

Title: After the Counsel
Text: Eph 1: 11-12
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Ephesians 1: 11: 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: 12: That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

Let me focus your attention on this phrase in verse 11, "*him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.*" Now, let me narrow your focus to that one word "counsel". Paul told the Ephesians,

Acts 20: 27: "I am pure from the blood of all. For I have not SHUNNED TO DECLARE TO YOU ALL THE COUNSEL OF GOD."

The word "shun" is important. Men were not shunning to preach the law and good works. No one is offended at that. But men "shunned" to preach that which was offensive and make men persecute you

Galatians 5:11: And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased.

If Paul has preached works and shunned to preach the eternal counsel of God then Paul would not have suffered. But Paul did not shun to preach that all salvation and every aspect of salvation was predestinated by our triune God in the *counsel of peace* before the world was made. That is offensive. That is *the counsel of God* that men shun to preach.

After watching a church service on youtube, somehow I got switched over to a preacher I have never heard. He was preaching v19 *And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe* [that is where he stopped]. In one of his points he read v3: *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:* [that is where he stopped]. He included everybody--made a point to include everybody. The proposition of his entire message was: God blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, so now we have the power to enjoy those blessings if we just exercise the power. The context shows nothing remotely close to that. He shunned to declare the counsel of the triune God.

Beginning to end the salvation of God's elect was predestinated in *the counsel of peace* by the triune God.

- The beginning for each one God calls was predetermined--**Ephesians 1: 5: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.**
- In our text, Paul declares our end was predestinated-- **Ephesians 1: 11: 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**

It is offensive is that the sinner has no part in salvation. God the Father chose his people. God the Son redeemed his people. God the Holy Spirit sanctifies his people. God the Father is pleased that his Son receive all preeminence--that all fulness dwell in him--that Christ get all glory.

The counsel of God is the hidden wisdom, the mystery, that no sinner knew, only God. That is, until God was pleased to revealed it. Paul wrote in verse 9: *[God] made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:*

God called Paul to the third heavens and gave Paul an abundance of revelation. Peter said, "*In which some things are hard to understand.*"

Ephesians 3: 2: If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: 3: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, 4: Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) 5: Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; 6: That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:....9...the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: 10: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly *places* might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, 11: According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: 12: In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him. 13 Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.

Proposition: Salvation--all of salvation--is according to the purpose of God who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will. I want to preach God so big and salvation so accomplished by the sovereign will of God, that we are made willing to cast ourselves entirely into Christ's hand to save us.

THE COUNSEL OF PEACE

Before creating the world, all three persons in the Godhead entered counsel together. Scripture calls it the counsel of peace because Christ made peace between offended God and his offending people. God was in Christ reconciling his people unto himself, not imputing our trespasses to us. It is easier to show what the triune God agreed upon in this counsel of peace by showing what each person in the Godhead accomplished.

God the Father predetermined who he would save by choosing whom he would.

Ephesians 1: 3: Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ: 4: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

Election is the chief blessing. All other spiritual blessings are ours by God choosing us in Christ. Throughout time God has worked all things after this very counsel of his own will working all things for his elect alone.

In the council of peace, the part the Spirit of God would accomplish would be regeneration, sanctification through faith. So God predestinated the elect to the adoption.

Ephesians 1: 5: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6: To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

From the fall, God has worked all things after this counsel of his own will. God has worked all things to bring his elect under the gospel. The Spirit regenerates and gives the Spirit of God's own Son so that we cry, "Abba, Father."

Most important in God's purpose was to give his Son all preeminence. It pleased God that all fulness dwell in his Son. God purposed that Christ would make peace between his fallen people and God--*that is why it is called the council of peace.*

Colossians 1:18...that in all *things* he might have the preeminence. 19: For it pleased *the Father* that in him should all fulness dwell; 20: And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, *I say*, whether *they be* things in earth, or things in heaven.

God first trusted Christ. He trusted him to glorify his name, to manifest his righteousness, trusted him to redeem and save his elect.

