

“Ephesians Overview”

The Family of God

Ephesians 1:1-14

Dr. Jeff Stivason

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Mike Davis: Good morning, Jeff.

Jeff: Good morning. Good to see everybody.

Ted Wood: You're a breath of fresh air. *(Laughter)*

Jeff: It's a breath of fresh air. But it took my breath away to be here at 6:00.

(Laughter) 6:30; that's right.

Frank Melnyk: Why are you so skinny?

Jeff: Huh?

Frank: Why are you so skinny?

Jeff: I don't know. *(Laughter)* Well, a couple things. You know, I am feeling better. I turned the corner about three weeks ago and I feel a lot better. But I do want to say this to you. I still have some headaches and I still have some memory issues. But other than that I'm a lot better than I was.

I was on the phone with Sig one evening. And I was sitting on the couch, and he just happened to call me on a particularly bad night. And I couldn't think of how to start sentences and I couldn't grab words, and things like this. And he kept saying to me, "Well if you're distracted, I'll let you go."

And I said, "No; this is kind of a pretty bad night."

And he'd say, "Well if you're distracted, I'll let you go." *(Laughter)* All right. Anyway, it's good to be here.

Sig Tragard Tell us what was really going on, Jeff. *(Laughter)*

Jeff: Yeah, yeah. I thought that was funny. Anyway, why don't I pray? And then we'll talk about the lesson, okay? So why don't we pray together?

Father in heaven, we are thankful for Your love toward us in the Lord Jesus Christ. We're thankful for the salvation that we have in Him. Lord, You are a wonderful God, and You have been wonderful to us. We gather this morning thanking You for the blessing of Your inscripturated Word. Father, as we gather together, we're mindful of the fact that we need You and You know that. And in our dependence upon You You have provided this Word. So Lord, we open it. We look to it, and we ask that You will help this to be the context of our lives rather than situations in which we find ourselves, so that we can always draw upon it for strength and wisdom.

Father, we pray for those who are not with us but would like to be. We pray for those who are not with us because of the cares of the world and those things that have happened to them. And we ask that Your hand would be upon them. Father, be with us for good. And we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

Brave Men: Amen.

Jeff: Okay. Well, I know that we ended at about I think Sig said at verse 7 of chapter 1. But what I thought I might do this morning is to just give you a verbal recap, and talk to you about some things that we've looked at already just by way of introduction, to see

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generally where we are in the lay of the land, at least in your thinking. I know that, for instance, that when we ended this particular study in Ephesians, I thought it was going to be a relatively quick study. But I think that we ended up doing a lot of work together thinking about some of the ideas that are in Ephesians. And I thought that maybe you might still want to do some of that as we get together this morning. So I’ll sort of pick up where we left off, but I’ll recap where we’ve been. That’s the idea that I thought about engaging in.

So I want us to read at least the first several verses of chapter 1. I think we’ll go through verse 14, and then we’ll see where we are. If we move beyond that then we’ll read some more. But let’s do that for now.

Ephesians 1: *“Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints who are in Ephesus and are faithful in Christ Jesus. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us for adoption to Himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will, to the praise of His glorious grace with which He has blessed us in the Beloved.

“In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, which He lavished upon us in all wisdom and insight, making known to us the mystery of His will according to His purpose, which He set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time—to unite all things in Him, things in heaven and things on earth. 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 are 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 grace.”

Well, let’s just stop there for a minute before we go on. We may stop there for more than a minute, but we’ll see. Well, just a couple of things by way of background. And I don’t want to run through all of this again because I think we actually did this. If my memory serves me right—Hey, Don?

Don Maurer: Yes, sir?

Sig: Do you want Don to do anything? Or should we get him to a table?

Jeff: I forgot to have Don do anything. But Don, you can feel free to play an intro for me. Okay?

Don: Yes.

Jeff: Just give me a line there. *(Music)*

Jeff: That’s wonderful. Well, let’s just think a little bit about some of the background to the Ephesian letter before we get started. Let’s think a little bit about the people involved. One of the things that we remember is that these folks were folks who had

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practiced the black arts—magic. We talked about that some when we were together the last time.

