

# Ephesians 1:5-6 Commentary

PREVIOUS

EPHESIANS - CHRIST AND THE CHURCH  
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NEXT

Ephesians 1:5 He [predestined](#) us [to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ](#) to [Himself](#), [according](#) to the [kind intention](#) of His [will](#), ([NASB: Lockman](#))

**Greek:** [proorisas](#) ([AAPMSN](#)) [hemas](#) [eis](#) [huiiothesian](#) [dia](#) [lesou](#) [Christou](#) [eis](#) [auton](#), [kata](#) [ten](#) [eudokian](#) [tou](#) [thelematos](#) [autou](#).

**BGT** προορισας μες ες υιοθεσ αν δι ησο Χριστο ες α τ ν, κατ τ ν ε δοκ αν το θελ ματος α το ,

**Amplified:** For He foreordained us (destined us, planned in love for us) to be adopted (revealed) as His own children through Jesus Christ, in accordance with the purpose of His will [because it pleased Him and was His kind intent] ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**NLT:** His unchanging plan has always been to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. And this gave Him great pleasure. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**NLT (revised)** God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure.

**Phillips:** He planned, in his purpose of love, that we should be adopted as his own children through Jesus Christ ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**Wuest:** having previously marked us out to be placed as adult sons through the intermediate agency of Jesus Christ for Himself according to that which seemed good in His heart's desire ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#))

**Young's Literal:** having foreordained us to the adoption of sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,

**KJV** Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

**ESV** he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will,

**NET** He did this by predestining us to adoption as his sons through Jesus Christ, according to the pleasure of his will--

**NIV** he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will--

**CSB** He predestined us to be adopted through Jesus Christ for Himself, according to His favor and will,

**NKJ** having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,

**NRS** He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will,

**NAB** he destined us for adoption to himself through Jesus Christ, in accord with the favor of his will,

**NJB** marking us out for himself beforehand, to be adopted sons, through Jesus Christ. Such was his purpose and good pleasure,

**GWN** Because of his love he had already decided to adopt us through Jesus Christ. He freely chose to do this

**HE PREDESTINED US TO ADOPTION AS SONS THROUGH JESUS CHRIST TO HIMSELF:** [proorisas](#) ([AAPMSN](#)) [hemas](#) [eis](#) [huiiothesian](#) [dia](#) [lesou](#) [Christou](#) [eis](#) [auton](#):

- **Predestined** - Ep 1:11; Romans 8:29,30
- **Adoption as sons** - Jeremiah 3:4,19; Hosea 1:10; John 1:12; 11:52; Romans 8:14, 15, 16, 17,23; 2Cor 6:18; Galatians 4:5,6; Hebrews 12:5, 6, 7, 8, 9; 1John 3:1; Revelation 21:7
- John 20:17; Galatians 3:26; Hebrews 2:10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15
- [Ephesians 1 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Ephesians 1:5-6 Predestined to Adoption](#) - Steven Cole
- [Ephesians 1:4-6: The Body Formed in Eternity Past-2](#) - John MacArthur
- [Ephesians 1:4-14: The Calling of the Church](#) - John MacArthur
- [Ephesians 1:6-10: Redemption Through His Blood](#) - John MacArthur

#### Related Passages:

Romans 8:15 For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of **adoption as sons** by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!"

Romans 8:23 And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our **adoption as sons**, the redemption of our body.

Galatians 4:4-7 But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, 5 so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the **adoption as sons**. 6 Because you are **sons**, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" 7 Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a **son**; and if a **son**, then **an heir through God**.

### GOD PRE-PLANNED FOR US TO BE HIS SONS

God "marked us out beforehand" as it were. In eternity past! This is amazing. Mind blowing. This truth should grip our hearts. It does mine! My first father left when I was year old. My step father would not even call me by my given name but called me "That boy" to my mother. And now I read that the Almighty God has brought me into His family as His son. And I am absolutely overwhelmed at such grace and kindness. I pray you are having a similar response and it works itself out in loving obedience to the praise of the glory of His amazing grace. Amen.

**He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself** -The previous verse ends with **In love** which leads some commentators to associate the phrase with the preceding truth. However Nestle in his Greek text punctuates the verse in such a way as to favor the phrase better relating to what follows, thus, "**in love He predestined us**." In fairness, it should be noted that there are good expositors favoring the former and the latter interpretation. Note **through** (dia - means, instrument) indicates Jesus is the "Agent" by which the adoption is realized.

Paul's use of the verb **predestined** indicates that like God's choosing of believers in eternity past, His adoption of us as His sons was settled in the heart of God even before He created a world for us to live in! (see more discussion at **adoption as sons** below) This truth like that in Eph 1:4+ boggles our minds and should fill our hearts with gratitude. What a comforting thought it is...before our Father raised the majestic mountain peaks on this planet, He predetermined to raise up sons and daughters that would be His very own children forever and ever! Amen!

**Swindoll** on what this truth of **predestined** should do to our hearts - For the believer, the doctrine of God's predestination should strengthen our trust in the security of our salvation in Christ; it should not excuse complacency or lead to feelings of superiority or privilege. ([Insights on Galatians, Ephesians](#))

**(Having - KJV) predestined (4309)** (**proorizo** from **pró** = before + **horizo** = determine or establish boundaries <> **horos** = boundary, limit) means to mark out the boundary or limits of a place (think "horizon"), thing or person in advance or beforehand. To determine beforehand, mark out beforehand, predestine. To pre-horizon, pre-determine limits (boundaries) predestine. The aorist tense speaks of a definite event in the past. The active voice (and a participle = ends in "-ing") indicates that God initiated this action of His Own free will! The Bible itself never extends **proorizō** to God pre-determining people's decisions, i.e. requiring or coercing their choices (this theological argument goes beyond Scripture). 5x - Acts 4:28; Rom. 8:29; Rom. 8:30; 1 Co. 2:7; Eph. 1:5; Eph. 1:11

**Harold Hoehner** on **proorizo** - Twice it is used with a thing as its object (Acts 4:28; 1 Cor 1:27). The other four times persons are objects. However, when people are the objects of predestination, there are two accusatives. God has predestined us to something. Cremer notes that the primary interest is not the who but to what is one predestined. Although the action of the verb precedes history, the who belongs to history and the what talks about the eternal future. In conclusion, it means that one's destiny is determined beforehand. The active voice indicates that God did it. It is interesting to notice that both the choosing and

predetermining are governed by πρὸ, "before." God did these things before the creation of the earth. ([Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary](#))

**Hoehner** on the relationship between **chosen** and **predestined** - Third, it may be a participle of **means** (**ED: INSTRUMENTAL**) indicating that God chose by predestinating. Normally, the participle of means is contemporaneous with the time of the main verb as here. Fourth, it could be viewed as a **causal** participle, thus giving reason for the election and could be rendered "because of having predestined us, he chose us."<sup>6</sup> It is difficult to choose between the third and fourth views. However, the last option seems to make the most sense. In the counsels of God, the reason he chose the saints out of ( κ ) the mass of humanity is because he predetermined their destiny. ([Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary](#))

**NET Note** - By predestining. The aorist participle (proorisas) may be translated either **causally** ("because he predestined," "having predestined") or **instrumentally** ("by predestining"). A causal nuance would suggest that God's predestination of certain individuals prompted his choice of them. An instrumental nuance would suggest that the means by which God's choice was accomplished was by predestination. The instrumental view is somewhat more likely in light of normal Greek syntax (i.e., an aorist participle following an aorist main verb is more likely to be instrumental than causal).

**Wuest** commenting on **proorizo** writes that "The genius of the word is that of placing limitations upon someone or something beforehand, these limitations bringing that person or thing **within the sphere of a certain future or destiny**. These meanings are carried over into the New Testament usage of the word. Thus, the "chosen-out" ones, have had limitations put around them which bring them within the sphere of becoming God's children by adoption (Eph. 1:5), and of being conformed to the image of the Lord Jesus (Ro 8:29). ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmans Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

**Proorizo** is used six times in the NT...

**Acts 4:27-28+** "For truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever Thy hand and Thy purpose **predestined** to occur.

**Comment:** the crucifixion of Jesus was predetermined by the will of God not evil men, although evil men did by their free will execute Jesus and thus are culpable. Herein lies the unfathomable mystery of God's sovereignty and man's responsibility. God does not try to explain how they can coexist. Although Luke does not use the verb **proorizo** but the root verb **horizo**, he presents a similar truth in Acts 2:22-23 writing

**Acts 2:22-23+** "Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know--<sup>23</sup> this Man, delivered up by the **predetermined** (**horizo** = marked out by a limit) plan (that which has been purposed and planned) and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death.

**Romans 8:29+** For whom He foreknew, He also **predestined** to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren; **8:30** and whom He **predestined**, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

**Comment:** here we see that one of the purposes of "predestination" is that we are conformed to the image of God's Son. See also Kenneth Wuest's comments on **proorizo** above.

**1 Corinthians 2:7+** but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom, which God **predestined** before the ages to our glory

**Comment:** In other words God predetermined before the ages that the gospel would be proclaimed, a message of wisdom that is hidden in the sense that it can only be understood with the Spirit's illumination.

**Ephesians 1:11** also we have obtained an inheritance, having been **predestined** according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will,

**The Westminster Confession of Faith** - "All those whom God hath predestined unto life ... He is pleased, in His appointed and accepted time, effectually to call by His Word and Spirit."

God will get His man (or woman) every time!

**Related Resources:**

- [What is predestination? Is predestination biblical?](#)
- [How are predestination and election connected with foreknowledge?](#)

**To** (1519) (**eis**) is a preposition indicating motion into., the direction or appointment in context to adoption In the present context **eis** is used to indicate purpose = in order to, with a view to, for the purpose of. This **proorizo** or **marking out beforehand**, this **setting limits upon**, this **predestinating** had in view the act of God adopting these selected out ones (**eklego**) as His spiritual children, of taking hopeless sinners and miraculously transforming them into hope-filled sons!

**Hoehner** remarks that "It is to be noted that there are three occurrences of **εϛ** in verses 5–6: the first one has the idea of direction or appointment, the second indicates direction and relationship, and the third points to goal or end. All of the actions of the Father have as their goal the praise to God."

**Spurgeon** comments "The chosen ones are adopted; they become the children of God. The universal Fatherhood of God, except in a very special sense, is a doctrine totally unknown to Scripture. God is the Father of those whom he adopts into his family, who are born again into his family, and no man hath any right to believe God to be his Father except through the new birth, and through adoption. And why God thus elects or adopts is declared here: "According to the good pleasure of his will." He does as he pleases. That old word of God is still true: "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." Men do not like that doctrine; it galls them terribly; but it is the truth of God for all that. He is Master and King, and he will sit on the throne, and none shall drag him thence.

Here is **Fanny Crosby's** great hymn "[Adopted \(play\)](#)"...

O what a blessing, how can I express it?  
Out of the fullness of rapture I sing,  
Now by the Father received and adopted,  
I am a child and an heir of a king.

**Refrain**

*I am adopted, O wonderful love,  
Heir to a heritage purchased above;  
Tell it, my soul, and joyfully sing,  
I am a child and an heir of a King.*

O what a Father, how tenderly gracious,  
O what a Savior to make me His care;  
Tho' I have slighted, rejected, and grieved Him,  
Still He permits me His kingdom to share.

**Refrain**

O the unsearchable riches He giveth,  
Riches increasing from day unto day;  
Treasures in value all others excelling,  
Treasures that never will rust nor decay.

**Refrain**

When I have finished the work He appoints me,  
When I have ended my journey below,  
Then to my Father and Jesus my Savior,  
Home to a beautiful palace I go.

**Refrain**

**Adoption as sons** (5206) (**hiothesia** from **huios** = son + **tithemi** = place) literally means "to place one as a son". **Hiothesia** speaks of being placed in a position of a son or daughter who now possesses the same rights as the parent's natural children. It means to formally and legally declare that someone who is not one's own child is henceforth to be treated and cared for as one's own child, including complete rights of inheritance. Notice how KJV translates it "adoption of children" which is not accurate and misses the intended meaning of the term **hiothesia**. Remember that **all** translations have some degree of interpretative bias.

**NET NOTE** - The Greek term **hiothesia** was originally a legal technical term for adoption as a son with full rights of inheritance. BDAG 1024 s.v. notes, "a legal t.t. of 'adoption' of children, in our lit., i.e. in Paul, only in a transferred sense of a transcendent filial relationship between God and humans (with the legal aspect, not gender specificity, as major semantic component)." Although some

modern translations remove the filial sense completely and render the term merely "adoption" (cf. NAB, ESV), the retention of this component of meaning was accomplished in the present translation by the phrase "as...sons."....**Adoption as his sons** is different from spiritual birth as children (Jn 1:12). All true believers have been born as **children** of God and will be **adopted** as sons of God. The adoption is both a **future** reality, and in some sense, **already true**. To be adopted as a son means to have the **full rights of an heir**. Thus, although in the ancient world, only boys could be adopted as sons, in God's family all children -**both male and female - are adopted**.(HALLELUJAH!)

**Huiiothesia** - 5 times all by Paul -Ro 8:15, 23; 9:4; Gal 4:5; Eph 1:5 (Not used in the Septuagint)

#### Related Resource:

- Another onsite [study on Adoption](#).

**Barnhouse** - Let us take the Greek word apart. It is huiiothesia. The first half is **huiios**, the common noun for an adult son. The latter half is **thesia**, a placement, an installation, a setting of a person or a thing in its place. So the whole word means not so much adoption as the placing of a son. (God's Heirs: Romans 8:1–39)

**Barclay** - In Roman law, "When the adoption was complete it was complete indeed. The person who had been adopted had all the rights of a legitimate son in his new family and completely lost all rights in his old family. In the eyes of the law he was a new person. So new was he that even all debts and obligations connected with his previous family were abolished as if they had never existed." ([Ephesians 1 Commentary](#))

**Gaebelein** takes the thought even further: "Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ are not adopted into the family of God; they are born into the family. The Greek has only one word 'Sonplace.' We are placed into the position of Sons."

