

# AN INTRODUCTION TO SOTERIOLOGY AND THE BIBLICAL TEXT

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Quote by **Harry Callahan**: “A man has to know his limitations.” **The line is from the 1973 movie Magnum Force** where Dirty Harry takes on vigilante cops.

Understanding the relationship between biblical theology and systematic theology. Systematic theology presupposes “systems.” “A system is **a collection of elements or components that are organized for a common purpose.**” Systems catalogue information. The names of these systems are labels. Labels help identify, labels intrinsically separate. For example, cans of fruit might be separated from loaves of bread, but placed together with cans of vegetables. But within the category of “cans,” fruit would be separated from vegetables. And within the cans of fruit, each fruit would be separated by its content. Now, let us pull back a bit.

The biblical text forms the material for a system. Systems are the consequence of biblical exegesis. They are not the means. Labels are good. Yet all labels must yield to the biblical text. Our system must be the product of the biblical text. Thus, let us consider the biblical text.

## TWELVE QUESTIONS FROM EPHESIANS 1:3-14

Begin with an over-view of entire Letter to the Ephesians.

1. Are all three members of the Godhead noted in 1:3-14?
  - a. What verses emphasis each individual?
  - b. What seems to be the primary actions carried out by each individual?
2. Does each section end with a repeating statement?
  - a. What verses begin and end each section?
  - b. Which person receives most of the material?
3. Within each section, make a list of the actions described.
4. What is the one thing we “do” in this opening statement?

## THE FATHER

5. When did the choosing of v. 4 take place?
6. Notice the parallelism between “choosing” and “predestination.” What does “predestination” mean?

<sup>3</sup> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, **who has blessed us** in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,

<sup>4</sup> even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world,  
that we should be holy and blameless before him.

In love <sup>5</sup> he predestined us<sup>[b]</sup>

for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ,  
according to the purpose of his will, <sup>6</sup> to the praise of his glorious grace,  
with which **he has blessed us** in the Beloved.

7. Where else is the word “predestined” used in chapter 1? [these are the only occurrences in Ephesians]
  - The Greek word “predestine” also occurs in the following four references.
  - Ac 4:28 For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel **determined** before to be done.
  - Ro 8:29 ¶ 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.
  - Ro 8:30 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.
  - 1Co 2:7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God **ordained** before the world unto our glory:
8. Why did God choose us before the foundation of the world?

## THE SON

9. According to verse 10, what is God’s plan?
  - What might this be referring to?
10. How will all things be united? Through what means?

## THE SPIRIT

11. What role does the Holy Spirit have in the redeemed (v. 13)?
12. What does His action result in?

## INHERITANCE [kleronomia]

- Eph 1:14 Which is the earnest of our **inheritance** until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.
- Eph 1:18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his **inheritance** in the saints,
- Eph 5:5 For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any **inheritance** in the kingdom of Christ and of God.
- Eph 1:11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance [**Kelroo**], being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

## Notice Other Select Passages on The Idea of An Inheritance

- Ac 20:32 And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and **to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.**
- Ga 3:18 **For if the inheritance be of the law**, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise.
- Eph 5:5 For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, **hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.**
- Col 3:24 **Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance:** for ye serve the Lord Christ.
- Heb 9:15 ¶ And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, **they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.**
- 1Pe 1:4 **To an inheritance incorruptible**, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, {for you: or, for us}

## **WHAT DOES EPHESIANS 1:3-14 TELL US ABOUT OUR SALVATION?**

## SIX QUESTIONS FROM REVELATION 1:4-8

1. Is the Trinity present in this paragraph?
  - How are they described?
2. What is said of Jesus in verse 5b?
  - Is there any logical connection between His three titles in verse 5b?
3. What is said of Jesus in verses 5b and 6?
4. How does Jesus free us?
5. What are the results of this shed blood?
6. What does this paragraph say about those who shed His blood?

## **WHAT DOES REVELATION 1:4-8 TELL US ABOUT OUR SALVATION?**

## NINE QUESTIONS FROM FIRST PETER 1:3-13

1. What motivated God to act in verse 3?
2. What did His mercy result in?
3. What were we born again into?
4. Why do we have this living hope?
5. What does this living hope result in?
6. How is this inheritance described?
7. When reading this, what other NT books come to mind?
8. What do verses 10-12 tell us about the prophets and angels?
9. How does v. 13 begin? What does that tell us?

## **WHAT DOES 1 PETER 1:3-13 TELL US ABOUT OUR SALVATION?**