We also remember that these folks had the temple of Artemas, the temple of Diana. And you remember that she was one of the major gods in the Greek pantheon. One of the things about her was that she was a patroness of maidens. And I think I said to you a while ago that it was kind of ironic, because this patroness of maidens actually demanded a sacrifice of a maiden in order for the winds to die down and the sailors to be able to sail.

And so it’s ironic. These gods are fickle; they’re capricious. And yet they oftentimes resemble the worshipers themselves. In fact, it’s very much like Psalm 115, which says that we become like the very thing that we worship. Or the thing that we worship is very much like us. And so they were capricious and fickle and ironic in many ways. And this was Diana.

And one of the things that I think I mentioned at the time during the introduction was that Diana was part and parcel of the magic that was going on in Ephesus at the time, at least in that part of the world. She was a part of the dark arts. In fact, we’ve actually found papyrus scrolls that have her image on the scroll and an incantation on the scroll itself.

And so what is the incantation? Well, it’s something of a Love Potion #9 ironically. (*Laughter*) And you say the incantation, and perhaps the person that you desperately want to fall in love with you will indeed fall in love with you. That’s the idea.

And so I find it interesting that when we open a letter like the one we have, (and Paul warns us against all kinds of sexual immorality), you know, you sort of wonder if you put yourself in the shoes of the Ephesians, if you think about them and what life must have been like, and how superstitious perhaps they may have been, how strongly they believed in the magic arts. As they were passing by the temple of Diana and had participated in some of the lascivious affairs that went on in the temple at one time, and having felt the draw to go back into the temple, you sort of wonder if in their heart of hearts they were wondering. Has someone cast a spell on me that’s drawing me back into the temple of Diana?—that sort of thing. You wonder what thought process must have been running through their minds as they were working out of a new context.

But anyway, all of that by way of background to the letter to the Ephesians. One of the things that I think is interesting is that Paul is combatting this view of the dark magic arts. And I think that one of the ways that he’s doing that is that he’s saying to these people, look. There is a power. There is a real power. But the real power is not in Artemas. The real power is in God.

And I think I’ve said to you the last time we were together with this particular introduction that you find *power* being used in 1:21, 2:2, 3:10 and 6:11 and 12.

Transcriber’s Note: Ephesians 1:21, NKJV. *“Far above all principality and power.”*

Ephesians 2:2. *“According to the prince of the power of the air.”*

Ephesians 3:10. *“To the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places.”*

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Ephesians 6:12. “*For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers.*”

Jeff: And again this is the idea of *dunamos*. And it’s the word from which we get our word *dynamite*. But it doesn’t mean what dynamite means. Dynamite, for instance, is that explosive destructive power that you get in a little stick. The *dunamos*, the power that is of God, is a constructive power. It’s a power that calls into life. And it’s a power that comes directly from the resurrection power of Christ. If God called Him from the dead, He certainly can call us.

We also learned that this power has an already but not yet quality to it. For instance, we learned this in Ephesians 1:10: “*as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in Him—things in heaven and things on earth.*” And then in 1:22 and 1:23: “*And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is the body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.*”

The difference in those two verses in the same chapter is palpable. And you can see the already part but not the not yet part. And what do I mean by that? Well, it says that there is a plan “*to unite all things in Him.*” And then the latter verse says that all things have been united in Him. So there’s an already taken place, but a not yet consummated aspect to this text.

And so it’s part of the power. It’s part of the power that Paul is preaching. It’s part of the gospel power that has indeed achieved. And yet we don’t see it. We will because it’s as good as done.

We could say it like this. Gerhardus Voss used to say it like this. He was an old Princeton scholar. And he used to talk about eschatology not just as last things. But he used to talk about them as the future being pulled into the present. And he called them “*semi-futurities.*”

And the idea then is that because of the resurrecting power of Christ that’s manifest not only in Christ, but there’s a reciprocity to it. 1 Corinthians 15 says that if Christ has been raised from the dead, then surely we will be raised from the dead. But if we haven’t been raised from the dead, surely Christ hasn’t been raised from the dead. The idea then is that so certain is the future in the present because of the resurrecting power of Christ that there is an alreadyness to our faith.

