

# Ephesians 1:11-12 Commentary

PREVIOUS

EPHESIANS - CHRIST AND THE CHURCH  
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NEXT

Ephesians 1:11 [also](#) we [have obtained an inheritance having been predestined according](#) to His [purpose](#) who [works all things after](#) the [counsel](#) of His [will](#) ([NASB: Lockman](#))

**Greek:** [en o kai eklehrothemen \(1PAP\)](#) [prooristhentes \(AAPMPN\)](#) [kata prothesin tou ta panta energountos \(PAPMSG\)](#) [kata ten boulen tou thelematos autou.](#)

BGT ἡμεῖς ἐκλεκτοὶ ἐγεννηθῆμεν κατὰ πρόθεσιν τοῦ πατρὸς ἐν ᾧ πάντα τὰ ἔργα ἐτελέσθησαν κατὰ τὴν βουλὴν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ

**Amplified:** In Him we also were made [God's] heritage (portion) and we obtained an inheritance; for we had been foreordained (chosen and appointed beforehand) in accordance with His purpose, Who works out everything in agreement with the counsel and design of His [own] will, ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**Barclay** - It was in Christ, in Whom our portion in this scheme was also assigned to us, that it was determined, by the decision of Him who controls everything according to the purpose of His good will,

**CSB** We have also received an inheritance in Him, predestined according to the purpose of the One who works out everything in agreement with the decision of His will,

**ERV** (Easy-to-Read Version) In Christ we were chosen to be God's people. God had already planned for us to be his people, because that is what he wanted. And he is the one who makes everything agree with what he decides and wants.

**Hoehner** - "in Whom also we were made a heritage having been predestined according to the purpose of the one who is working all things according to the counsel of his will"

**ESV** 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,

**GWT** - God also decided ahead of time to choose us through Christ according to his plan, which makes everything work the way he intends.

**ICB** In Christ we were chosen to be God's people. God had already chosen us to be his people, because that is what he wanted. And God is the One who makes everything agree with what he decides and wants.

**KJV** In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

**NCV** - In Christ we were chosen to be God's people, because from the very beginning God had decided this in keeping with his plan. And he is the One who makes everything agree with what he decides and wants.

**NET** In Christ we too have been claimed as God's own possession (SEE [MACARTHUR'S NOTE BELOW](#)), since we were predestined according to the one purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to the counsel of his will

**NIV** In Him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will,

**NLT**: Furthermore, **because of Christ**, we have received an inheritance from God, for He chose us from the beginning, and all things happen just as He decided long ago. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**NLT** (revised) Furthermore, because we are **united with Christ**, we have received an inheritance from God, for he chose us in advance, and he makes everything work out according to his plan.

**Phillips:** And here is the staggering thing - that in all which will one day belong to Him we have been promised a share (since we were long ago destined for this by the one Who achieves his purposes by his sovereign will), ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**Wuest:** in Whom also we were made an inheritance, having been previously marked out according to the

purpose of the One Who operates all things according to the counsel of His will, ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#))

**Young's Literal:** in whom also we did obtain an inheritance, being foreordained according to the purpose of Him Who the all things is working according to the counsel of His will,

#### ALSO WE HAVE OBTAINED AN INHERITANCE: εν ο kai eklehrothemen (1PAPI):

- **Inheritance** - Ep 1:14; Ps 37:18; Acts 20:32; 26:18; Ro 8:17; Galatians 3:18; Colossians 1:12; Col 3:24; Titus 3:7; James 2:5; 1Pe 1:4; 3:9
- Ephesians 1 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Psalm 37:18 ([Spurgeon](#)) The LORD knows the days of the blameless, And their inheritance will be forever.

Acts 20:32+ "And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you **the inheritance** among all those who are sanctified.

Acts 26:18+ to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness (cf Eph 2:2 - DOMAIN AND POWER OF SATAN - Col 1:13+) to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and **an inheritance** among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.'

Colossians 1:12+ giving thanks to the Father, Who has qualified us to share in **the inheritance of the saints** in Light.

Colossians 3:24+ knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the **inheritance**. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.

Titus 3:7+ so that being justified by His grace we would be **made heirs** according to the hope of eternal life.

James 2:5+ Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith and **heirs of the kingdom** which He promised to those who love Him?

1 Peter 1:4+ to obtain an **inheritance** which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved (PERFECT TENSE!) in heaven for you,

### OUR INHERITANCE IN CHRIST

**In Him** (cf in Christ) in the NAS is the last phrase in Eph 1:10+ but fits more appropriately at the beginning of verse 11 and is so translated in other most other versions (see above). Jesus Christ is the ground or source of our divine **inheritance** and apart from Him the only eternal thing a person can receive from God is condemnation.

**In Him we have obtained an inheritance** - Note that "**we**" switches to "**you**" in Eph 1:12, so some think Paul is referring to the Jews in this verse and the Gentile recipients of the letter in Eph 1:13.

**Hoehner** however writes "It has been suggested that Paul is making a contrast between "we," Jewish Christians, and "you," Gentile Christians in verse 13. If this were the case, one would think that Paul would have used the pronoun μες, "you," to emphasize that. This inheritance is true for both Jewish and Gentile Christians." ([Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary](#))

**A T Robertson** sees it differently - Probably the reference is to those who like Paul had once been Jews and had now found the Messiah in Jesus, some of whom like Simeon and Anna had even looked for the spiritual Messiah before his coming. (Word Pictures in the New Testament)

**Wycliffe Bible Commentary**. - Some believe that **we** here refers to the Jews, because of the expression **first trusted**. This seems likely in view of the contrast between **we** in verse 12 and **ye** in verse 13.

These truths are life changing...if we lay hold of them and live in the light of them as **Ray Stedman** exhorts us to do...

The question dear reader then is are you enjoying your inheritance? Do you wake in the morning and remind yourself at the beginning of the day, "I'm a child of the Father." "I've been chosen by him to be a member of his family." "He imparts to me all the richness of his life." "His peace, his joy, his love are my legacy, my

inheritance from which I can draw every moment of life. And have them no matter what my circumstances may be." Do you reckon on these unseen things which are real and true? -- because, if you do, when you trust in God's grace to be your present experience, you can know of yourself what the Father said three times about his Son Jesus. God the Father, looking down at you can say, "This fellow here, this girl there, this man, this woman -- this is my beloved child in whom I am well pleased." That is our inheritance. (Read full message [Ephesians 1::3-14: Foundations](#))

**We obtained an Inheritance** (only use in NT) ([2820](#)) (**kleroo** related word **kleros** = lot) means to choose or determine by lot. In the passive sense (as in this use - passive voice) it means to obtain an inheritance or be appointed an heir. Only use of kleroo in the NT ([hapax legomenon](#)) Believers became heirs of God because He predestined us according to His purpose. The "lot" in a sense then fell to believers not by chance but solely because of His gracious sovereign choice.

Paul uses the **aorist tense** to refer to a definite action in past. When something in the future was so certain that it could not possibly fail to happen Greek often spoke as if it had already occurred as in this case (prolepsis or [proleptic](#) in English = representation of something as existing before it actually becomes reality). To be sure, to an extent all believers have already received some of the inheritance (cf Eph 1:3 "*every spiritual blessing...*") but there is a certain future inheritance awaiting every believer for as Peter reminds his readers undergoing various trials, believers possess...

an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, **reserved** (**perfect tense** = speaks of the abiding nature or permanence of the inheritance) in heaven for you (1Pe 1:4+)

Paul explains to the Ephesian elders how in this present life to have a greater assurance of one's inheritance

And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the **inheritance** among all those who are sanctified. (Acts 20:32+)

**Comment:** It follows from this verse that study the Word of His grace results in a greater richness and understanding of our glorious inheritance

**John MacArthur** explains the two ways that this verse can be translated...

The passive form of the verb (kleroo) in Eph 1:11a allows for two possible renderings, both of which are consistent with other Scripture. It can be translated "**were made an inheritance**" or, as here, **have obtained an inheritance**. The first rendering would indicate that we, that is, believers, are Christ's inheritance. Jesus repeatedly spoke of believers as gifts that the Father had given Him (John 6:37, 39; 10:29; 17:2, 24; etc.). Jesus won us at Calvary—as the spoils of His victory over Satan, sin, and death—and we now belong to Him. " 'And they will be Mine,' says the Lord of hosts, 'on the day that I prepare My own possession' " (Mal. 3:17). From eternity past the Father planned and determined that every person who would trust in His Son for salvation would be given to His Son as a possession, a glorious inheritance.

