point here in verses 12-13 with the pronoun shift.

- He is stressing God's sovereign plan in the ordering of salvation history.

- Paul is also saying that the Lord's inheritance is not limited to the Jewish believers. They obviously had a special privilege, being the first to hope in Christ. But the Gentiles are also recipients of God's amazing grace.

Paul is saying there are no second-class citizens in the kingdom of God. All believers are God's possession redeemed for his glory.

Gentiles can be assured of their privileged status by the Spirit's work in their lives.

Notice, now, what Paul says about the Spirit's work. He teaches us about the sealing of the Spirit, the "promised Holy Spirit" (the same promise given to Israel), and the guarantee of the Spirit.
A. The Sealing of the Spirit (13)

A seal was a mark of ownership and authenticity. It was used for cattle, even slaves who were branded by their masters. Owners were guarding their property from theft by branding them (O'brien, 120).

Those seals were external of course. Our seal is internal. God puts his seal in our hearts. (Stott, 49)

Paul later prays for the Ephesians to be "strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inner being" (3:16). The Spirit of God is dwelling in believers. Paul affirms this in several ways in Romans 8, saying, "Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ, does not belong to him (8:9), and "The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God (8:16).

In Ephesians 4, Paul writes, "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption" (4:29). God has sealed us, and will keep us until the day of redemption.

B. The Promised Holy Spirit (13b)

Paul refers to the Holy Spirit as the "spirit of Promise" probably because his new covenant presence was foretold. The prophets and Jesus told of the day in which the Spirit would be sent. Ezekiel 36:27 and Joel 2:28 are examples of Old Testament predictions.

Peter mentions the promised Holy Spirit in Acts 2 saying, "Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out on this that you yourselves are seeing" (2:33).

In John 14-16, Jesus also spoke of the Spirit's presence that he would send. Jesus said, "[It] is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you." (16:17).

He has not left you as an orphan (14:18). How encouraging is this?
Finally, the Holy Spirit is the guarantee of our final inheritance.

The Spirit is the first installment or the down payment provided for the glory that is to come.

Many times people compare the Spirit to an engagement ring, using this verse. However, an engagement ring is not part of the wedding. It's a promise, but it's not a down payment. A better analogy is the down payment on a house, which is the first installment of the purchase (Stott, 49).

So God isn't just telling us about something in the future, he is bringing the future into the present, so that we may taste what the future is like.

Once again, Paul strikes the note "to the praise of his glory" (14).

There's nothing left to do but to join Paul in worship, and declare his praises to the nations who aren't worshiping this God.

God is calling the nations to praise him for his mighty salvation.

God the Father has chosen us, God the Son has redeemed us, God the Spirit has assured us. Let's worship the Triune God.

We were made for praise. And our hearts will only be satisfied when we begin praising this God.