But not only that. One of the things that we remember is that this is sort of a displaced community, displaced in the sense that here we meet Priscilla and Aquila. Here we meet Apollos the Alexandrian. Here we meet a variety of characters. We meet followers of John the Baptist as we learn in the book of Acts. We learn that here are those who practice magic arts, those who are part of the temple of Artemas. All of these figures make up Ephesus. This is a different, diverse cultural community. And here we find the gospel having made an impact, having made inroads.

And it’s all of these different sorts of people who come into the church of Jesus Christ that Paul designates one thing. And you remember that one thing was that he called them *saints*. So they are holy ones. They are those who are set apart from the world to be devoted to God. And this is how he designates strange followers of John the Baptist, those who come out of the dark arts, those who were once in Rome but expelled for a

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time because of the Claudian expulsion, and so on. All of these people are described now as holy, as saints.

So that’s a brief introduction. Do you have any thoughts? Do you have any questions that arise out of that again as we sort of ramp up? Ted?

Ted: I’m just thinking about the idea of “already but not yet.”

Jeff: Yes.

Ted: I mean, that would be worth unpacking at some time, because that has such a frequent understanding in the Bible.

Jeff: Yes.

Ted: And I think that most evangelicals don’t think that way. They think of just now.

Jeff: Yes.

Ted: So in the higher view of the Communion service, it’s not just a memorial now. It is heaven coming down to earth. The heavenly banquet going on is naturally imposed on what’s going on at the Communion table. I know Calvin held to that view.

Jeff: Yes.

Ted: And so it would just be very informative to talk about how that is a very important idea, and how we do things as Christians.

Jeff: Yes. Let me give you two texts and then give you an example. And I’ll give you the example that Ted just gave to us. Just flip right now to Ephesians 5.

And look at what it says.

Dave Wessel: What verse?

Jeff: This is verse 1. *“Be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love as Christ loved us and gave Himself for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.”*

And then he goes on a little further down in verse 8. And I’ll start in verse 7. *“Therefore do not become partners with them. For at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light.”*

Now I want you to just think about that a minute. In the beginning Paul says, “Walk in love.” Now he’s going to go on and describe how walking in love means walking in light. And you are light, so walk in light. In other words, the idea is—and here’s the already aspect but not yet—what’s already is that you are light. The not yet aspect is that you need to continue to practice walking in the light, because some of your practices are still darkness. So the idea is that you’ve become what you already are.

You see that same thing if you go to Philippians and then to Colossians. Just flip over two books. Look at chapter 3. He says in verse 1, *“If then you have been raised with Christ.”* And the interesting thing is that could be translated “since.” *“Since you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.”*

Sig: Where is that, Jeff?

Jeff: Verse 1.

Sig: Philippians 3.

Jeff: Colossians 3.

Sig: Oh, Colossians.

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Jeff: So it’s since or if. But the idea is *“since you have been raised with Christ.”* Raised where? Raised to the heavenlies. Since you’ve been raised to the heavenlies, then what? Seek the things above.

There’s the alreadiness of having been seated with Christ in the heavenlies. The not yet part is that we seek the things that are already ours in Christ.

And I think the Communion works well with this. When we think about communion, sometimes ministers will emphasize one aspect over another. In fact, I just had a congregant come and tell me. He said, “You know, Pastor Jeff, all of your comments about the Lord’s Supper were mostly about it being a sign, and not so much about it being a seal.”

And his point was this. A sign points ahead to something. But a seal reminds us that what’s promised in that something that is pointed to there’s a reality. And that reality is the promise of God and His blessing to us. And that was a good reminder. We take this meal the way we take it, as indeed it is a sign pointing ahead. And yet there’s an already aspect to the blessing that we participate in when we come to that table. And so yes, it is an important thing.

Don Bishop: Ravi Zacharias says that *“The Lord’s Supper is past, present and future.”*

Jeff: Yes.

Don: “Do this.” Now. “In remembrance.” Past. “Of me,” until He comes.