**Guzik** - This high position in the family of God gives us something in Jesus that Adam never had. "When people ask us the speculative question why God went ahead with the creation when he knew that it would be followed by the fall, one answer we can tentatively give is that he destined us for a higher dignity than even creation would bestow on us." (Stott)

**Detzler** - Throughout the Greek world the wealthy and influential practiced adoption. Sometimes just a simple declaration in the marketplace turned a slave into a son. It was an ancient remedy used when a marriage failed to produce a male heir. No change in name came, but the adopted son immediately became heir to the entire wealth and position of his adoptive family. Conversely the adopted son also assumed responsibility for the parents in their time of need. Adoption in the Greek and Roman world was a beautiful picture. His contemporary culture gave the Apostle Paul this word, but he gave the word a new, Holy Spirit-inspired meaning. (Only Paul uses this word to describe the relationship of believers to their Heavenly Father.) No concept is more meaningful to a believer. For adoption deposits every-thing that God owns to the accounts of His sons and daughters. Adoption is all about position and privilege... Walking down the dusty streets of Nazareth one summer afternoon I was almost run over by a racing boy. As he charged past me the little lad caught sight of his father. In a shrill, childish voice he screamed: "**Abba, Abba**." Then I began to understand the intimacy of relationship which God sustains to us. What wonderful, God-ordained words to use in prayer: "Abba, Father." ([Detzler, Wayne E: New Testament Words in Today's Language. Victor. 1986](#)) (Bolding added)

The concept of **adoption as sons** reaches back into the Old Testament, Paul writing in Romans that

For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren (the Jews), my kinsmen according to the flesh (specifically unbelieving Jews), who are Israelites, to whom belongs the **adoption as sons** (huiiothesia) and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen. (Ro 9:3, 4,5+)

**Comment:** God had "adopted" Israel in the Old Testament, Jehovah declaring in Exodus 4:22 to Moses "Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD, Israel is My **son**, my **first-born**.'"

The nation of Israel was not chosen by God because they deserved His favor, but **because of His unmerited grace and electing love** (Deut 7:6ff+). Israel was to have been "a holy (set apart from the profanity of the surrounding nations to be a) people to the LORD" Who had chosen them "for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth" (Dt 14:2+). Indeed, Jehovah protected, delivered, and chastened Israel, as a father would his own "adopted sons." In contrast to the other NT uses of **huiiothesia**, here the concept of adoption applied not to an individual, but to an entire nation to demonstrate the undeserved mercy of God. They were chosen by God because of His love (see Isa. 43:20–21).

Here in Ephesians 1:5 Paul reveals the **"past tense"** aspect of our **adoption as sons**, an event predetermined in the heart and mind of God before the foundation of the world. In **Romans** Paul explains the **present tense** aspect of **adoption as sons** when we were

born into God's family and God gave us His Spirit Who kindles the fire of assurance in our souls for...

all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are **sons of God**. For you have not received a spirit of slavery (as when we were bound to sin and our "father" Satan) leading to fear again, but you have received (right now in this life) a spirit of **adoption as sons** by which we cry out, "**Abba!** (Dearest Father)! Father (**pater**)!" (Ro 8:14, 15+)

**Comment:** Abba is the very name the Beloved Son used when speaking to His Father, Mark 14:36- recording "And He [Jesus] was saying "**Abba!** (Dearest Father)! Father (**pater**)! All things are possible for Thee. Remove this cup from Me. Yet not what I will, but what Thou wilt."

Again in **Romans 8 Paul** writes of the **future tense** aspect of our **adoption as sons**...

And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit (i.e., the first fruits is the Spirit, Whose presence in us guarantees the full completion of our salvation - cf pledge in Eph 1:14+), even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our **adoption as sons** (we were adopted in the past when God predestined us, we are adopted now as believers --see Ro 8:15 above, Gal 4:5 below -- but there awaits the culmination of our privileges and position as adopted sons awaits our future resurrection and glorification - adopted as sons, past, present and future!), the redemption of our body (we have already been redeemed as believers but there is a future culminating redemption when this mortal body will put on immortality in glory). (Ro 8:23+)

**Comment:** This future tense aspect of adoption as sons of God includes the ultimate privilege of being like him (1John 3:2+) and being conformed to the glorious body of Christ [Php 3:21+]

In a parallel passage in **Galatians** Paul describes the present aspect of adoption of sons of God writing that...

when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, in order that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the **adoption as sons**. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "**Abba!** (Dearest Father)! Father (**pater**)!" Therefore you are no longer a slave (to sin, Satan or the fear he orchestrates Heb 2:14-15+), but a son (we are adopted sons), and if a son then an heir through God." (Gal 4:4-7+)

**Comment:** The intimacy of our new relationship with God the Father - "Abba! Father!" - stands in striking contrast to our prior relationship of enslavement to **Sin**.)

**Adoption** (see [ISBE article on adoption](#)) is a well known human institution but supernatural adoption of believers by God is far more than a name. A man adopts one to be his son and his heir that does not at all resemble him, but whosoever God adopts for His child is like Him (2Pe 1:4-note) he not only bears His heavenly Father's name, but His image.

**Spurgeon** - Oh, what a blessing this is, altogether inconceivable in its results!

"Behold what wondrous grace,  
The Father hath bestow'd  
On sinners of a mortal race,  
To call them sons of God!"

**Adoption**, was a commonly known legal procedure in the Hellenistic world, the most famous example being Julius Caesar's adoption of his great-nephew Octavius, who later succeeded him as the emperor Caesar Augustus. Often a wealthy, childless man would adopt a young slave, who would trade his slavery for sonship, with all its concomitant privileges. This adoption meant at least three things all of which have spiritual parallels for believers who are now sons and daughters of God...

(1) **It brought about a total break with the old family and a new family relation with all its rights, privileges and responsibilities.** The adopted person lost all rights in his old family, and gained all the rights of a fully legitimate son in his new family. In the most literal sense, and in the most binding legal way, he got a new father!

(2) **The adopted son became an heir to his new father's estate.** No matter how many other sons there were at the time or how many were born thereafter, he was co-heir with them. This was not subject to change.

(3) **The old life of the adoptee was completely erased.** All debts and obligations were legally canceled. The adopted son was regarded by the law as a new person. William Barclay cites a case in Roman history that shows how completely this was true. The Roman emperor Claudius adopted Nero so that Nero could succeed him as emperor. Claudius had a daughter named Octavia. Nero wished to marry Octavia to seal the alliance. Although they were not blood relations, in the eyes of the law they were now brother

and sister and could not marry. The Roman senate had to pass a special law in order for them to marry.

In like manner, believers, when they are adopted, are removed from under the authority of their previous father, Satan (see Jn 8:44) and are given a new Father. They are guaranteed an inheritance with all the children of God, and as Paul explains later (Ep 1:14-note) the Holy Spirit is the down payment and guarantee of their inheritance. The Spirit is also the witness that adoption has taken place (Ro 8:14, 15-notes). Finally, the adopted sons are new persons, in that all their sins are forgiven, and they have a clean slate before God. What a tremendous blessing to know that God has made us His own and that this was predetermined most likely before the foundation of the world "according to the kind intention of His will"!

Second, it is the Holy Spirit who is the Spirit of adoption who is given to us as a permanent witness to our adoption. It is the Spirit who assures believers of their relationship with God and causes them to cry "Abba, Father" (Ro 8:15-note; Gal. 4:5). And not only this, but it is the Spirit who assures believers of their freedom from the bondage of the law (Gal. 4:5) and frees them from fear (Ro 8:15-note).

Finally, while adoption is a present possession for believers, it also has a future aspect. Although believers have received the "first-fruits of the Spirit," they are still waiting for the redemption of the body, which is considered to be part of "the adoption" (Ro 8:23-note). It will be complete only when Jesus returns and changes this vile body into a glorified one.

**S Lewis Johnson** writes that when Paul used **adoption as sons** he may have had in mind the idea of true adoption as practiced in the Roman Empire at that time in history. Johnson goes on to say that...

a true adoption, (is the process) by which an individual is taken out of one family and put in another family. In the Roman world, the family was based on what was called the **patria potestas**, that is "the father's power." The father had absolute power among the Romans. He not only had absolute power over his children so far as disciplining them is concerned, but he had power over them as long as he lived. He could actually put children to death in Roman Law. In fact, even when a son became a magistrate, he was still under his own father. So, for a child to be taken out of one Roman family, and placed in another family, was a very, very significant thing. In fact the ceremony is so interesting I'm going to read a little bit to you about it.

Deon Cassius tells us that the Roman Law was that the Law of the Romans gave a father absolute authority over his son, and that for the son's whole life. It gives him authority, if he so chooses, to imprison him, to scourge him, to make him work on his estate as a slave in fetters, even to kill him. The right still continues to exist even if the son is old enough to play an active part in political affairs, even if he's been judged worthy to occupy the magistrate's office, and even if he is held in honor by all men. It is quite true that when a father was judging his son, he was supposed to call the adult male members of the family into consultation, but it was not necessary that he should do so. There are actual instances of cases in which a father did condemn his son unto death. Silast, in the Catiline Conspiracy, tells how a son called Allus Fulvius joined the rebel Cataline. He was arrested on the journey and brought back. And his father ordered that he should be put to death. The father did this on his own private authority. The father gave as his reason, "He had begotten him not for Cataline against his country, but for his country against Cataline."

Under Roman Law a child could not possess anything, and any inheritance willed to him or a gift given to him became the property of the father. So it was a serious step to take a child out of one family and put him another. The ritual of adoption must have been very impressive. It was carried out by a symbolic sale in which copper and scales were used. Twice, the real father "sold" his son, and twice he bought him back. Finally, he sold him a third time and at the third sale, he did not buy him back. After this, the adopting father had to go the praetor, one of the principal Roman magistrates, and plead the case for the adoption. And only after all this had been gone through was the adoption complete. But when the adoption was complete, it was complete indeed. The person who had been adopted had all the rights of a legitimate son in his new family and completely lost all rights in his old family, and furthermore all his old debts were considered to be paid – he was a new person. ([Ephesians 1:3-6 The Work of the Father](#))

Puritan **Thomas Gataker** writing on adoption into God's family noted that "The least degree of sincere sanctification...is a certain sign of adoption, a sure argument to [the Christian] that he has it, that he is the adopted child of God."

**Gerald Cowen** has some thoughts on **huiothesia**...

**Huiothesia** (adoption) is formed by combining **huios** (son) and **thesis** (a placing) and literally means "the placing as a son" or "adoption." Vine says that **huiothesia** "signifies the place and condition of a son given to one to whom it does not naturally belong."

In the Greek world the word is found only as early as the second century B.C.; however, the concept of

adoption (place a son) is much earlier. In Crete (fifth century B.C.) adoption had "to take place on the market-square before the assembled citizens and from the speaker's tribunal.

The rules allowed adoption even when there were already male descendants . . . The adopted son is introduced . . . and inscribed in the koina grammateia. "4 This process was usually connected with the making of a will. Moulton and Milligan cite an example from the Greek papyruses:

We agree, Heracles and his wife Isarion on the one part, that we have given away to you, Horion, for adoption our son Patermouthis, aged about two years, and I Horion on the other part, that I have him as my own son so that the rights proceeding from succession to my inheritance shall be maintained for him.

In the Jewish world official adoption was not practiced. The word is not used at all in the Old Testament. It is referred to by Jews living outside Israel, such as Philo. However, he used it in a figurative sense to refer to the relation of the wise person to God.

**In Roman society the father had absolute power over his family;** in the early days, at least, he had power of life and death over them. Barclay adds, "In regard to his father a Roman son never came of age. No matter how old he was, he was still under the patria potestas." Therefore, for a son to be adopted, he had to be transferred from under the authority of his father to another's, which was equally absolute.

There were two steps. The first step was called MANCIPATIO. It consisted of a mock sale in which the father twice symbolically sold his son, and twice bought him back. The third time he did not buy him back.

The second step was a ceremony called VINDICATIO. The new father went to a Roman magistrate and presented the proposed adoption before him. When this was finished, the adoption was complete. This ceremony was carried out in the presence of seven witnesses. This was in case some dispute arose after the death of the adopting father, so that the inheritance of the adopted person was guaranteed.

**In the New Testament "adoption" is used only by Paul.** On one occasion he referred to Israel's adoption by God as His chosen people (Ro 9:4). The other four references speak of the believer's relationship with God. Romans 8:15 says, "For you have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but you have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." In the same chapter (Ro 8:23), adoption is spoken of as future (at least partially): "But ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body." Galatians 4:5 gives further explanation of this concept of adoption. Jesus came to redeem those under the law "that we might receive the adoption of sons." Then Paul spoke of adoption as already complete: "And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts" (author's italics). Ephesians 1:5 explains that adoption was part of God's will from ages past: "Having predestined us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself according to the good pleasure of His will."

**The use of huiothesia in the New Testament can be summarized as follows.**

**First**, it speaks of the special relationship believers have with God. It speaks of "sonship," but one distinct from that assured by natural descent. In this respect the believers are contrasted with Jesus. Believers are put into the relationship of sons by adoption; Jesus is the unoriginated, unique Son who always was the Son and therefore did not need to be adopted.

**Second**, it is the Holy Spirit who is the Spirit of adoption who is given to us as a permanent witness to our adoption. It is the Spirit who assures believers of their relationship with God and causes them to cry "Abba, Father" (Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:5). And not only this, but it is the Spirit who assures believers of their freedom from the bondage of the law (Gal. 4:5) and frees them from fear (Rom. 8:15).

**Finally**, while adoption is a present possession for believers, it also has a future aspect. Although believers have received the "**first-fruits of the Spirit**," they are still waiting for the redemption of the body, which is considered to be part of "the adoption" (Ro 8:23). It will be complete only when Jesus returns and changes this vile body into a glorified one.

