

Chosen & Predestined

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Date: 15 February 2026

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[0:00] How are you doing?

Awesome. Is it warm? Is it hot? Take out your Bibles with me, please, and turn to the book of Ephesians, right after Galatians, right before Philippians and Colossians, Gentiles, the poor child. Right? I've never heard it so long. Never heard that? You heard Gentiles eat popcorn. No, it's A-E-I-O. Galatians is A.

Ephesians. Philippians. Now I'm really confused. I'm really confused. I don't know. In the Hebrew? It's something about vowels.

Vowels. I just learned the song. I feel that in my vowels. I'm sorry. I just learned the song. I just learned the song. I just learned the song. All right. You got a whole New Testament in the song?

[1:20] Cool. Well, we're going to stay in Ephesians. Like I said, right after Galatians, right before Philippians, which is right before Colossians.

So Ephesians 1, we started this study in Ephesians just a few weeks ago. So we're just at the beginning here. Starting to unpack now a little more closely.

Unpack Paul's sentence. Paul's bursting out in praise as in chapter 1, Ephesians 1 verse 3 through verse 14.

Paul just kind of bursts out in praise. He says, blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us. And then he starts to enumerate all the ways in which God has blessed us.

So we're starting there. There's a whole lot here. In Greek, it's all one sentence from verse 3 through verse 14. He just keeps on going. If you were diagramming, it would be, you know, you'd be here and then you'd be here and then you'd be here.

[2:21] Keep going and you'd need all these pages to get it. Or maybe a scroll. So we want to read the text first.

We're going to concentrate this morning on verses 3 through 6. And so we'll read the verses. We will pray and then we'll dig in. All right.

If you're able, please stand as I read from Ephesians chapter 1 verse 3 through 6. 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 be holy and blameless before him. In love, he predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to himself according to the kind intention of his will.

To the praise of the glory of his grace which he freely bestowed on us in the beloved. So reach the word on us.

[3:45] Father, give us a sense of your word and help us to be caught up in Paul's delight of the Father and his blessings.

May we see how greatly we are blessed. How much we are favored. How deeply God wants us. And treasures us. May we grasp some of that today. We ask in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. Please be seated. So Charles Hadris Spurgeon.

Anybody heard of his name? He hasn't been around for a while. He preached back in the 1850s to 1880s.

He started preaching when he was 20 years old. And preached until he was 57 years old when the Lord took him home.

[4:54] He's a British Baptist. So, you know, don't hold that against you if you're not Baptist. But he was often called the Prince of Preachers.

Because from the time that he was 20 and started preaching in the Metropolitan Tabernacle, which seated 6,000 people, it was always full when he preached.

He preached with a pastor. He preached with a wisdom. He preached with a conviction, with humor, with application.

He was a very unique and blessed preacher. So, one time, he was preaching, not in his church, but he was preaching to a group of Methodist brethren.

And as he's preaching, the crowd became alive. And they're nodding along and crying out, Amen, Hallelujah. Spurgeon got that alive. And so, being stirred himself by the congregation, he preached with more vigor, with more force.

[6:14] And the last point that he was making that day in the text led to the doctrine of election. And as he mentioned this word, election, there was a deep drawing in of breath.

And he said to them, knowing that they did not like this doctrine, he said to them, brethren, you believe it. Silence.

And he said, you do. And I will make you sing, Hallelujah. He said to them, is there no difference between you and other men?

And they said, yes, glory to God. He said, is there a difference between what you were and you are now? Yes, Hallelujah.

And he said, who made that difference? You or God? Oh, the Lord, glory, Hallelujah. He said, yes, that is the doctrine of election.

[7:26] If there's a difference, the Lord has made the difference. And it began in eternity past. I don't know how it went after that, but he did get them to say, Hallelujah, without knowing that they were saying, Hallelujah.

What do you do? Nothing against Methodists. Just interesting. We come to that mysterious doctrine today because in verse 4, he says, he chose us.

