

“OUT OF DARKNESS INTO LIGHT”

COLOSSIANS 1:12-14

Pastor Keith E. Gephart

INTRODUCTION

Believers are to joyfully give thanks to the Father, even though they may have to endure difficult times with patient steadfastness and longsuffering (11-12). There are many reasons for which we ought to give thanks to our Lord; this passage gives us **four** of them.

GIVE THANKS TO THE FATHER FOR ALL HIS BENEFITS!

- I. GOD HAS QUALIFIED US FOR OUR INHERITANCE (12b).
 - The verb means “made us sufficient”
 - II Cor. 3:6 is the only other NT use, along with the adjective and another noun meaning adequacy.
 - That passage makes clear that all our adequacy is from God.
- A. The Father—to whom we give thanks—through His **pure grace**.
- B. A portion of the Inheritance
 - Same terms used in LXX of Israel’s portion/share/inheritance in Canaan
 - The church does not take over Israel’s inheritance, but now even Gentiles get to share in it—in the spiritual promises and heritage in Christ.
 - We already have the inheritance, even though the fullness of it awaits the future.
 - We don’t have to wait for our benefactor to die in order to get it like other inheritances; Jesus died for us—but now lives for us!
1. With the saints—
 - These are fellow Christians
 - Paul could also think of the Church now getting to share the spiritual inheritance along with the OT Jews.
 - He could also think of Gentile believers sharing with the early Jewish believers, like in Eph. 2:11-14.
2. In Light
 - The inheritance is in the sphere of light.
 - God is Light, and we share light and walk in light in Him (I J. 1:5-7).
 - Heaven is full of light, for God is there.
 - Light is knowledge, truth, holiness, love, glory.

Thank God for His grace that has made us sufficient!

But, how do we get our inheritance? What has God done?

- II. GOD HAS DELIVERED US FROM THE POWER/DOMAIN/AUTHORITY OF DARKNESS (13a).
 - A. We needed “Rescue” from one much more powerful than us!
 - B. We lived in the Power, Domain, Authority of Darkness
 - We were dominated by it. Under the control of the “prince of darkness.”
 - We were living among the “sons of darkness. Our lives and hearts were full of darkness.
 - See the same expression as here in **Lk. 22:53**—the greatest assault ever on God’s kingdom.
 - C. Darkness is ignorance, falsehood, misery, vice, and sin.
 1. Government—“the power of Satan” (Acts 26:18)
 2. Essence—darkness (Acts 26:18)
 3. Pursuits—“works of darkness” (Rom. 13:12)
 4. Subjects—“Children of disobedience and wrath” (Eph. 2:3)

The Colossian believers have been transferred into the realm of light once and for all!

- III. GOD HAS TRANSFERRED US INTO THE KINGDOM OF THE SON (13b).
 - A. “Transfer” was quite literally used for the taking of a group of people from one place and resettling them in another. E.g. Israel and Judah into captivity; colonization in the Roman Empire

- But in this case, the transfer was from slavery into liberty. This transfer was done with divine power and purpose; those transferred were not “emigrants in search of a home, nor as a company of dissatisfied exiles.”
 - In principle the believer has already been transferred—the good work is begun and will be completed (Phil. 1:6). The earnest/guarantee of the Spirit given to the believer (Eph. 1:4; cf. II Cor. 1:22; 5:5) assures him of future glory, as does the presence of Christ within them, that is “the hope of glory” (Col. 1:17).
- B. “Kingdom” is not merely the rule, but also the realm—just as the domain of darkness.
- Paul does not limit the “kingdom” to the future Millennial/Messianic kingdom.
 - What God has promised to Israel he has not rescinded, and what he has promised for this earth’s redemption will be accomplished.
- C. It is the Father’s “beloved” Son—the Son of His Love—who rules this kingdom.
- Christ owns and has authority over this kingdom; there are no inferior beings in charge—no levels of angels to whom the believer must submit.
 - Christ “founded” this kingdom, organized it, rules over it by prescribing its laws, regulating its usages, protecting its subjects, and then rewarding them with blessings.
 - The Son is characterized by the love that belongs to God. Compare “beloved Son” in Mt. 3:17.
 - The Son also was the personal manifestation of the love of God as may be seen from Jn. 1:18; 14:9; and especially 17:26. Since this is true, the believer freely receives all things “together with Him” (Rom. 8:32).
 - As the “only begotten” Christ perfectly represents the Father’s love (I Jn. 4:9). Christ possesses the Father’s love, and He also “excites it in the divine heart”.
- D. Believers are now in the kingdom
- This passage does teach that believers are already rescued from the power of darkness, and that they have already received their inheritance in a real sense.
 - cf. Rom. 8:30—the believer is already glorified! They are *potentially* saved, because the knowledge of God is itself salvation, and this knowledge is within their reach.

Now having introduced the Son beloved by the Father, Paul moves to a profound discussion of His **work** and **Person**. First, Paul looks at His work of Redemption.

IV. THE SON HAS REDEEMED US (14).

- A. The payment of a price; generally the idea was to make a payment for the release of a slave.
- B. The forgiveness of Sins—the preeminent benefit of His redemption of us.
1. The word means “release” and comes from a verb meaning “to take away, remove.”
 2. It is the foremost blessing of redemption that is often stressed in both OT (e.g. Ex. 34:7; Is. 40:2; 55:7; Jer. 33:8; Mic. 7:18; Ps. 85:2; 103:3) and later in the preaching of the apostles (Acts 5:31; 13:38; 26:18) and in the epistles like this one.
 3. Man’s guilt is extremely deep, his due penalty is so great, his conscience is so agonized, his future prospect is so foreboding, he is so utterly helpless and hopeless apart from Divine interposition that he desperately needs such free and perfect absolution of sin.
 4. Such forgiveness is not partial or discriminate among repentant sinners; it is for all who humble themselves and call upon Him.
 5. Other benefits depend upon forgiveness, such as purity—righteousness must precede holiness.
- C. Through His blood (Eph. 1:7; not all mss. have the phrase here).

CONCLUSION

Because, God has qualified me for my inheritance, He has delivered me from the power of darkness, He has transferred me into the kingdom of His Son, and the Son has redeemed me—forgiving my sins.

I have every reason to be happy; I have no good reason to be miserable.

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