Translated the other way, however, this word means just the opposite: it is believers who receive the inheritance...

Both of the translations are therefore grammatically and theologically legitimate. Throughout Scripture believers are spoken of as belonging to God, and He is spoken of as belonging to them. The New Testament speaks of our being in Christ and of His being in us, of our being in the Spirit and of His being in us. "The one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him" (1Cor. 6:17). Paul could therefore say, "For me, to live is Christ" (Phil 1:21).

The practical side of that truth is that, because we are identified with Christ, our lives should be identified with His life (cf. 1Jn 2:6). We are to love as He loved, help as He helped, care as He cared, share as He shared, and sacrifice our own interests and welfare for the sake of others just as He did. Like our Lord, we are in the world to lose our lives for others.

Although either rendering of eklērōthēmen can be supported, Paul's emphasis in Ephesians 1:3-14 makes the second translation more appropriate here ([Ephesians Commentary](#))

**HAVING BEEN PREDESTINED ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE: prooristhentes (AAPMPN) kata prothesin:**

- Isaiah 46:10,11
- Ephesians 1 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## Related Passage:

2 Timothy 1:9+ Who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but **according to His own purpose** and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity,

## "PREDETERMINED POSSESSIONS"

**Spurgeon** comments that "The enmity of men's hearts to this doctrine of predestination was seen in the House of Common, not a fortnight ago, when one who ought to have known better talked about "the gloomy tenets of Calvin." I know nothing of Calvin's gloomy tenets; but I do know that I read here of predestination, and I read here that God hath his own way, and his own will, and that he reigns and rules, and so he will until the world's end; and all who are loyal subjects wish God to rule. He is a traitor who would not have God to be King; for who is infinitely good and kind as God is? Let him have his divine will. Who wishes to restrain him? Whether we wish is or not, however, the Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice, and let his adversaries tremble. Our predestination is "according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will."

**Having been predestined** (4309) (**proorizo** from **pró** = before + **horizo** = to determine) means to mark out with a boundary beforehand. Believers are what they are because of what God chose to make them before any man was created. Neither fate nor human merit determines our destiny.

The peace of the Christian Church has been disrupted due to the misunderstanding which surrounds the verb **proorizo**. It behooves believers to consider the divinely intended meaning of this word by carefully examining the critical passages where it is used...

**Proorizo** - 6x in 6v - Acts 4:28; Ro 8:29, 30; 1Co 2:7; Eph 1:5, 11

**According to** (2596) (**kata**) means not a portion of but proportional to. In other words, if a billionaire gives you \$10 it is OUT OF his fortune, that would be a "portion" but if he gives you a million dollars, he is giving you "according to" (**kata**) his riches and thus is giving in proportion to his wealth. In the present context Paul is referring to God's purpose.

**His purpose** - God has an eternal **purpose** for all things. If God is God at all, He is sovereign. He cannot work independently of His own nature, for then He would cease to be God, something that is impossible. He is a wise God; therefore, His eternal purpose is a wise one. He is a powerful God; therefore, He is able to accomplish what He purposes. He is a loving God; therefore, what He purposes will manifest His love. He is an unchanging God; therefore, His purpose is unchanging.

**Purpose** (4286) (**prothesis** from **protithemi** = set before oneself; purpose or plan) means a placing in view or openly displaying something (eg, **prothesis** is the Greek word used for the shewbread in the Holy Place as set before God). The idea is that of a setting forth, a plan in advance, or that which is planned or purposed in advance. In other words, it speaks of an intention or plan, and is like a "blueprint" or design of God in calling men in general, Gentiles as well as Jews"

**Prothesis** - 12x in 12v - Matt 12:4; Mark 2:26; Luke 6:4; Acts 11:23; 27:13; Rom 8:28; 9:11; Eph 1:11; 3:11; 2 Tim 1:9; 3:10; Heb 9:2. NAS = consecrated(3), purpose(7), resolute(1), sacred(1).

**William Hendriksen** sums up this passage writing that "Neither fate nor human merit determines our destiny. The benevolent purpose—that we should be holy and faultless (Ep 1:4-note), sons of God (Ep 1:5-note), destined to glorify him forever (Eph 1:6-note, cf. Ep 1:12, 13, 14-notes Ep 1:12; 1:13; 1:14)—is fixed, being part of a larger, universe-embracing plan. Not only did God make this plan that includes absolutely all things that ever take place in heaven, on earth, and in hell; past, present, and even the future, pertaining to both believers and unbelievers, to angels and devils, to physical as well as spiritual energies and units of existence both large and small; He also wholly carries it out. His providence in time is as comprehensive as is His decree from eternity. ([New Testament Commentary](#))

**WHO WORKS ALL THINGS AFTER THE COUNSEL OF HIS WILL: tou ta panta energountos (PAPMSG) kata ten boulen tou thelematos autou:**

- Eph 1:8; Job 12:13; Pr 8:14; Isa 5:19; 28:29; 40:13,14; Jer 23:18; 32:19; Zech:13; Acts 2:23; 4:28; 20:27; Romans 11:34; Hebrews 6:17
- Ephesians 1 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**GOD MAKES EVERYTHING**

## WORK OUT

**Who works all things after the counsel of His will** - He accomplishes what He wills reflecting the fact that He is sovereign (and omnipotent). Works is in the **present tense** indicates continuous action and the **active voice** indicates God is the initiator. In short, God is continually working out His perfect will whether we see it or acknowledge it in our lives.

**Guzik** observes that "We see three aspects of God's plan working together. It begins with His purpose, then the counsel of His will, and finally results in His work. God made His plan carefully according to an eternal purpose, taking counsel within the Godhead, and then He works with all wisdom."

**G Campbell Morgan** - "Our God is a God who not only wills; He works; and He works according to His will ... The word counsel stands for deliberate planning and arranging, in which the ways and means of carrying out the will are considered and provided for."

**Works** (1754) (**energeo** from **en** = in + **érgon** = work. English = energetic) means to work effectively to cause something to happen. To energize, to operate, to work effectually in. It means power in exercise, and is used only of superhuman power. To work energetically, effectively and/or efficiently. To put forth energy. To be at work. To produce results.

God energizes every believer with all the power necessary for his spiritual completion. God operates with His divine energy in all things. The same word occurs in Eph 1:19-note and Eph 1:20-note, in reference to the energetic operation of the Father's infinite might which He energetically exerted in Christ when He raised Him from the dead. The conclusion is that nothing, absolutely nothing can upset the elect's future spiritual blessings in glory.

**MacArthur** has an interesting comment noting that "God's creating and energizing are one in His divine mind. When He spoke each part of the world into existence it began immediately to operate precisely as He had planned it to do. Unlike the things we make, God's creations do not have to be redesigned, prototyped, tested, fueled, charged, and the like. They are not only created ready to function, they are created functioning. ([Ephesians](#))

**Energeo** - 21x in 19v - Matt 14:2; Mark 6:14; Rom 7:5; 1 Cor 12:6, 11; 2 Cor 1:6; 4:12; Gal 2:8; 3:5; 5:6; Eph 1:11, 20; 2:2; 3:20; Phil 2:13; Col 1:29; 1 Thess 2:13; 2 Thess 2:7; Jas 5:16. accomplish(1), brought about(1), effective(2), effectually worked(2), performs...work(1), work(6), working(2), works(7).

**All** (3956) (**pas**) has idea of "whole" as well as the idea of oneness or a totality

**According to** (2596) (**kata**) So what God energizes He will complete

**Counsel** (1012) (**boule**) when used of man expresses a decision, a purpose or a plan which is the result of inner deliberation. **Boule** is that which has been purposed and planned. **Boule** has in it the ideas of intelligence and deliberation. In other words **boule** describes the result of deliberate determination which in the present context reflects the product of not just a "mastermind" but God's heart of infinite love.

