

# **Ephesians 1:11-14**

FBC Brandon, Szydlowski Life Group – Summer 2025



# EPHESIANS 1:11-14 (ESV)

**Ephesians 1:11-14 (ESV)** 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.



# EPHESIANS 1:11-14 IN THREE PARTS

**The Present and Future  
Inheritance of Believers**

**Ephesians 1:11a (Galatians 3:29, Romans  
8:17, 1 Peter 1:3-5)**

**Predestined for God's Glory**

**Ephesians 1:11b-12 (Romans 8:29-30,**

**Signed, Sealed, and Delivered**

**Ephesians 1:13-14**



# THE PRESENT INHERITANCE OF BELIEVERS, 1

Ephesians 1:11a (ESV) In him we have obtained an inheritance

- **Inheritance:** money, land, or possessions received from someone after the person has died; the particular characteristics received from parents through the genes.
- Notice that Paul says we have gained an inheritance, not we *will* gain an inheritance.
- This tells us that there are aspects of our inheritance that we have now, in the present. Some of those things include:
- **Forgiveness of sins:** Through Christ's sacrifice, believers are freed from the penalty and power of sin. Read 1 John 1:9
  - As we looked at previously, sin is falling short of God's standard of righteousness. It ultimately separates mankind from God and leads to spiritual death.
  - Because God is just, sin requires a penalty. Christ shed his blood unto death on the cross to cover that penalty for us.



# THE PRESENT INHERITANCE OF BELIEVERS, 2

Ephesians 1:11a (ESV) In him we have obtained an inheritance

- **Adoption as Children of God:** We are made children of God so that we can receive that inheritance. God fully adopts us into his family so that we can receive the full blessing of being in relationship with him. Read 1 John 3:1
- This adoption has several aspects.
  - First, it is from God. He initiated the overall plan for adoption/redemption and he is fully invested in completing his plan for individuals.
  - Therefore, this adoption is not earned, but is received. There is no human merit or work that can be done to be adopted by God.
  - This adoption brings us a new identity, and with that identity new privileges. We are made new and our identity is completely contained in our relationship with God through Christ. We are able to enter into eternal communion with God.
  - The act of adoption is a powerful demonstration of the love that God has for his people.



# THE PRESENT INHERITANCE OF BELIEVERS, 3

Ephesians 1:11a (ESV) In him we have obtained an inheritance

- **The presence of the Holy Spirit:** Another present benefit is the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives. He is proof of the guarantee that God has given us. He is a foretaste of our future inheritance when things are made new and sin is destroyed. Read **1 Corinthians 6:19-20**
  - The Spirit brings about a change in our lives that we call sanctification. It is the process whereby we grow more Christlike over time. Christ must increase and we must decrease.
  - The leading of the Holy Spirit develops what Paul calls the fruit of the spirit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. These attributes should all be present in our lives and we should see evidence of their increase as we walk with the Spirit.
  - Speaking of walking with the Spirit, one of his roles in our lives is as a guide. Jesus called him both Helper and Guide. He leads us into all truth and helps us discern the will of the Father.



# THE PRESENT INHERITANCE OF BELIEVERS, 4

Ephesians 1:11a (ESV) In him we have obtained an inheritance

- One of the methods that the Spirit uses to guide and sanctify us is through the conviction of sin. Conviction should point us away from sin and toward righteousness.
- As the Spirit leads we will become more and more in line with the will of the Father as has been revealed through his word.



# THE PRESENT INHERITANCE OF BELIEVERS, 5

Ephesians 1:11a (ESV) In him we have obtained an inheritance

- **Spiritual Gifts:** The final present benefit of our inheritance that we'll look at is the giving of spiritual gifts to believers. Read 1 Corinthians 12:4-11
  - Some of the gifts outlined in the New Testament include: serving, teaching, encouraging, giving, leadership, and mercy, word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, faith, healing, miraculous powers, prophecy, distinguishing between spirits, speaking in tongues and interpretation of tongues, administration
  - These gifts are given to believers to serve God's plans and his kingdom. They are given in different measures to different believers. Just as a body has multiple parts that are all of importance, the body of Christ (the Church) has people with differing gifts that serve in different ways.



# THE FUTURE INHERITANCE OF BELIEVERS, 1

Ephesians 1:11a (ESV) In him we have obtained an inheritance

- All of our benefits are not received in this present age, however. Just as our current inheritances are given, not earned, our future inheritance is a gift given by God because of his overwhelming love and grace. Some of the benefits we will receive include:
- **Eternal life:** God has granted us the boon of eternal life in his presence. The key to think of here is his presence. Eternal life without him is meaningless. Read [John 3:16](#)
  - The key to think of here is his presence. Eternal life without him is meaningless. It's not just that we get to live a long time, it's that the quality of that life will be off the charts. Though we do have joy in this world and the benefits of the fruit of the Spirit, much of this world is defined by sin, pain, loss, etc. The world to come will be free of these things.