Jeff: Yes. And Gerhardus Voss might say something like this. Until He comes. And yet you’re already doing it because He has already come. And not just come in the event of the Resurrection two thousand years ago. But He has come in such a way that you too have experienced the resurrection power already, and yet not in its fullness. There’s a coming again that will be and will consummate that power in us. So yes; that’s great. Does anybody else want to poke that more or think more about it?

Sig: But my concern is—and maybe it’s because I’m older, and I’ve been around the church and the faith for a long time,—but I want the “not yet.” I have a hard time living in the already. You know, I think of the first day when I was exposed to Christ, and the joy and the overwhelming power I felt. But in about ten or fifteen years it was very different. You know, I went through a lot of hard times. I know that everyone goes up and down. But I guess my question is, how do you live in the already? And you never really taste the “not yet” enough. I don’t know. Do you keep going? Do you persevere?

Jeff: Well, I do think though, Sig, that there are different types of Christianity. You know this. And one type of Christianity (and there are varying degrees of it that move away from it), but one type of Christianity basically talks about having your best life now. And so all this fullness of splendor and whatever it is that we have in Christ is supposed to be ours now, or at least approximate to it in a way that we would design.

Then there’s another form of Christianity, and I think it’s closer to the Biblical one. It says that it is for us to undergo or experience the humiliation of Christ now. And I think, for instance, that you see that in a letter like 1 Peter. In 1 Peter 1:11 it says, *“inquiring of the person or time, the Spirit of Christ in them, that is, the prophets were indicating when they predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories.”* In other words, the

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sufferings of Christ, His humiliation, and the subsequent glories—His exaltation. So that’s called *the twofold estate of Christ*.

And then if you go to the last chapter, chapter 5 verse 1, it says: “*So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed.*” There is the humiliation and exaltation.

Now the ironic thing is that if you go back into this letter, one of the things that you notice is that there are key times where Peter talks about the suffering that the Christian will undergo. For instance, in chapter 2 and verse 20 he talks about the slave being beaten in the second sentence in that verse. “*But if when you do good and suffer for it and you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God.*”

Then in chapter 3 he talks about suffering for righteousness’ sake. In verse 14 ye says: “*But even if you should suffer for righteousness’ sake, you will be blessed.*”

Then if you look at 4:1 he talks about “*Christ suffered in the flesh. So arm yourselves with the same way of thinking.*” And then jump down to verse 13. “*But rejoice insofar as you share Christ’s sufferings.*”

So the life of Christ is one of humiliation and exaltation. Peter says that we participate in the life of Christ’s suffering. And one of the things that he does say in verse 1 of chapter 5 is that he is a partaker of the glories that are to follow. But then he winds it all up. He’s got these two pillars—one in chapter 1 verse 11 and one in chapter 5 verse 1. And sprinkled throughout he talks about the suffering and humiliation that we’ll undergo.

But then at the end, outside of the last pillar, what he does is, he packages it all up for us. This is what he says in verse 6. So he says, “*Humble yourselves.*” There’s the humiliation. “*Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that at the proper time He may exalt you.*”

Now there are a number of things that are very comforting about that verse. First of all, we find that we participate in the same humility and exaltation as Christ. The suffering and the exaltation, the glories to follow are ours. We’re kept, we’re humbled, we’re exalted.

One of the beautiful things about it is that if you go back to chapter 1, it’s in chapter 1 that he said that the prophets looked into the time that the Messiah would show Himself. And the idea was that He showed Himself at the proper time, the right time.

And so by the time we get to the end of the epistle Peter says that if He knew the proper time to reveal the Messiah, then He knows the proper time to exalt you. Now that’s a ministry. Go ahead.

Frank: Is he talking about suffering in a physical sense or in a spiritual sense?

Jeff: Well, I personally think that there’s a commonality between them both. So for instance, I view any suffering in Christ as this humiliation. Go ahead.

Frank: I’m talking about when I’m trying to witness to someone, okay?

Jeff: Uh-huh.

Frank: Christ’s suffering was more physical when He went to the cross. But between His birth and His suffering on the cross what type of suffering was He going through? Was it His humiliation mostly?

