

Jim's Notes
July 18, 2007
The Letter of St. Paul to the Ephesians
Ephesians 1:11-14

Ephesians 1:11

St. John Chrysostom (AD 349 – 407):

Since inheritance is a matter of fortune, not of choice or virtue, it often depends on obscure or fortuitous circumstances, overlooking virtue. It may bring to the fore those who are of no account. But notice how Paul qualifies this statement. . . . He says “have been destined,” that is, God has set us apart for himself. It is as if to say God saw us before we became heirs. The foreknowledge of God is wonderful and sees all things before they occur. (Homily on Ephesians 2.1.11-14)

Ephesians 1:12

Caius Marius Victorinus (AD 300 – aft. 362):

First the believer is enabled to hope in Christ, that is, follow Christ and believe that all Christ's promises can be fulfilled. Only then will the consequence be that he will live for the praise of the glory of God. (Epistle to the Ephesians 1.1.12)

Ambrosiaster [pseudo-Ambrose] (about A.D. 370):

What he means is that God first allotted the task of preaching to those believers in Christ who were from a Jewish background. Therefore no one of Gentile background was chosen to be an apostle. It was fitting that the first preachers should be chosen from those who had previously hoped for the salvation that had been promised to them in Christ. (Epistle to the Ephesians 1.12)

Ephesians 1:13a

St. Jerome (AD 347 – 420):

It is no small praise for the Ephesians that they have heard not preaching as such but “the word of truth.” Remember that we read in another letter (I Corinthians 2:4) that there is a great distance between preaching and the word of truth. (Epistle to the Ephesians 1.1.13)

Ephesians 1:13b

Didymus of Alexandria [the Blind] (AD 313 – 398):

One who takes on discipline and virtue receives in his own character the seal and form of the knowledge that he puts on. So one who is made a partaker of the Holy Spirit

becomes likewise spiritual and holy through disciplined fellowship with him. (On the Holy Spirit 20)

St. John Chrysostom (AD 349 – 407):

By this seal God shows great forethought for humanity. He not only sets apart a people and gives them an inheritance but secures it as well. It is just as if someone might stamp his heirs plainly in advance; so God set us apart to believe and sealed us for the inheritance of future glory.

What does “in the Spirit of promise” mean? That we have now received him according to his promise. There are two promises, first through the prophets and finally through the Son (see Joel 2:28 & Acts 1:8). (Homily on Ephesians 2.1.11-14)

Ephesians 1:14b

St. Jerome (AD 347 – 420):

A guarantee (*arrabon*, "earnest") is not the same as a token or pledge- For a guarantee is given as an affidavit and bond for a future purchase. But a pledge . . . is an expression of a present reciprocal transaction. Thus when the money is returned the pledge is restored by the creditor to the one who has repaid the debt. . . . So from the guarantee the majestic scope of the future inheritance may be grasped. (Epistle to the Ephesians 1.1.14)

Theodoret (AD 392 – 457):

He shows how great are our expectations. This grace is already being given, through which miracles were worked: the dead were raised lepers cleansed and demons driven out. All of these and similar things have the status of a pledge, so it will become obvious that the faithful will enjoy in the future a much greater grace. (Epistle to the Ephesians 1.14)

Ephesians 1:14b

Ambrosiaster [pseudo-Ambrose] (about A.D. 370):

Just as it is the glory of a doctor if he cures man, so it is to the praise of God's glory when many are won for the faith. And so it is part of God's glory to have called the Gentiles that they might obtain their salvation through the faith promised to the Jews. The Gentiles have as a sign of their redemption and future inheritance the Holy Spirit, given at baptism. (Epistle to the Ephesians 1.14)

Some examples of living and abiding in Christ with the Church Fathers

St. Polycarp (written c. AD 107)

But may the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ Himself, who is the Son of God, and our everlasting High Priest, build you up in faith and truth, and in all meekness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering, forbearance, and purity; and may He bestow on you a lot and portion among His saints, and on us with you, and on all that are under heaven, who shall believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, and in His Father, who "raised Him from the dead" (Galatians 1:1). Pray for all the saints. Pray also for kings (1 Timothy 2:2), and potentates, and princes, and for those that persecute and hate you (Matthew 5:44), and for the enemies of the cross, that your fruit may be manifest to all, and **that you may be perfect in Him**. (To the Philippians 12)

St. Hippolytus (c. AD 160 – 235)

You are dead in the world, but you **live in Christ**. (On Christ and Antichrist 30)

St. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage (AD 200 - 258)

Wherefore, beloved brethren, having diligently pondered both the benefits of patience and the evils of impatience, let us hold fast with full watchfulness the patience whereby we **abide in Christ**, that with Christ we may attain to God; which patience, copious and manifold, is not restrained by narrow limits, nor confined by strait boundaries. (Treatise 9.20)

St. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage (AD 200 - 258)

And therefore we ask that our bread—that is, Christ—may be given to us daily, that we who abide and **live in Christ** may not depart from His sanctification and body. (On the Lord's Prayer 18)

St. Methodius of Olympus (died c. AD 311)

Now we should consider the case of the renowned Paul, that when he was **not yet perfect in Christ**, he was first born and suckled, Ananias preaching to him, and renewing him in baptism, as the history in the Acts relates. But when he was grown to a man, and was built up, then being moulded to spiritual perfection, he was made the help-meet and bride of the Word; and receiving and conceiving the seeds of life, he who was before a child, becomes a church and a mother, himself labouring in birth of those who, through him, believed in the Lord, until Christ was formed and born in them also. For he says, "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you" (Galatians 4:19); and again, "In Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel" (1 Corinthians 4:15). (Banquet of the Ten Virgins, Discourse 3, chap. 9)

St. Athanasius (AD 293 – 373)

For thus we shall be capable of a life not temporary, but ever afterwards *abide and live in Christ*; since even before this our life had been founded and prepared in Christ Jesus. (Discourse II Against the Arians 22.76)

St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan (AD 337-397)

Further, even as in Him we sit at the right hand of the Father, not in the sense that we share His throne, but that *we rest in the Body of Christ*—even as, I say, we have part in Christ's session by reason of corporal unity, so too *we live in Christ* by reason of unity of our bodies with His Body. (Exposition of the Christian Faith, Book 4.10:135)

Sr. Augustine of Hippo (AD 354 – 430)

If therefore you suffer not any persecution for Christ, take heed lest not yet you have begun godly to *live in Christ*. But when you have begun godly to *live in Christ*, you have entered into the winepress; make ready yourself for pressings: but be not thou dry, lest from the pressing nothing go forth. (Exposition on Psalm 56.4)

St. Gregory Nazianzen (AD 329 – 390)

This is our present Festival (Christmas); it is this which we are celebrating today, the Coming of God to Man, that we might go forth, or rather (for this is the more proper expression) that we might go back to God—that putting off the old man, we might put on the New; and that as we died in Adam, so we might *live in Christ*, (1 Corinthians 15:22) being born with Christ and crucified with Him and buried with Him and rising with Him (Colossians 2:11). For I must undergo the beautiful conversion, and as the painful succeeded the more blissful, so must the more blissful come out of the painful. (Oration 38.4, Dec. 25, AD 380)