



Election, predestination, adoption are but the cogs in the wheel bringing about God's ultimate purpose for His people. That purpose being to bring them into a glorious inheritance, an inheritance that has been purchased by Christ and is found alone in Christ. In v3 Paul says, "*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.*" from that statement we observe that while the Christian does know a measure of blessing in time (in His salvation, a blessed state), yet the fulfilment/completion of that blessing is something that he/she will not enter into until we arrive in the heavenly places!

If God has promised and purposed to bless His children and there is no blessing until we arrive in heaven, then surely it is the ultimate design of God to have His people in the heavenly places where Christ is and where they enter into its full enjoyment? That is God's purpose and in that work He is blessed...turn to 1 Peter Ch1:3-4, "*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope...To an inheritance incorruptible undefiled...that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.*" God has promised us that...yet Paul seeks to remind the Christians at Ephesus of God's ultimate purpose. It is one thing to know that it is God's will to bless His people in this way, yet it is an entirely different thing to be assured that this will take effect...this Paul does by making the statement in v11 that "God worketh all things after the counsel of His own will." The statement in regards to God's working all things after His will is connected to the inheritance of His people.

We need to discern two things, what Paul means by 'all things' and what is the 'counsel' of God's will. (1) All Things. By All things Paul at the very least is referring to the operation of Grace (Rom Ch8v28-31) the purpose of God is in view, God is said to work all things, what are the all things? Foreknowledge, predestination - these are all said to be working towards the fulfilment of God's purpose (glorification). (2) Counsel. The terms (will and counsel) are often synonymous yet their distinction in v11 is evident (God's counsel - God's will). The word will expresses choice/purpose (volition)...the word counsel implies deliberation or consultation...Planning something carefully and intentionally. When Paul speaks of the counsel of God's will he is seeking to show us that when God wills to do something He consults with no one...He does not deliberate with others, (*His counsel belongs within Himself*), (v9), "*which He hath purposed in Himself.*" Dan Ch4:35, "*None can say unto him what doest thou...*" With men there is deliberation, consultation before a choice is made and executed, but with God...(no-one is His counsellor). Job 12v13 "*With him is wisdom and strength, he hath counsel and understanding.*" All things then are working according to God's plan. Paul makes this statement to show God's people certain truths that flow out of God's working all things after the counsel of His own will.

1) The Accomplishment of His will.

The word 'worketh' as it stands in the original text is 'energeo' - from this word we derive the English words 'energy', 'energetic' or 'energize'. When applied to men the word carries the idea of an exertion of power/force, work means labour/toil, with toil comes the need to rest and replenish the resource...but when applied to God the word signifies God working with not with great power or much power but with an infinite power...an energy which needs no replenishment! The word 'energeo' appears in v19 in relation to God's power...'working'= energeo - described as exceeding great power and mighty power. In v20 Paul gives an example of where this exceeding great power of God was demonstrated, in the resurrection and exaltation of Christ (v20), "*Which He wrought in Christ when He raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places.*" The raising of Christ from the dead and His exaltation to the right hand of God. Turn to Acts Ch2v23-24, the arrest of Christ the death of Christ and the resurrection of Christ were all brought to pass according to the precise counsel of God. When God raised Christ from the dead it was a demonstration of power, but it was so much more...the resurrection of Christ was God declaring to the world that He had the power and ability to bring to pass 'all things' that He has purposed from all eternity.

Fill you mind with the power of God Christian! In Gen Ch1:26, "*And God said let us make man in our image...*" See the power of God in creation, He consults with no one except Himself, as Father Son and Holy Spirit [the language of consultation].

Let us go back to Ephesians Ch1 and contrast v20 with v3, as noted from Acts Ch2v23-24 it was God's purpose from all eternity by His almighty power to raise Christ and seat him at the right hand of God in heavenly places. God has done that. Yet in v3 Paul states that it is God's purpose, His will to bless His children with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ! The same power (energy) that effected the resurrection and exaltation of Christ will ensure the fulfilment of that purpose...that we might obtain that inheritance, be brought to Glory! God will carry into effect all that He has purposed concerning His Church. That same power will ensure that God's people be gathered together as one in Christ, that power will bring about the realisation of an inheritance. When God works He does so effectually.

Application.