And verse 5, he says, he predestined. Those are hard words. For me. Before we look at that, I just want to remind you the background of Paul's letter.

We looked a few weeks ago at the theme of the letter, which is the essentials of healthy Christianity. It is a letter written to any Christians at any time. It was written during the first century, around 60 A.D.

by the Apostle Paul. But it did not include the words at Ephesus. You know, he wrote to the saints who are at Ephesus. And that little phrase, at Ephesus, wasn't in the original.

[8:35] It was left blank so that as it came to each church in that vicinity, they could write in their own name. So eventually, this letter became at Ephesus. But it included other churches in the area.

Most of those churches you would read in the first, chapter 2 and chapter 3 of the book of Revelation, that circle of churches that John later ministered to and Paul had ministered to before that, including Laodicea, Hierapolis, etc.

So, the book breaks into two, quite literally right in the middle, chapters 1 through 3, are about what God has done. Paul focuses on how God has blessed us and how God has worked for us, what God has done for us, how he has revealed things to us.

So it's what God has done, what his works are. And because of that, who we are. And then in chapters 4 through 6 becomes the practical, becomes the therefore you walk, right?

Therefore you walk in a manner worthy of the Lord. So walk worthy. So first half is about God's work, second half is about our walk. You know, walking worthy, walking in light, walking in love, walking in newness of life, etc.

[9:51] So that's the book. Last time we looked at the introduction to the letter, first two verses that address to us Paul, an apostle.

So we ask the question, why should we listen to Paul? What does he, what, why should we trust what he has to say? Who is Paul?

Because he wasn't one of the original twelve disciples. He's not even mentioned in any of the four gospels. He's not mentioned until the end of chapter seven in Acts.

As he's standing there, Stephen is stunned. And so we took some time to look at that, his call, and how God met him on the road to Damascus, and Paul's going this way, right, ready to persecute the

church and hating Jesus and all of that.

And suddenly a light shines and Paul falls off his horse, and after Jesus meets him, he's going this way. A radical change. A radical change that Paul did not ask for, but God imposed.

[10:59] So he understood this whole concept of God is God, and God will do what God will do. And so, why should we listen to Paul?

He is an apostle called by Christ, set apart distinctly with authority of Jesus himself to the Gentiles specifically.

And he writes, we see in verse one, he writes to Christians. He writes to every kind of Christian, to the saints, the holy ones, the ones who've been made holy, who are at Ephesus and who are faithful ones, believing ones in Christ Jesus.

And then we ask the question, as Paul launches into this praise in verse three through fourteen, we ask, what does Paul worship?

And he worships a God who has blessed us in many ways. And so we've got, kind of got an overview of that blessing, blessed with every spiritual blessing. And we noted that in these verses from three to fourteen, there is the work of the triune God.

[12:04] We have got the Father who's initiating, who's blessing, right, who's choosing and predestining. But he does it all through Christ. Because multiple times we see he's done this in Christ, in the beloved one, through Christ, right, by all, so Christ is there.

And then we see in verse thirteen and fourteen that the Holy Spirit now is mentioned as the one who applies all of this to us. God has done all this work, but it's the Holy Spirit who seals us, who comes to us and makes God's work real in our lives.

He's the one who causes us to be born again. He who walks with us and enables us, right, to do what God calls us to do. So we see that.

So now today we're going to try to unpack the first couple of blessings that Paul begins to enumerate in these verses. So we'll see two.

The first blessing in verse four and the second blessing in verse five. Look how far we're getting today. And as you look at these verses, look at all the commas, all the phrases, right?

[13:18] So what's the first blessing? Well, it's that he chose us. The Father has chosen us. And I put it this way, he's chosen us from eternity to be his holy ones for himself.

To be his holy ones for himself. He chose us from eternity past. So let's dig into it. Verse four. So going back to verse four, he's blessed us, right?

He's blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ just as, right? So he's, he's blessed us. How has he done that? Just as, first of all, he chose us.