**NIDNTT** says that in secular Greek **boule** "denotes an intention, a deliberation. It also stands for the result of a deliberation in the sense of a decision of the will, a resolution, a counsel or an edict. So already in Homer (Il. 2, 53) an assembly of men is called a **boule**, when it became an institutional body (e.g. the Council of the Five Hundred in Athens, Herodotus 5, 72; 9, 5).

**Boule** also occurs well over 100 times in the **Septuagint (LXX)** by contrast with thelema (see below), mainly for Hebrew **etsah** (06098) (74 times). It denotes...

(a) **the weighty preconsideration which precedes the effecting of the will** (e.g. Dt 32:28). It can even be found in the sense of "wisdom" (e.g. "discretion" [Hebrew = **mezimmah** - 04209 = purpose, discretion, device] in Pr 2:11; Pr 8:12 = "prudence"; Pr 20:5 = "plan"). The Spirit "of counsel", i.e. of considered reflection, is a gift of God (Is 11:2);

(b) **counsel** (e.g. Isa. 9:6 as a characteristic of the Messiah) and advice, whether good (Ge 49:6; 1Ki. 12:8) or foolish (Ps 1:1; Ps 106:43, Pr 21:30 = "counsel", Is 19:11);

(c) as in secular Greek, the **council** as a political institution, e.g. the assembly of the people (1Macc. 14:22), the deliberations of such a board (Jdg 2:2), and the resolution of an assembly (3 Macc. 7:17); "**council** of the holy ones" (Ps 89:7), "**company**" (Ps 111:1) "**assembly**" in Ps 1:5

(d) also, and above all, **the counsel or purpose of God** (e.g. "The LORD brings the **counsel** of the nations to naught...the **counsel** of the LORD stands for ever", Ps 33:10, 11; "Thou dost guide me with Thy **counsel**", Ps 73:24, 106:13, 107:11, Pr 8:14, 19:21). God's purposes are trustworthy and true; Israel can therefore rely on them (Is 25:1). His purpose includes Israel's salvation (Is 14:26; cf. also Is 5:19; Mic 4:12). ([Brown, Colin, Editor. New International Dictionary of NT Theology. 1986. Zondervan](#))

**Boule** - 118 x in **Septuagint (LXX)** translated variously as "**counsel**", "**advice**", "**discretion**", "**counselor**" - Ge 49:6; Nu 16:2; Dt 32:28; Jdg 19:30; 20:7; 2Sa 15:31, 34; 16:20, 23; 17:7, 14, 23; 1Kgs 12:8, 13, 14, 24; 2Kgs 18:20; 1Chr 12:19; 2Chr 10:8, 13, 14; 22:5; Ezra 4:5; 10:8; Neh 4:15; Esther 4:17; 9:31; Job 5:12, 13; 10:3; 12:13; 18:7; 22:18; 29:21; 38:2; 42:3; Ps 1:1, 5; 13:2; 14:6; 20:4; 21:11; 33:10f; 66:5; 73:24; 89:7; 106:13, 43; 107:11; 111:1; Pr 1:25, 30; 2:11, 17; 3:21; 8:12, 14; 9:10; 11:13f; 15:22; 19:21; 20:5; 21:30; 22:20; 25:28; 31:4; Eccl 2:12; Isa 3:9; 4:2; 5:19; 7:5, 7; 8:10; 9:6; 10:25; 11:2; 14:26; 19:3, 11, 17; 25:1, 7; 28:8; 29:15; 30:1; 31:6; 32:7, 8; 36:5; 41:21; 44:25, 26; 46:10; 47:13; 55:7, 8; Je 18:18, 23; 19:7; 32:18; 49:7, 20, 30; 50:45; Ezek 7:26; 11:2; 27:9; Da 2:14; 4:27; 6:4; 7:8; Ho 10:6; Mic 4:9, 12; 6:16; Zech 6:13.

Here is an interesting use in the **Septuagint (LXX)** where the Greek seems to amplify the thrust of the Hebrew text (source of the NAS)...

**NAS** = Proverbs 25:28 Like a city that is broken into and without walls Is a man **who has no control over his spirit**.

**LXX** = Proverbs 25:28 As a city whose walls are broken down, and which is unfortified, so is a man **who does anything without counsel** (boule).

**Richards** says that "**Boule** is a strong term, indicating **God's** fixed intention. That which is his purpose stands utterly fixed and cannot be changed by any action of others. Of its twelve occurrences in the NT, seven times **boule** is used in reference to God's will and purpose (Lk 7:30; Ac 2:23; 4:28; 13:36; 20:27; Ep 1:11; He 6:17). When used of **human beings**, the word has a weaker force, expressing an intention or plan that may or may not be achieved. ([Richards, L O: Expository Dictionary of Bible Words: Regency](#))

**Ellicott** says **boule** "solemnly represents the almighty will as displayed in action; **thelema** designating the will generally, **boule** the more special expression of it

**John Eadie - Thelema** therefore, is will, the result of desire—voluntas; **boule** is counsel, the result of a formal decision—propositum. Here (Ep 1:11) **boule** is the ratified expression of will—the decision to which His will has come. The Divine mind is not in a state of indifference, it has exercised **thelema**—will; and that will is not a lethargic velleity, for it has formed a defined purpose, **boule**, which it determines to carry out. His desire and His decrees are not at variance, but every resolution embodies His unthwarted pleasure. This divine fore-resolve is universal in its sweep—"He worketh all things after the counsel of His own will." The plan of the universe lies in the omniscient mind, and all events are in harmony with it. Power in unison with infinite wisdom and independent and undeviating purpose, is seen alike whether He create a seraph or form a gnat—fashion a world or round a grain of sand—prescribe the orbit of a planet or the gyration of an atom. The extinction of a world and the fall of a sparrow are equally the result of a free pre-arrangement. Our "inheritance" in Christ springs not from merit, nor is it an accidental gift bestowed from casual motive or in fortuitous circumstances, but it comes from God's fore-appointment, conceived in the same independence and sovereignty which guide and control the universe. ([Commentary](#))

**Earle** - Salmond says: "The distinction between boule and thelema is still much debated, scholars continuing to take precisely opposite views of it." Nevertheless he concludes: In a connection like the present it is natural to look for a distinction, and in such cases the idea of intelligence and deliberation seems to attach to the boule. This appears to be supported by the usage which prevails in point of fact in the majority of NT passages, and particularly by such occurrences as Matt. 1:19. Here, therefore, the will of God which acts in His foreordaining purpose or decree, in being declared to have its boule or "counsel," is set forth not arbitrarily, but intelligently and by deliberation, not without reason, but for reasons, hidden it may be from us, yet proper to the Highest Mind and Most Perfect Moral Nature (Earle, R. Word Meanings in the New Testament).

**Wuest** in commenting on Ro 8:29 has an interesting thought noting first that **boule** is "used in classical Greek of a council convened for the purpose of administering the affairs of government, such as the Roman Senate, or of the camp-fire council of Xenophon and his officers on their march back to Greece. Out from the deliberations of this latter council, for instance, would come counsel, a pre-determined course of action that would best meet the circumstances they had to face on the march. Here (Ro 8:29) we have the Triune God in council convened, the purpose of which was to select out from the three Persons of the Godhead, the Lamb for sacrifice who would pay the penalty for man's sin. The result of the deliberations of this council, namely, the counsel that came from these deliberations was that the Son of God was to die on Calvary's Cross. The word **boule** (counsel) is described by the perfect participle of **horizo**, "to mark out the boundaries or limits" of any place or thing, "to determine or appoint." This verb tells us that these deliberations were for the purpose of determining something, and the fact that it is in the perfect tense shows that these deliberations had reached a successful conclusion and the counsel of the council was fixed and unchangeable." ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmans Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

**Boule** - 12x in 12v - NAS = counsel(1), decision(1), motives(1), plan(4), purpose(5).

Luke 7:30 But the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected God's **purpose** for themselves, not having been baptized by John.

Luke 23:51 (he had not consented to their **plan** and action), a man from Arimathea, a city of the Jews, who was waiting for the kingdom of God;

Acts 2:23 this Man, delivered over by the predetermined **plan** and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death.

Acts 4:28 to do whatever Your hand and Your **purpose** predestined to occur.