**Adoption, as it was practiced in the Roman world of Paul's day, meant three things.**

(1) Barclay points out, "The adopted person lost all rights in his old family, and gained all the rights of a fully legitimate son in his new family. In the most literal sense, and in the most binding legal way, he got a new father."

(2) Next, he became an heir to his new father's estate. No matter how many other sons there were at the time or how many were born thereafter, he was co-heir with them. This was not subject to change.



(3) Finally, the old life of the adoptee was completely erased. All debts were legally canceled. He was regarded by the law as a new person. Barclay cites a case in Roman history that shows how completely this was true. The Roman emperor Claudius adopted Nero so that Nero could succeed him as emperor. Claudius had a daughter named Octavia. Nero wished to marry Octavia to seal the alliance. Although they were not blood relations, in the eyes of the law they were now brother and sister and could not marry. The Roman senate had to pass a special law in order for them to marry.

**In like manner, believers, when they are adopted, are removed from under the authority of Satan and given a new Lord, who is now also their Father. They are guaranteed an inheritance with all the children of God, of which the Holy Spirit is the down payment and guarantee. The Spirit is also the witness that adoption has taken place. Finally, they are new persons, all their sins are forgiven, and they have a clean slate before God. What a tremendous blessing to know that God has made us His own.** ([Salvation- Word Studies from the Greek New Testament- Gerald Cowen](#))

**Harold Hoehner** adds that "The saints chosen by God are predestined as adopted sons (and daughters) of God. This means that believers, formerly labeled as "sons of disobedience" and "children of wrath" (Eph 2:2–3), have absolutely no responsibility and/or obligation to their old father the devil (cf. John 8:38, 44), the ruler of the realm of the air (Eph 2:2). Rather, they are now God's sons and daughters and he controls their lives and property. Since God does not die, the saints will always be under his control. The father has a right to discipline his sons (Heb 12:5–11). Although this may sound foreboding, it is not. It must be remembered that under Roman law the reason for adoption was to continue a family name and its property. The point is that the one adopted acquired a new status, privilege, and property that would not have been available under his old father. There would be no reason for adoption if it were disadvantageous. The adoption brought great gains to the adoptee. Likewise, the saints were under the tyrant the devil who was their slavemaster and who brought destruction. In contrast, the saints have a new father who is unselfish, loving, and caring and wants the very best for his sons and daughters, the believers. Although believers are adopted into God's family, its full realization for the believers will be enjoyed at the time of their resurrection (Rom 8:23) when their old father the devil will no longer tempt them to return to him. ([Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary](#))

**Through** (1223) (**dia**) is a preposition of intermediate agency. Christ is the intermediate agent of (the means by which) the Father brings to fruition His purpose of placing believers as His adult sons, doing so through Christ's finished work on the Cross.

**To** (eis) **Himself** (846) (**auto**) refers to the Father Who had previously marked us out with a view to adopting us as sons for Himself for His own satisfaction that He might lavish His love on us. How amazing is His grace? (Rhetorical of course!) And since we are now His sons and daughters, we are subject to His loving and wise discipline, which in fact is proof that we are truly adopted (see Heb 12:5-11+).

**Harold Hoehner** - The preposition **ε ς** denotes direction and relationship, and thus is translated "to" and "into," connoting the coming to and into God's family. Therefore, God predestined us to be adopted as his sons (and daughters), this adoption came through Christ, and this finally brings us to God in order to have fellowship with him as our father. ([Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary](#))

**THOUGHT** - God has preordained that we would share His very nature...like Father, like son! Am I living up to my potential in Christ?

Peter phrases the same idea this way calling us **partakers of His divine nature**...

For by these (His own glory and excellence) He has granted (perfect tense = an abiding gift, speaks of permanence of the grant, He won't renege on His word to His beloved!) to us His precious (costly, valuable, same word used of the blood of Jesus in 1Pe 1:19+) and magnificent (very great, exceeding great, preeminent, in a sense beyond adequate description) promises (assurances), in order that by them (by what? His promises -- which means we need to saturate our mind with His word of Truth that the Spirit would renew our thinking) you might **become partakers** (those who commune, have fellowship with, partner with, are companions with - Do you really believe this? Does your everyday life demonstrate to the lost world you believe this radical truth?) **of the divine nature** (no, we are not "little gods", but His life is now our life Col 3:4+, His Spirit now our enablement, Ep 5:18+), having escaped (note past tense! The verb is unique and means we have escaped completely! Sure we are **in** the world, but we are no longer **of** this decaying world which is passing away and even its lusts -1Jn 2:17+) the corruption (state of ruin, decay, deterioration) that is in the world by lust (epithumia). (2Pe 1:4+)

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**QUESTION** - [What does it mean that Christians are adopted by God?](#)

**ANSWER** - To adopt someone is to make that person a legal son or daughter. Adoption is one of the metaphors used in the Bible to

explain how Christians are brought into the family of God. Jesus came “that we might receive adoption to sonship” (Galatians 4:5), and He was successful: “You received God’s Spirit when he adopted you as his own children” (Romans 8:15, NLT).

The Bible also uses the metaphor of being “[born again](#)” into God’s family (John 3:3), which seems to be at odds with the concept of adoption because, normally, either a person is born into a family or adopted, not both. We shouldn’t make too much of the difference, however, because both of these concepts are metaphors and should not be played against each other.

Adoption was not common in the Jewish world. A person’s standing was based on his birth. This is the reason that, if a man died, his brother was supposed to [marry the widow](#). The first son to be born of the new marriage would be legally considered the son of the dead brother so that his family line would continue. There was never any thought of the widow adopting a son to carry on the family name. In John 3, Jesus is speaking to Nicodemus, a Jewish leader, and He uses the Jewish concept of being born again (or born from above) to explain how one is brought into God’s family.

In the Roman world, adoption was a significant and common practice. Today, we can write a will and leave our wealth and property to anyone we want, male or female. In the Roman world, with few exceptions, a man had to pass his wealth on to his son(s). If a man had no sons or if he felt that his sons were incapable of managing his wealth or were unworthy of it, he would have to adopt someone who would make a worthy son. These adoptions were not infant adoptions as is common today. Older boys and adult men were normally adopted. In some cases, the adoptee might even be older than the man who was adopting him. When the adoption was legally approved, the adoptee would have all his debts cancelled and he would receive a new name. He would be the legal son of his adoptive father and entitled to all the rights and benefits of a son. A father could disown his natural-born son, but an adoption was irreversible.

In the book *Ben-Hur: A Tale of the Christ* and the movie starring Charlton Heston, we see a vivid portrayal of Roman adoption. In the movie, Judah [Ben-Hur](#) (a Jew) has been imprisoned on a Roman galley ship as a rower. When the ship sinks in battle, Judah escapes and saves the life of a Roman commander, Arrius. Arrius’s only son has been killed, and he ultimately adopts Judah, who is pardoned for his supposed crimes. He is also given a new name, “young Arrius,” and has all the rights of inheritance. In the scene where the adoption is announced, Arrius takes off his ancestral signet ring and gives it to young Arrius. Young Arrius says that he has received “a new life, a new home, a new father.”

Paul, writing to Roman audiences, uses the metaphor of adoption, which a Roman audience would have understood. Galatians 4:3–7 says, “So also, when we were children, we were enslaved under the basic principles of the world. But when the time had fully come, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, to redeem those under the Law, that we might receive our adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying out, ‘[Abba, Father!](#)’ So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, you are also an heir through God.” In this passage, Christians are born enslaved, but Jesus buys them out of slavery and they are adopted by the Father and given the Spirit, so now they are heirs.

When we come to faith in Christ, our debts are cancelled, we are given a new name, and we are given all the rights that heirs of God possess. One difference from Roman adoption is that Christians are not adopted because God thinks they will make worthy heirs. God adopts people who are completely unworthy, because He adopts on the basis of His grace.

So, Christians have been born into God’s family (using a Jewish metaphor) and adopted into God’s family (using a Roman metaphor). The end result is the same; Christians are forever part of God’s family. [GotQuestions.org](#)

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#### Related Resources:

- [What is the Spirit of adoption \(Romans 8:15\)? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What does the Bible say about adoption? | GotQuestions.org](#)

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Williams Evans (1870-1950) - Great Doctrines of the Bible - [see index](#)

#### ADOPTION

- **Regeneration** begins the new life in the soul;  
**Justification** deals with the new attitude of God towards that soul, or perhaps better, of that soul towards God;  
**Adoption** admits man into the family of God with filial joy.
- **Regeneration** has to do with our change in nature;  
**Justification**, with our change in standing;  
**Sanctification**, with our change in character;

**Adoption**, with our change in position.

- In **regeneration** the believer becomes a child of God (John 1:12, 13); in **adoption**, the believer, already a child, receives a place as an adult son; thus the child becomes a son, the minor becomes an adult (Gal. 4:1–7).

## I. The Meaning of Adoption

**Adoption** means (GREEK WORD LITERALLY MEANS) the placing of a son. It is a legal metaphor as **regeneration** is a physical one. It is a Roman word, for **adoption** was hardly, if at all, known among the Jews. It means the taking by one man of the son of another to be his son, so that that son has the same position and all the advantages of a son by birth. The word is Pauline, not Johannine. The word is never once used of Christ. It is used of the believer when questions of rights, privileges, and heirship are involved. It is peculiarly a Pauline word (Gal. 4:5; Rom. 8:15, 23; 9:4; Eph. 1:5). John uses the word “**children**,” not “**sons**,” because he is always speaking of sonship from the standpoint of nature, growth, and likeness (cf. 1 John 3:1).

Exodus 2:10 and Heb. 11:24 furnish two splendid illustrations of the Scriptural sense and use of adoption.

## II. The Time When Adoption Takes Place

### 1. IN A CERTAIN SENSE IT IS ETERNAL IN ITS NATURE

Eph. 1:4, 5—Before the foundation of the world we were **predestinated** unto the adoption of children. We need to distinguish between the **foreordaining** to adoption, and the actual act of adoption which took place when we believed in Christ. Just as the incarnation was **foreordained**, and yet took place in time; and just as the Lamb was slain from before the foundation of the world, and yet actually only on Calvary. **Why then mention this eternal aspect of adoption?** To exclude works and to show that our salvation had its origin solely in the grace of God (Ro 9:11; 11:5, 6). Just as if we should adopt a child it would be a wholly gracious act on our part.

### 2. IT TAKES PLACE THE MOMENT ONE BELIEVES IN JESUS CHRIST

1 John 3:2—“Beloved, now are we the sons of God.” Gal. 3:26—“For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.” See also John 1:12. Sonship is now the present possession of the believer. Strange as it may be, inconceivable as it may seem, it is nevertheless true. The world may not think so (1 John 3:1), but God says so, and the Christian believing it, exclaims, “**I’m a child of the King.**” Formerly we were slaves; now we are sons.

### 3. OUR SONSHIP WILL BE COMPLETED AT THE RESURRECTION AND COMING AGAIN OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

Ro 8:23—“Waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.”

Here in this world we are incognito; we are not recognized as sons of God. But some day we shall throw off this disguise (2 Cor. 5:10). It doth not appear, it hath not yet appeared what we shall be; the revelation of the sons of God is reserved for a future day. See also 1 John 3:1–3.

## III. The Blessings of Adoption

The blessings of adoption are too numerous to mention save in the briefest way. Some of them are as follows:

- Objects of God’s peculiar love (John 17:23), and His fatherly care (Luke 12:27–33).
- We have the family name (1 John 3:1; Eph. 3:14, 15), the family likeness (Ro 8:29); family love (John 13:35; 1 John 3:14); a filial spirit (Ro. 8:15; Gal. 4:6); a family service (John 14:23,24; 15:8).
- We receive fatherly chastisement (Heb. 12:5–11); fatherly comfort (Isa. 66:13; 2 Cor. 1:4), and an inheritance (1 Pet. 1:3–5; Rom. 8:17).

## IV. Some Evidences of Sonship

Those who are adopted into God’s family:

- Are led by the Spirit (Ro 8:14; Gal. 5:18).
- Have a childlike confidence in God (Gal. 4:5, 6).
- Have liberty of access (Eph. 3:12).
- Have love for the brethren (1 John 2:9–11; 5:1).

- Are obedient (1 John 5:1–3)

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### **QUESTION - [What is predestination? Is predestination biblical? Watch the Accompanying Video](#)**

**ANSWER - [Romans 8:29-30](#)** tells us, “For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.” Ephesians 1:5 and 11 declare, “He predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will...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.” Many people have a strong hostility to the doctrine of predestination. However, predestination is a biblical doctrine. The key is understanding what predestination means, biblically.

The words translated “predestined” in the Scriptures referenced above are from the Greek word *proorizo*, which carries the meaning of “determining beforehand,” “ordaining,” “deciding ahead of time.” So, predestination is God determining certain things to occur ahead of time. What did God determine ahead of time? According to Romans 8:29-30, God predetermined that certain individuals would be conformed to the likeness of His Son, be called, justified, and glorified. Essentially, God predetermines that certain individuals will be saved. Numerous scriptures refer to believers in Christ being chosen (Matthew 24:22, 31; Mark 13:20, 27; Romans 8:33, 9:11, 11:5-7, 28; Ephesians 1:11; Colossians 3:12; 1 Thessalonians 1:4; 1 Timothy 5:21; 2 Timothy 2:10; Titus 1:1; 1 Peter 1:1-2, 2:9; 2 Peter 1:10). Predestination is the biblical doctrine that God in His sovereignty chooses certain individuals to be saved.

