

Main Idea: God is overflowing with pure goodness and kindness. He has so much love for us that He gives us forgiveness through Jesus Christ. He wants to save us! His character is to love and intercede so He solved the dilemma of how we can have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

We are separated by sin to a holy God, so Christ pays the price. His purity covers our sinfulness. In God's eyes, we are forgiven by the shed blood of Christ and His work. We have been purchased and freed from the bondages of sin to freedom in Christ. The Holy Spirit gives us wisdom and understanding so we can know Him and grow in Him. God's plan was hidden; however, He gave clues for the faithful to see, not fully revealing for all to know. The plan is about the Authority, Lordship, Supremacy and Centrality of Christ, so the world might know and God glorified. At a perfect fixed point in time that all leads to Christ, all will know! Everyone will know that Christ is All and everything throughout the universe will be under His loving Authority. We, as Christians, will be in His inheritance. As Christians, we have been called by the grace of God to receive His Son, to trust in Him, to have faith in Him, to give praise and honor to Jesus Christ for the glory of God the Father.

Contexts and Background:

This passage, verses 1-14, is one long sentence in the Greek. Intertwined are these essential themes: God's Sovereign plan is at work; that we are of value to Him by who we are in Christ; our purpose, as God chosen; we are saved without merit and elected for salvation; our redemption in Christ; and, the Holy Spirit who empowers us.

Commentary—Word and Phrase Meanings:

- *In him.* This refers to our union in Christ--our membership and unity in the body of Christ now and in eternity (also stated "in Christ" or "in Jesus"). It is mystical by the sheer truth that we can neither fully define nor understand it. When we are saved, we are in Christ and He dwells in us while He also represents us before the Father. Thus, false teachings, complicated rituals, and empty philosophies can do nothing but distract, confuse, and hurt us (John 15:1-8; Rom. 6:4; 8:9-17; 1 Cor. 6:15-17; 2 Cor. 1:4-5; Gal. 5:24; Phil. 3:1-14; Col. 1:24; 2:6-11; 3:3-4)!
- *Redemption/ release.* This means a ransom was paid for deliverance from slavery and oppression (freeing a slave by paying the price for him). The illustration is that God freed Israel from slavery and delivered them to the Promised Land by the blood of the Passover lamb; He delivers us from sins by His promise fulfilled by the Blood of the Lamb. This is about the forgiveness we receive; God redeems Israel, and He redeems us by paying for our sins by what Christ has done through His shed blood (Rom. 8:23; 1 Cor. 4:8-13; Gal. 6:12; Eph. 1:7; 2:13-16; Col. 1:21-22; 2:13, 17, 20; 3:9-10; Heb. 9:14; 1 Pet. 1:19).
- *Through his blood.* The blood of Jesus was spilt as a sacrifice in our place so that we could have the necessary redemption to be saved! Jesus makes it possible for us to be forgiven of our sins and saved from God's wrath for our sins. Therefore, through the blood, we receive grace and mercy undeserved--we receive salvation and eternal life! His Atonement, our redemption--only through Christ's blood and suffering, which was the sacrifice for our reconciliation, to bind us in good relationship back to our Creator and Lord (Lev. 17:11; Isa. 1:18; 53:6; Luke 22:20; Rom.

3:23-25; 8:1; 5:9; I Cor. 5:7; Eph. 1:7; Col.1:20; 1 Thess. 1:10; Heb. 7:27; 9:14, 22; I John 1:7; 2:2; Rev. 13:8; 22:14)!

- *Forgiveness / remission of sins.* God frees us from bondage and penalty and gives us a “pardon” by grace alone and grants us a cancelation of debt a “remission of our sins.” The Blood of Jesus is the forgiving agent that rescues us from God's wrath and saves us, because His blood is spilt from His sacrificial death, and following His Resurrection, appeased the wrath of God for us. Because He did this, we can receive salvation. We are "undead" because we have eternal life, as well as the joy and honor of receiving forgiveness for our sins. God was more merciful with us than we could ever be with anyone else, or could ever deserve. *Sins* here refers to trespass against God's Holiness, as in we fell behind and error and can't come back without a pardon (Psalm 103:12; Micah 7:19; Matt. 5: 3-12; Luke 4:18; 2 Cor. 5:19-21; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14; Heb. 10:19-25; 2 Pet. 1:9; 2:20; Rev. 1:5-6).
- *In accordance.* Our life belongs to Christ. He is our LORD, so be and do and live in conformity with who He is and what He has done for you!
- *Riches of God's grace... Lavished.* The love that He has poured upon us! We have full access to His grace and blessings. What could be greater than this? How wonderful it is to be Christian! We are in love, hope, joy, and grace and purposed for His glory.
- *Wisdom / prudence and understanding.* This refers to a good way of thinking that honors God with good choices and character; God gives us understanding and insight (Luke 1:17).
- *Mystery of his will.* The *will of God* is basically the call to follow Jesus as He moves us forward, for He came to do God's will and sets for us an example of faith. This is an attitude of life that should be the goal of a mature person of faith. The battle is between belief and unbelief, centered on how one views God and self. If God is first, then belief comes easy; if one's self is first, then belief is pushed aside or rationalized away (Psalm 25:14; Matt. 6:33; John 2:4; 7:17; 8:44; 14:6; 18:37; 2 Cor. 11:10; Col. 1:14; Heb. 8:10; 13:21; Rev. 3:7-14).
- *Good pleasure.* This refers to the intent to do something good and be gracious (Phil. 1:15; 2:13; 2 Thess. 1:11).
- *In Christ.* Christ is our Redeemer. We belong to Him. This is the most incredible wonder we are blessed with. Christ is our living Hope that will never fade away! We are God's people in community; we have a special guarantee and favor, and we have a special personal and communal relationship with Him, as He had with the Israelites in the Old Testament. It is also in the form of a duty, not to receive salvation, but rather for us to respond to what Christ has freely and lovingly given us. We need to be reminded of what we have and who we are in Christ. If not, we will soon forget and replace His guidance either with our frailty or with the ways of the world. (Deut. 7:7-8; Rom. 9:11, 16-18, 29-33; 9:6-26; 11:5; Col. 3:12; 1 Thess. 1:4; 2 Thess. 2:13; 1 Tim. 2:5; 2 Tim. 1:9; 1 Pet. 1:18-21).
- *Times reach their fulfillment / fullness of time.* This is not necessary a fulfillment of future prophecy; rather, this is a term to mean the ‘season’ of God is at hand or fulfilled. This is about God's dominance with perfect will and timing. He brings us redemption through the journey of time and the relationships paid by His death and resurrection. This also means God rules the universe, past, now and the future. When we consider how we are and who He is! This also refers to the practice of love, as we do not deserve His love, yet we receive it anyway. We do not earn it or