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Jeff: Well when I talk about humiliation, for Christ I’m mainly talking about a status change. Let me do this. Maybe this will help you, maybe it won’t. but let me have you think for a minute about two words that we oftentimes conflate now in theology. Those are *condition* and *estate*.

And when we talk about *estate*, we oftentimes talk about an estate sale. That’s not what we mean theologically. What do we mean?

Well, let me go back to Adam for just a minute. When we talk about Adam’s condition prior to his fall into sin and after his fall into sin, we talk about it in a few ways. Prior to his fall we talk about him being in a condition of, let’s say, neutrality or un-fallenness. When we talk about his condition after the Fall, we talk about it as being in a fallen estate, or I’m sorry—condition. See how this can easily happen? It’s just a habit, because *condition* and *estate* have often been conflated.

Now a condition can be had apart from God. Apart from God Adam can be either in a state of neutrality (he hasn’t eaten of the fruit from the tree), or in a state of fallenness (he has now eaten of the fruit from the tree.) Condition is apart from God.

Estate comes theologically when you factor God in. When you factor God in, we call his estate prior to the Fall *a state of innocence*. In other words, in the Judge’s eyes he’s innocent. We might even say that he’s righteous.

However, after the Fall we say that his estate is guilt. It’s one of guilt. So condition is what one can be, what any human can be in any particular situation or circumstance apart from the Judge. But once you add a Judge (and in this case that Judge is God), then there is an estate. And that estate is either one of innocence or guilt.

Now let me bring Christ into this equation. When we think of Christ, when Christ comes down from heaven to take on flesh, His condition doesn’t change. He doesn’t become as to His condition a sinner. But to Him is imputed our state of guilt, okay? So Christ remains sinless. As to His condition He is a sinless Savior. But as to His estate before God He is counted as guilty. Okay? Now I don’t remember where I was going with this.

Ted: Well, Frank asked the question about suffering and humiliation.

Jeff: Yes. So—

Ted: Was it physical or spiritual? Right, Frank?

Jeff: Yes. So the idea that we’re talking about with Christ is His assumption of our estate. He assumes the role of a servant so that He can assume our estate. So His suffering is standing in our stead, becoming like us, yet not having sinful flesh, but experiencing in His flesh hunger and thirst and disappointments and all those kinds of things.

Ted: Both physical and spiritual.

Jeff: Yes, physical and spiritual. There’s one thing I want to point out before we leave this verse.

Ted: What verse is that?

Jeff: It’s 1 Peter 5 verse 6.

Transcriber’s Note: Jeff attempts to write the verse on the blackboard.

Jeff: What does the verse say? “*Therefore humble yourselves.*”

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Brave Man: “Under the mighty hand of God.” (Jeff writes.) “So that at the proper time” (Jeff writes) “He may exalt you.” (Jeff writes.)

Jeff: Now what’s next?

Kirk Ellerbusch: Now what verse is that?

Brave Man: “Casting all your anxieties on Him because He cares for you.”

Jeff: Okay.

Sig: And what was that reference?

Jeff: That’s 1 Peter 5:6-7. Now one of the things that you realize is that when you translate Greek, one of the things that a basic grammar will help you with is how to add English words that will help with the sense of the translation. So for instance, if you’re translating a genitive you use the word *of* to show possession. Or if you’re using a dative you add the word *to*. You add these English words to help with the sense.

So here we have this participle *casting*. And one of the things that the introductory grammars will tell you is that when you have this there is a helpful word that will give the sense is to throw away a word, an extra word.

But before I put in this extra word I want you to catch this. “*Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time He may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on Him.*” The question that’s left open in this verse is the order of what’s happening here. And one of the things that we realize is that by adding the extra word for help in translation, we get a better sense.

Now that word that you would add prior to the participle is the word *after*. Listen to this. “*Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time He may exalt you, after casting all your anxieties on Him.*”

Now you understand when the casting of anxieties is to take place. It’s to take place before, because only when you cast your anxieties on Him can you humble yourself before Him. If you still think of yourself as God who can control all of the things in your life then you’re not going to humble yourself before Him, right? It will be impossible for you to do so.

