

25-0928a - Detailed Summary

25-0928a - *The "In Crowd," Part 1, Jim Lokenbauer*

Bible Readers: Mike Mathis and John Nousek

This detailed summary by Grok, xAI, (Transcription by TurboScribe.ai)

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The "In Crowd," Part 1

Scripture Readings

1st Reading (0:04 - 0:30): Mike Mathis

Ephesians 1:1-7: The service begins with the first scripture reading from Ephesians chapter 1, verses 1 through 7, delivered by Mike. He reads: "Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God to the saints who are in Ephesus and the faithful in Christ Jesus. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ just as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blame before him having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to himself according to the good pleasure of his will to the praise of the glory of his grace by which he made us accepted in the beloved in him we have redemption through his blood the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace." Mike concludes the reading at this point.

2nd Reading (0:35 - 1:01): John Nousek

Ephesians 1:7-14: Following the first reading, the second scripture reading continues in Ephesians chapter 1, picking up from verse 7 and extending through verse 14, read by John. He starts: "which he lavished on us in all wisdom and insight. He made known to us the mystery of his will according to his kind intention which he purposed in him with a view to the administration to an administration suitable to the fullness of all of the times. It is the summing up of all things in Christ things in the heavens and things on the earth in him. Also, we have obtained an inheritance having been predestined according to his purpose who works all things after the counsel of his will. To the end, that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of his glory in him. You also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation, having also believed you were sealed in him with the holy spirit of promise was given as a pledge as our inheritance. It's a view to the redemption of God's own possession to the praise of his glory." John ends the reading with "Amen."

Summary of Transcript (0:04 - 37:22)

Preacher: Jim Lokenbauer

(3:58 - 6:35) Introduction to the Sermon and Cultural Reference

Preacher Jim expresses gratitude to Mike and John for reading the lengthy scripture passages, acknowledging the challenge of public reading and commending their performance. He introduces the morning's lesson titled "Are You In With The In Crowd?" and notes that the readings were from Ephesians chapter 1, covering the first 14 verses. Jim references a 1964 song by American singer Dobie Gray called "The 'In Crowd,'" which was later repopularized in the 1970s by Brian Ferry of Roxy Music. He admits to dating himself with this reference and explains that the song celebrated being part of a popular clique engaged in the latest worldly social trends, glorifying carnal behavior and boasting about ungodly virtues driven by the flesh. Jim cautions that songs with catchy tunes

often have poor lyrics and advises against letting them replay in one's mind, sharing that he enjoyed the song in the 1970s when he was outside of Christ and it did not bother him. He quotes the apostle John from his first letter, warning: "Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him, for everything in the world, the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes, the boasting of what he has and does, comes not from the Father, but from the world." Jim emphasizes that being outside that worldly "In Crowd" is beneficial, but playfully suggests that believers are the true "In Crowd," not chasing futile things but comprising a multitude who have heard and accepted God's truth, resulting in the removal of scales from their eyes to see the futility of worldly life.

(6:36 - 8:14) Highlighting the Theme in Ephesians

Jim points out a recurring theme in the 14 verses from Ephesians chapter 1, noting that the word "in" appears 20 times, with 10 instances specifically indicating the relationship with the Savior through phrases like "in Christ," "in him," and "in the one he loves." He invites the congregation to reread Ephesians 1:1-14 with this theme in mind to identify it. Jim then recites the passage again: "Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God to the saints in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus. Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight."

(8:15 - 10:57) Continuing the Rereading and Verse-by-Verse Analysis

Introduction

Continuing the rereading of Ephesians 1:1-14, Jim proceeds: "In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ in accordance with his pleasure and will to the praise of his glory which he has freely given us in the one he loves. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding and he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure which he purposed in Christ to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ. In him we were also chosen having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will in order that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be for the praise of his glory and you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth the gospel of your salvation having believed you were marked in him with a seal the promised holy spirit who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession to the praise of his glory." Jim asks if the congregation noticed the theme that all blessings are in Christ, highlighting that Paul uses "in" 36 times in Ephesians and 176 times in his other writings, many expressing the unique relationship of being in Christ. He proposes going verse by verse through the text to better understand being in Christ as part of this "In Crowd" of holy people, starting with verse 1: "Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God to the saints in Ephesus the faithful in Christ Jesus."