# THE FUTURE INHERITANCE OF BELIEVERS, 2

Ephesians 1:11a (ESV) In him we have obtained an inheritance

- **A new heaven and a new Earth:** God has promised to remake creation into the paradise he originally created. Creation will be free of sin and decay. Read Revelation 21:1
  - The outcome of sin is death. It is the curse under which we live. God will reverse that curse and existence will be whole and perfect.
  - As part of that new creation the old, or former, things will be forgotten.
  - This is not only a New Testament idea. God revealed, in part, through the Old Testament prophets. Read Isaiah 65:17-19



# THE FUTURE INHERITANCE OF BELIEVERS, 3

Ephesians 1:11a (ESV) In him we have obtained an inheritance

- **Resurrected, glorified bodies:** As part of God's recreation we will also have new, glorified bodies that are free from pain and sin. Read **Philippians 3:20-21**
  - We will live in the victory over sin and death that Christ gained on the cross.
  - Our glorified bodies will be fully empowered by the Holy Spirit. We will not be weakened by temptation.
  - Our bodies will be physical. Think of Christ's glorified body after the resurrection. He had form and solidity.
  - In short, our bodies will be as God intended at the beginning of creation.



# PREDESTINED FOR GOD'S GLORY, 1

**Ephesians 1:11b-12 (ESV)** 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.

- **Predestined:** determine (an outcome or course of events) in advance by divine will or fate.
- As we have covered this topic in detail recently, we're going to take a different tack today. We will look at the three major (well, two major and one minor) understandings of predestination that we find in the Christian church today.
- Those three viewpoints can be found in the larger systems known as Calvinism, Arminianism, and Molinism.
  - Can I get a volunteer to briefly describe what Calvinism is, in general?
  - And Arminianism?
  - Finally Molinism?



# TRADITIONAL VIEW OF PREDESTINATION

**Ephesians 1:11b-12 (ESV)** 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.

- All of scripture speaks of God's plans and his sovereignty over events.
- **Isaiah 14:24** The LORD of hosts has sworn: "As I have planned, so shall it be, and as I have purposed, so shall it stand,"
- Before the foundation of the world, God determined everything that takes place in history: for His counsel shall stand.
- No one can say to Him, "What are you doing?" (**Daniel 4:35**).
- For does not the potter have the right to do what he wants with his own clay (**Romans 9:21**)?
- And does the hammer have the right to say to him who wields it, "don't swing me here or there" (**Isaiah 10:15**)?
- Of course not, He is God and He does all things according to His own pleasure (**Ephesians 1:11**).



# PREDESTINED FOR GOD'S GLORY, CALVINISM 1

**Ephesians 1:11b-12 (ESV)** 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.

- Calvinism is an entire system of theology but for the purposes of this lesson we will focus only on its understanding of predestination as it relates to soteriology.
- **Soteriology**: the doctrine of salvation
- But first, a bit of history. Calvinism is named after John Calvin, the 16<sup>th</sup> Century French Catholic priest turned reformer. He's most famous for his second stint in Geneva where he served as spiritual leader. It was while in Geneva that he composed his masterwork, *The Institutes of the Christian Faith*. Calvin's influence met and exceeded that of even Luther as his understanding of doctrine came to prominence in the reformed world. He stressed the sovereignty of God in all things, including in the work of salvation.



# PREDESTINED FOR GOD'S GLORY, CALVINISM 2

**Ephesians 1:11b-12 (ESV)** 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.

- You may be familiar with the Calvinist acronym TULIP. Though Calvin never used the TULIP acronym, he did teach its concepts.
- The I in TULIP is for irresistible grace. It refers to the idea that God's call is irresistible by his elect. The L in TULIP, or limited atonement, supports that idea by stating that Christ's sacrifice is sufficient, but only for the elect.
- To the Calvinist, all of the work of salvation is accomplished by God. He does the choosing and he provides the faith necessary to respond. If God has chosen someone, they cannot turn away and they cannot not be saved. To the Calvinist, God is sovereign in all things. His will is accomplished in his way.
- Calvinists will look to verses like **Romans 8:28-30**, **Ephesians 1:3-6**, and **John 6:44** to support their view.
- The Calvinistic view of predestination is the traditional post-1517 view of the Protestant Church.



