

**HIGHER GROUND:
WHO'S IN CHARGE?
Ephesians 1:10b-12**

President Harry S. Truman was given a desk-top sign that said, "The buck stops here." On the back was the statement, "I'm from Missouri." On more than one occasion President Truman referred to the desk sign in public statements. For example, in an address at the National War College on December 19, 1952 Mr. Truman said, "You know, it's easy for the Monday morning quarterback to say what the coach should have done, after the game is over. But when the decision is up before you -- and on my desk I have a motto which says 'The Buck Stops Here' -- the decision has to be made." In his farewell address to the American people given in January 1953, President Truman referred to this concept very specifically in asserting that, "The President--whoever he is--has to decide. He can't pass the buck to anybody. No one else can do the deciding for him. That's his job.

When the person in charge isn't doing the job or can't do the job, it's time for a change. Ask Bobby Valentine about that. Coaches are fired when teams lose. CEOs are fired when companies flounder. Preachers are fired when churches decline.

Who's in charge? The character of an organization is profoundly affected by its leader. The mission of an organization is profoundly affected by its leader. It is vitally important to know who is in charge?

I. WE HAVE BEEN GIVEN A TRUST THROUGH JESUS CHRIST.

- A. Paul continued this great prayer of thanksgiving by declaring our lot or portion in Christ. ¹⁰ *In Him* ¹¹ *also we have obtained an inheritance.* The In Him part of this passage again pointed the reader to Jesus Christ. The recurring chorus in this song is the reader's union with Christ. Apart from Christ, none of these blessings were a reality. The benefit of their union with Christ was the

obtaining of an inheritance. Paul used the word inheritance to describe, not a particular material possession, but a place or mission or identity. It is the same idea stated in Deuteronomy 4:20. ²⁰ *“But the Lord has taken you and brought you out of the iron furnace, from Egypt, to be a people for His own possession, as today. Deuteronomy 4:20 (NASB95)*

- B. To be identified as God’s possession/portion/lot is a powerful reality.
 - 1. We most often think of being chosen as a thing of privilege. Here, the choice is to an awesome responsibility. We are chosen by God to be a vehicle of blessing and revelation. When God made his covenant with Abraham, he said he would bless him and make him a great nation and through him all the nations of the earth would be blessed.
 - 2. We are chosen to be a separate people. We are to be holy as God is holy.
 - 3. We are chosen to be a missionary people. We are to be witnesses to the character and mission of God through Christ.

II. WE CAN TRUST THE CHARACTER OF GOD’S WILL.

- A. The acts of God are not those of a capricious God. Paul was abundantly clear. ¹⁰ *In Him* ¹¹ *also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will.*
- B. Our temptation is to impose our character on God’s character.
 - 1. He is fickle with an unintelligible will and wisdom.
 - 2. He is angry – constantly ticked off because we have disappointed him.
 - 3. He is senile. He is out of touch with the reality of our human experience.

4. He has lost control. He is subject to our choice and the circumstances we impose on him.
- C. God's character is not our character. He is beyond reproach. He is completely holy, righteous, and just. His choice grew out of his divine plan. We are not living with Plan B. We are a part of Plan A.

III. WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND OUR DESIGNED PURPOSE IN CHRIST.

- A. Paul had come to understand his place in Christ and his purpose in Christ. ¹⁰ *In Him* ¹¹ *also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will,* ¹² *to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory.* This is God's language. In Isaiah 43:21, he made this statement about his choice of Israel. ²¹ *"The people whom I formed for Myself Will declare My praise.* Isaiah 43:21 (NASB95)
- B. How do we show forth his praise?
 1. By growing in our faith through our walk with Christ.
 2. By the way we love one another.
 3. Be being salt and light.
 4. By sharing the testimony of our salvation.