The most common objection to the doctrine of predestination is that it is unfair. Why would God choose certain individuals and not others? The important thing to remember is that no one deserves to be saved. We have all sinned (Romans 3:23) and are all worthy of eternal punishment (Romans 6:23). As a result, God would be perfectly just in allowing all of us to spend eternity in hell. However, God chooses to save some of us. He is not being unfair to those who are not chosen, because they are receiving what they deserve. God’s choosing to be gracious to some is not unfair to the others. No one deserves anything from God; therefore, no one can object if he does not receive anything from God. An illustration would be a man randomly handing out money to five people in a crowd of twenty. Would the fifteen people who did not receive money be upset? Probably so. Do they have a right to be upset? No, they do not. Why? Because the man did not owe anyone money. He simply decided to be gracious to some.

If God is choosing who is saved, doesn’t that undermine our free will to choose and believe in Christ? The Bible says that we have the choice—all who believe in Jesus Christ will be saved (John 3:16; Romans 10:9-10). The Bible never describes God rejecting anyone who believes in Him or turning away anyone who is seeking Him (Deuteronomy 4:29). Somehow, in the mystery of God,

predestination works hand-in-hand with a person being drawn by God (John 6:44) and believing unto salvation (Romans 1:16). God predestines who will be saved, and we must choose Christ in order to be saved. Both facts are equally true. [Romans 11:33](#) proclaims, "Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!" [GotQuestions.org](#)

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**QUESTION - [How are predestination and election connected with foreknowledge?](#)**

**ANSWER** - Certainly, since God knows everything, it would have been possible for God to base His predestination and election of individuals upon His [foreknowledge](#) of the future. In fact, that is the exact position that many Christians believe, as it is the Arminian view of predestination. The problem is that it really is not what the Bible teaches about predestination, election, and foreknowledge. In order to understand why the view that "God made His choice based on merely knowing the future" is not what the Bible teaches, let's first consider a couple of verses that speak to the reason God elected or predestined people to salvation.

Ephesians 1:5 tells us that God "predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will." According to this verse, the basis of our being predestined is not something that we do or will do, but is based solely on the will of God for His own pleasure. As Romans 9:15-16 says, "I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion. It does not, therefore, depend on man's desire or effort, but on God's mercy." Similarly, Romans 9:11 declares regarding Jacob and Esau, "Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad—in order that God's purpose in election might stand: not by works but by him who calls." Then again in Ephesians 1:11 we see that people are "chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will." From these and many other passages, we see that Scripture consistently teaches that predestination or election is not based upon something that we do or will do. God predestined people based on His own sovereign will to redeem for Himself people from every tribe, tongue, and nation. God predetermined or predestined this from before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4) based solely on His sovereign will and not because of anything that He knew the people would do.

But what about Romans 8:29 where it says that those "He foreknew, He also predestined"? Doesn't that seem to say that predestination is based upon the foreknowledge of God? Of course, the answer is yes, it does teach that predestination is based on the foreknowledge of God. But what does the word foreknowledge mean? Does it mean "based upon God's knowledge of the future," meaning God simply looks down through the future and sees who will believe the gospel message and then predestines or elects them? If that were the case, it would contradict the verses above from Romans and Ephesians that make it very clear election is not based on anything man does or will do.

Fortunately, God does not leave us to wonder about this issue. In John 10:26, Jesus said, "But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep." The reason some people believe is that they belong to God. They were chosen for salvation, not based on the fact that they would one day believe, but because God chose them for "adoption as sons in Christ Jesus" before they ever existed. The reason one person believes and another person does not is that one person has been adopted by God and the other has not. The truth is that the word foreknew in Romans 8:29 is not speaking of God's knowing the future. The word foreknowledge is never used in terms of knowing about future events, times or actions (God's omniscience). What it does describe is a predetermined relationship in the knowledge of God whereby God brings the salvation relationship into existence by decreeing it into existence ahead of time.

The word know is sometimes used in the Bible to describe an intimate or personal relationship between a man and a woman. In a similar sense, before God ever created the heavens and earth, and a long time before we were ever born, God knew His elect in a personal way and chose them to be His sheep, not because they would someday follow Him but in order to guarantee that they would follow Him. His knowing them and choosing them is the reason they follow Him, not the other way around. The issue really is not whether or not God knows who will believe, but why some believe and others do not. The answer to that is God chooses to have mercy on some and others He leaves in their sinful rebellion.

The following quote by John Murray is excellent in dealing with this issue: "*Even if it were granted that 'foreknew' means the foresight of faith, the biblical doctrine of sovereign election is not thereby eliminated or disproven. For it is certainly true that God foresees faith; He foresees all that comes to pass. The question would then simply be: whence proceeds this faith, which God foresees? And the only biblical answer is that the faith which God foresees is the faith He himself creates (cf. John 3:3-8; 6:44, 45, 65; Eph. 2:8; Phil. 1:29; 2 Peter 1:2). Hence His eternal foresight of faith is preconditioned by His decree to generate this faith in those whom He foresees as believing.*" [GotQuestions.org](#)

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**Related Resources:**

- [What does the Bible say about predestination vs. free will? | GotQuestions.org](#)

- [How are predestination and election connected with foreknowledge? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What is foreknowledge in the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](#)

## ACCORDING TO THE KIND INTENTION OF HIS WILL: kata ten eudokian tou thelematos autou:

- Ep 1:9-note; Ep 1:11-note
- Daniel 4:35; Matthew 1:25; 11:26; Luke 10:21; 11:32; Romans 9:11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16; 1Cor 1:1,21; Phil 2:13; 2Th 1:11
- [Ephesians 1 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Ephesians 1:5-6 Predestined to Adoption](#) - Steven Cole
- [Ephesians 1:4-6: The Body Formed in Eternity Past-2](#) - John MacArthur
- [Ephesians 1:4-14: The Calling of the Church](#) - John MacArthur
- [Ephesians 1:6-10: Redemption Through His Blood](#) - John MacArthur

## GOD'S MAGNANIMOUS MOTIVATION!

**According to the kind intention of His will** - Why did He bless us with adoption as His sons? Paul gives us the answer and what a grand answer it is!

**According to (2596) (kata)** does not mean out of but in proportion to. Let's illustrate. If I am a billionaire and I give you ten dollars, I have given you out of my riches; but if I give you a million dollars, I have given to you according to my riches. The first is a portion while the second is a proportion." In this case the phrase introduces God's sovereign motivation for predestining believers to adoption as sons.

**Accordinging** in Ephesians (14x in 12v) - Eph. 1:5; Eph. 1:7; Eph. 1:9; Eph. 1:11; Eph. 2:2; Eph. 3:7; Eph. 3:16; Eph. 3:20; Eph. 4:7; Eph. 4:16; Eph. 4:29; Eph. 6:5;

**Kind intention (2107) (eudokia** from **eu** = well, good + **dokeo** = think) defines the state of being kindly disposed, and so refers to God's benevolence, good will, or pleasure. Election and predestination transpired because it pleased Him! God's absolute act of free love grounded totally in Himself nothing apart from Him which gave His will direction. In the NT the word occurs nine times, seven of which speak of God's actions (Matt 11:26; Luke 2:14; 10:21; Eph 1:5, 9; Phil 2:13; 2 Thess 1:11) and twice of a human being's actions (Rom 10:1; Phil 1:15).

God delighted to impart His spiritual blessings to His sons and daughters!

**Hoehner** - There are three connotations of the word (**eudokia**) (1) it can describe purpose, will, desire (God's, 1 Chr 16:10; Matt 11:26; human's, Ps 145:16 [LXX 144:16]; Rom 10:1); (2) it can denote goodwill or benevolence (God's, Ps 51:18 [MT 51:20; LXX 50:20]; Phil 2:13?; human's, Phil 1:15) and (3) it can mean good pleasure, satisfaction, well-pleasing (cf. God's, Ps 19:14 [MT 19:15; LXX 18:15]; Eph 1:9; human's, Ps 141:5 [LXX 140:5]; 2 Thess 1:11). It is this third sense that fits the concept in the present context.

**God's predestination of adopted sons into his family was not unpleasant but rather expresses his good pleasure.** Barth summarizes it well when he says, "*Not a grim Lord watching over the execution of his predetermined plan, but a smiling Father is praised. He enjoys imparting his riches to many children.*" ([Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary](#))

**Eudokia** - 8v - Matt. 11:26; Lk. 2:14; Lk. 10:21; Rom. 10:1; Eph. 1:5; Eph. 1:9; Phil. 1:15; Phil. 2:13; 2 Thess. 1:11

**Will (2307) (thelema)** refers what one has decided. Here it refers to God's gracious disposition (what He has decided - His will, design, purpose). His electing and predestining us unto adoption are not due to any good in us or anything outside God Himself, but are acts of His own pure goodness, originating wholly in the freedom of His own sovereignty. In other words His good pleasure comes from His good and acceptable and perfect will!

**Thelema in Ephesians** -Eph. 1:1; Eph. 1:5; Eph. 1:9; Eph. 1:11; Eph. 2:3; Eph. 5:17; Eph. 6:6;

**Hoehner** - In conclusion, predestination puts more emphasis on the "what" than the "who." God took the initiative to predetermine our destiny as adopted sons into the family of God. He accomplished this through (διὰ) his Son Jesus Christ to bring us to (εϛ) God himself. This was done all according (κατὰ) to his pleasure freely operating from his own will. Because he has predestined us, he chose us out of all humanity. These actions are not only the basis of every spiritual blessing but also are the spiritual blessings themselves. Is it any wonder that God is to be praised! ([Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary](#))

## "ACCORDING TO" - Part 1

### Ephesians 1:5

#### Alexander Maclaren

That phrase, '**according to**,' is one of the key-words of this profound epistle, which occurs over and over again, like a refrain. I reckon twelve instances of it in three chapters of the letter, and they all introduce one or other of the two thoughts which appear in the two fragments that I have taken for my text. They either point out how the great blessings of Christ's mission have underlying them the divine purpose, or they point out how the process of the Christian life in the individual has for its source and measure the abundances, the wealth of the grace and the power of God. So in both aspects the facts of earth are traced up to, and declared to be, the outcome of the heavenly depths, and that gives solemnity, grandeur, elevation, to this epistle all its own. We are carried, as it were, away up into the recesses of the mountains of God, and we look down upon the unruffled, mysterious, deep lake, from which come the rivers that water all the plains beneath.

Now of these two types of reference to the divine will and the divine wealth, I should like to gather together the instances, as they occur in this letter, in so far as I can, in the course of a sermon, touching them, it must be, very imperfectly. But I fear that it is impossible to deal with both the phases of this '**according to**,' in one discourse. So I confine myself to that which is suggested by the first of our two texts, in the hope that some other day we may be able to overtake the other. So then, we have set before us here the Christian thought of the divine will which underlies, and therefore is manifest by, the work of Jesus Christ, in its whole sweep and breadth. And I just take up the various instances in which this expression occurs in a great variety of forms, but all retaining substantially the same meaning.

**I. Note that that divine will which underlies and is operative in, and therefore is certified to us by the whole work of Jesus Christ, in its facts and its consequences, is a 'good pleasure.'**

Now there are few thoughts which the history of the world has shown to be more productive of iron and steel in the human character than that of the sovereign will of God. That made Islam, and is the secret of its power today, amidst its many corruptions. Because these wild desert tribes were all stiffened, or I might say inflamed, by that profound conviction, the sovereign will of God, they came down like a hammer upon that corrupt so-called Christian Church, and swept it off the face of the earth, as it deserved to be swept. And the same thought of the sovereign will, of which we are but instruments-pawns on its chess-board — made the grand seventeenth century Puritanism in England, and its sister type of men and of religion in Holland. For this is a historically proved thesis, that there is nothing which so contributes to the formation, and valuation of, and the readiness to die for, civil liberty, as the firm grasp of that thought of the divine sovereignty. Just because a man realizes that the will of God is supreme over all the earth, he rebels against all forms of human despotism.

But with all the good that is in that great thought — and the Christianity of this day sorely wants the strength that might be given it by the exhibition of that steel medicine — it wants another, '**the good pleasure of His will.**' And that word, '**good pleasure**,' does not express, as I think, in Paul's usage of it, the simple notion of sovereignty, but always the notion of a benevolent sovereignty. It is '**the good pleasure**' — as it is put in another place by the same Apostle — '**of His goodness.**' And that thought, let in upon the solemnity and severity of the other one, is all that it needs in order to make the man who grasps it not only a hero in conflict, and a patient martyr in endurance, but a child in his Father's house, rejoicing in the love of his Father everywhere and always.

Paul would have us believe that if we will take the work of Jesus Christ in the facts of His life, and its results upon humanity, as our horn-book and lesson, we shall draw from that some conceptions of the great thing that underlies it, '**the good pleasure of His will.**' We stand in front of this complex universe, and some of us say: 'Law'; and some of us say: 'A Lawgiver behind the law; a Person at the heart of all things'; but unless we can say: 'And in the heart of the Person a will, which is the expression of a steadfast, omnipotent love,' then the World seems to me to be a place of unsolvable riddles and a torture-house. There goes the great steam-roller along the road. Everybody can see that it crushes down, and makes its own path. Who drives it? The steam in the boiler, or is there a hand on the lever? And what drives the hand? Christianity answers, and answers with unflinching lip, rising clear above contradictions apparent and difficulties real, '**The good pleasure of His will,**' and there men can rest.

Then there is another step. Another form in which this '**according to**' appears in this letter is, if we adopt the

rendering, which I am disposed to do in the present case, of the Authorized Version rather than of the Revised, **'according to His good pleasure... which He hath purposed in Himself,'** The Revised Version says, **'Which He hath purposed in Him,'** and that is a perfectly possible rendering. But to me the old one is not only more eloquent, but more in accordance with the connection. So I venture to accept it without further, ado — **'His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself.'**

That brings us into the presence of that same great thought, which in another aspect is expressed in saying **'His name. is Jehovah,'** and in yet another aspect is expressed in saying **'God is love,'** viz. the thought, which sounds familiar, but which has in it depths of strength and illumination and joy, if We rightly ponder it, that, to use human words, the motive of the divine action is all found within the divine nature.