Acts 5:38 "So in the present case, I say to you, stay away from these men and let them alone, for if this **plan** or action is of men, it will be overthrown;

Acts 13:36 "For David, after he had served the **purpose** of God in his own generation, fell asleep, and was laid among his fathers and underwent decay;

Acts 20:27 "For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole **purpose** of God.

Acts 27:12 Because the harbor was not suitable for wintering, the majority reached a **decision** to put out to sea from there, if somehow they could reach Phoenix, a harbor of Crete, facing southwest and northwest, and spend the winter there.

Acts 27:42 The soldiers' **plan** was to kill the prisoners, so that none of them would swim away and escape;

1 Corinthians 4:5 Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the **motives** ("secret thoughts") of men's hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God.

Ephesians 1:11 also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the **counsel** of His will,

Hebrews 6:17 In the same way God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His **purpose**, interposed with an oath,

**Will** (2307) (**thelema** from **thelo** = to will with the "-ma" suffix indicating the result of the will = "a thing willed") generally speaks of the result of what one has decided. One sees this root word in the feminine name "**Thelma**." In its most basic form, **thelema** refers to a wish, a strong desire, and the willing of some event. (**Note**: See also the discussion of the preceding word **boule** for comments relating to thelema).

**Zodhiates** says that **thelema** is the "Will, not to be conceived as a demand, but as an expression or inclination of pleasure towards that which is liked, that which pleases and creates joy. When it denotes God's will, it signifies His gracious disposition toward something. Used to designate what God Himself does of His own good pleasure. ([Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament](#))

**Thelema** has both an objective meaning ("what one wishes to happen" or what is willed) and a subjective connotation ("the act of willing or desiring"). The word conveys the idea of desire, even a heart's desire, for the word primarily expresses emotion instead of volition. Thus God's will is not so much God's intention, as it is His heart's desire.

Most of the NT uses of **thelema** (over 3/4's) refer to God's will and signify His gracious disposition toward something. God's will usually refers to what He has decreed, but occasionally God's will refers to what He desires but has not decreed (Mt 18:14). Of the remainder of the uses of **thelema** twice refers to the will of the exalted Christ (Acts 21:14, Ep 5:17), once to the will of the devil (2Ti 2:26) and 12 times to human will most often in contrast to God's will (eg Lk 23:25, Jn 1:13, Ep 2:3). Paul was an **apostle** only because it was the **will (thelema)** of God - 1Cor 1:1, 2Cor 1:1, Ep 1:1, Col 1:1, 2Ti 1:1.

**Vine**...Man is able to resist the will, the thelema, of God, but whatever takes place God's determinate counsel, boulema, is never prevented from fulfillment. **Thelema**, when used of God, signifies a gracious design (cp. Ro 2:18; 12:2; 15:32); the similar word boulema denotes a determined resolve (see Ro 9:19). To do the will of God, then, is to yield ourselves to the accomplishment of His designs for us by obeying Him in all that He has revealed to faith, cp. Ro 1:17; He 11:3. But since neither the desire, nor the power, to do the will of God, dwells naturally in the believer, God works in Him "both to will and to work of His good pleasure," Php 2:13, cp. He 13:21 and 1Co 12:6. This, however, does not relieve the believer of his responsibility, for he is to "understand what the will of the Lord is," Ep 5:17, and understanding it, he is to do it from the heart, Ep 6:6. ([Vine, W. Collected writings of W. E. Vine. Nashville: Thomas Nelson](#))

**Thayer** adds that **thelema** is "what one wishes or has determined shall be done (i.e. objectively, "thing willed")

**Wuest** distinguishes **boule** from **thelema** noting that "**boule** is a desire based upon the reason, but **thelema** is a desire based upon the emotions. God's will or desire here (Ep 1:9, 11), comes from His heart of love. ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdman Publishing](#))

[Company Volume 1](#), [Volume 2](#), [Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

**Constable** adds that "**Counsel (boule)** refers to God's purpose or deliberation. **Will (thelema)** denotes willingness. The idea contained in Eph 1:11 is that God chose a plan after deliberating on the wisest course of action to accomplish his purpose.

Stated another way, **thelema** conveys the idea of desire, even a heart's desire, for the word primarily expresses emotion instead of volition. Thus God's will is not so much God's intention, as it is His heart's desire. **Wuest** adds that in the context of Eph 1:9 "This will or desire is **according to His good pleasure**. The words "**according to**" (Eph 1:9) are **kata**, the preposition meaning "down" and suggesting domination. This desire on God's part is *dominated* by His good pleasure." ([Wuest Word Studies - Erdman Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

**Wayne A Detzler** writes that "in ancient secular Greek the word **thelema** had another meaning. Homer used it to speak of "readiness," "inclination," and "desire." When one was ready for an event, or inclined to undertake a course of action, **thelo** (root verb form of thelema) was used. Later the word also gained a sexual meaning, as when a man has his "will" with a woman, or vice versa. In the writings of Plato the word came to speak of intention or desire. (Wayne A Detzler. *New Testament Words in Today's Language*)

**NIDNTT** says that the root verb **thelo** in classic Greek "originally and especially in Homer and in early Attic inscriptions with the following meanings

(a) to be ready; to prefer, to be inclined; (b) to wish, to desire (e.g. "he desired to see", Homer, Od. 11, 566; also in the sexual sense, Homer, Od. 3, 272);

(c) to have in mind (Homer, Il. 1, 549); (d) to will, both as determining and coming to a decision; and in particular (e) to will, in the sense of compelling, and overbearing the will (Homer, Il, 14, 120; 19, 274; Plato, Phdr. 80d). The noun **thelema**, derived from **thelo** and attested from Antiphon the Sophist onwards, but used very rarely in secular Greek, correspondingly denotes intention, wish, and then chiefly will.

**Thelema** - 62x in 58v - Mt 6:10; 7:21; 12:50; 18:14; 21:31; 26:42; Mark 3:35; Luke 12:47; 22:42; 23:25; Jn 1:13; 4:34; 5:30; 6:38, 39, 40; 7:17; 9:31; Acts 13:22; 21:14; 22:14; Ro 1:10-note; Ro 2:18-note; Ro 12:2-note; Ro 15:32-note; 1Cor 1:1; 7:37; 16:12; 2Cor 1:1; 8:5; Gal 1:4; Ep 1:1-note, Ep 1:5-note, Ep 1:9-note, Ep 1:11-note; Ep 2:3-note; Ep 5:17-note; Ep 6:6-note; Col 1:1-note, Col 1:9-note; Col 4:12-note; 1Th 4:3-note; 1Th 5:18-note; 2Ti 1:1-note; 2Ti 2:26-note; He 10:7-note, He 10:9-note, He 10:10-note, He 10:36-note; He 13:21-note; 1Pe 2:15-note; 1Pe 3:17-note; 1Pe 4:2-note, 1Pe 4:19-note; 2Pe 1:21-note; 1Jn 2:17; 5:14; Rev 4:11-note. **NAS** = desire(1), desires(1), will(57).

Thelema is one of those words that is best understood from how it is used in Scripture. I would suggest reading the preceding NT passages (in context if you have time) and making notation of what you learn about thelema. Here are a few examples to illustrate this approach...

We are to pray for God's **thelema** (before we pray for our will!)...

**Matthew 6:10**-note "Your kingdom come. Your **will** be done, On earth as it is in heaven.

**Comment:** Compare also the value of praying in His thelema or will (1Jn 5:14), the importance of doing His will and prayer (Jn 9:31), Jesus' example of submission to God's will in prayer (Mt 26:42, Lk 22:42), Jesus as the God Man doing His Father's will and His submission and obedience giving us an example to follow (Jn 4:34, Jn 5:30, 6:38, He 10:7, 9)

We can and should wrestle in prayer for each other to do God's will...

**Colossians 4:12**-note Epaphras, who is one of your number, a bonds slave (doulos) of Jesus Christ, sends you his greetings, always laboring (agonizomai) earnestly for you in his prayers (proseuche), that you may stand perfect (teleios) and fully assured in all the **will** of God.

**Comment:** Epaphras wanted the Colossians to be mature ("full grown" spiritually, not "babes") and fully convinced in regard to the will of God.