The promises of God are more believable than the promises of men? Romans 4:21 - "*What he had promised, he was able also to perform.*" Because of His power and ability. What has God promised? He has promised v11 a glorious inheritance (heaven). It is true that our heavenly position with Christ is promised, but it is already possessed! Look at

Ch2:6, so certain and sure is Paul of heaven that He speaks of God having already “*raised us up together with Christ in heavenly places.*” It is as if it has already happened! Also Rom Ch8:28-30, “*Them he also Glorified.*” If God has effected our salvation, we can trust him for everything else, both in this life and in the life to come! His Sovereign counsel will

2) The Immutability of His will.

In Hebrews Ch6v17 Paul speaks of, “*The immutability of His counsel.*” His counsel is unchangeable, but because His counsel belongs to His will, His will and purpose is therefore unchangeable! If His counsel be immutable then His will is immutable (*one belongs to the other*). What He has designed for His Church will and can never change...because He being the source of blessing knows no change...turn to James Ch1v17, “*every good gift and every perfect gift cometh down from the Father...with whom there is no variableness neither shadow of turning.*” the nature of God is one that knows no change...therefore His purpose can know no change...A change in His purpose is for God to do something now that He had determined beforehand not to do. Vice versa for God not to do something now that He had beforehand purposed to do, his purposes do not and cannot change! That is true of man...a man may love something now and over time grow to hate that particular thing, or he may hate something now and through a change of will begin to love that thing....It is human nature for us to break promises, government, politicians, parents and children. but “*God is not a man* (Moses says Num Ch23:19) *that He should lie...hath He said (willed) and shall He not do it? hath He spoken and shall He not make it good?*” “*I am the Lord I change not.*” Isaiah Ch46v10, “*My counsel (determination/plan/will) regarding my people shall stand (unchanged & unchangeable)*!” nothing can frustrate the plan of God neither the devil or my sin! We find that amazing, that God does not change towards me in my sin, my backslidings, we feel he should, but he doesn’t, that is beyond our comprehension. Even though a failure, God continues in His grace to work all things after the counsel of His will! That ought to drive me to the feet of Christ, and pour out my soul in thankfulness.

*The work which His goodness began, the arm of His strength will complete;
His promise is Yea and Amen, and never was forfeited yet.
Things future, nor things that are now, nor all things below or above,
Can make Him His purpose forgo, or sever my soul from His love.*

One reason why God’s will is unchangeable is because of the one in whom we are blessed...we are blessed in Christ, the language never separates between Christ and His people, ‘in him’ ‘by him’ ‘with him’ - For God to forgo or relinquish His purpose for His people would be for God to forsake His son...(as He is so are we in this world).

Application.

God’s purpose to bring us to glory has not changed even though it may seem that it has! When we understand the immutability of God’s counsel, we will see that there is nothing that comes my way (*by way of trial or affliction*) that is not designed by the hand of God. What do I mean? When providence seems to frown upon us, we question God’s purpose. How Satan will have the Christian question the sovereignty of God tell you that God has changed. When sickness comes, when trial comes...is God really in control....dear believer, “*All things are working together for your good.*” Remember dear child of God, the Lord has said of you, “*I will establish my covenant with you*”, “*I will remember my covenant*”, “*I will never break my covenant with you.*...” *When darkness veils His lovely face, I will rest on His unchanging grace; In every high and stormy gale, My anchor holds within the veil. His oath, His covenant and His blood will Support me in the whelming flood.*

Rom Ch8v28, “All things work together for good, the good of God’s purpose.” v31, “What shall we then say to these things? Paul could say, if God be for us, who then can be against us, nothing can separate me, held by an omnipotent, unchangeable love. To the unconverted we must say, His will regarding sin has not changed, He will judge and He will punish sin.

3) The Pre-eminence of His Will.

Throughout these past weeks we have noted the two themes with which the mind of the apostle Paul was thoroughly imbued (1) A sense of the absolute supremacy and sovereignty of God (2) A corresponding sense of dependence upon God. When we combine those two truths, man’s inability and God’s gracious provision there naturally emerges a third element of truth, i.e. that all glory and veneration be ascribed to God alone! That God in Christ receive all the pre-eminence! Hence Paul could say, “*blessed be the God and Father*” [observe v6, v12, v14] we receive these blessings all “*To the praise of the Glory of His Grace.*”

God is glorified, but we are to glorify Him, in all things He is to receive the pre-eminence, “*Man’s chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him forever.*” *In the home, work, school family everything!* Can you say, “*Blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*”?

“The power of God is not diminished when it is said that He cannot die and cannot sin, for if He could do these things, His power would be less.” ...R.B. Kuiper...