# FREE WILL IN THE CALVINIST TRADITION





# PREDESTINED FOR GOD'S GLORY, ARMINIANISM 1

**Ephesians 1:11b-12 (ESV)** 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.

- Arminianism is the tails to Calvinism's heads. It is named after Jacobus Arminius, the Dutch theologian that opposed the Dutch Reformed Church's strict interpretation of predestination. As a professor of theology at Leiden University he became an influential figure. Arminius died at a relatively young age but his followers, known as the Remonstrants, took up his banner and forced the Dutch authorities to address the predestination question. The Synod of Dort was convened in 1618 to consider the controversy and Arminian free-will was rejected.
- Arminians will use the same words as Calvinists but they will, of course, give them different meanings and interpretations. An example of this is 'the elect'. A Calvinist would identify the elect as those chosen by God. An Arminian will say that the elect are those that God knew would choose him, so he chooses them first. This is referred to as Conditional Election.



# PREDESTINED FOR GOD'S GLORY, ARMINIANISM 2

**Ephesians 1:11b-12 (ESV)** 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.

- Another key distinction of Arminianism revolves around God's grace. Arminians believe that God's grace is both **resistible** and **prevenient**.
- Resistible is common enough word. By it, Arminians believe that men can choose not to respond to God's call. They put the ultimate power of salvation into man's heart.
- **Prevenient**: preceding in time or order; antecedent.
- In this case, Arminians hold that God's grace is given to a believer before they believe. It is what allows the elect to believe. It doesn't cause them to believe (like a Calvinist would say) but gives them the power to accept (though they won't always do so) God's offer.
- Many, but not all, Arminians do not believe in the perseverance of the saints. This is the logical end to their viewpoint. If a man has the power to accept or reject God's offer of salvation once, what is to stop him from changing his mind later on and reject what he has previously accepted?
- Arminians will look to passages such as **1 Timothy 2:4**, **John 7:17**, and **John 3:16** for Biblical support of their position.



# PREVENIENT GRACE





# PREDESTINED FOR GOD'S GLORY, MOLINISM 1

**Ephesians 1:11b-12 (ESV)** 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.

- Molinism is the third 'major' Protestant approach to soteriology. It is an attempted middle-ground between Calvinism and Arminianism.
- Molinism was developed by a Spanish Catholic Jesuit priest named Luis de Molina in the late 16<sup>th</sup> Century. Molina was a theology professor in Portugal. He never became a Protestant, though his theological approach is most closely associated with Protestants. Molina tried to answer the theological question: **how can God be sovereign and in control of everything while humans have free will?**



# PREDESTINED FOR GOD'S GLORY, MOLINISM 2

**Ephesians 1:11b-12 (ESV)** 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.

- Molina's proposed answer to this question involves three types of divine knowledge.
  - **Natural Knowledge** – this is knowledge that God has about all possibilities in creation. God knows all necessary truths. For example: God knows all potential creatures and all possible worlds that could exist. *“If I create Person A in situation X, they could freely choose option Y or Z.”*
  - **Middle Knowledge** – God's Middle Knowledge allows him to know all **counterfactuals** of creaturely freedom. He knows every reaction by every creature in every situation that could ever exist. MK is not determined by God (because of free will) but is known by him. *“If Judas were in such-and-such circumstances, he would betray Jesus.”*
  - **Free Knowledge** – this concept is God's knowledge of the actual world, not just the possible ones. It includes all future events and actions. *“I will create a world where Judas exists and freely chooses to betray Jesus.”*



# PREDESTINED FOR GOD'S GLORY, MOLINISM 3

**Ephesians 1:11b-12 (ESV)** 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.

- Basically, Molinism boils down to this:
  - God knows all possible worlds (natural knowledge).
  - God knows what free creatures would do in all possible circumstances (middle knowledge).
  - God chooses to create a world where His purposes are fulfilled through the free choices of creatures (free knowledge).
  - So, God does not cause people's free choices, but He knows them and orders the world accordingly.
- Read **1 Samuel 23:6-14** for an example Molinists cite of Middle Knowledge in action.



MOLINISM EXPLAINED VIA SUPERHEROES

# MOLINISM EXPLAINED

***IN 3 SUPERHERO SCENES***





# SIGNED, SEALED, AND DELIVERED, 1

**Ephesians 1:13-14 (ESV)** 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.

- In verse 13 Paul turns personal. He shifts from 'we' to 'you'. He emphasizes the personal nature of salvation. Christ came for you.
- This passage also supports the necessity of hearing the gospel message. It tells us – Calvinist, Arminian, or Molinist – that it is our responsibility to preach the good news to all.
- Those that respond to the message for salvation are sealed and guaranteed. God marks us with a seal, showing ownership of us. He becomes our master.
- The inheritance we spoke of earlier (both in the now and the not yet) is guaranteed by the Holy Spirit. What greater promissory could we have?