Ephesians 1: 7: In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; 8: Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; 9: Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: 10: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; *even* in him [his people]: 11: 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: 12: That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

From the beginning of time, God has been working all things after this counsel of his own will

Zechariah 6: 12: And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name *is* The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD [the church, his people]: 13: Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.

Between them both means between our triune God and his people there is peace in and by Christ. Our Mediator reconciled his elect to God the Father. He made us be reconciled to the Father. The council of peace is between our triune God and every believer in Christ. That is the eternal council of peace by which God saves his elect. Everything was purposed, determined, predestinated by God in eternity in this counsel of peace.

HOW BIG IS OUR GOD?

God is big enough to work all things to bring his counsel of peace to pass. Paul is boasting of God verse 11...*who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.*

The "all things" is what was agreed upon in the counsel of peace. The "all things" is what Paul is talking about in Romans 8.

Romans 8: 28: And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose...32: He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

He is talking about what matters! He is talking about *all things* in that *council of peace.*

Romans 8: 28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose. [here are the "all things"] 29: For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30: Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. 31: What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us? 32: He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

Everything that has ever happened was brought to pass by our God, from the smallest microscopic thing to massive events. Our God is mighty. He "who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." We are not talking about false gods who are trying, whose will is frustrated unless puny man let's him have his way. Jeremiah spoke of man-made gods, "They must needs be borne, because they cannot go; For they cannot do evil, neither also is it in them to do good'. We are talking about the living and true God.

Jeremiah 10: 10: But the LORD *is* the true God, he *is* the living God, and an everlasting king: at his wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation. 11: Thus shall ye say unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, *even* they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens. 12: He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion. 13: When he uttereth his voice, *there is* a multitude of waters in the heavens, and he causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings with rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures.

There is nothing you and I can sacrifice to him--he made it all, it all belongs to him.

Psalm 50: 9: I will take no bullock out of thy house, *nor* he goats out of thy folds. 10: For every beast of the forest *is* mine, *and* the cattle upon a thousand hills. 11: I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field *are* mine. 12: If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world *is* mine, and the fulness thereof.

Romans 11: 34: For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? 35: Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? 36: For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

Through the fall, using rebels and friends, heaven and hell, the devil and angels, our God works all things after the counsel of his own will. God said, "I have purposed it, I will also do it." (Is 46: 11). All things includes the smallest things. He says

Matthew 10: 29: Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. 30: But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

What about men in powerful positions? They only think they have great power but

Proverbs 21:1 The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.

Isaiah 46: 10: Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, MY COUNSEL SHALL STAND, and I WILL DO ALL MY PLEASURE: 11: Calling...the man that executeth MY COUNSEL from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it.

That man who came from a far country and executed all God's counsel is the GodMan Christ Jesus who came down from heaven—*he is the all the counsel of God and he accomplished all the council of God.*

God is working all things. So when we become displeased at providence in our lives, we are really displeased with God. David is an example. Uzzah touched the ark and God killed him right then and there. It displeased David. David was displeased at God for killing Uzzah. We cannot murmur at providence except we murmur against God who worked it. We need to be like Aaron who held his peace. We should not murmur because if we are God's elect, redeemed, regenerated child of God then God is working all things together for our good according to his purpose. That providence we murmur against is God accomplishing his eternal council for us.

TRUST CHRIST

Let us trust all our care into Christ's hand even as God the Father trusted him. God the Father did all this, **Ephesians 1: 12: That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.**

Nothing glorifies God more as trusting Christ who God first trusted. God first trusted in Christ. God trusted his name to his Son, God trusted all his people to his Son--we can trust our soul to him.

That is the secret to contentment--trusting Christ. The secret to contentment is knowing: the LORD is the portion of my inheritance (and I am his), the LORD is the portion of my cup and the LORD maintainest my lot.

Hebrews 13: 5: Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. 6: So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

True life and true wealth is not in temporal possessions but in having Christ Jesus. Can't you say this?

Psalm 16: 6: The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.

How good? He says, "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the

LORD (Is 54: 17). That is the secret to contentment and happiness! He is working all things after the counsel of his own will! He is doing it just for his people!

Amen!