He chose us. What does that mean? He chose us. Well, he picked us out for himself. Do you ever, do you ever play in the play yard, you know, where you get up, you choose two captains and you, you know, and you get to choose teams and you pick and, and you're kind of sitting there going, I don't want, don't make me be last, don't make me be last, right?

So, so you hope to be picked, right? For, for one of the teams to play. Well, God picked out for himself. Paul says he chose us. Who's the us?

[14:35] Well, it goes back to verse one, the saints, the holy ones who are faithful in Christ, who are believing in Christ. So, in other words, believers. Christians, he chose us.

How did he choose us? Well, that's the next phrase. In, in. He chose us in, in. In who? Well, that's Christ.

Because, go back to verse three, he's the father of the Lord Jesus Christ, right? Who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. Now he's going to, now he's going to summarize that as in him.

Right? Now, verse four, just as he chose us in him, back to Christ. Chose us in him. What does that mean? All these blessings that come to us, each one is in Christ or through Christ or because of Christ.

Christ. So, the father does the choosing but he does it in Christ. So, what has Christ done to connect us to those blessings?

[15:52] Right? The father has chosen but he's chosen us in Christ. So, what has Christ done? He's done all kinds of things. He's paid to Christ. Right?

Right? And namely, right? Namely, the father sent the son to die in the place of sinners. Who ever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Right? So, he's connected us to us. So, what is the work of Christ? The work of Christ is to walk a life of righteousness and holiness without sin.

And so, he can voluntarily, willingly put himself in our place on the cross to pay our penalty. And so, in doing that, he redeems us.

Which we will get to down in verse 7. So, it's his merit. In Christ, he chose us in him, in Christ, because of his merit, because of his work, what he has done outside of us.

[16:58] What Christ did long before we were born. Right? So, he did it. So, the father chooses us way, way before we're born. And then Christ comes into the world and does his work way before we're born.

And that's how we get chosen in him. All depending on Christ. Well, when did God do this choosing?

What's the next phrase? Verse 4. He chose us in him when? Before foundation of the world.

Well, what was the foundation of the world? Genesis 1? Yeah. And God said, let there be let there be life, let there be separation, let there be, let there be, let there be.

He spoke into existence. The world. The world did not evolve. The world was not and then the world was. Created.

[18:03] Spoken into existence. So before creation, before, so we would call that eternity past at some point. God has no beginning.

God is eternal. It's hard for us to relate to that, right? Because we all have a beginning. We all have a birthday. Right? If you celebrate those kind of things.

Or if people annoyingly remind you of those kind of things. we have starting points God does not.

How do we get? We're not to relate to that. We all do, we all are eternal beings after we're born.

We all are eternal. The soul is eternal. There's no end. It just depends on where your soul will be for eternity. But we don't have a being.

But God, so God creates at some point an eternity past. What that means is when he chose us, it has nothing to do with our deeds. It is not on the basis of what we have done.

[19:07] It's before we have done anything good or bad. It's not based on our word. So why has he chosen us? What purpose?

If it's not based on what we do, why would he choose us? Why me? Well, what's the next phrase?

He chose us in him before the foundation of the world that that so here's the purpose that we be holy and blameless before him in love.

Holy before him that we be holy before him. Now, does your translation say that we should be?

Anybody have that?

Most of you have it? No. No? You don't have it? Okay for you. Most of you don't have it. You don't have it? You have it. Would be. Would be.

Okay. Well, neither should or would are in the Greek. It's simply that we be holy. Holy. because the word should imply something, doesn't it?

[20:17] What does it imply? Your performance. You should do this. You should do that. And if you hear shoulds enough then you will ask people not to should on you anymore.

Right? Because what is it? It's shaming is what it is. The word's not there. It's not should.

It's not about performance. All of this when he chose us wasn't about now you better go be living up to this standard. Let it say what it says.