Not doing God's **thelema** identifies an unbeliever (regardless of whether they claim to be a believer or not!)...

**Matthew 7:21**-note Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the **will** of My Father who is in heaven will enter.

**Comment:** Compare Lk 12:47; See also the converse or "positive" side of doing God's will as indicative of a true believer in



Matthew 12:50, 1Jn 2:17)

Jesus refers to doing God's thelema and in essence is saying that we won't really know the Bible unless we are willing to obey the Bible. Or stated another way, we won't really know God's will unless we are willing to obey God's will.

**John 7:17** If anyone is willing (verb **thelo** = the idea is a purposeful decision not a passive acquiescence! So to purpose to do God's Will, to take pleasure in it, to be fond of doing it, to take delight in it) to do His will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself.

The man who does God's will is he who will be the man after God's own heart (clearly Luke is not speaking of perfection but of direction of one's heart)...

**Acts 13:22** "After He had removed him, He raised up David to be their king, concerning whom He also testified and said, 'I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My heart, who will do all My **will**.'

Note that God even gives us the ability to do His will and this is something we should pray for (cp Col 4:12)...

**Hebrews 13:21**-note (Prayer for the God of peace to) equip you in every good thing to do His**will**, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen

God's will is most clearly revealed in His Word...

**1Thessalonians 4:3**-note For this is the **will** of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality;

**1Thessalonians 5:18**-note in everything give thanks; for this is God's**will** for you in Christ Jesus.

**Eph 5:17**-note So then do not be foolish, but understand what the **will** of the Lord is. (**Which he goes on to clearly state**) **Ep 5:18**-note And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, (See also 1Pe 2:15-note)

The Scriptures were not written by the will of man but through God's will...

**2Peter 1:21**-note for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human **will**, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

It was God's will to create all things...

**Revelation 4:11**-[note](#) Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your **will** they existed, and were created."

**Thelema** - in the **Septuagint (LXX)** translated as "desire", "delight", "favor" -

2Sa 23:5; 1Kgs 5:8ff; 9:11; 2 Chr 9:12; Esth 1:8; Job 21:21; Ps 1:2; 16:3; 28:7; 30:5, 7; 40:8; 103:7, 21; 107:30; 111:2; 143:10; 145:19; Eccl 5:4; 12:1, 10; Isa 44:28; 48:14; 58:3, 13; 62:4; Jer 9:24; 23:17, 26; Dan 4:35; 8:4; 11:3, 16, 36; Mal 1:10.

Here is a good prayer...

Psalm 143:10 Teach me to do Your **will (thelema)**, for You are my God; Let Your good Spirit lead me on level ground.

In Isaiah we see God's sovereign omnipotent will exercised through a human king in order to bring His people Israel back from Babylonian exile...

**Isaiah 44:28** "It is I who says of Cyrus, 'He is My shepherd! And he will perform all My **desire (thelema)**.' And he declares of Jerusalem, 'She will be built,' And of the temple, 'Your foundation will be laid.'"

**Daniel 4:35 (King Nebuchadnezzar** came to understand God's sovereign, omnipotent **will**) "All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, But He does according to His **will (thelema)** in the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of earth; and no one can ward off His hand Or say to Him, 'What have You done?'

The **Antichrist** exerts his will in...

Daniel 11:36 "Then (This important time phrase marks a dramatic shift in this prophecy vaulting forward into the future describing an evil king like the world has never seen) the **king** (the Antichrist) will do as he pleases (**according to his will** = thelema), and he will exalt and magnify himself above every god and will speak monstrous things against the God of gods; and he will prosper until the indignation (~time of Jacob's trouble, the 3.5 year period Jesus called the Great Tribulation at the end of Daniel's Seventieth Week) is finished, for that which is decreed will be done.

God works out all things, even the difficult things in our life including illnesses, suffering and even death. We see through a mirror dimly in this life and surely this divine maxim is often difficult to understand and also difficult to accept. One reason is that many either do not fully comprehend or do not ascribe to God the attribute of complete sovereignty in the design and execution of His purpose. This failure to acknowledge God's control makes it difficult to understand those things in His plan which to us seem "out of place", but we can rest assured that such things will work for His glory.

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**Illustration** - A minister was called to the scene of a coal pit disaster. Someone placed in his hands a beautiful piece of embroidery on which the words "God is love" had been wrought. The minister held this up so that the stricken people could see the message which had been so perfectly worked according to a plan. Then he turned the canvas round and all they could see where the tangled ends of thread that certainly did not seem to make any sense at all.

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In **Morning and Evening**, Spurgeon writes the following devotionals on Ephesians 1:11...

When Jesus gave himself for us, he gave us all the rights and privileges which went with himself; so that now, although as eternal God, he has essential rights to which no creature may venture to pretend, yet as Jesus, the Mediator, the federal head of the covenant of grace, he has no heritage apart from us. All the glorious consequences of his obedience unto death are the joint riches of all who are in him, and on whose behalf he accomplished the divine will. See, he enters into glory, but not for himself alone, for it is written, "Whither the Forerunner is for us entered." Heb. 6:20. Does he stand in the presence of God?-"He appears in the presence of God for us." Heb. 9:24. Consider this, believer. You have no right to heaven in yourself: your right lies in Christ. If you are pardoned, it is through his blood; if you are justified, it is through his righteousness; if you are sanctified, it is because he is made of God unto you sanctification; if you shall be kept from falling, it will be because you are preserved in Christ Jesus; and if you are perfected at the last, it will be because you are complete in him. Thus Jesus is magnified-for all is in him and by him; thus the inheritance is made certain to us-for it is obtained in him; thus each blessing is the sweeter, and even heaven itself the brighter, because it is Jesus our Beloved "in whom" we have obtained all. Where is the man who shall estimate our divine portion? Weigh the riches of Christ in scales, and his treasure in balances, and then think to count the treasures which belong to the saints. Reach the bottom of Christ's sea of joy, and then hope to understand the bliss which God hath prepared for them that love him. Overleap the boundaries of Christ's possessions, and then dream of a limit to the fair inheritance of the elect. "All things are yours, for ye are Christ's and Christ is God's.

><> ><> ><>

Our belief in God's wisdom supposes and necessitates that he has a settled purpose and plan in the work of salvation. What would creation have been without his design? Is there a fish in the sea, or a fowl in the air, which was left to chance for its formation? Nay, in every bone, joint, and muscle, sinew, gland, and blood-vessel, you mark the presence of a God working everything according to the design of infinite wisdom. And shall God be present in creation, ruling over all, and not in grace? Shall the new creation have the fickle genius of free will to preside over it when divine counsel rules the old creation? Look at Providence! Who knoweth not that not a sparrow falleth to the ground without your Father? Even the hairs of your head are all numbered. God weighs the mountains of our grief in scales, and the hills of our tribulation in balances. And shall there be a God in providence and not in grace? Shall the shell be ordained by wisdom and the kernel be left to blind chance? No; he knows the end from the beginning. He sees in its appointed place, not merely the corner-stone which he has laid in fair colours, in the blood of his dear Son, but he beholds in their ordained position each of the chosen stones taken out of the quarry of nature, and polished by his grace; he sees the whole from corner to cornice, from base to roof, from foundation to pinnacle. He hath in his mind a clear knowledge of every stone which shall be laid in its prepared space, and how vast the edifice shall be, and when the top-stone shall be brought forth with shoutings of "Grace! Grace! unto it. " At the last it shall be clearly seen that in every chosen vessel of mercy, Jehovah did as he willed with his own; and that in every part of the work of grace he accomplished his purpose, and glorified his own name.

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**Mysterious Ways** - The twists and turns in the life of Jacob DeShazer sound like the plot of an intriguing war novel. But taken together, they show us the mysterious ways in which God moves.

DeShazer served the US Army Air Corps in World War II as a bombardier in the squadron of General Doolittle. While participating in Doolittle's raid on Japan in 1942, DeShazer and his crew ran out of fuel and bailed out over China. He was taken to a Japanese prison camp where he trusted Jesus as his Savior. After his release, he became a missionary to Japan.

One day DeShazer handed a tract with his story in it to a man named Mitsuo Fuchida. He didn't know that Mitsuo was on his way to a trial for his wartime role as the commander of Japanese forces that attacked Pearl Harbor. Fuchida read the pamphlet and got a Bible. He soon became a Christian and an evangelist to his people. Eventually, DeShazer and Fuchida met again and became friends.