We love one another because, we discern, or think we discern, lovable qualities in the being on whom our love falls. God loves because He is God. That great artesian fountain wells up from the depths, by its own sweet impulse, and pours itself out; and **'the good pleasure of, His goodness'** has no other explanation than that it is His nature and property to be merciful. And so, dear brethren, we get clean past what has sometimes been the misapprehension of good people, and has oftener been the caricatured representation of Evangelical truth which its enemies have put forth -- that God was made to love and pity by reason of the sacrifice of the Son, whereas the very opposite is the case. God loves, therefore He sent His Son, **'that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life,'** (John 3:16) and the notion of the Cross of Christ as changing the divine heart is as far away from Evangelical truth as it is from the natural conceptions that men form of the divine nature. We shake hands with our so-called antagonists and say, 'Yes! we believe as much as you do that God does not love us because Christ died, but we believe what perhaps you do not, that Christ died because God loves us, and would save us.' **'The good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself.'**

Then, still further, there is another aspect of this same divine will brought out in other parts of this letter, of which this is a specimen, **'Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fulness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ,'** which, being turned into more modern phraseology, is just this — that the great aim of that divine sovereign will, self-originated, full of loving-kindness to the world, is to manifest to all men what God is, that all men may know Him for what He is, and thereby be drawn back again, and grouped in peaceful unity round His Son, Jesus Christ. That is the intention which is deepest in the divine heart, the desire which God has most for every one of us. And when the Old Testament tells us that the great motive of the divine action is for 'My own Name's sake,' that expression might be so regarded as to disclose an ugly despot, who only wants to be revered by abject and submissive subjects. But what it really means is this, that the divine love which hovers over its poor, prodigal children because it is love, and, therefore, lovingly delights in a loving recognition and response, desires most of all that all the wanderers should see the light, and that every soul of man should be able to whisper, with loving heart, the name, 'Abba! Father!' Is not that an uplifting thought as being the dominant motive which puts in action the whole of the divine activity? God created in order that He might fling His light upon creatures, who should thereby be glad. And God has redeemed in order that in Jesus Christ we might see Him, and, seeing Him, be at rest, and begin to grow like Him. This is the aim, **'That they might know Thee, the only true God .... whom to know is eternal life.'** (John 17:3) And so self-communication and self-revelation is the very central mystery of the will.

But that is not all. Another of the forms in which this phrase occurs tells us that that great purpose, the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord, was that, **'Now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known'** by the Church **'the manifold wisdom of God.'** (Ephesians 3:10) And so we get another thought, that that whole work of redemption, operated by the Incarnation, and culminating in the Crucifixion and Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus Christ, stands as being the means by which other orders of creatures, besides ourselves, learn to know **'the manifold wisdom of God.'** According to the grand old saying, at Creation the 'morning stars sang together for joy.' All spiritual creatures; be they 'higher' or 'lower,' can only know God by the observation of His acts.

***'Twas great to speak a world from naught,  
'Tis greater to redeem,'***

and the same angelic lips that sang these praises on the morning of Creation have learnt a new song that they sing: 'Glory and honour and dominion and power be unto the Lamb that was slain.'

Thus to principalities and powers, a diviner height in the loftiness, and a diviner depth in the condescension, and a diviner tenderness in the love, and a diviner energy in the power, of the redeeming God have been



made known, and this is the thought of His eternal purpose.

And that brings me to another point which is involved in the words that I have just quoted, which stand in connection with those that I have previously referred to. The phrase '**eternal purpose**' literally rendered is, '**the purpose of the ages,**' and that, no doubt; may mean 'eternal' in the sense of running on through all the ages; or it may mean, perhaps, that which we usually attach to the word 'eternal,' viz. unbeginning and unending. I take the former meaning as the more probable one, that the Apostle contemplates that great will of God which culminates in Jesus Christ, as coming solemnly sweeping through all the epochs of time from the beginning. In a deeper sense than the poet meant it, '*Through the ages an increasing purpose runs, and that binds the epochs of humanity together* — 'the purpose of God in Christ Jesus.'

The philosophy of history lies there; and it is a true instinct that makes the cradle at Bethlehem the pivot around which the world's chronology revolves. For the deepest thing about all the ages on the further side of it is that they are 'Before Christ,' and the formative fact for all the ages after it is that they are Anno Domini.

And now the last thing that is suggested by yet another of these eloquent expressions is deduced from another part of the same phrase. The purpose of the ages is described as that which He '**purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.**'

Now the word '**purposed**' literally is '**made.**' And it may be a question whether 'purposed' or 'accomplished' is the special meaning to be attached to the general word 'made.' Either is legitimate. I take it that what the Apostle means here is that the purpose of God, which we have thus seen as sovereign, self-originated, having for its great aim the communication to all His creatures of the knowledge of Himself, and running through the ages, and binding them into a unity, reaches its entire accomplishment in the Cradle, and the Cross, and the Throne of Jesus Christ our Lord.

He fulfils the divine intention. There is that one life, and in that life alone of humanity you have a character which is in entire sympathy with the divine mind, which is in full possession of the divine truth, which never diverges or deviates by a hair's-breadth from the divine will, which is the complete and perfect exponent to man of the divine heart and character; and that Christ is the fulfilment of all that God desired in the depths of eternity, and the abysses of His being.

Did He will that men should know Him? Christ has declared Him.

Did He will that men should be drawn back to Him? Christ lifted on the Cross draws all men unto Him.

Was it 'according to the good pleasure of His goodness' that we men should attain to the adoption of sons? By that Son we too became sons.

Was it the purpose of His will that we should obtain an 'inheritance'? We obtain it in Jesus Christ, 'being heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.'

All that God willed to do is done. And when we look, on the one hand, up to that infinite purpose, and on the other, to the Cross, we hear from the dying Him, '**It is finished!**' (John 19:30) The purpose of the ages is accomplished in Christ Jesus.

Is it accomplished with you? I have been speaking about the divine counsel which is a 'good pleasure,' which runs through the whole history of mankind, But it is a divine purpose that you can thwart as far as you are concerned. 'How often would I have gathered... and ye would not,' (Mt 23:37) and your 'would not' neutralizes His 'would.'

Do not stand in the way of the steam-roller. You cannot stop it, but it can crush you.

Do not have Him say about you, 'In vain have I smitten, in vain have I loved.'

Bow, accept, recognise that all God's armory is brought to bear upon each of us in that great Cross and Passion, in that great Incarnation and human life. And I beseech you, in your hearts, let the will of God be done even as for a world it has been done by the sacrifice of Calvary.

Ephesians 1:6 [to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.](#) (NASB: Lockman)

**Greek:** [eis epainon doxes tes charitos autou en echaritosen](#) (3SAAI) [hemas en to egaphemeno.](#) (RPPMSD)

**BGT** ες παινον δξης τς χριτος ατος χαρ τωσεν μς ντ γαπημν.

**Amplified:** [So that we might be] to the praise and the commendation of His glorious grace (favor and mercy), which He so freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**Barclay** - He determined in his love before time began to adopt us to himself through Jesus Christ, in the good purpose of his will so that all might praise the glory of the generous gift which he freely gave us in the Beloved.

**Hoehner** - "to the praise of the glory of his grace with which grace he has bestowed on us in the beloved one,"

**KJV:** To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

**NLT:** So we praise God for the wonderful kindness He has poured out on us because we belong to his dearly loved Son. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**NLT (Revised)** So we praise God for the glorious grace he has poured out on us who belong to his dear Son.

**Phillips:** that we might learn to praise that glorious generosity of his which has made us welcome in the everlasting love He bears towards the Son. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**Wuest:** resulting in praise of the glory of His grace which He freely bestowed upon us in the Beloved ([Eermans Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#))

**Young's Literal:** to the praise of the glory of His grace, in which He did make us accepted in the beloved,

**ESV** to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.

**NET** to the praise of the glory of his grace that he has freely bestowed on us in his dearly loved Son.

**NIV** to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.

**CSB** to the praise of His glorious grace that He favored us with in the Beloved.

**NKJ** to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved.

**NRS** to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

**NAB** for the praise of the glory of his grace that he granted us in the beloved.

**NJB** to the praise of the glory of his grace, his free gift to us in the Beloved,

**GWN** so that the kindness he had given us in his dear Son would be praised and given glory.

**BBE** To the praise of the glory of his grace, which he freely gave to us in the Loved One:

## TO THE PRAISE OF THE GLORY OF HIS GRACE: eis epainon doxes tes charitos autou:

- **To the praise** - Ep 1:7,8,12,14,18; 2:7; 3:10,11; Proverbs 16:4; Isaiah 43:21; 61:3,11; Jeremiah 33:9; Luke 2:14; Romans 9:23,24; 2Co 4:15; Philippians 1:11; 4:19; 2Th 1:8, 9, 10; 1Ti 1:14, 15, 16; 1Peter 2:9; 4:11
- [Ephesians 1 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Ephesians 1:5-6 Predestined to Adoption](#) - Steven Cole
- [Ephesians 1:4-6: The Body Formed in Eternity Past-2](#) - John MacArthur
- [Ephesians 1:4-14: The Calling of the Church](#) - John MacArthur
- [Ephesians 1:6-10: Redemption Through His Blood](#) - John MacArthur

## GOD'S PURPOSE - THAT WE MIGHT PRAISE HIM

This is the end of the section on the work of the Father (choosing, adopting) His work rightly eliciting praise from Paul (and us!)

**To the praise of the glory of His grace** - Why did God predestine us to adoption? The result of God's gracious dealings with men is ultimately the praise of the glory of His grace. We see this repeated pattern after the work of the Son (Eph 1:12) and the work of the Spirit (Eph 1:14).

Since salvation is all of God's grace, Christians certainly ought to praise Him for it!

And that is why they were chosen: to give Him praise

-- Harold Hoehner

**Expositor's Greek Testament** says that...Here it is the glory specifically of God's grace and the praise of that is now stated to be the ultimate end of God's foreordination of us unto adoption, as our adoption itself has been declared to be the object of the foreordination. God's final purpose in His eternal determinations and the supreme end to which all that He will regarding us looks, are the manifestation and adoring recognition of His grace in its gloriousness. The phrase means more than "the praise of His glorious grace". It expresses the setting forth on God's part, and the joyful confession on man's part, of what the Divine grace in these eternal counsels is in the quality of its splendour, its magnificence. That this is the idea is shown by the subsequent mention of the "riches" of the same grace. (Nicoll Robertson, editor)

**To (1519) (eis)** means direction toward. Here **eis** describes the purpose of God's act in predestining certain one to be adopted as His sons was ultimately "to the praise of the glory of His grace. God elects saves us for His own glory!" Hoehner adds that " It is to be noted that there are three occurrences of ε ς in verses 5–6: the first one has the idea of direction or appointment, the second indicates direction and relationship, and the third points to goal or end. All of the actions of the Father have as their goal the praise to God." ([Ibid](#))

**Praise (1868) (epainos** from **epí** = upon + **ainos** = praise) means a commendable thing - praise, approval, applause. That which is represented as being worthy of regard, confidence, kindness, etc

**Epainos in NT** - Ro 2:29; Ro 13:3; 1Co. 4:5; 2Co. 8:18; Ep 1:6; Ep 1:12; Ep 1:14; Phil. 1:11; Phil. 4:8; 1Pe. 1:7; 1Pe. 2:14 - five times of ,men's praise of God (Ep 1:6, 12, 14; Php 1:11; 1Pet 1:7)

**Epainos in Septuagint** - 1Chr. 16:27; 2Chr. 21:20; Ps. 22:3 = You who are enthroned upon the praises of Israel; Ps. 22:25 = From You comes my praise in the great assembly; Ps. 35:28 = And my tongue shall declare Your righteousness And Your praise all day long.

**Glory (1391) (doxa)** means to give a proper estimate of. **Doxa** comes from the idea of something that is "weighty" in a person and hence the idea of "significance" or "importance" and this personal "weightiness" makes an impact on others. Our predestining to adoption as God's sons gives a proper estimate of God's grace will be the object of eternal hallelujah's to God, a grace that is exemplified forever in believers, His redeemed, the objects of His grace.

**Hoehner** - Basically, **doxa** has the idea of the reflection of the essence of one's being, the summation of all of one's attributes, whether it refers to God or a human being. The essence of one's being makes an impact, whether good or bad, on others; this impact of one's essential being is that of one's reputation or glory. Because of how God has revealed himself, one thinks of his reputation in categories of splendor, power, and radiance. That reputation is a result of his essential being. Therefore, a human being is to glorify (in the sense of magnify or praise) God because of his glory, reflecting his essential being. ([Ibid](#))

**Doxa in Ephesians** - Eph. 1:6; Eph. 1:12; Eph. 1:14; Eph. 1:17; Eph. 1:18; Eph. 3:13; Eph. 3:16; Eph. 3:21;

**Grace (5485) (charis)** is not merely favor but reveals His divine character and in context gives Him glory. In praising God for what He does, we learn to praise Him for what He is. Praise is called forth from the children of God by this divine glory which appears in grace.

Great God of wonders! All Thy ways  
Display Thine attributes divine;  
But the bright glories of Thy grace  
Above Thine other wonders shine:  
Who is a pard'ning God like Thee?  
Or who has grace so rich and free?  
—Samuel Davies

#### Related Resources:

- Accepted in the Beloved
- [Facebook - Preceptaustin](#)
- [Blog - Preceptaustin](#)

**WHICH HE FREELY BESTOWED ON US IN THE BELOVED: en echaritosen (3SAAI) hemas en to egaphemeno, (RPPMSD):**

- **Freely bestowed** - Isaiah 45:24,25; Jeremiah 23:6; Ro3:22, 23, 24, 25, 26; 5:15, 16, 17, 18, 19; 8:1; 2Co 5:21; Philippians 3:9; 1Pe 2:5
- **In the Beloved** - Ps 22:20; 60:5; Proverbs 8:30,31; Isaiah 42:1; 49:1, 2, 3; Zechariah 13:7; Matthew 3:17; 17:5; John 3:35;

10:17; Colossians 1:13

- [Ephesians 1 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Ephesians 1:5-6 Predestined to Adoption](#) - Steven Cole
- [Ephesians 1:4-6: The Body Formed in Eternity Past-2](#) - John MacArthur
- [Ephesians 1:4-14: The Calling of the Church](#) - John MacArthur
- [Ephesians 1:6-10: Redemption Through His Blood](#) - John MacArthur

## "ACCEPTED IN THE BELOVED"

The **KJV translation** rendering is beautiful...

