

“The Mystery of His Will”

“The Mystery of His Will” Worked Out “In and Through” Christ Jesus our Lord:

➤ There are three recurring themes around which this eulogy revolves –

- (1) the will of God (1:5, 9, 11);
- (2) in Christ (1:3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13); and
- (3) to the praise of His glory (1:6, 12, 14).

➤ The three combining into one over all thought – *the will of God being worked out in Christ to the praise of His glory:*

I. The Plan of God (διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ) (1:1, 3-14)

- There is a clear Theocentric focus that occurs in 1:3-14

- 1) God is the origin and source of salvation, His initiative is evident;
- 2) God’s gracious electing plan shapes past, present, and future;
- 3) God’s ultimate goal is that He Himself be glorified – hence the refrain ‘to the praise of His glory’ (vv. 6, 12, 14):

I. The Plan of God (διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ) (1:1, 3-14)

II. The Plan of God – The Centrality of Christ (1:3-14)

- There is a clear Christological dimension:
- Christ is the mediator and ‘sphere’ of divine blessing:

- All the undeserved blessings of God’s gracious saving work are lavished upon us ‘in and through Christ’ (vv. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13)

I. The Plan of God (διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ) (1:1, 3-14)

II. The Plan of God – The Centrality of Christ (1:3-14)

A. The Centrality of Christ in God’s Plan:

1. “Blessed – in heavenly places In Christ” (ἐν Χριστῷ) (1:3)

- This prepositional phrase is the master key that unlocks heaven’s treasury:

- This thought permeates 1:3-14 as well as the rest of the epistle:

1. “Blessed – in heavenly places In Christ” (ἐν Χριστῷ) (1:3)

This preposition (ἐν) at its root carries the idea of “within, in, or within-ness,” indicating that the location is within the bounds marked by the word with which it occurs: “Full weight (N. Turner, A Grammar of New Testament Greek, p. 263) must be given to the mystical conception of being *in Christ*, inside a new sphere of experience and spiritual existence.” “We abide *in* God and he abides *in* us (*with* is inadequate).” “It would not be safe to ignore the primary force of the preposition...” Therefore it should not be taken as if “through Christ” (διὰ Χριστοῦ), as though Christ was merely presented as the instrument:

I. The Plan of God (διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ) (1:1, 3-14)

II. The Plan of God – The Centrality of Christ (1:3-14)

A. The Centrality of Christ in God’s Plan:

1. “Blessed – in heavenly places In Christ” (ἐν Χριστῷ) (1:3)

- In Christ there was a change in:

- 1) Our Position (2:5-6)
- 2) Our Privileges (3:8)

- ἐξιχνιάω “to trace out” with (α) “that which cannot be traced out,” “unsearchable, past finding out”

- Cannot be fully comprehended by man:

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II. The Plan of God – The Centrality of Christ (1:3-14)

A. The Centrality of Christ in God’s Plan:

1. “Blessed – in heavenly places In Christ” (ἐν Χριστῷ) (1:3)

- In Christ there was a change in:

- 1) Our Position (2:5-6)
- 2) Our Privileges (3:8)
- 3) Our Possessions (1:3-14; 2:11-22; 3:6)

- And there should be a change in:

- 4) Our Practice (chaps 4-6)

I. The Plan of God (διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ) (1:1, 3-14)

II. The Plan of God – The Centrality of Christ (1:3-14)

A. The Centrality of Christ in God’s Plan:

1. “Blessed – in heavenly places In Christ” (ἐν Χριστῷ) (1:3)

2. “He (God) chose us In Him (ἐν αὐτῷ) before the foundation of the world” (1:4)

3. “He (God) freely bestowed on us In the Beloved” (ἐν τῷ ἠγαπημένῳ) (1:6)

4. “According to His kind intention which He purposed In Him” (ἐν αὐτῷ) (1:9)

5. "The summing up of all things *In the Christ*" (ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ) (1:10)
6. "*In Him* (ἐν ᾧ), also we have obtained and inheritance" (1:11)
7. "We who were the first to hope *In the Christ*" (ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ) (1:12)
8. "*In Him* (ἐν ᾧ), also you, after listening to the word of the truth...having believed, you were sealed *In Him* (ἐν ᾧ) with the Holy Spirit" (1:13)

