

Text: Eph 1.3-14

This week I want to go over the whole long sentence again, so you can fully grasp what Paul is saying.

On your study sheet I offer a translation of the passage that loosely follows the NASB, but it is my own translation.

- I set it out with indentations with the hope that this will help you visualize the relationships between the clauses.
- I also put a faint line on the page to help you see how the main clauses are parallel to one another.

The first part of our study tonight will be to highlight some of those key relationships. You can contribute with your own observations as well.

I. Visualizing the relationships between the clauses of Eph 1.3-14

A. The top-level clauses

1. Beginning in v. 3 b, “who blessed us”
2. Verse 7, “In whom ... we have”
3. Verse 11, “In whom ... we have”
4. Verse 13, “In whom ... you also”

B. Intra verse connections

1. All the items in parentheses are implied, not in the text, but come from their previous mentions in the passage
2. “In whom” v. 7 connects to “the Beloved”
3. “In whom” v. 11 points to “in Him” or “in Christ” of v. 10
4. “In whom” v. 13 points to “Christ” in v. 12
5. I am uncertain about “Having made known” (9) ... should it be parallel to “Redemption through his blood” and “the forgiveness of sins” or subordinate to them?
6. Relating to our final point tonight, I am seeing a subdivision of the passage around the phrase “in whom” instead of the “to the praise of his glory”

II. Considering the “we” vs. “you” distinctions of Eph 1.11-13

“There is considerable debate as to the meaning of 1:11–14. Many believe that the “we” of verses 11–12 are Jewish believers and the “you” of verses 13–14 are Gentile believers, signifying the unity of the two groups in Christ and the church. Others feel it is stylistic, with the emphasis on all believers (“we”) and then the specific readers of this letter (“you”). This is a difficult decision, and either is viable. However, while I spent most of my teaching career opting for the first view, since I do not see the Jew-Gentile issue addressed until 2:11 I now think the latter view is more likely. Paul is continuing his emphasis on God’s salvific gifts and recapitulating the blessings to all Christians he mentioned earlier.”¹

“One vital feature of the mystery is that believing Jews and believing Gentiles have their share in this grand program of God. The apostle speaks of the mystery in relation to Jewish believers in verses 11 and 12; in relation to Gentile believers in verse 13; then he combines them both in verse 14.”²

Having considered this again, I can see points in favor of both views. However:

1. I discovered that the “in whom” of v. 7 and v. 13 also appears in v. 11
2. While it is true that in 2.11 Paul brings up the distinction between Gentile believers and Jewish believers,

Ep 2.11 ¶ Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called "Uncircumcision" by the so-called "Circumcision," which is performed in the flesh by human hands —

the slight distinction in 1.11-12 vs. 1.13 could be a “preview” of that topic.

¹ Grant R. Osborne, *Ephesians: Verse by Verse*, Osborne New Testament Commentaries (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2017), 28.

² William MacDonald, *Believer’s Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*, ed. Arthur Farstad (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 1910.

3. However, notice that verse 7 also has “we” — is the “we” of v. 7 an exclusive blessing for Jewish believers?

Either way, our God has blessed ALL believers with EVERY spiritual blessing, so we can be confident of our destination and the glorious future we hold because of the work of Christ for us.