It's not that you should be holy, that you should act holy, that you should pursue holiness. it's not that you should try to measure up. Have you ever felt that pressure?

How does it feel? Does it motivate you? No, because we're rebellious. Don't tell me what I should do. That's not how God works.

[21:26] That's not how God motivates us. That's not how God motivates us. You must. You have to. No, it doesn't say that. He says that we be holy.

It points to who we are, not to what we do. It's about our position before God, not about our performance.

From chapter four on, he will get to the things he wants us to do. He will talk about it. Since you've been changed and blessed in all these ways, you have the privilege to walk in this way.

You have the joy to walk in this way. You have the power, you have the riches to walk in this way.

He doesn't need to say, should it? He just says, don't.

Don't. Don't. Enjoy. We're set apart for a purpose, in other words.

[22:34] That we be, watch this now, verse four, that we be holy and blameless, where? Before him.

With him. That's a position. That we be holy with him. The word holy means to set apart. to be set apart.

It's part of the first prayer Jesus taught us to pray. Right? Our Father, well, hallowed be thy name.

Or, cause your name to be set apart. Cause your name to be holy. But I think of it in terms of cause your name to be set apart so that as I go through this day, I see you.

Right? And I recognize I walk before you. And I'm holy before you. Cause that's who I am. That's who he's made me.

[23:38] Not cause I work up or measure up or check enough boxes and I start to feel holy. Anybody ever feel holy? I mean, if you're honest, right?

Nope. Nope. But we are. We're saints. Because he chose us. Because he called us.

And he set us apart. To be holy. Set apart before him. So, God also chose the nation Israel.

Okay? So back in Deuteronomy, God talks to them, to the Israelites, about his motive in choosing them. Why did he choose them? What is it about Israel that he would choose them?

Now, what is it about us that he would choose us? Right? Why? So, listen to God's words in Deuteronomy 7. He says, For you are a people holy.

[24:38] They're saying, there we go, holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you to be what? to be a people for his treasured possession.

Isn't that good? I don't hear any performance in there at all. I don't hear, I just hear, I want you to be mine. I want you to my treasured, my treasured possession.

Right? Right? Out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth, it was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set his love on you and chose you, for you are the fewest of all peoples.

But it is because the Lord loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers that the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt.

That's why I chose you. To be his treasure. We are chosen to belong to him, to be his treasured possession, which also implies we are not our own, right?

[25:56] He's chosen us to be for him and with him. How do we respond to that? How would that motivate you? How does that motivate you differently than you should be holy?

How do you feel about being God's treasure in possession? Boy, I mean, doesn't that make you want to, oh, he loves me, I want to love him back. I want to do my best at that.

And though I fall and fail many times, he still will love me. Because we hear in verse three that he's our father. He's not just our God, he's our father.

So, yeah, our response would stimulate humility and gratitude. Same with Wesley, you know, how can it be that thou, my God, should die for me?

How can it be that I gain an interest in the Savior's blood? How can it be? I don't deserve it. So, first blessing we see, the Father has chosen us from eternity to be his holy ones, and I like to add, for himself.

[27:11] Not just to be his holy ones, but to be his holy ones for himself. to be his treasured possession. So, what's the ultimate purpose, or what is the grand purpose of choosing us?

Right? Chose us, right, to be holy, okay, to be with him, okay? But then he goes on, verse five, and he talks about preaching to adoption. There's a link, there's a grammatical link between verse four

and verse five.

So, Paul says, right, he chose us, he chose us, I have to think in terms of diagram. He chose us, right, so that's the main verb, and then the next verb in verse five is having predestined.

So, having predestined is not a full verb, it's a participle. Didn't spruce up on my gram.

So, in other words, what a participle does, what having predestined does is it defines the choosing.

So, he chose us how? Having predestined us. So, I have to make a choice, I have to make, how are those two verbs linked?

[28:28] He chose us because he predestined us? Is it he chose us so that he predestined us? Is it he chose us when he predestined us?