(10:58 - 14:00) Exposition of Verse 1

In verse 1, Paul introduces himself with his heavenly credentials and authority as an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God. Jim explains that the Father in heaven chose Paul before time began

to be an apostle, noting God's foreknowledge of individuals even before creating the universe, which demonstrates the awesomeness of God. Although addressed to the church at Ephesus, Paul indicated in other writings that his letters should be read in all congregations, meaning the information in Ephesians applies to the whole church worldwide and throughout time. What God spoke to the church then remains useful for Christians today. This verse conveys two key ideas: first, the saints are the faithful, and contrary to Catholic doctrine that saints are a select few, all true believers in God are saints, such as Saint Jean, Saint Scott, Saint Michael, Saint Ruth, Saint John, and Saint Joe; second, the saints are those in Christ Jesus. The term "saint" was used not only in the New Testament but also in the Old Testament, as in Second Chronicles where Solomon described the congregation of Israel as saints during the temple dedication, derived from a Hebrew word meaning pious, holy, godly, good, or saint.

(14:02 - 16:01) Exposition of Verse 2

Verse 2 states: "Grace and peace to you from God our father the lord Jesus Christ." As one of God's chosen spokesmen, Paul conveys a special blessing of grace and peace to the saints from God and Jesus. These are meaningful and powerful words for believers. Receiving God's grace and peace places them in fellowship with God and Jesus. Grace represents God's mercy, love, and forgiveness of sins offered to all mankind through faith in Jesus. In this greeting context, it is the highest blessing, signifying God's continued outpouring of grace on believers. Those who have obediently believed in Jesus as the Son of God, accepted his atoning sacrifice, and died with him in baptism receive forgiveness of sins, removing hostility between God and sinful man and creating peace. God continues to sprinkle believers with Christ's blood as they walk in fellowship with him, knowing their sins are forgiven, which provides a tranquil state of mind and peace in God's presence, with a conscience free from conviction of sin.

(16:03 - 19:36) Exposition of Verse 3

Verse 3 reads: "Praise be to the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ." Jim emphasizes that these blessings are in Christ. Peter states that God has given everything needed for life and godliness through knowledge of him. From heaven, God pours out his love and spiritual blessings through the Holy Spirit because believers are in Christ. The old sinful nature was nailed to the cross, making believers new creatures in Christ who walk according to the Spirit rather than the flesh. God expects his children to be fruitful, so he provides the Holy Spirit to aid in serving him, equipping saints with the fruits of the Spirit to transform their character to resemble Jesus', including love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control, among others. God also equips saints for spiritual warfare with the full armor of God, which are spiritual blessings of good Christian character and tools to engage the enemy while serving God. The battle is not with mankind, whom believers aim to save, but Satan uses ungodly people against them; however, the larger picture is a spiritual battle of good versus evil in the heavenly realm. Survival requires using God's spiritual armor, which includes truth, righteousness, faith, readiness to share the gospel, confidence in salvation (protecting the soul even if the body is killed), the sword of the Spirit (the word of God), and prayer. These are the spiritual blessings poured out from the heavenly realms.

(19:38 - 21:17) Exposition of Verse 4 and Introduction to Calvinism

Jim moves to verse 4: "He chose us in him before the creation," with some versions saying "before the foundation of the world," "to be holy and blameless in his sight." He notes that this verse enters into a doctrinal area causing much confusion and error, attributed to John Calvin, who lived over 500 years ago and authored Calvinism, the main source of false teachings on election and predestination. In summary, Calvin introduced humanism into scriptural understanding by relying on human reasoning rather than letting God speak through scripture, leading to varied interpretations based on individual understanding. By acknowledging the authority and perfection of God's revealed word and allowing scripture to interpret itself, many errors could be avoided. Jim states that much of Protestantism is based on Calvin's false teachings.

(21:18 - 22:54) Critique of Calvin's Teachings on Election and Predestination

Calvin also introduced the false teaching of faith only. Regarding election and predestination in Ephesians verses 4 and 11, Calvin claimed God determined from eternity whom to save and damn, irrespective of faith, love, merit, or lack thereof, citing uncontrollable human depravity, and that God chooses some from the human race opposed to the divine, including the elect in his kingdom. This idea portrays God's kingdom as aristocratic, consisting of an elite elect, which Jim calls a crock. He asserts that much Protestant doctrine is tainted by these false teachings and should be rejected by letting God speak through his word. The subject is easy to understand when rejecting the influence of British aristocracy's caste system on doctrine, as God does not operate that way.