- **One cannot have Christianity without Christ:**
 - *You may have Confucianism without Confucius:*
 - *Buddhism without Buddha*
 - *Islam without Muhammad*
 - *Mormonism without Joseph Smith*
 - *But you cannot have Christianity without Christ:*

- I. The Plan of God (διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ) (1:1, 3-14)
- II. The Plan of God – The Centrality of Christ (1:3-14)
- A. The Centrality of Christ in God's Plan:*
- B. The Centrality of Christ and the Church – Unity:*
- Unity is a thread of thought that runs through this epistle:

- I. The Plan of God (διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ) (1:1, 3-14)
- II. The Plan of God – The Centrality of Christ (1:3-14)
- A. The Centrality of Christ in God's Plan:*
- B. The Centrality of Christ and the Church – Unity:*
1. Seen in the Term "One" (ἐν):

1. Seen in the Term "One" (ἐν)
 - "the both one" (2:14)
 - "one new man" (2:15)
 - "one body" (2:16; 4:4)
 - "one Spirit" (2:18; 4:4)
 - "one hope" (4:4)
 - "one Lord" (4:5)
 - "one faith" (4:5)
 - "one baptism" (4:5)
 - "one God and Father" (4:6)
 - "each one of us" (4:7)
 - "each individual (one) part" (4:16)
 - "each one of you" (5:33)

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- B. The Centrality of Christ and the Church – Unity:*
1. Seen in the Term "One" (ἐν)
 2. Seen in the Term "Unity" (ἐνότης) (2x)
 - This term is used nowhere else in the NT except in Ephesians 4:3, 13:

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- A. The Centrality of Christ in God's Plan:*
- B. The Centrality of Christ and the Church – Unity:*
1. Seen in the Term "One" (ἐν)
 2. Seen in the Term "Unity" (ἐνότης) (2x)
 3. Seen in the Phrase "In Christ" (ἐν Χριστῷ)
 - "in Christ" or its equivalent is used over 30x in this epistle, indicating that Christ is the sphere in whom this unity is achieved:

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- A. The Centrality of Christ in God's Plan:*
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1. Seen in the Term "One" (ἐν)
 2. Seen in the Term "Unity" (ἐνότης) (2x)
 3. Seen in the Phrase "In Christ" (ἐν Χριστῷ)
 4. Seen in the Phrase "With, Together With" (συν):
 - Used almost exclusively with persons, and indicates close fellowship:

4. Seen in the Phrase "With, Together With" (συν):
 - God "made us alive together with (συνεζωοποίησεν) Christ" (2:5)
 - God "raised us up with (συνήγειρεν) Christ" (2:6a)
 - God "seated us with (συνεκάθισεν) Christ in the heavenly places" (2:6b)
 - The emphasis is placed upon the "realized" aspect of believers' "being made alive," "being raised," and "being seated":
 - Our true home is where Christ is, it is heavenly in origin, character, and destiny:

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II. The Plan of God – The Centrality of Christ (1:3-14)

A. The Centrality of Christ in God's Plan:

B. The Centrality of Christ and the Church – Unity:

1. Seen in the Term “One” (έν)

2. Seen in the Term “Unity” (ένότης) (2x)

3. Seen in the Phrase “In Christ” (έν Χριστῷ)

4. Seen in the Phrase “With, Together With” (συν):

5. Seen in the Relationship (συν) of the Church:

5. Seen in the Relationship (συν) of the Church:

- Believers are joined/fitted together (συναρμολογέω) (2:21; 4:16)
- Believers “are being built together” (συνοικοδομέω) (2:22)
- Believers “are being held together” (συνβιβάζω) (4:16)
- Believers are to maintain the unity between them “in the bond of peace” (συνδεσμος) (4:3)

- “Fellow citizens” (συμπολιτης) (2:19)
- “Fellow heirs” (συνκληρονόμος) (3:6)
- “Fellow members of the body” (σῶσσωμος) (3:6)
- “Fellow participants of the promise” (συμμέτοχος) (3:6)

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3. Seen in the Phrase “In Christ” (έν Χριστῷ)

4. Seen in the Phrase “With, Together With”

(συν):

5. Seen in the Relationship (συν) of the Church:

6. Seen in the Designations of the Church:

a) Family (οἰκετι τοῦ θεοῦ) (2:19)

b) Body (σῶσσωμα) (3:6)

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