It's amazing how God can take two men who were mortal enemies, bring them together, and lead them to Himself. But it shows us that He is in control. And nothing—not even a world war—can stop God from working "all things according to the counsel of His will" (Ephesians 1:11). —Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

My times are in my Father's hand;  
How could I wish or ask for more?  
For He who has my pathway planned  
Will guide me till my journey's o'er  
—Fraser

Every child of God  
fills a special place in His plan.

## GOD'S INHERITANCE AND OURS

### Alexander Maclaren Ephesians 1:11...

A dewdrop twinkles into green and gold as the sun-light falls on it. A diamond flashes many colours as its facets catch the light. So, in this context, the Apostle seems to be haunted with that thought of 'inheriting' and 'inheritance,' and he recurs to it several times, but sets it at different angles, and it flashes back different beauties of radiance. For the words, which I have wrenched from (their context in the first of these two verses, are more accurately rendered, as in the Revised Version, in 'whom also we were made,' not 'have obtained' — 'an inheritance.' Whose inheritance? God's! The Christian community is God's possession. Then, in my second text, we have the converse thought — 'the earnest of our inheritance. What is the Christian's possession? The same God whose possession is the Christian. So, then, there is a deep and a wonderful relation between the believing soul and God, and however different must be the two sides of that relation, the resemblance is greater than the difference. Surely that is the deepest, most blessed, and most strength-giving conception of the Christian life. Other notions of it lay stress, and that rightly, upon certain correspondence between us and God. My faith corresponds to His faithfulness and veracity. My obedience corresponds to His authority. My weakness lays hold on His strength. My emptiness is replenished by His fulness. But here we rise above the region of correspondences into that of similarity. In these other aspects the convexity fits the concavity; in this aspect the two hemispheres go together and make the complete globe. We possess God, and God possesses us, and it is the same set of facts which are set forth in the two thoughts, 'We were made an inheritance,... the earnest of our inheritance.'

#### **I. Now, then, let me ask you to look first at this mutual possession.**

We possess God; God possesses us. What does that mean? Well, it means plainly and chiefly this, a mutual love. For we all know — and many of us thankfully can bear witness to the truth of it in our earthly relationships, — that the one way by which a human spirit can possess a spirit is by the sweet mutual love which abolishes 'mine' and 'thine,' and all but abolishes 'me' and 'thee.' And so God sets little store by the ownership which depends on divinity and creation, though, of course, that relation brings with it a duty. As the old psalm has it, 'It is He that hath made us, and we are His — still, such a relationship as this, based upon the connection that subsists between the Maker and the work of His hands, is so purely external, and a harsh, and superficial, that God does not reckon it to be a possession at all.

You perhaps remember how, in the great word which underlies all these New Testament conceptions of God's ownership of His people, viz. the charter that constituted Israel into a nation, He said, 'Ye shall be unto Me a people for a possession above all nations, for all the earth is Mine.' And yet, though that ownership and mastership extended over everything that His hands had made, He — if I might so say — contemned it, and relegated it to a secondary position, and told the people that His heart hungered for something deeper, more real, more vital than such a possession, and that therefore, just because all the earth was His, and that was not

enough to satisfy His heart, He took them and made them a peculiar treasure above all nations. We have, then, to think of that great Divine Love which possesses us when He loves us, and when we love Him.

But remember that of this sweet commerce and reverberation of love which constitutes possession, the origination must be in His heart. 'We love Him because He first loved us.' The mirrors are set all round the great hall, but their surfaces are cold and lifeless until the great candelabrum in the centre is lit, and then, from every polished sheet there flashes back an echoing, answering light, and they repeat and repeat, until you scarce can tell which is the original and which is the reflection. But quench the centre, light, and the daughter-radiances vanish into darkness. The love on either side is on one side spontaneous and underived, and on the other side is secondary and evoked, but it is love on both sides. His possession of us is, as it were, the upper side, and our possession of Him is, as it were, the underside of the one golden bond. It matters not whether you look at the stream with your face to its source or with your face to its mouth, the silvery plain is the same; and the deepest tie that knits men to God is the same as the tie that knits God to men. There is mutual possession because there is mutual love.

Then again, in this same thought of mutual possession there lies a mutual surrender. For to give is the life-breath of all true love, and there is nothing which the loving heart more desires than to be able to pour itself out — much rather than any subordinate gifts — on its object. But that, if it is one-sided, is misery, and only when it is reciprocal, is it blessed. God gives Himself to us, as we know, most chiefly in that unspeakable gift of His Son, and we possess Him by virtue of His self-communication which depends upon His love. And then we possess Him, and He possesses us, not less by the answering surrender of ourselves, which is the expression of our love. No love subsists if it is only recipient; no love subsists if it is only communicated. Exports and imports must both be realised in this sweet commerce, and we enrich ourselves far more by what we give to the Beloved than by what we keep for ourselves.

The last, the hardest thing to surrender, is our own wills. To give them up by constraint is slavery that degrades. To give them up because we love is a sacrifice which sanctifies, even in the lowest reaches of daily life. And the love that knits us to God is not invested with all its blessed possession of Him, until it has surrendered its will, and said, 'Not as I will, but as Thou wilt.' The traveller in the old fable gathered his cloak around him all the more closely, and held it the more tightly, because of the tempest that blew, but when the warm sunbeams fell he dropped it. He that would coerce my will, stiffens it into rebellion; but when a beloved one says, 'Though I might be much bold to enjoin thee, yet for love's sake I rather beseech,' then yielding is blessedness, and the giving ourselves away is the finding of God and ourselves.

I need not touch, in more than a word, upon another aspect of this mutual possession, brought into view lovingly in many parts of Scripture, and that is that there is in it not only mutual love and mutual surrender, but mutual indwelling. 'He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.'

Jesus Christ has said the same thing to us, 'I am the Vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in Me bringeth forth much fruit.' We dwell in God, possessing Him; He dwells in us, possessing us. We dwell in God, being possessed by Him. He dwells in us, being possessed by us. And He moves in the heart that loves, as the Master walking through His house, as the divinity is present in the temple, and as the soul permeates the body, and is sight in the eye and colour in the cheek, and force in the arm, and deftness in the finger, and swiftness in the foot. So the indwelling God breathes through all the capacities, and all the desires, and all the needs of the soul which He inhabits, and makes them all blessed. The very same set of facts — the presence of a divine life in the life of the believing spirit — may either be looked at from the lower end, and then they are that I possess God, and find in Him the nutriment and the stimulus for all my being, or may be looked at from the upper end, that He possesses me and finds in me capacities and a nature the emptiness of which He fills, and organs which He uses. In both cases mutual love, mutual surrender, mutual inhabitation, make up God's possession of me and my possession of God.

## **II. And now let me point you in a very few words to some of the plain, practical issues of this mutual possession.**

God's possession of us demands our consecration. 'Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price; therefore, to live for self is to fly in the face of the very purpose of Christ's mission and of God's communication of Himself to us. There are slaves who run away from their masters and 'deny the Lord that bought them.' We do that whenever, being God's slaves, we set up anything else than His will as our law, or anything else than His glory as the aim of our lives. To live for self is to die, to die to self is to live. And the solemn obligations of that most blessed possession by God of us are as solemn as the possession is blessed, and can only be discharged when we turn to Him, and yield the whole control of our nature to His merciful hand, believing that

He has not only the right to dispose of us, but that His disposition of us will always coincide with our sanest conceptions of good, and our wisest desires for happiness. Yield yourselves to God, for He has yielded Himself to you, and in the yielding we realise our largest and most blessed possession. It is a good bargain to give myself and to get God.

God's possession of us not only demands consecration, but it ensures safety. Remember that great word, 'No man is able' to pluck them out of My Father's hand' God is not a careless owner who leaves His treasures to be blown by every wind, or filched by every petty robber. He is not like the king of some decrepit monarchy, slices of whose territory his neigh-hours are for ever paring off and annexing. What God has God preserves. 'He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.' 'They are Mine, saith the Lord, My jewels in the day which I make.' But our security depends on our consecration. 'No man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand.' No! But you can wriggle yourself out of your Father's hand, if you will. And the security avails only so long as you realise that you belong to God, and are living not for yourself.