(22:56 - 24:50) God's Plan Before Creation

Before creation, the Godhead—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit—existed and brought forth a new creation with spiritual and physical realms to exhibit God's love, creativity, and holiness, all for his good pleasure. With foreknowledge of life's unfolding drama in both realms, God had a plan in place. Verse 4 indicates he would teach his children that he is God to be worshiped and adored, with all blessings from him. God demonstrates love's power through the scheme of redemption and its achievements. He gave all created intelligent beings in both realms free will to obey or disobey by following their own desires, along with laws and consequences for breaking them.

(24:51 - 27:51) Spiritual and Physical Realms, Plan of Salvation, and Free Will

In the spiritual realm, angels and their kind are God's children, present with him in heaven, operating by sight rather than faith, without excuse for disobedience, and punished immediately. In the physical realm, God created the earth, universe, and everything, with man as the pinnacle, made in his image, also his children with laws and consequences. Knowing mankind would sin before creation, God planned salvation, including election and predestination. He knows beforehand who will obey the gospel and who will reject it, recording names in the book of life upon obedience, with warnings that names can be blotted out, requiring faithfulness. As all-knowing, God knows by name who will accept or reject his word, but free will means every human walks a fine line of choice. Election is not arbitrary as Calvin claims, ignoring character; instead, those who choose to obey the gospel are elected and saved.

(27:55 - 29:47) God's Gentle Drawing and Calling

John reveals God's gentle drawing in John 6:44 and 65, where Jesus says no one comes to him unless the Father draws them, and he will raise them on the last day; no one comes unless granted by the Father. Souls listening, looking, and truthfully seeking the word of God will find. Jesus stands at the door and knocks; those opening their hearts receive him. As a spirit, God touches hearts through the spirit of life in us; if sensitive to the quiet whisper when hearing God's word, recognizing truth, faith is created. God speaks through his word, the Bible, his revealed will for man.

(29:49 - 30:39) Faith and Pleasing God

Since God is invisible in the physical realm, humans operate by faith, believing in him. The Hebrew writer defines faith as being sure of hoped-for things and certain of unseen things; without faith, pleasing God is impossible, as one must believe he exists and rewards earnest seekers.

(30:40 - 31:46) Human Composition as Three-Part Being

Man is a three-part being: a physical body with a growth cycle and about 70-year shelf life; the eternal soul that thinks, feels, and is the conscious self, continuing after death; and God's spirit animating the flesh, returning to God upon death, as James states. Even unbelievers have this breath of life.

(31:47 - 34:06) Role of the Holy Spirit and Rejection of Calvinism

Upon baptism, believers receive the Holy Spirit as a seal marking them as God's, enabling God to touch hearts with drawing power if sensitive; calloused hearts from sin cannot hear the gentle whisper like "come unto me all you who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest," "believe my words be saved," "I want you to be with me for all eternity." Salvation is offered to all, contrary to Calvinism, which allows immoral lives for the elect. False doctrines must be sifted and rejected for simple truth.

(34:06 - 35:50) Universal Offer of Salvation and Election Process

John 3:16 states God loved the world, giving his son so believers have eternal life, offering to everyone, refuting Calvin. Titus 2:11 says God's grace bringing salvation appeared to all men, including Jesus' passion on the cross to remove sins for heavenly reunion. The election process in 1 Peter 1:1-2 addresses God's elect, chosen by God's foreknowledge through the Spirit's sanctifying work for obedience to Jesus and sprinkling by his blood, with grace and peace in abundance.

(35:51 - 36:51) Becoming Part of God's "In Crowd"

If a soul answers God's drawing through hearing the word and obeys Jesus' commands to repent, believe, be baptized, remain faithful, and follow his words, baptism sprinkles with his blood, cleansing sin, and grants the Holy Spirit for sanctification, setting apart for holy purpose to serve God with clean conscience. This is how one becomes part of God's "In Crowd," in Christ.

(36:51 - 37:22) Conclusion and Invitation

Jim announces more discussion that evening to finish the lesson. He offers the invitation for those wanting to join the Lord's "In Crowd" and reject the worldly one by having sins washed away, or for church prayers. He calls to come as they stand and sing.