To the praise of the glory of his grace,  
wherein **He hath made us accepted in the Beloved.**

### Related Resource

- Accepted in the Beloved

As you read these words may Spurgeon's prayer be your prayer and your experience...

I desire that you may this morning experimentally enjoy the precious drop of honey from the rock Christ Jesus which is contained in the four words- "**Accepted in the Beloved.**" Oh that the Holy Spirit may make you enter into the treasures, which they contain!

**Spurgeon** goes on to comment that...There is another precious doctrine, the **acceptance** of those who are **adopted**. We are **beloved of God**; He has a complacency (idea of great pleasure) toward us; He takes a delight in us; we are **acceptable** in His sight. Oh, what a blessing this is! But remember that it is all in Christ: "Accepted in the beloved." Because Christ is **accepted**, therefore those who are in Him are **accepted**.....There is music for you: "accepted in the Beloved." Are there grander words in any language than those four? Oh, the joy of being beloved, adopted, accepted by God the Father because of his beloved Son!

"**Accepted in the Beloved**" - This speaks of our justification, of Christ's righteousness imputed to our account by grace through faith.

Other translations render this verse "His glorious grace He favored us with in the Beloved" (HCSB), "His glorious grace with which He has blessed us in the Beloved" (ESV)

**Gotquestions** on **accepted** - The word is related to grace and gives the idea of making us graceful or favorable through Christ, the beloved of God. When we [put on Christ](#), the Father sees His loveliness when He looks at us. The blood of Christ has taken away the guilt of our sins, and we stand before the Father as perfectly accepted.

**Lewis Sperry Chafer** comments on "**made accepted**"...The student would do well to observe the force of the word **made** as it appears in a considerable number of passages, where it indicates that the thing accomplished is not wrought by the believer for himself, but is the work of God for him. If he is **made** something which he was not before, it is evidently the work of another in his behalf. In this instance, the believer is said to be made accepted. He is **accepted** on the part of God who, because of His infinite holiness, could accept no one less perfect than Himself. All of this is provided for on the basis of the truth that the believer is **made accepted** "in the beloved" (Eph. 1:6). Without the slightest strain upon His holiness, God accepts those who are in union with His Son; and this glorious fact, that the one who is saved is accepted, constitutes a measureless feature of divine grace. (Systematic Theology)

**A W Pink**...Accepted in the beloved" goes deeper and means far more than "accepted through him." It denotes not merely a recommendatory passport from Christ, but a real union with Him, whereby we are incorporated into His mystical body, and made as truly partakers of His righteousness as the members of the physical body partake of the life which animates its head. (The Divine Covenants)

**Expositor's** writes that...The context may well vindicate the KJV paraphrase with its emphasis on **acceptance**—"wherein he hath made us **accepted** in the **Beloved.**" It is the objective grace of God that is in view, indicating His favorable regard, rather than the further ethical effect of that grace in making us gracious. ([Expositor's Bible Commentary](#))

Someone has written a poem which expresses this glorious truth...

Near, so very near to God,

Nearer I could not be;  
For in the person of His Son,  
I'm just as near as He.  
Dear, so very dear to God,  
Dearer I could not be;  
For in the person of His Son,  
I'm just as dear as He.  
(Amen and "Oh my"!)

**Freely bestowed** (5487) (**charitoo** from **charis**= grace) means to cause one to be the recipient of a benefit. It means to bestow grace or favor upon or to show kindness to someone. Charitoo can also convey the sense of to make one agreeable or possessed of grace. To be sure Paul's use of this verb demonstrates that man can take no credit for this bestowal of grace -- it was unearned and unmerited favor and that is why it was freely bestowed.

See 10 page discussion in [New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology](#) - Topics covered include χάρις (**charis**), grace, gracefulness, graciousness, favour, thanks, gratitude; χάρισμα (**charisma**), gift given out of goodwill; χαρίζομαι (**charizomai**), show favour or kindness, give as a favour, to be gracious to someone, to pardon; χαριτόω (**charitoo**), endue with grace.

**Ralph Earle** writes that "The verb **charitoo** comes from the noun charis, "grace." It means "**to endow with charis**," or "**to cause to find favor**". The idea here is that God has extended His favor or grace to us in Christ." (Word Meanings in the New Testament)

**Thayer** says **charitoo** means to "pursue with grace, compass with favor, to honor with blessings."

It is interesting to observe the only other NT use of **charitoo** is by Luke who records the angel hailing Mary...

And coming in, he said to her, "Hail, **avored** one! The Lord is with you." (Luke 1:28)

**Comment:** "**Favored one**" is charitoo in the **perfect tense** which speaks of the abiding nature of this bestowal of grace

Paul says more literally that God has *begraded us with His grace*. Christians are those who have been graced by God in the Beloved, the Son of God. John explains the relationship of grace with the Beloved Son writing that...

And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of **grace** and truth. John bore witness of Him, and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.'" For of His fulness we have all received, and **grace** upon **grace**. For the Law was given through Moses; **grace** and truth were realized through Jesus Christ. (John 1:14-17)

**Comment:** Grace certainly was present in the OT but it was fully and abundantly realized when Jesus Christ came.

**In the Beloved** - To Whom does Paul refer? To Christ of course. He is our sole (soul) Source of acceptance with God. Take a moment to prayerfully ponder this incredible truth that we as the children of God (see 1Jn 3:1-note, 1Jn 3:2-note) are now and forever **in Him** (See **in Christ**), **in identification with Him**, **in covenant oneness with Him** (See The Oneness of Covenant) and Oneness Notes), **in an eternal bond with Him**, **in an indissoluble union with Him!** In Christ forever we are **accepted** by the Father for He is forever pleased with His **Beloved Son** in Whom we live and breathe and have our being eternally! Amazing grace indeed that in the Beloved, the Father of glory now calls us "**Beloved**" (1Th 1:4-note, Ro 1:7-note, Jude 1:1), now and forever His "**beloved children**" (Eph 5:1-note) **Hallelujah!**

**Ruth Paxson** comments on the incredibly important preposition "**in**"...

"**In**" -- Can we ever grasp fully the meaning of this little word to us? **In Him** Whom the Father loves supremely we are. **In** the Beloved whose righteousness and holiness satisfy every demand of the Father's justice and holiness we stand. The Beloved Son is our divine rainbow, God's pledge to us who are made accepted **in Him** that we will never again be cast out from His presence. **In** the Son of His love the Father receives us as He receives Him and loves us as He loves Him. It would be impossible to believe such an apparently incredible statement did not Christ Himself declare it. **Then we must believe it and rejoice in it.**

**Comment:** Beloved, in our old nature, we all strive for "acceptance" with our fellow man, and many of us have been soundly rejected by those closest to us, and we have great difficulty "accepting" the truth that we truly are "accepted in the Beloved." So take a moment to mediate on the prayer Jesus prayed for us

which contains His requests which are so transcendent and incomprehensible that it will surely take eternity to fathom their depths but which can just as surely in this present life bring solace and comfort to our souls and satisfy our hunger for acceptance...

I in them and **You** in **Me**, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that **You** sent **Me**, and loved them, **even as You have loved Me** (!!!). "**Father, I** desire that they also, whom **You** have given **Me**, be with **Me** where **I** am, so that they may see **My** glory which **You** have given **Me**, for **You** loved **Me** before the foundation of the world. O righteous **Father**, although the world has not known **You**, yet **I** have known **You**; and these have known that **You** sent **Me** and **I** have made **Your** name known to them, and will make it known, so that **the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I** in them." (John 17:23-26)

I'm forgiven, because You were forsaken  
I'm **accepted**, You were condemned  
I'm alive and well, Your Spirit is within me  
Because You died and rose again.

**Amazing Love, how can it be,**  
That You, my King should die for me?  
**Amazing Love, I know it's true**  
It's my joy to honor You in all I do to honor You  
([Amazing Love](#))

**Spurgeon** observes that...

God's love of His dear Son covers all believers, as a canopy covers all who come beneath it. As a hen covers her chickens with her wings, so God's love to Christ covers all the children of promise. As the sun shining forth from the gates of the morning gilds all the earth with golden splendor, so this great love of God to the Well-beloved, streaming forth to Him, enlightens all who are in Him. God is so boundlessly pleased with Jesus that in Him He is altogether well pleased with us....

Much went before this, but, oh, what a morning without clouds rose upon us when we knew our **acceptance** and were assured thereof. **Acceptance** was the watchword, and had troops of angels met us we should have rejoiced that we were as blest as they. Understand that this **acceptance** comes to us entirely as a work of God--"**He hath made us accepted in the Beloved.**" We never made ourselves **acceptable**, nor could we have done so, but He that has made us first in creation, has now made us new by His grace, and so has made us **accepted in the Beloved**. That this was an act of pure grace there can be no doubt, for the verse runs thus, "Wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved," that is, in His grace. There was no reason in ourselves why we should have been put into Christ, and so accepted; the reason lay in the heart of the Eternal Father Himself.

Can we get a step farther? Will the Holy Spirit help us while I say a few words by way of enlargement?

**1. If we are "accepted in the Beloved," then, first, our persons are accepted: we ourselves are well pleasing to Him.** God looks upon us now with pleasure.

**2. Being ourselves accepted, the right of access to Him is given us.** When a person is accepted with God he may come to God when he chooses. He is one of these courtiers who may come even to the royal throne and meet with no rebuff. No chamber of our great Father's house is closed against us; no blessing of the covenant is withheld from us; no sweet smile of the Father's face is refused us.

**3. And, being accepted ourselves, our prayers are also accepted.** Children of God, can you sincerely believe this? When God delights in men He gives them the desires of their hearts.

**4. It follows, as a pleasant sequence, that our gifts are accepted, for those who are accepted with God find a great delight in giving of their substance to the glory of His name.** Then let us try what we can do for Him. Here is a great lump of quartz, but if the Lord can see a grain of gold, He will save the quartz for the sake of it. He says, "Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it." I do not mean that the Lord deals thus with all men. It is only for accepted men that He has this kind way of accepting their gifts. Had you seen me, when a young man, and an usher, walking through the streets with rolls of drawings from a boys' school, you would have guessed that I considered them of no value and fit only to be consigned to the fire; but I always took a great interest in the drawings of my own boy, and I still think them rather remarkable. You smile, I dare say, but I do so think, and my judgment is as good as yours. I value them because they are his, and I think I see budding

genius in every touch, but you do not see it because you are so blind. I see it since love has opened my eyes. God can see in His people's gifts to Him and their works for Him a beauty which no eyes but His can perceive. Oh, if He so treats our poor service, what ought we not to do for Him? What zeal, what alacrity should stimulate us! If we are ourselves accepted our sacrifices shall be acceptable....

"Accepted in the Beloved." May not each believer talk thus with himself--I have my sorrows and griefs, I have my aches and pains, and weaknesses, but I must not repine, for **God accepts me**.

Ah me! How one can laugh at griefs when this sweet word comes in, "**accepted in the Beloved**." I may be blind, but I am "**accepted in the Beloved**." I may be lame, I may be poor, I may be despised, I may be persecuted, I may have much to put up with in many ways, but really these troubles of the flesh count for little or nothing to me since I am "**accepted in the Beloved**." **Is not this a word to die with?** We will meet death and face his open jaws with this word, "**Accepted in the Beloved**." Will not this be a word to rise with amidst the blaze of the great judgment day?

And now I wish to finish with this one practical use. If it be so that we are "**accepted in the Beloved**," then let us go forth and tell poor sinners how they can be accepted too.

"**Accepted in the Beloved** - What a healing balm is there here, for a weary, heavy-laden sinner!" - Hedley Vicars

**Spurgeon** asks...Why is that peculiar title ("**the Beloved**") here used? It might have been said, we are accepted in Christ, or accepted in the Mediator; there must be some motive for giving Him this special name in this place. The motive is declared to be that we may praise the glory of divine grace. God did not want for a beloved when he made us His beloved: His heart was not pining for an object; His affections were not lone and desolate. His only-begotten Son was His delight, and there was room enough in Him for all the Father's love; it was we that needed to be loved, and so the **Beloved** is mentioned that we may remember the unselfishness of divine grace. He makes us His beloved, but he had a **Beloved** before. We are also reminded that we are "**accepted in the Beloved**" to let us know that God has not shifted His love--His first **Beloved** is His **Beloved** still. We have not supplanted His dear Son, nor even diverted a beam of love from Him. The Lord has called us *beloved* who were not so, and made us a people who were not a people; but He has not withdrawn a grain of love from Jesus, Whom He still calls "mine Elect. in Whom my soul delights." All the infinite love of God still flows to Jesus, and then to us in Him. It pleased the Father that to Him a fullness of love should be given, that out of it we might each one receive. God's love to us is His love to His Son flowing in a hundred channels. For His sake He makes the wedding-feast, and we are the happy guests who sit at the table. Not for our sakes is this done, but for Jesus' sake, that so it might be **all of grace**. His perpetual acceptance with God is our acceptance, that nothing legal, nothing whereof we might boast, might be mingled with the work of sovereigns grace. ([Ephesians 1:6 Accepted on the Great Father](#))

**Steven Cole** also asks...Why does Paul use that designation of Jesus Christ (**Beloved**) here? There could be several reasons. The eternal love that exists between the Father and the Son is a perfect love. When the Father adopts us into His family, we are drawn into this circle of infinite, perfect love (John 15:9). In Jesus' great prayer for His disciples just before the cross, He prays (John 17:23), "I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me." **What a staggering thought, that the Father loves us even as He loves His own Son!** So Paul calls Jesus "**the Beloved**" to show that we are now in this relationship of love with the Father and the Son. Also, Paul may call Jesus "**the Beloved**" to show the great price that God paid to adopt us as His children. Jesus was supremely God's beloved Son, in whom He was well pleased (Matt. 3:17; Col. 1:13; Luke 20:13). Yet the Father and the Son were willing to interrupt this perfect relationship of love so that the Son could go to the cross and endure the wrath of the Father on our behalf! As Paul writes (Rom. 8:32), "He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?"