Possessing God we are rich. There is nothing that is truly our wealth which remains outside of us, and can be separated from us. 'Shrouds have no pockets,' says the Spanish proverb. 'His glory shall not descend after him,'

says the grim psalm. But if God possesses me He is not going to let His treasures be lost in the grave. And if I possess Him then I shall pass through death as a beam of light does through some denser medium — a little refracted indeed, but not broken up; and I shall carry with me all my wealth to begin another world with. And that is more than you can do with the money that you make here. If you have God, you have the capital to commence a new condition of things beyond the grave.

And so that mutual possession is the real pledge of immortal life, for nothing can be more incredible than that a soul which has risen to have God for its very own, and has bowed itself to accept God's ownership of it, can be affected by such a transient and physical incident as what we call death. We rise to the assurance of immortality because we have an inheritance which is God Himself. And in that inexhaustible Inheritance there lies the guarantee that we shall live while He lives, because He lives, and until we have incorporated into our lives all the majesty and the purity and the wisdom and the power that belong to us because they are God's.

But we have to notice the two words that lie at the beginning of our first text — 'In whom we were made an inheritance.' That opens up the whole question of the means by which this mutual possession becomes possible for us men. Jesus Christ has died. That breaks the bondage under which the whole world is held. For the true slavery which interferes with the free service and the full possession of God is the slavery of self and sin. Jesus Christ has died. 'If the Son make you free ye shall be free indeed.' That great sacrifice not only 'breaks the power of cancelled sin,' but it also moves the heart, in the measure in which we truly accept it, to the love and the surrender which make the mutual possession of which we have been speaking. And so it is in Him that we become an Inheritance, that God comes to His rights in regard to each of us. And it is in Him that we, trusting the Son, have the inheritance for ours, and 'are heirs with God, and joint heirs with Christ.' So, dear friends, if we would 'be meet for the inheritance of the saints in light,' we must unite ourselves to that Lord by faith, and through Him and faith in Him, we shall receive 'the remission of sins and inheritance among all them that are sanctified.'

**Ephesians 1:12 [to the end](#) that [we who were the first to hope in Christ](#) would be to the [praise](#) of His [glory](#). (NASB: Lockman)**

**Greek:** [eis to einai](#) (PAN) [hemas eis epainon doxes autou tous proelpikotas](#) (RAPMPA) [en to Christo](#):

**Amplified:** So that we who first hoped in Christ [who first put our confidence in Him have been destined and appointed to] live for the praise of His glory! ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**ASV:** to the end that we should be unto the praise of his glory, we who had before hoped in Christ:

**Barclay** - that we, who were the first to set our hopes upon the coming of the Anointed One of God, should become the means whereby his glory should be praised.

**Contemporary English Version:** He did this so that **we Jews** would bring honor to him and be the first ones to have hope because of him.

**ESV:** so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory.

**Hoehner** - "in whom also we were made a heritage having been predestined according to the purpose of the one who is working all things according to the counsel of his will"

**International Children's Bible:** We are the first people who hoped in Christ. And we were chosen so that we would bring praise to God's glory.

**KJV:** That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

**NET:** so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, would be to the praise of his glory.

**NLT:** God's purpose was that we who were the first to trust in Christ should praise our glorious God. [NLT - Tyndale House](#)

**NLT (REVISED)** "God's purpose was that **we Jews** who were the first to trust in Christ would bring praise and glory to God."

**Phillips:** so that we, as the first to put our confidence in Christ, may bring praise to his glory! [Phillips: Touchstone](#)

**Wuest:** with a view to our being to the praise of His glory who had previously placed our hope in the Christ, ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#))

**Weymouth:** so that we should be devoted to the extolling of His glorious attributes—we who were the first to fix our hopes on Christ.

**Young's Literal:** for our being to the praise of His glory, even those who did first hope in the Christ,

#### TO THE END THAT WE WHO WERE THE FIRST TO HOPE IN CHRIST: eis to ... proelpikotas (RAPMPA) en to Christa

- **To the end that we should be** - Eph 1:6,14; 2:7; 3:21; 2Thessalonians 2:13
- **Who were the first to hope in Christ** - Eph 1:13; Ps 2:12; 146:3, 4, 5; Isa 11:10; 12:2; 32:1,2; 42:1, 2, 3, 4; 45:23,25; Jer 17:5, 6, 7; 23:6; Mt 12:18, 19, 20, 21; Jn 14:1; Ro 15:12,13; 2Ti 1:12; Jas 1:18; 1Pe 1:21
- Ephesians 1 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**To the end** ([1519](#)) (**eis**) is a common preposition which literally speaks of motion into or toward but here is used to show result.

**First to hope** ([4276](#)) (**proelpizo**) means to hope before, to repose (place) hope in a person or thing before the event confirms it.

**First to hope** is in the **perfect tense** which means hoped or trusted at some point of time in past with the effects continuing in the present. This was an abiding, permanent hope.

**We who were the first** - As discussed below this appears to refer to the Jews who had of old the **hope** and promise of the Messiah (Jer 29:11 was given to Israel, and the remnant was looking for the Messiah in the NT - Lk 2:36, 37, 38, 24:21, Paul's affirmation in Acts 28:20; see [The Messianic Hope of Israel](#)) in contrast to the Gentiles who had heard of Him just then. For more discussion of the Scriptures that show that the Jew was the "**first to hope in Christ**" ([Click "first to hope"](#))

Although it is fair to question whether "**we**" refers to **Jewish believers** or **all believers (Jew and Gentile)** the majority of authorities favor the phrase "**We who were the first**" as a reference to **Jewish believers**...

Probably the reference ("**We who were the first**") is to those who like Paul had once been **Jews** and had now found the Messiah in Jesus, some of whom like Simeon and Anna had even looked for the spiritual Messiah before his coming. (The respected Greek scholar **A T Robertson** in [Word Pictures](#))

**We** refers to **Jewish Christians**, and the verb describes their Messianic hope before (pro) the advent of Christ. Hence Rev., correctly, we who had (have) before hoped. In Christ should be "in the Christ," as the subject of messianic expectation and not as Jesus, for whom Christ had passed into a proper name. It is equivalent to in the Messiah. (Another respected Greek scholar **Marvin Vincent** - [Word studies in the New Testament 3:368-369](#) - note that Kenneth Wuest quotes Vincent as supporting the "**we**" as descriptive of Jewish believers.)

It seems **obvious** that there is a contrast between the "**we**" of verse 12 and the "**you**" of verse 13; **most take verse 12 to refer to Christians of Jewish origin**, people "who had already hoped" in the Messiah. The compound verb "to hope before" occurs only here in the New Testament; it may mean "**we (Jews) hoped in the Messiah before you (Gentiles) did,**" or (so Robinson; Jerusalem Bible) "**we (Jews) hoped in the Messiah before he came.**" (Another highly regarded source used to help those who are translating

the Bible into other languages - **Bratcher, R. G., & Nida, E. A.** A Handbook on Paul's Letter to the Ephesians. New York: United Bible Societies)

The third work of the Holy Spirit is the making of one new people, the church, out of those who were diverse peoples beforehand. This theme comes in for full and repeated treatment in chapter 2. But even here it is so prominent that **John R. W. Stott**, for one, organizes the outline of Ephesians 1 around it. He speaks of "*the future blessing of unification*" in verses 9 and 10, and of "*the scope of these blessings*" in verses 11–14, showing that the blessings given by God through Christ belong equally to **Jewish and Gentile believers**. The parallelism is perfect. In verses 11 and 12 Paul speaks of **himself and other Jewish believers**, saying that such were "*chosen ... for the praise of his glory*." In verses 13 and 14 he speaks of the **Gentile believers**, to whom he is writing the letter, saying that they "*also were included ... to the praise of his glory*." (**James Montgomery Boice**, J. M. Ephesians: An Expository Commentary)

