

# WORKING THINGS TOGETHER

By John Richardson

## SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 1:11–14

*In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.*

## OBSERVATION

Hope can be a very powerful thing, building an expectation that seems unclear at the present time. The loss of hope can be very devastating in the life of a person. Paul, speaking to the church of Ephesus, desires to impart hope to the people through a reminder of an inheritance that is without compare.

- Paul speaks of an inheritance, meaning the inclusion of the promise of salvation first given to the Jews. Now the Gentiles (like you and I) have been included into the plan of salvation. The inheritance is a great gift that builds hope for the believer, knowing that God has given us life now and in the future after death. Paul continues to share that it was predestined, fixed in time before time began. God's purpose in saving you was a plan that He was constantly working on. Each believer knows that God has saved them, as He planned, and is working on their behalf (v. 11).
- The plan unfolded according to the purpose He has set. God's purposes always drive God's plan. God is working everything together to extend the gospel inheritance to people who are without Christ. Everything is working together for His will, what He desires, and is bringing about the salvation of His sons and daughters. We (the church) are not without hope because God is bringing about His plan, over and against the destruction of this world, which includes disease. Being in full control, God has your future fixed in His plan (v. 11).
- Verse 12 gives the reader a look back at the Jewish believers. "... so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory." Jews who believed in Jesus gave praise to the glory of God. Without the Jews who first believed, one would wonder how the Gentiles would know the gospel. The grace given to the Jews of biblical times now reflects the motion of the gospel to those without Christ. Every person who hears the gospel now has a mission to share the gospel, for the glory of God to be praised across the earth.

- Paul now brings the Gentile audience back into the discussion (“you also”). Now the Gentiles can praise God with the Jews because all stand in the riches of God’s grace. The promise of the inheritance is the gift of the Holy Spirit, who seals a believer to the day of glory. The Holy Spirit is such a gift that guides the minds and hearts of believers to be obedient to God, to lift prayers when unable to speak, to comfort, etc. God has not left the believer without hope in this world but has given gifts of inheritance and the Holy Spirit. Every person has reason to praise God.

## **OBEDIENCE**

The gift of salvation is a plan that God is unfolding in and through you as a believer. The response of the believer is to share and praise. This week when you are feeling a bit different about how the world is changing, can gather in praise and seek ways to share the Gospel.

- The day we are in today is part of God’s plan to reach to the world with His Gospel, how will you trust in his plans over the events of the world?
- You have the gift of the Holy Spirit to lean on in every circumstance. How will you listen to and respond to the Holy Spirit this week?
- Every believer on the planet has a reason to praise God today. Spend time this week praising God: write down those praises and share them with your family, online, or with a neighbor.
- How will you look at the events of the world today? Through the lens of media outlets or through the Word of God?

## **PRAYER**

Pray for a redeeming of time to not launch into worry but embrace praise. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you toward the plans of God. Ask God to move you toward a position of praise, looking for ways to celebrate the beautiful plan that God has created.