UNIT 5 EPHESIANS LESSON 2

"THE DOXOLOGY"

STUDY PASSAGE: Ephesians 1:3-14

Verses 3-14 compose a doxology, or hymn of praise, to God -Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In the original Greek, it is all one sentence. The deeper one goes into the passage, the greater will be the praise inspired in the heart of the reader.

Nowhere does the Bible teach the doctrine of the Trinity, but the ingredients are all here in this passage:

Chosen by the Father (v3-6)
Redeemed by the Son (v7-10)
Sealed by the Holy Spirit (v11-14)

We will look at the passage first for teaching about the Holy Trinity, and then for teaching about the believer.

THE FATHER

1. He is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. (See also Romans 15:6; 1 Peter 1:3; Revelation 1:6). This defines the God of the Christian. He is the God who has been perfectly revealed by Jesus Christ (Colossians 1:15; John 1:18). Our God is a God who not only inhabits eternity, and has infinite power; but is just like Jesus. All that God is, all that God does, and all that we can rightly say about God, is consistent with His nature as revealed in Jesus.

2. He is the initiator of our Salvation. This is a theme which runs right through Scripture. Salvation begins with God, we are only saved because God acted. See verse 4, He chose; and verse 5, He chose us ... according to the purpose of His will.

   These verses and others in the Bible that teach us we are only saved because God acted, have troubled many. They have felt that this made God some kind of tyrant, who, on mere whim, chose some for salvation and not others. We will certainly find this teaching very difficult to reconcile with the Biblical teaching that man is responsible to repent, and believe the Gospel, and indeed, we will have to be content to leave these teachings in paradox, just as the Bible does, but we need not be troubled if we remember:

   (a) God's will is not "sheer will", but the will of a revealed nature, cf. point 1 above.

   (b) No one could be saved unless God took the initiative -John 6:44.

   (c) “Election “ is how God works in the light of man’s sin and free will to achieve His purpose of saving as many as possible.

(d) The gospel is to be presented to all. After a person believes, he comes to understand that his salvation depends on God's election, and therefore his security is in God, and not in his own efforts. Election is not a deterrent, hindering the faith of the unconverted, but an assurance to the saved.

3. He has a purpose to unite all things in Christ. Verse 9. All God does is motivated by this plan, including our adoption as children (v5). So then, His will is not only the will of a revealed nature, but the will of a purpose concerning Christ.

THE SON

1. He is the Beloved. This tells us something of the very inner relationship of the Godhead (The Holy Trinity). The Son is the eternal object of the Father's love. As we are in Christ, we become in Him, the object of the Father's love.

2. He is the Redeemer. Our redemption (our being set free or released from captivity) is through His blood, and involves the forgiveness of our sins. The word "blood" or "cross", signifies "a violent death".

3. He is the "Head". The word translated "unite" in verse 10, is a term that was used to describe the summing up statement at the end of a speech; a statement that showed the relationship of various points that had been made. It was sometimes called "the Head". When all the ages have run their course, it will be seen that Jesus Christ and His pre-eminence have been the centre of all the divine purpose. Note that the word "mystery" or "secret plan" in verse 9, has special meaning of something which was before kept secret, but now is made known.

THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. He is the Spirit of promise, or, the promised Spirit. Scholars are not sure which is meant here, but both are true.

   He is the Spirit of promise, in that, He Himself is the promise of the full possession of our inheritance in Christ - for we only have a foretaste, more is to come, cf 2:7. The word translated "guarantee", verse 14, is still used by modern Greeks to describe an engagement ring.

   He is the promised Spirit. Use a concordance and you will discover that the indwelling of the Holy Spirit was promised not only by Christ, but by the prophets as well.

2. He seals the Believer. His indwelling is the mark of ownership. His presence marks us off as belonging to God, cf 1, 2. We are saints, when the Holy Spirit indwells us.

THE BELIEVER

The central teaching is that the believer is in Christ (see above). As such, we are:

1. In the place where God planned that we should be. God's plan centres on Christ, but it includes us. Christians are ones who have discovered their destinies. They are fulfilling the purpose of their creation, which was to be loved by God in Christ.

2. Holy and blameless before Him. We are this now, by grace, by which we are justified and clothed with the righteousness of Christ. We shall be this when the Holy Spirit completes His work within.

3. His sons and daughters (see note on "in Christ". A sharing with Christ.)

4. Redeemed or released from slavery, or brought back to our rightful Master.

5. Given insight into the purpose of God.

6. Sealed with the Holy Spirit.

7. One who has heard and believed the gospel. So we see, that even here in this passage which speaks so strongly of the sovereignty of God in election, we have reference to the responsibility of people to hear and believe. Right here, we have the great paradox of election and freewill. We do not have to choose to believe one or the other. The scripture presents us with both truths in paradox and leaves it there. We will believe both truths in balance.

   So indeed with Paul we say, "Praise to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ".

QUESTION 1:
Verses 5 & 6 deal with God's predetermined plan for us. What is each Christian's destiny? What is the means by which this destiny is brought about?

QUESTION 2:
In verses 9 & 10, God has a secret plan. What is this plan and when will it be revealed? How is God accomplishing it?

QUESTION 3:
From Ephesians 1:11-14, describe the steps by which salvation comes to an individual, noting other passages in Paul's epistles that support his teaching here.

QUESTION 4:
What do you learn of the Holy Spirit in this passage?

QUESTION 5:
In these verses what does being "in Christ" mean?

QUESTION FOR GROUP STUDY:
In verses 13 & 14, God has 'guaranteed' our inheritance. How does he do this? Does this mean anything to you personally?