What does Paul mean when he says, "**that we should be to the praise of his glory who first trusted in Christ**"? Who is the "**we**" who first trusted in Christ? Well now the Apostle might think of the Christian church in the present age as the those who had first trusted in Christ – I'm speaking of the church to which the Apostle was speaking – he might have thought of them as the first who trusted in Christ in this church age. But it's unlikely that that is what he's speaking about. It's possible that he was simply saying, "*I am a Jewish man, and we Jews in Old Testament times were believers, we looked forward to the coming redeemer and thus, we were the first trusters in Christ*." What he probably means... is: **we are Jewish individuals and in the church of Jesus Christ the first believers were Jewish**. (Sermons on Ephesians - **Dr. S Lewis Johnson** - Professor of New Testament from 1950-1972 and Professor of Systematic Theology from 1972-1977 at Dallas Theological Seminary)

**A. Skevington Wood** - So far, what Paul has written applies to Jews and Gentiles alike, united in the one body of Christ. Now he refers in turn to one class (v. 12)(**ED: JEWS**) and then to the other (vv. 13, 14). The "**first to hope in Christ**" (literally, "*the Christ*"—the definite article [*THE*] is significant) were Jews who recognized their Messiah prior to the conversion of the Gentiles. This expectation of God's coming Deliverer was distinctive to the Jews. The Gentiles entertained no such prospect (Eph 2:12). This appears to be the most satisfactory interpretation of *proelpizo* ("hope"), though some think that Paul had the apostles in mind as preceding other believers. ([Expositor's Bible Commentary - First Edition](#))

**Harold Hoehner** - The **we** in verse 11 seems to be a distinct group from the anonymous "we/us" in verses 3-10. This is supported by two facts: (1) verse 11 includes the word also and (2) verse 13 changes to "you also," which refers to Gentile believers. Though both Jews and Gentiles participate in God's blessings, the Jews were called first (cf. Acts 3:26; Rom. 1:16). ([The Bible Knowledge Commentary](#))

**John Stott** - The structure of the paragraph makes this plain: *in him ... we (Jews) who first hoped in Christ have been destined ... to live for the praise of his glory. In him you (Gentiles) also, who ... believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit which is the guarantee of our inheritance* "The apostle moves from the pronoun we (himself and his fellow Jewish believers) to you also (his believing Gentile readers) to our inheritance (in which both groups equally share). He is anticipating his theme of the reconciliation of Jews and Gentiles which he will elaborate in the second part of chapter 2. Already, however, by the repetition of the words in him (verses 11, 13) he emphasizes that Christ is the reconciler, and that it is through union with Christ that the people of God are one. ([God's New Society: The Message of Ephesians](#))

**MacArthur** agrees that the pronoun "**we**" refers to Jews who believed - **To the end that we who were first to hope in Christ** is the first statement given here about the human side of our divine inheritance in Christ. The Greek has a definite article before **Christ**, and a more literal translation is **hope in the Christ**. The meaning is not changed, but the definite article emphasizes the uniqueness of our **hope**: it is in the one and only Savior, Jesus Christ. **It also stresses the idea that the apostles and other first-generation Jewish believers were the first to receive the Messiah**. ([Ephesians. Chicago: Moody Press](#))

**Francis Foulkes** - At this point Paul is speaking of the Old Testament beginning of the outworking of God's purpose for mankind, as he says that *we*, the Jews, became his people. ([Ephesians Tyndale New Testament Commentary](#))

**Coffman** comments that the phrase "**we who were first to hope in Christ**" "...is generally interpreted to mean that the Jewish dispensation looked to the coming of Christ, hoping for the deliverance that he would bring. Anna (**Ed**: see Lk 2:38+) and Simeon (**Ed**: see Lk 2:25+, cp Isa 25:9, cp also Joseph of Arimathea - Mk 15:43+, Lk 23:51+ where "waiting" often used with the nuance or sense of "hoping") are representative of those who did this; but, despite the popularity of this explanation, there is also the glaring possibility that the clause might very well be a qualifier of them who shall be "unto the praise of God's glory," the same being limited to those, and only those, who had before that future event, laid hold upon the hope in Christ. Even if we agree with the vast majority of the scholars who interpret it differently, it must be admitted that the alternate understanding suggested here does no violence to the truth. ([James Burton Coffman's Comments - Who is J B Coffman?](#))

**John Eadie** offers a more detailed analysis for those interested -- The main struggle has been to determine who are meant by the

**we who were first to hope.** Koppe, followed by Holzhausen, understands the apostle to use the style royal, and to mean himself. The majority of commentators suppose the words to denote the **believing Jews**, so called, in the opinion of Beza, Grotius, Estius, Bodius, Bengel, Flatt, Olshausen, and Stier, because their faith in Christ preceded in point of time that of the Gentiles. This exegesis admits of various modifications. **The hope of the Jews** in Christ preceded that of the Gentiles, either, as Harless imagines, because they had heard of Him earlier; or, as Rosenmuller, Meyer, Olshausen, Chandler, and others affirm, because they possessed the Old Testament prophecies, and so had the hope of Him before He came into the world. But it may be replied, that this sudden change of meaning in *hemeis* (we). So different from all the preceding verses, is a gratuitous assumption; for the "**we**" and the "**us**" in the preceding context denote the community of believers (**Ed**: Which includes Gentiles) with whom the apostle identifies himself, and why should he so sharply and abruptly contract the signification, and confine it to himself and his believing (**Ed**: Jewish) countrymen? There is no hint that such particularization is intended, and there is nothing to point out the Jews as its object. Were this the idea, that the Christian Jews were distinguished from the Gentiles by the fore hope of a Messiah, as the great object of their nation's anticipations and desires, then we might have expected that the phrase would have been *proelpikotes eis ton Christon*. Nor do we apprehend that there is anything in the participle to limit its meaning to the Hebrew portion of the church. The (preposition) **pro** may not signify before or earlier in comparison with others, but, as de Wette maintains, it may simply mean "*already*"— prior to the time at which the apostle writes...The preposition indeed has often a more distinctive meaning, but there is thus no necessity caused by the words of the clause to refer it to Jews. The use of **humeis** in the following verse might be said to be a direct transition, natural in writing a letter, when the composer of it passes from general to more special allusions and circumstances. The verb **elpizo** (to hope) also is used in reference to the Gentiles, Mt 12:21, Ro 15:12; and it might here denote that species of trust which gives the mind a firm persuasion that all promises and expectations shall be fully realized. But while these difficulties stand in the way, still, on a careful review of the passage, we are rather inclined from the pointed nature of the context to refer the **hemas** (= we) **to believing Jews**. The participle may certainly bear the meaning of having hoped beforehand—that is, before the object of that hope appeared; or it may mean before in comparison with others, Acts 20:13. Thus the **humeis** of the following verse forms a sharp contrast to the expressed **hemas** and the *tous proelpikotas*, which is a limiting predication, with emphasis upon it, as indicated by its position and by the specifying article...**So understood, the claim describes the privilege of believing Jews in contrast with Gentiles.** ([Eadie's excellent Commentary on the Greek Text of the Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians](#))

**Christ** (5547) (**Christos** from **chrío** to anoint, consecrate to an office ~ The Anointed One ~ The Messiah Greek here has a definite article before Christ, and a more literal translation is hope in the Christ."

#### Related Resource:

- [Trinitarian Formulas and Expressions in Ephesians](#) - ESV Study Bible Chart (Interesting!)

#### WOULD BE TO THE PRAISE OF HIS GLORY: eis to einai (PAN) hemas eis epainon doxes autou:

- Ephesians 1 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Praise** (1868) (**epainos** from **epí** = upon + **ainos** = praise). In our humanly-oriented society, God's wanting exclusive credit seems inappropriate only because men have no concept of His greatness, holiness glory. "

**Epainos** - 11x in 11v - Rom 2:29; 13:3; 1 Cor 4:5; 2 Cor 8:18; Eph 1:6, 12, 14; Phil 1:11; 4:8; 1 Pet 1:7; 2:14. fame(1), praise(9), worthy of praise(1).

**Glory** (1391) (**doxa**) means to give a proper opinion or estimate of. God desires creatures that will give Him glory by both proclaiming and displaying His glory. For that reason He redeems men. God alone deserves glory

In other words, believers (in this case "we who were the first to hope") are trophies of the grace of God, exhibiting what He can do with such unlikely raw materials, and thus bringing glory to Him.