Prayer and the Will of God
Scripture: Ephesians 1
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having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, to the end that we … should be to the praise of His glory. (1:11, 12b)

Our discussion here will follow the order of the Greek text of verse 12, in which (as reflected in the King James Version) **should be to the praise of His glory** precedes "who were the first to hope in Christ" (which phrase will be discussed below in relation to the human perspective).

God's perspective on our inheritance in Christ is here shown in His predestination, His power, and His preeminence.

God's predestination. **having been predestined according to His purpose**. As Christians we are what we are because of what God chose to make us before any man was created. From eternity past He declared that every, elect sinner—though vile, rebellious, useless, and deserving only of death—who trusted in His Son would be made as righteous as the One in whom they put their trust. As Paul has already established, "He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him" (v. 4).

William Hendriksen's comment on this passage is helpful and concise:

Neither fate nor human merit determines our destiny. The benevolent purpose—that we should be holy and faultless (verse 4), sons of God (verse 5), destined to glorify him forever (verse 6, cf. verses 12 and 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: Exposition of Edphesians* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1967], p. 88)

God's power. **who works all things after the counsel of His will. Works** is from *energeo*, from which we get such English words as *energy, energetic, and energize*. 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.

Energizing is an indispensable part of His creative plan and work. Because in His wondrous grace God chose us to be His children, citizens of His kingdom, and joint heirs with His Son, He will bring all of that to pass. "For I am confident of this very thing," Paul declared, "that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus" (Phil. 1:6). God works out what He plans. He energizes every believer with all the power necessary for his spiritual completion. It is not sufficient to think that God only makes the plan. He also makes it work out.

God's preeminence. **should be to the praise of His glory**. As mentioned above, this phrase begins verse twelve in the Greek text, and that order fits logically with what Paul has been saying about God's perspective on our inheritance. The Lord's perspective and working are seen in His predestination, in His power, and, as we see here, in His preeminence. Man is redeemed for the purpose of restoring the divine image marred by sin. Because God's intention in creating men was that they should bear the divine image, salvation's goal is creation's goal. God desires creatures that will give Him glory by both proclaiming and displaying His glory. For that reason He redeems men.

Scripture always presents salvation from God's side, in order that He should have full credit. In our humanly–oriented society, God's wanting exclusive credit seems inappropriate—but only because men have no concept of His greatness, holiness, and glory. What views they may have of Him are simply projections of themselves. The praise and glory that men so much desire are totally undeserved, and their motives for wanting them are purely sinful. But God seeks glory for the right reasons and because He alone is deserving of it. His seeking glory is a holy desire of which He is supremely and singly worthy.

Our predestined salvation, including our attendant eternal and boundless blessings, are therefore designed that they **should be to the praise of His glory**.

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