achieve it in any way or merit whatsoever, yet it is there for our taking because of what Christ has done in our behalf (Acts 2:32-36; Rom. 13:8-10; Gal. 4:4; Eph. 3:2-12; 4:2; Col. 1:15-20;).

- *Unity / unite to all things /gather together.* This is an all-encompassing statement of the magnificence and perfection of God's will in 'harmony' with Jews and Gentiles (Rom. 8).
- *Under Christ.* All things are under Christ's view and authority; His Rule is supreme in a glorified creation! He is the Deliverer and will deliver us! This is the Covenant of Grace under Christ. This is God's universal right to be recognized as first, foremost, and the only worshiped being (Psalm 86:9-10; Is. 45:22-23; Jer. 10:10; Zech. 14:9; Mal. 1:11; Phil. 2:9-11; 1 Tim. 1:17).

Devotional Thoughts and Applications:

No matter what we go through from persecution or loss, we could never even catch a glimpse of what Christ has given to us through grace. To be a real authentic Christian, we must have more than belief. We must have trust. We must surrender to His Lordship as one day the entirety of creation will. We forerun and herald His Supremacy by the demonstration of our active faith--that He alone is the God who is here and saves.

We have His favor and grace, because we cannot save ourselves. We can't be saved by works, deeds, favor from others, right thought, or actions. Our salvation comes only and purely from Christ, His Word inputted to us by the Holy Spirit. Remember, God chose to bestow His love to you. He first loved us, first loved you, a love that is not earned or disserved is freely given to you! You are beloved (John 2:9; 1 John 4)!

Church Leadership Tip: Now that we know what God has lavished upon us, what do we do as a church to model that to those around us? If your church is stagnant, one of the main reasons is because you are not getting what His grace is about and it has become stale, like out-of-date milk. Pray, seek forgiveness, and get back to your call.

The Essential Inductive Questions (for more Inductive questions see Inductive Bible Study):

1. What does this passage say?
2. What does this passage mean?
3. What is God telling me?
4. How am I encouraged and strengthened?
5. Is there sin in my life for which confession and repentance is needed?
6. How can I be changed, so I can learn and grow?
7. What is in the way of these precepts affecting me? What is in the way of my listening to God?
8. How does this apply to me? What will I do about it?
9. What can I model and teach?
10. What does God want me to share with someone?

Additional Questions:

1. How can you explain the Gospel?
2. Why does the wrath of God make people uncomfortable? Why do most preachers fail to teach it? What does this passage tell us?

3. Why was a sacrifice necessary for our reconciliation? How does that make you feel? How should we respond?
4. God is overflowing with goodness and kindness that gives us forgiveness. How does this help us take comfort in Him?
5. God wants to save us! What gets in the way?
6. The blood of Jesus was spilt as a sacrifice in our place so that we could be saved. Why did God allow this?
7. What was the dilemma of your life that got in the way of having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord?
8. Since we are given wisdom and understanding to know Christ, how does this help you to grow in Him everything throughout the universe will be under His loving Authority More?
9. Everything throughout the universe will be under our Lord's loving Authority. How does this help you trust Him in the dailies of life?
10. Our true battle is between belief and unbelief, trust and not to trust Christ as Lord. If God is first, then belief comes easy; if one's self is first, then belief is pushed aside or rationalized away. Who is first in your life?
11. As a Christian, we should be in love, with hope, joy, and grace and purposed for His glory. So what gets in the way? What can you do?
12. No matter what we go through from joy or loss, we could never understand what Christ has given to us through grace. So what will you do with that?