**Rainsford**... He (God the Father) hath made us His **Hephzibahs** (Hebrew = "my delight is in her" - This is God's heart for Zion, who will once again be called "My delight is in her!" = Isa 62:4)--made us dear to Him in the Beloved--made us His delights, a joy to Himself in the Beloved....And yet there are multitudes of professing Christians who do not trust, or know, or believe that they are **accepted in Him**, and who do not enjoy the blessedness and rest of looking up into their Father's face and recognizing the love bestowed on them in the Father's Beloved, and the security that that love has surrounded them with! **They think they are only accepted according to the measure of their prayers, their merits, their good works, and their faith, instead of according to the measure of the Father's everlasting love for His Son.** Yes! we are here plainly taught that our acceptance in the first place was not even on account of Christ's own merits, or prayers, or blood, or sacrifice, much less ours, but solely and only on account of our relation to His person as God's Beloved One; and the subsequent interference of sin only brought out the resources of redemption, forgiveness, salvation, and adoption in Him "in Whom all fullness dwells." (Col 1:19-note, cp Col 2:9-note)

**Lehman Strauss**...Verse six teaches us that every true believer has been foreordained to be such a trophy of the grace of God as to cause men to praise the glory of His grace.

**Spurgeon** writes...What astounding grace does the Lord display—in accepting our poor, imperfect offerings! What rich merit abides

in our Lord Jesus! What sweet fragrance beyond expression dwells in Him—to drown and destroy our foul sulphurous offerings, and to make us accepted in the Beloved! Glory be unto our glorious High Priest, whose perfect life and sin-atonement death, is so sweet—that the Holy Judge is well pleased with us for His righteousness' sake—and accepts us in Him, even with our sulphurous incense!

**NET Note**...God's grace can be poured out on believers only because of what Christ has done for them. Hence, he bestows his grace on us because we are in his dearly loved Son.

In the Beloved accepted am I,  
Risen, ascended, and seated on high;  
Saved from all sin thro' His infinite grace,  
With the redeemed ones accorded a place!  
—Martin

**Beloved (25) (agapao)** speaks especially of love as based on evaluation and choice, a matter of will and action. The Beloved = Christ, the one the Father loves. Christ is the essence of the love that God with which He loves the lost and which is the product of the Spirit in the heart of the yielded believer. God the Father has always loved God the Son with this love which is permanent. Note that **Beloved** is **perfect tense** which in this context conveys the idea of permanence and speaks of the Father having always loved Son. Christ is the One Who is ever in the state of being loved by the Father! And where are saved sinners? In the Beloved

It is interesting to note that the term "**Beloved**" is a title applied in the Septuagint (LXX) to **Israel** in its special role as God's chosen race.

The grace is bestowed in and with Christ Himself. It is in the gift of God's Son that the gift of grace becomes ours and the splendor of that grace is fully realized and seen by mankind.

**God the Father** declared for all to hear...(and behold, a voice out of the heavens, saying) "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well-pleased." (Mt 3:17)

And because we have placed our faith in the Beloved Son, God the Father...

delivered (rescued - see *rhuomai*) us from the domain (*exousia* - "right and the might") of darkness (nothing less than the kingdom of Satan, in which we were all once captive slaves - see Ep 2:1, 2-note, Ep 2:3-note), and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son (Literally - *the kingdom of the Son of His love*), (Col 1:13-note)

**And as a result Paul can write to the saints at Rome** addressing them as..

all who are beloved of God in Rome, called as saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. (Ro 1:7-note)

The practical, albeit in human terms not fully comprehensible, conclusion is that because we are in covenant (see Covenant = exchange of Robes) with Christ (one with Him, identified with Him by faith), all that our Redeemer possesses is possessed by us and the Father now loves us even as He loves His own dear Son and He wills for us to enjoy every spiritual blessing that Christ enjoys in the heavenly places! What manner of love is this. How great is the love with which the Father has loved us and, yea, even love which was bestowed before the foundation of the world! (Ep 1:3, 4-note)

**Wuest** explains that "The words "in the Beloved" are locative of sphere. That is, God the Father freely bestowed on us the grace which saved us, and did so in the sphere of the Lord Jesus, His Person and His work on the Cross. His grace could not operate in our salvation apart from the atoning death of our Lord, for God is not only a loving God, but a righteous and just God who cannot pass by sin, but must require that it be paid for. Only thus can He manifest His grace. ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmans Publishing Company Volume 1](#), [Volume 2](#), [Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

#### **Related Resource:**

- Study on significance of locative of sphere

**Spurgeon notes that accepted in the Beloved** connotes...

I. Positive union.

1. In the heart of Christ, and in His heart from all eternity. With prescient eye Christ beheld His people before they were yet formed. Hath He not said, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with the bands of My kindness have I drawn thee." "As the Father hath loved me, even so have I loved you."



2. We are also in Christ's book. Having loved us we were chosen in Him and elected by His Father. We were not chosen separately and distinctly, and as individuals alone and apart. We were chosen in Christ. Blessed fact! the same register which includes Christ as first born, includes all the brethren.

3. We are in Christ's hand. All those whom the Father gave to Christ were bestowed upon Christ as a surety; and in the last great day, at the Redeemer's hand will God require the souls of all that were given to Him. Just as the Apostle Paul argues concerning Levi, that Levi is inferior to Christ; for he says, Abraham was less than Melchisedec, for without doubt the less is blessed of the greater, so also Levi was less than Melchisedec, for he was in the loins of Abraham when Melchisedec met him. So, beloved, as Levi was in the loins of Abraham and paid tithes to Melchisedec, so we were in the loins of Christ and paid the debt due to Divine justice, gave to the law its fulfilment, and to wrath its satisfaction. In the loins of Christ we have passed through the tomb already, and have entered into that which is within the veil, and are made to sit down in heavenly places, even in Him. This day the chosen of God are one with Christ and in the loins of Christ.

5. As we are in the heart of Christ, in the book of Christ, in the hand of Christ, and in the loins of Christ, there is yet another thought dearer and sweeter still. We are in the person of Christ; for we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. By the mysterious operations of the quickening Spirit the sinner begins to live a spiritual life. Now, in the moment when the spiritual life was first given, there commenced in that soul a vital and personal union with the person of Christ Jesus. There had always been in that soul a secret mystical union in the Divine purpose; but now there comes to be a union in effect, and the soul is in Christ from that hour, in a sense in which it never was before.

II. Accepted in the Beloved. What does our acceptance include?

1. Justification before God. We stand on our own trial. When we stand in Christ we are acquitted; while standing in ourselves the only verdict must be condemnation.

2. Divine complacency.

3. Divine delight.

III. Divine operations; "made accepted." All of God, not of man.

### At the Cross...

we become 'accepted in the Beloved.' Here the exchange takes place between the perfect and the imperfect. Believing in the perfect One, we become 'complete in Him.' Conscious only of evil, we take refuge in Him in whom there is no evil, that we may be represented by him before God, and so treated by God as being without evil, even in the eye of His holy law. Feeling our utter lack of goodness, we flee out of ourselves to One in whom there is all goodness—who is absolutely perfect; so perfect, so infinitely perfect, that He has enough and to spare of His perfection for us. The fullness of evil that is in us is thus not only covered over by the atonement of the atoning Son of God, so as to become invisible, as if it were non-existent—but is supplanted by the fullness of all goodness, is exchanged for the perfection of another, even of the perfect One, so that God, looking at us, sees only our Representative, and deals with us according to His excellency and preciousness. What we should have received, in the shape of punishment, He gets for us; what He claims and deserves in the shape of reward, and glory, and favor, we get, as represented by Him, and treated by God as entitled to all that to which He is entitled.

Our consent to be treated on the footing of this foreign merit, this perfection of another—is what God asks of us. Such is the proposal which the gospel makes to us. This is substantially the meaning of our believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. Receiving the divine testimony to the sin-bearer as true, we give our consent to be represented by Him before God. Thus we exchange places and persons with Him. He was made sin, we are made righteousness; He takes the curse, we take the blessing. We hear the cry upon the cross, "It is finished"—and we know that the work which justifies is done. All that follows—resurrection and ascension—is the result of the completed work; not the completing of it, but the fruits of its completion. 'He was delivered, because we had sinned; He was raised, because we were justified' (Romans 4:25). As it was 'by the blood of the everlasting covenant' that He was brought from the dead (Hebrews 13:20), so was it because our justification was finished on the cross that He rose from the dead. The knowledge of this brings to him who knows it forgiveness, acceptance, justification—we become 'accepted in the Beloved.' ([The Cross Of The Lord Jesus](#))

**Horatius Bonar** writes...He who has been accepted in the beloved, has not daily to go and plead for acceptance, nor to do or say

anything which implies that the condemnation, from which he has been delivered, has returned; but he has to mourn over, to confess, to seek forgiveness for daily sins. The two states are quite distinct, yet quite consistent with each other. The complete acceptance of the believing man does not prevent his sinning, nor do away with the constant need of new pardons for his sins; and the recurrence of sin does not cancel his acceptance, nor is the obtaining of new pardons at variance with his standing as a forgiven man. ([Christ the Cleanser](#))

**Octavius Winslow**...Behold your present standing, believer in Christ! Turn your eye away from all your failures in obedience-the flaws and imperfections that mark your sincere endeavors to serve Christ and to glorify God- and see where your true acceptance is, even in the Beloved of the Father, "The Lord our righteousness." "Accepted in the Beloved," is the record that will raise you above all the fears and despondencies arising from your shortcomings and failures, and fill you with peace, and joy, and assurance. ([Christ, the Wonderful](#))

**Arthur Pink** writes...Every poor sinner who has fled to Him for refuge stands "accepted in the Beloved" (Eph 1:6). Hallelujah! ([The Attributes of God](#)) -- By nature we were "under the (sentence of) law," but now believers are "under grace" (Ro 6:14). By nature we were "children of wrath" (Eph 2:2), but now we are "accepted in the Beloved" (Eph 1:6). Under the first covenant we were "in Adam" (1Cor 15:22), but now we are "in Christ" (Ro 8:1). As believers in Christ we have everlasting life, and because of this we "shall not come into condemnation." ([Comfort for Christians](#)) Such a one has been accepted in the Beloved, accorded a standing before God which neither the Law nor Satan can challenge, and made nearer and dearer to God than are the holy angels. Tell such a one that something else is still required from him, before God can regard him with approbation—that the redemption of Christ must be added to, by his own good works—and he rejects such an aspersion with the utmost abhorrence, as the Devil's lie! ([An Evangelical Spirit](#))

**Octavius Winslow**...A present salvation is an essential element of this Gospel Banquet thus provided for us in the wilderness. For the lack of a more simple recognition of this aspect of the gospel, many of God's people are deprived of much blessing. If saved at all-we are saved now. The believer is as entirely pardoned- as completely justified- as fully adopted at the present moment, as he will be when glorified. "By grace you are saved." "Accepted in the Beloved." "You are complete in Him." Could any truth be expressed in terms more strong, or placed in light more lucid? Oh marvelous banquet, that meets and satisfies all the requirements of the soul! Come to it with what infirmity- with what need- with what sorrow- with what frame you may, there is a place and a viand for you; a loving welcome, and a most free meal. "You prepare a table for me in the presence of my enemies." ([The Banquet](#)) How few, in the language of the prophet, "possess these possessions." But the word of God fully justifies this view of a present salvation. Listen to its language. "I write unto you, little children, because ,our sins are forgiven for His name's sake " Observe, it is a present forgiveness! " To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He has made us accepted in the Beloved." Observe, it is a present acceptance! "Beloved, now are we the sons of God" Mark, it is a present adoption! "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus " Notice, it is a present acquittal! Such is the authority upon which we earnestly urge you to realize your present standing in Christ. ([THE GOD OF PATIENCE](#))

**Thomas Brooks**..."He has made us favorites," so Chrysostom and Theophylact render it. "God has ingratiated us," he has made us gracious in the Son of his love. Through the blood of Christ, we are lovely and beautiful in God's eyes.

**Ruth Paxson** writes...

"**Accepted**" -- what a gracious word! What a wealth of significance in it! Those that were by nature "children of disobedience and wrath." (Eph 2:2,3); so "far-off" from God that they were called strangers" (Eph 2:19); so deep down in the abyss of death and depravity that they were "without hope" (Eph 2:12); yet here said to be "accepted." How could such a change ever be wrought in the sinner? If so utterly disobedient, he would not want acceptance; if so utterly depraved, he could not make himself acceptable, even if he desired to. The sinner of Eph 2:1-3 is rendered both hopeless and helpless by sin. Then by whom and on what ground was the change wrought by which he was taken into the very heart and home of God?

"Made accepted." God has left to the sinner not an inch of ground for boasting. Not an atom of anything either in his character or in his conduct can avail to bring him into God's favour. If he is ever accepted by God, God Himself must act on his behalf.

John 17:23. "That the world may know that thou hast... loved them as thou hast loved me. "

Near, so very near to God  
Nearer I could not be;  
For in the person of His Son,  
I'm just as near as He.

