

Ephesians 1:1-14

The Divine Purpose: The Glory and Headship of Christ

1. According to the Spirit of the Reformation Study Bible, an outstanding characteristic of the letter to the Ephesians is “the awe with which it contemplates the mystery of the church.” Do we have that same awe for the Church today? If so, how do we see that? If not, why not and what are some factors that decrease our awe?

What are some practical things that we should be doing to address this?

2. In 1:1 Paul emphasizes the reality of his office: he mentions that he is “an apostle” – and that he is this “by the will of God.” Why would he emphasize this?

Should elders or deacons today do the same kind of thing when they visit members in the congregation? Why or why not?

3. In this passage Paul speaks about all three persons of the Trinity: the Father (vv. 3-6); the Son (vv. 7-12); the Holy Spirit (vv. 13,14). The earliest confessions of the church (Apostles’ Creed, Nicene Creed, Athanasian Creed) are also Trinitarian. Why would that be?

4. In verse 3 Paul says that we have been blessed “in the heavenly realms.” Why not “in the earthly realms”?

5. Why is it important to know that God chose us “before the creation of the world”? (v. 4; cf. Canons of Dort I,7; Belgic Confession 22)

6. According to 1:4 God chose us “to be holy and blameless in his sight.” What do you think of the idea that God chose us because he knew or “foresaw” that we would be holy and blameless? (cf. Canons of Dort I,7; Canons of Dort I,RE 5; Deuteronomy 7:7-8; Romans 9:11-16).

7. According to verse 4 what is the goal or purpose of our election?

How does that square with the idea, “how I live does not really matter: if I’m elect I will be saved, and if I’m not elect then I won’t be saved”? (Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 64; Canons of Dort V,6)

8. Does it fit with the context to suggest that Paul speaks to the Ephesians about election in order to make them question whether or not they are elect?

Why does Paul speak to them about their election?

9. What does it mean that God lavished his grace (i.e. redemption from sin) on us “with all wisdom and understanding”? (1:8)

How should that knowledge comfort us today?

10. What is “the mystery of God’s will” mentioned in verse 9? (cf. 3:3-7; Colossians 1:26; question 1)

J VanWoudenberg