So the point is that first of all you need to cast all your anxieties on Him. And after you’ve done that then you’ll be in a position to humble yourself before Him.

Now the striking thing about that is this. If you look at this verse, what does he remind us of? “*Be sober-minded, be watchful. For your adversary the devil prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.*”

Now I want you to think about this. That reference to the roaring lion of Satan reminds me—I don’t know if it reminds you of this,—but it reminds me of the Garden. Satan was prowling about in the garden seeking someone to devour, and found Adam. Adam did not humble himself before God. He did not cast his anxieties on God and so humble himself, but instead thought himself able to handle his situation. And so Satan found a morsel to devour.

And I really think that’s a striking thing when you think about it. And my point is that it goes back to Sig’s original question. My point is that when you think about life in the present you have to think about it in terms of the humiliation of Christ. You have to think about it in terms of the present sufferings, the present anxieties, the present

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disappointments, the present failures. And what do you do with those? You cast them on God and humble yourself before the sovereign God of heaven and earth who knows what the proper time is for you to be exalted.

And to me that’s the proper perspective on Christianity. So you know, when I hit a failure I just don’t lose my mind. I’m tempted to lose my mind, right? I mean, you’re tempted to. But the more situated that you are in this kind of thinking, the more you frankly take it in stride. And you realize that this is just part of the warp and woof, part of the essential fabric of what it means to be living life in Christ. That’s my take on it. Yes?

Don Bishop: I have a quote here from Alistair Begg. “*The presence of anxiety is directly related to the absence of humility.*”

Jeff: Yes. Did he just send that to you now? (*Laughter*)

Ted: A personal friend of his. (*Laughter*)

Jeff: Yes, yes. (*Laughter*)

Ted: Read that again, please.

Frank: Take your mask off.

Don: “*The presence of anxiety is directly related to the absence of humility.*”

Sig: I don’t know about you, men, but I thought I asked a very difficult question that challenges me. I think Jeff gave us a seminar or a semester in theology and we didn’t have to pay tuition. (*Applause*)

Jeff: So I think that part of what we find here is that Paul is really attempting to help us with a sense of personal security. And I think that when you enter into chapter 1 of the book of Ephesians, what you find is that you find that security. In other words, there are powers that surround you. And those ought to be considered real powers, at least real threats. But one of the things that you need to take to heart is that the power that resurrected you from spiritual death is the power that has united you to the triune God.

And that’s what we find in this text. And remember what I said to you. I’m kind of rehearsing a bit, because I’m not sure. I think maybe that the next time we’ll start following a little bit more in the order. But I do remember going over this with you. I remember there being a lot of discussion about this point. Maybe this is where we’ll begin and then take it up the next time.

But this is where we started talking about the Trinitarian structure of verse 3 and following. And this is where I talked about the Father allocating a number to be saved. This is where I talked about the Son accomplishing redemption for that number, and then the Spirit applying what it was that the Son accomplished to that number. So basically, you know, these are the three A’s. We often think about redemption accomplished and applied—accomplished by Christ, applied by the Spirit. But if you go back just one more a. to the Father, He allocates a number for whom the Son accomplishes redemption for whom the Spirit applies that redemption.

And remember, this is all in Christ. Remember, there are eleven references in fourteen verses to “*in Christ.*” So all of the benefits that are mentioned here flow from Jesus Christ. And we talked about what union with Christ meant and how being in union with Christ was really the storehouse of blessing for us as Christians.

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I think what I did was that I think I started to talk about the Father’s work in predestination. And I think that was where we left off. At least that’s where I remember most of the assaults coming. *(Laughter)* Just kidding; I’m just kidding.

So I think that what we’ll do is this. If you have a couple questions in the remaining time that’s fine. If not, I’ll just end now. But what we’ll do next time is that I will take up verses 3-6. I know that’s about three verses behind where Sig sent this out. I think it was verse 7. But I think we’ll just start with the Father’s allocation before we head into verse 7 and the Son’s accomplishment, and just get our bearings with the Trinitarian aspect of the redemption that we have. So is there anything you guys want to—

Sig: So do you want to start with chapter 1 verse 7 next week?

Jeff: We’ll start with 1:3 next week.