Dear, so very dear to God,

Dearer I could not be:  
For in the person of His Son,  
I'm just as dear as He.

**"To the praise of the glory of his grace."** Surely every saint should have a singing heart, and the theme of his song should ever be the matchless grace of God. The saints on earth and the redeemed in heaven unite in one grand, glorious symphony of "praise to the glory of his grace" wherein He took sinners like us and "made us accepted in the beloved."

Let us take one backward glance at our immeasurable wealth in the Father's grace before we look forward to that in the redemptive work of His Son:

**Through His grace** -- chosen -- loved

Through the riches of His grace -- predestinated -- loved as adult sons **Through the exceeding riches of His grace** -- accepted -- loved as the Son is loved.

Could our Father do more than this for us? Could He do less for His Son? Then should not our fearful, trembling hearts rest full-length upon the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus? And should not the dominating passion of our lives be to live to the praise of the glory of His grace?

**John Trapp**...recalls several human examples of "acceptance" based upon another person...David saw the features of his friend Jonathan in lame **Mephibosheth**, and therefore loved him. He forgave Nabal at Abigail's intercession; and was pacified toward Absalom at Joab's. Pharaoh favoured Jacob's house for Joseph's sake. Shall not God do as much more for Jesus' sake? Joseph was well pleased with his brethren when they brought Benjamin; bring but the child Jesus in our arms (as Simeon did, and as Themistocles did the king of Persia's child) and he cannot but smile upon us. Were he never so much displeased before, yet upon the sight of this his well-beloved Son, in whom he is well pleased, all shall be calm and quiet, as the sea was when once Jonas was cast into it. (Trapp's Commentary on the New Testament)

**J Sidlow Baxter** associates the OT Levitical high priest's role (Aaron) in assuring acceptance of the sons of Israel before God (see Ex 28:38) and the NT truths about our Great High Priest... As our Lord (Jesus Christ) represents us on high, "Holiness to the Lord" flashes from His brow. The brow is the noblest and most distinguishing feature of man. Holiness must be written here, to be seen before all else as the High Priest enters the most Holy Presence. This is the first thing God beholds in our glorious High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary. He bears it on HIS forehead that WE may be accepted! As Aaron was to bear the "holy crown" always (Ex 28:38), so Christ bears it always for us, so that in Him we become ALWAYS ACCEPTED! All this is taught doctrinally in the New Testament - especially in Ephesians and Hebrews. We are "accepted in the Beloved" (Eph 1:6) who bears us on His heart before God. We are chosen "in Him" to be "holy and without blame," (Eph 1:4) for He is our holiness. (Ed: Our "holiness" positionally is the Person of Christ. This truth should motivate and empower us [renew our minds] to daily work out of our high, holy position in practice!) We are told of the Divine "power to us-ward who believe" - and that power is seen, in Christ who bears His people on His mighty shoulder, "far above all principality and power and might, and every name that is named"! (Eph 1:21) **Well may our praise forever flow to God for such a Saviour!**

**Ray Stedman** applies the truth of Ephesians 1:6...

A number of years ago I was called on to visit a dear old Presbyterian pastor, retired, who was then over 94 years old. He had grown old in the service of God, with a wonderful record of faithful service to the Lord behind him. He called me on the phone one morning and asked me to come to see him. I found him plunged into the depths of gloom and despair. He said to me, "I've been thinking about my life and how little it has counted for Christ." With tears running down his face, he looked up at me and said, "Oh, Ray, I wonder sometimes if I'm even saved." What was the trouble? The enemy was using the circumstances of his long inactivity, his inability to do something active for the Lord, as an opportunity to bring him under condemnation. "Whenever our hearts condemn us," that is the problem, is it not? What a common one it is. It occurs so frequently and seemingly without good reason at all.

Now what is the remedy? Well, look at what John says. We must "know that we are of the truth." That is the essential thing.

**We must reestablish the great fact of our relationship to Christ.**

We must have ground for believing and reassuring ourselves that we are indeed "justified by faith," standing in God's presence not by our own righteousness, but by the righteousness of the Son of God, that **we are accepted in the Beloved**, that we are "in Christ," because, as Paul tells us in Romans 8, "There is therefore

now no condemnation to those that are in Christ," Romans 8:1). In Christ all that He is appears on our behalf and therefore there is no condemnation to us. Now, therefore, if we are going to silence the doubts of our hearts, we must know that we are "of the truth." That is where we must begin. (**Ed**: As an aside, remember that truth counters the lies of Satan and that the battlefield is our "mind.") This is what we saw in Ephesians where the Apostle Paul urges us to put on the breastplate of righteousness Ephesians 6:14), by which the heart is guarded, the emotions, which are so easily subject to discouragement, gloom, and despair. Put on the breastplate of righteousness. Realize again that you are "of the truth," for it is by the mind's knowledge that the heart's doubts are silenced. ([Sermon](#))

**William S Plumer** writes...

The Christian is a paradox. Because he has Christ, he has the unsearchable riches of Christ. .

Believers . . .

have full and free forgiveness of all their sins;

are fully accepted in the Beloved;

are clothed in Christ's spotless righteousness;

are adopted into the family of God;

have a perfect title to heaven through Christ;

have God for their Father,

have Christ for their Savior,

have the Holy Spirit for their Comforter,

have heaven for their home;

shall be like Christ and with Christ forever;

shall inherit all things;

(Believers) are sure of ultimate victory over . . .

sins,

the world,

the flesh,

the devil,

all sorrow,

death,

hell.

**Dwight Edwards** commenting on Phil 1:2 gives us the balance we must remember when we speak of '**accepted in the Beloved**'...We are thoroughly secure in the father --> son relationship we have with God, for we are eternally ACCEPTED in the Beloved. Eph. 1:6. Nothing, but nothing can separate us from the love of God. It must also be remembered however, that Christ is our Lord. We have been bought with a price and our bodies are no longer our own. We now are the property of Jesus Christ and are subject to His desires for our life. Therefore we are ACCOUNTABLE as well as ACCEPTED.

**J C Philpot** in "**Meditations on Matters of Christian Faith & Experience**" has a section on the miserable dregs of self...

"To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He has made us accepted in the Beloved." Ephes. 1:6

We are ever looking for something in self to make ourselves acceptable to God, and are often sadly cast down and discouraged when we cannot find . . .

that holiness,

that obedience,

that calm submission to the will of God,

that serenity of soul,

that spirituality and heavenly-mindedness

which we believe to be acceptable in His sight.

Our . . .

crooked tempers,

fretful, peevish minds,

rebellious thoughts,

coldness,

barrenness,

alienation from good,

headlong proneness to ill,

with the daily feeling that we get no better but rather worse, make us think that God views us just as we view ourselves. And this brings on great darkness of mind and bondage of spirit, and we seem to lose sight of our acceptance in Christ, and get into the miserable dregs of self, almost ready to quarrel with God because we are so vile, and only get worse as we get older.

Now the more we get into these dregs of self, and the more we keep looking at the dreadful scenes of wreck and ruin which our heart presents to daily view, the farther do we get from the grace of the gospel, and the more do we lose sight of the only ground of our acceptance with God. It is "in the Beloved" that we are accepted, and

not for any . . .

good words,

good works,

good thoughts,

good hearts, or

good intentions of our own.

If our acceptance with God depended on anything in ourselves, we would have to adopt the Wesleyan creed, and believe we might be children of God today and children of the devil tomorrow.

What, then, is to keep us from sinking altogether into despair, without hope or help? Why, a knowledge of our acceptance "in the Beloved," independent of everything in us, good or bad.

"Their righteousness is of Me, says the Lord."

"You are complete in Him."

What a universal chorus of harmonious voices do we hear all sounding forth the same melodious strain--that we are accepted in the Beloved.

"He saved us, not because of the good things we did, but because of His mercy." Titus 3:5

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**Dr Harry A Ironside** has the following illustration on "Accepted in the Beloved" (Eph 1:6KJV) writing that...

Years ago I was preaching in the small town of Roosevelt, Washington, on the north bank of the Columbia River. I was the guest of friends who were sheep-raisers. It was lambing time and every morning we went out to see the lambs—hundreds of them—playing about on the green. One morning I was startled to see an old ewe go loping across the road, followed by the strangest looking lamb I had ever beheld. It apparently had six legs, and the skin seemed to be partially torn from its body in a way that made me feel the poor little creature must be suffering terribly. But when one of the herders caught the lamb and brought it over to me, the mystery was explained. That lamb did not really belong originally to that ewe. She had a lamb which was bitten by a rattlesnake and died. This lamb that I saw was an orphan and needed a mother's care. But at first the bereft ewe refused to have anything to do with it. She sniffed at it when it was brought to her, then pushed it away, saying as plainly as a sheep could say it, "That is not our family odor!" So the herders skinned the lamb that had died and very carefully drew the fleece over the living lamb. This left the hind-leg coverings dragging

loose. Thus covered, the lamb was brought again to the ewe. She smelled it once more and this time seemed thoroughly satisfied and adopted it as her own.

It seemed to me to be a beautiful picture of the grace of God to sinners. We are all outcasts and have no claim upon His love. But God's own Son, the "Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the World," has died for us and now we who believe are dressed up in the fleece of the Lamb who died. Thus, God has accepted us in Him (Illustrations of Bible Truth. Moody Press, 1945)

So dear, so very dear to God,  
More dear I cannot be;  
The love wherewith He loves His Son,  
Such is His love to me.

So near, so very near to God,  
Nearer I could not be,  
For in the person of His Son,  
I am as near as He.  
(cf John 17:23)

**Comment:** Beloved, do you see what John 17:23 is saying? Jesus is saying the love which the Father has for believers in Christ is of the same degree as the love which He has for His Son! Now if that does "blow us away" with God's amazing grace, I don't know what will!

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**In Morning and Evening, Spurgeon** writes the following devotional on Ephesians 1:6...

What a state of privilege! It includes our justification before God, but the term "acceptance" in the Greek means more than that. It signifies that we are the objects of divine complacency (**Ed: Webster's 1828 = "the cause of pleasure or joy"!**), nay, even of divine delight. How marvelous that we, worms, mortals, sinners, should be the objects of divine love! But it is only "in the beloved."

Some Christians seem to be accepted in their own experience, at least, that is their apprehension. When their spirit is lively, and their hopes bright, they think God accepts them, for they feel so high, so heavenly-minded, so drawn above the earth! But when their souls cleave to the dust, they are the victims of the fear that they are no longer accepted. If they could but see that all their high joys do not exalt them, and all their low despondencies do not really depress them in their Father's sight, but that they stand accepted in One Who never alters, in One Who is always the beloved of God, always perfect, always without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, how much happier they would be, and how much more they would honour the Saviour! Rejoice then, believer, in this: thou art accepted "in the beloved." Thou lookest within, and thou sayest, "There is nothing acceptable here!" But look at Christ, and see if there is not everything acceptable there. Thy sins trouble thee; but God has cast thy sins behind His back, and thou art accepted in the Righteous One. Thou hast to fight with corruption, and to wrestle with temptation, but thou art already accepted in him who has overcome the powers of evil. The devil tempts thee; be of good cheer, he cannot destroy thee, for thou art accepted in him who has broken Satan's head. Know by full assurance thy glorious standing. Even glorified souls are not more accepted than thou art. They are only accepted in heaven "in the beloved," and thou art even now accepted in Christ after the same manner.

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**So Many Blessings** - When disaster strikes, people are exceedingly generous in their outpouring of assistance. After the terrorist attacks in September 2001, New York City was flooded with an estimated \$75 million worth of towels, blankets, flashlights, water bottles, canned beans, shovels, toothpaste, stuffed animals, radios, rubber boots, and thousands of other items. There was so much stuff that those affected could not use it all.

This reminds me of what happens when we turn in faith to Christ as our Savior. We were facing a personal disaster. Our sins put us in danger of an eternity of separation from God. The future was dark, hopeless.

Then Jesus stepped in and offered rescue. When we trusted Him, our heavenly Father lavished us with spiritual riches. Now we have more blessings than we can possibly use up. We are part of God's family (Ephesians 1:5). We have "redemption" and "the forgiveness of sins" (Ep 1:7). We are heirs of the One who owns everything (Ep 1:11). Our inheritance is sealed by the Holy Spirit (Ep 1:13,14).

The blessings of being a Christian just keep on coming. They'll never run out. What a generous, thoughtful God we serve! Let's

praise Him for the countless blessings that overflow in our lives. —Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Give me a spirit of thankfulness, Lord,  
For numberless blessings given;  
Blessings that daily come to me  
Like dewdrops falling from heaven.  
—Dawe

### **God's generous giving deserves thankful living.**

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**Accepted** - As the gospel was being presented to a woman, she explained she had tried her best to please God. Then she added, "But I'm afraid God will never accept me."

The Christian talking with her said, "I agree with you. He never will."

A look of astonishment came over the woman's face, for she had not expected such a response.

The believer then explained, "No, He never will, but God has accepted His Son, and if you join yourself to Him through faith, you will find God's favor!"

Many people have been deceived into thinking they must somehow earn acceptance in the eyes of God. The Bible, however, tells us that there is nothing in us, nor in what we do, that can in any way merit God's love and favor (Ro 3:28; Eph. 2:1, 2, 3, 4, 5). Our salvation is rooted in God's sovereign choice, His mercy, and Christ's sacrificial death for us (Eph. 1:4, 5, 6,7).

Trying to understand why God accepts us may baffle our minds, but the how is clear. Our acceptance comes in and through the Lord Jesus Christ, who paid the penalty for our sin, and who joins us to Himself. When we put our personal trust in Him and accept His forgiveness, we can be sure that we have been accepted. --Henry G. Bosch ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Sons of God, beloved in Jesus!  
O the wondrous word of grace;  
In His Son the Father sees us,  
And as sons He gives us place.  
-Whittle

**God accepts all who accept His Son.**