There's like eight ways in Greek that you can do this. but it all depends on context and you forget what makes the most sense. What is he chooses? He chose us to be holy.

I think so that he predestined us to adopt. I mean, it's just as lovely if we say because or when.

It really doesn't change it dramatically, but I think it's moving forward. I've got to think of how the diagram looks for you. So, four different aspects here in verse five and six.

He predestined us. Right? He chose us having predestined us. To predestine. Oh, there's that word. Predestine means to predetermine, to decide before.

[29:38] You struggle with that? Anybody? It's okay. It's okay. It doesn't clash you somewhere.

It's a hard concept. God did this before, you know, and so what about my choice and all that? Take some time. If you struggle with that, I would encourage you to take some time in Romans 9. because Paul talks about that. He talks about that struggle. He talks about those very same questions that we raise. And maybe that will help a little bit. But here's the thing I like to say. Election, predestination, those are God's business. That's what God does. And God's mysterious to us. So I'm not going to fully understand all that God does.

but it's clear that he does it as it is written. So I have to just kind of say that's God's business.

[30:46] And that's okay. And that's okay. I don't have to figure that out. Spurgeon used to say, you know, he had a ton of converts in the room, but he didn't worry about who was elected or who was chosen or whatever.

He just preached. He said, it's not like they have a big E on their chest. And you know, oh, I'll preach for that one because God chose that one. He didn't worry about it.

It's just preach. And they're often the most unlikely people like here. That was a joke.

Sorry. Didn't chuckle. Thank you. I appreciate that joke. So he predestined us for what? For adoption, is what he says.

He predestined us to adoption as sons, to adoption, to become his true children, to become children who have all the rights and who are accepted and have an inheritance and the nature of his children.

[31:47] They are adopted, but it's more than just adopted that he's legally chosen them, but that he's infused in them as well his nature because he causes them to be born again.

He gives them his nature. He gives them his Holy Spirit. So they share his nature, not just his name. So Deloney and I have adopted two children. That's the only children we have.

So we adopted Zach from birth and we adopted Abby from birth. And so one of the things we told them early on is when they started with what's that adoption, what does that mean? It means that we wanted you.

We wanted you. And for what we had to go through, we really had to want them. Teasing, they're aware now that there were things, we had to go to court and we had to, you know, all this kind of silly stuff.

But we believe God selected them for us and we got to choose them which meant we wanted them. They were wanted.

[32:56] Right? We desired them. We worked hard for them. And we loved them. So enter that in, you know, that God adopts us means he wanted us.

He wants us as his children. Good stuff. Well, how did he do it? Well, again, verse 4, he predestined us to adopt his sons through Jesus Christ.

How does he do it? Again, it's on the basis of Jesus Christ, on the basis of Christ's work, not ours. I'm not adopted because I did something good enough to be his child. He adopted me through Christ. And then notice it says, through Jesus Christ, to himself. Now, some of you may not have that phrase.

if you have an ESV, I think before 2014, y'all have it to himself?

[34:02] Yeah. There was an oversight in the printing of the ESV, so for a few years they had let that phrase out inadvertently.

And John Piper, among others, wrote to them and said put the words back in. And so they did in there later. But they acknowledged that was, they were not trying to take it out.

So if you have that missing, just know that's why. It's supposed to be there. He adopted us as sons through Jesus Christ to himself. So he adopted us through Jesus Christ to himself.

So just like he chose us for himself, now he adopts us for himself. to himself.

It's relational. It's relational. He wants a relationship with us. He accepts us to come to us.

[35:00] And since it's through Jesus Christ, that means we have that immediate access to him. We can come right to the Father. I'm his son. I can come right to him.

I don't have to jump through any hoops. I can come right to him. Even when I'm really dirty, I can come right to him so he can cleanse me. So he can wash me.

He wants me to come. Continually come. And then why does he do this ultimately?