Sig: Okay.

Jeff: 1:3. And that’s what we’ll start back with.

Kirk: Jeff?

Jeff: Yes?

Kirk: This may be off the subject. But I’m running across verses like in James where it says, *“Consider it all joy when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance,”* and so on and so forth.

Jeff: Yes.

Kirk: You know, trials are not an easy thing all the time.

Jeff: Yes.

Kirk: But if we approach our trials and cast them upon him,--

Jeff: Yes.

Kirk: And humble ourselves, that resolves that tension. And 1 Corinthians says that *“no temptation is overtaking you but such that is common to man.”*

Jeff: Yes.

Kirk: We want out now a lot of times. But God kind of takes us through.

Jeff: Yes.

Kirk: If I can paraphrase what you just said, if we would cast those things that are tests upon Him and humble ourselves and wait upon God, the results would be a lot better.

Jeff: Well you know, I’ve been thinking about Jeremiah lately. And I’ve been thinking about what God said to him. God said, *“The city is going to oppose you. But don’t you worry; I’ll deliver you,”* right?

Okay; well what does that mean? It means that for 23 years he got up and faithfully preached God’s word and was rejected. It means that a scroll that he dictated that was obviously expensive and time-consuming was cut up by the king into pieces and burned. He was thrown into prison. He was taken out of the prison and thrown into a well. There was no water in it but there was mud—something for a snack, you know? I mean, if you were the prophet you’d want to go back and say, *“Wait a minute!”*

And then I think of Hosea the prophet. *“Go marry this harlot,”* you know?

“But No, but I want a family. I want a wife that I love.”

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“No. I have other plans for you.” And then there’s Ezekiel to whom God says, “Hey, guess what? We need to teach these people what it’s like to lose their first love. So your wife is going to die tonight. But you’re not allowed to mourn for them because they deserve it.”

“Wait a minute! They deserve it, but do I?”

“Well, it doesn’t really matter because you’re My servant and you’re going to do what I tell you.” You know?

And we say, “Well, those are prophets.” Well, you know what? Let’s just face it. The guy comes to me and says, “My wife has had an affair.” Now what am I going to say to him? “Now you know what Christ felt like.”

I’m not going to say that first off. But what you hope to do is to bring him around to the idea that you’re not better than your God. And you’re God’s bride who was unfaithful to Him. And so use it. Use this extraordinarily hard providence in your life to love your wife if she’s still with you, right? To love your wife, and to be Christ to her.

“But I deserve better.”

“Well, obviously God has thought not.” (*Laughter*) “I mean, if I were God I’d make it better for you. But I’m not God.” That sort of thing, right?

So I guess what I’m saying is that the trials in life are exceedingly difficult. But we’re always called to have a better perspective, a godly perspective on whatever trial it is, whether it’s loss or unfaithfulness or persecution, or anything like that. I mean, I’ll just say frankly that, well—

Ted: Go ahead.

Jeff: Well, I think that maybe I better not.

Sig: Come on!

Jeff: I better not. I’ll do it next time.

Brave Man: You won’t remember it. (*Laughter*)

Jeff: I know. (*Laughter*) well, there’s a lot of truth to that.

Well, let me end us in prayer. I’ve got to get going. But let me just say this to you. It’s been just great being with you; it’s so good to be back. (*Applause*) Thank you.

Let’s pray together. Father, thanks for this day. Thanks for the opportunity to be back together with these men. Thank You, Father, that we can come back together and really begin as if we’ve not had a lapse in our relationship, and that’s because we haven’t. And Father, thank You for that time that we have together. Continue to bless it. Lord, we certainly pray for this virus to dissipate. We pray knowing that You can do anything You so choose. We pray that You will banish it from Your creation forever. We ask that, Lord. We also pray for those who have been impacted by the economics of it all. Lord, be with them; they’re hurting and in great need. Come alongside of them. And Father, be with us as a nation in this election year. We are indeed divided,. And we need more of Christ, not less. And so we pray that we would be Christ to our nation in just our little corner of the world. And we ask it in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Brave Men: Amen.

Jeff: Thank you. (*Applause*)