



**ALL THINGS
IN CHRIST**

an Ephesians study

**HUB GROUP NOTES | MAY 2, 2021
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GOD'S PLAN & PRESENCE (Ephesians 1:9-14)

Years ago Bertrand Russell declared:

“Man is the product of causes which had no prevision of the end they were achieving; that his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and his beliefs, are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms; that no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought and feeling, can preserve an individual life beyond the grave; that all the labors of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system, and that the whole temple of Man's achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruins—all these things, if not quite beyond dispute, are yet so nearly certain, that no philosophy which rejects them can hope to stand. Only within the scaffolding of these truths, only on the firm foundation of unyielding despair, can the soul's habitation henceforth be safely built.”

According to Bertrand Russell, the task of each human being is to figure out how to move forward in a world without a plan and unyielding despair.

Read Ephesians 1:9-14

1) According to these verses, how would the Apostle Paul respond to Bertrand Russell?

A) There is a plan. God works all things according to this plan & Jesus is the center of that plan. This unstoppable plan God initiates and executes, based on His grace, not on anything in us, and

B) To assure us, He gives us the Holy Spirit as the seal and guarantee of our future inheritance & completion of His will.

2) What does it mean that God's plan for "the fullness of time was to unite all things in Christ" (vs.10)?

God sent His Son at precisely the right moment, from His divine plan, to unite/head up everything in Him. He is in charge of the events of history, and no evil tyrant or disobedient nation or sinful people can thwart God's plan.

We are a divided culture & people, but Ephesians says God's perfect plan has been revealed & has come to a climax in Jesus. The theme of Ephesians is Christ's death and resurrection has brought heaven & earth together to unify everything that has been torn apart and alienated through sin.

3) In what way is the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit a "guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it"?

The word pledge might better be translated as down payment or earnest money. A down payment or earnest money is the first installment, with more of the same to follow. God wants us to be assured by the Holy Spirit, who is the seal and guarantee of our future inheritance & completion of His will.

4) Twice in this section, Paul says, "to the praise of his glory." Which truth in particular in this section moves you to worship?

5) What difference does it make to you personally to know that God has a plan and it will not be thwarted, and the Spirit in you is a guarantee that God will fulfill His purposes?

What's one practical way to keep these truths at the forefront of your heart as you navigate the challenges of life this week?

2021 BREAKTHROUGH PRAYER REQUESTS:

Father, pour out your Spirit on us and move us forward together.

Father, please retire the Worship Center mortgage by 2025.

Father, please use us to build a reproducing church among an unreached people - the Nyamwezi - by 2030.