

• *Our experience now*

In the middle of verse 6 Paul moves from the distant past to the present. God predestined us to the praise of the glory of His grace, said Paul. Now Paul turns to what God has done more recently, to what we are experiencing now. He says, *'This grace He freely gave us in the Beloved'* ^{□1}.

□1 1:6b

1. God gives us grace in great abundance

1. **God gives us grace in great abundance.** 'This grace He freely gave us in the Beloved...'. Paul uses a word that means to give lavishly, abundantly, graciously. God's plan for me and for all His people was put together before creation, but there comes a time in my life when God pours out this abundant grace upon me. It is 'grace upon grace' ^{□1}. It is grace that rules and reigns in abundance where once sin was present in abundance.

□1 John 1:16

• *"In the beloved"*

God's grace comes to me because of what God thinks about His Son. It comes 'in the Beloved'. God loves His Son. And God's salvation consists of getting me to be 'in Christ'. One reason why God pours out an abundance of grace upon me, is that He views me as His beloved one just as He viewed Jesus as His 'Beloved One'.

2. God's grace comes to us in redemption

2. **God's grace comes to us in 'redemption'.** Paul says: *'In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace'* ^{□1}. 'Redemption' is the release of a slave or of a person condemned to death, by the payment of a price. Israel had to be redeemed from slavery in Egypt by the death of the lamb. In the Mosaic law sometimes a person might be 'redeemed' from the death penalty by the payment of a price. In Paul's day in the cities of the ancient world slaves would sometimes be released if a price for their release was paid. This was called 'redeeming' the slave.

□1 1:7

• *Release by the payment of a price*

God redeems us by the price-paying of the blood of His Son. Jesus' death upon the cross was what it cost God. It was the price that paid for our sin, and got us freedom and release. It might be asked: who was the price paid to? The Bible does not press the picture-language to ask this question, but if it has to be answered the answer would be 'to His own holiness'. God Himself determined that sin would receive its penalty, but He sent the penalty upon His Son. We were redeemed, bought at great price, to be given perfect freedom in serving God.

• *The price – the blood of His Son*

• *All sins forgiven*

The greatest aspect of this release is the forgiveness of sins. God forgives all my sins when I put trust in the blood of His Son.

Again Paul lets us know that this graciousness is poured upon us richly, overwhelmingly, amazingly. 'In Him we have redemption ... according to the riches of His grace'. God's ways of grace surpass our understanding.

3. God's grace involves us in His whole plan of salvation

3. **God's grace brings us in to be involved in His whole plan of salvation.** Paul speaks of 'the riches of His grace' ^{□1}, which He has multiplied towards us with all wisdom and insight' ^{□2}. Or we could translate it as a new sentence. *'He has multiplied these riches of His grace towards us with all wisdom and insight'* ^{□3}, *making known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Christ,* ^{□4}. *In His good pleasure He is planning an arrangement for the fullness of times. He has a plan to bring together all things in Christ, things in heaven and things in earth – in Him!*' ^{□5}.

□1 1:7b

□2 1:8

□3 1:8

□4 1:9

□5 1:10

• **The entire universe has been falling apart**

• **But God's plan is to bring it back together again under Christ**

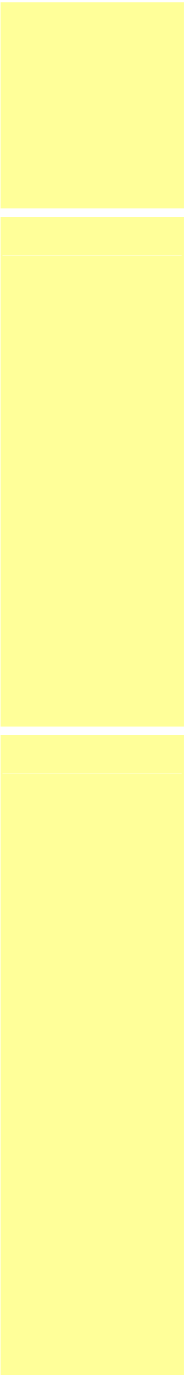
• **Reconciliation not by man's clever effort but through redemption in Christ**



• **God gives us wisdom to understand his mighty unifying plan - and to play our part in its fulfilment**

Since men and women have fallen into sin, the entire universe has been falling apart. Men and women are hateful towards each other. God and man are mutual enemies. Creation does not easily submit itself to human shepherding. Angels and men have no fellowship. Tribes and nationalities are full of bitterness and rivalry. Fragmentation rules the world.

God's plan is to bring it all back together again and put it under Christ! He brings us into His plan. He has multiplied these riches of His grace towards us with all wisdom and insight, making known to us the mystery of His will. He wants us to be involved in His purpose. It starts by our being right with God. Then we help others to be right with God. We reconcile tribe and tribe, nation and nation, by bringing people to a knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. God goes on doing this all the time, and we do it with Him. It is not a matter of bringing unity by political discussion, or by clever organisation. It is done – says Paul – in and through this redemption which is in the Lord Jesus Christ. God is working His way towards a goal. God is getting His church to be this new human race, gathered into a unity under the Lord Jesus Christ. It is this point that Paul will take up again and again, later in his letter. Ephesians 2:11–22 and 4:1–16 pursue this matter that Paul mentions here for the first time.

God's plan is a matter of His 'good pleasure. He makes known to us the mystery of His will, 'according to His good pleasure' – just because this is what He wants to do. Paul tells the Ephesians all of these things in order that they might co-operate with God's plan. Sin fragmented our world. Jesus is building a new world by bringing people to unity under Himself – and He wants us to co-operate in what He is doing. In Ephesians 2 and 4, Paul will develop the point. God's plan involves overcoming or abolishing temporary or sinful barriers among men and women. It involves creating 'one new man', the church of Jesus Christ. It involves maintaining unity amidst the great variety of gifts within the body of Christ, the church. It involves us setting our sights on 'the fullness of the times', the day when all fragmentation will end. God wants a world of 'redeemed' people. He wants every nation to hear about this plan of salvation in Jesus Christ. He wants all who trust in Christ, God's Son, to grow up into the unity of the faith. His abounding grace consists of bringing me and all the redeemed people of God into this mighty unifying plan. He gives us wisdom and insight to see what He is doing, and to see what we are to be doing under Him. This too is part of God's abounding grace.



 <p>slices.org.uk</p>	<p>Dr Michael Eaton is highly respected internationally as a theologian, author, preacher and teacher. He lives in Kenya where he is one of the leaders of the Chrisco Fellowship. His Preaching Through The Bible (PTTB) books are highly popular worldwide. Michael Eaton puts the theological and practical meaning of the Bible in a clear and down-to-earth way so that what is written can be easily understood by the reader.</p>	
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