What is it that moves God to do this? The end of verse five. He predestined us to adoption of Jesus Christ to himself according to the kind intention of his will to the praise of the glory of his grace which he freely bestowed on us in the beloved.

So what moves God? What was it? I don't hear a knocking. Do you hear a knocking? What's wrong?

[36:09] He doesn't choose us.

He adopts us according to the kind intention of his will. It's his good pleasure. It's his delight. The delight of his will. The delight of what he wants to do.

The pleasure of doing that. He's resolved. He desires. It pleases him. And the ultimate goal is to the praise of the glory of his grace which he freely bestowed on us in the beloved.

It's all about grace. The praise of his grace, his glorious grace, that which is undeserved but just given out abundantly poured out upon us to show his kindness.

So he's been saying in Christ through Christ. So how did the father adopt us through Christ? What was needed to make that transaction happen? He's chosen in eternity past, but how does he bring it about?

[37:12] How did he bring it about in Christ? So Galatians 4, 4. When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his son, born of a woman, born under the law, to do what?

To redeem. To redeem those who are under the law. Why? So that we might receive adoption of sons. There you go. How are we adopted?

It's through the redemption, the payment which Christ made to redeem those who are under the law so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the spirit of his son into our hearts crying, Abba, Father.

So you are no longer a slave, but a son. And if a son, then an heir, through God. What does it mean to be a child of God? How do we know? So here's the important question.

God has done this, but has he included me? Am I chosen? Am I adopted? How will I know?

[38:20] Well, Romans 8. For all who are led by the spirit of God are sons of God. Okay? Are you led by the spirit of God?

Do you know you're led by the spirit of God? All those who are led by the spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, into the shoulds, but you have received the spirit of adoption as sons.

There it is again. By whom we cry, Abba, Father. The spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. Has God borne witness to you?

Do you sense God's spirit saying to you, you are a child of God? Right? That's part of it. Are you led by the spirit and has the spirit communicated to you?

Has the spirit confirmed to you? In other words, has he changed? Has he changed? Are you more like God? God's Are you more than heirs?

[39:30] Heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him? Oh, why did he have to have the suffering of him? Because we're followers of Christ, if we're followers of Christ, we will suffer.

We will go through hardship. But that's one of the marks, that you are a son. How do you know if God adopted you? How do you know that you are a true child?

He sends the Holy Spirit as a witness. When does he do that? When you're born again. And when you're born again, you have a new life. You are awakened to God. You are led by his spirit, which means that you are changed in your nature and your desires.

So you may still have those old natural desires to go your own way, but you now have a new nature and desire to go God's way. That's how you know. And there's a battle in you.

Do you sense the battle? Because that's confirming as well. If there's a battle. If there's no battle, pray. Really, pray.

[40:37] How do you know if you're chosen? The same way. You know, because you have a gift of new life. You have been transformed, born again and transformed with new desires and new values. you now have a love for God and a hatred for sin.

Though you still sin, you hate it. And where you used to hate God, maybe you didn't say it out loud, where you used to hate God and hate his commandments, now you love him and love his commandments.

And not should do them, but would love to do them. Because of what he's done for you. Do you know you belong to him? Do you desire a relationship with him?

Because that's what he desires with you. That's why he chose you. To relate to him. To come to him. To talk to him. To rely on him. To worship him.

Just rest with him. We did that today. We did rest with him. Do you need rest? Do you need physical rest?

[41:42] Take a nap. But do you need rest for your soul? Remember that's what Jesus says. If you need rest for your soul, come to me. I'll give you rest for your soul. That's right.

Father, we thank you for your word. We thank you for how you blessed us. We thank you, Lord, that you would choose us for yourself to be your treasured possession.

We thank you, Lord, that you would predestine us for adoption of sons back to yourself through Jesus' blood. We thank you.

Help us to better worship you. Help us to better walk with you. Help us to better love you and treasure you back. Because of these truths, we pray in Christ's name. Amen. Amen.

Let's go. Let's go. Let's go. Let's go. Let's go. Let's go.