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EPHESIANS 1:4: CHOSEN IN CHRIST

By Dr. Wayne A. Barber

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Turn with me to the book of Ephesians chapter 1. Someone was visiting recently and said, "Did you know you're going to absolutely wear out the book of Ephesians?" Well, I hope so because there is a lot of truth there we need to understand. Instead of us saying, "Lord, bless me," according to verse 3 of chapter 1, we ought to be saying, "Thank you Lord for having so richly blessed me in Christ Jesus." What we need is already there in Him. Every spiritual blessing has been given to us already in Christ Jesus. Let's go back and read verse 3:

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ."

Every spiritual benefit. Remember that word "blessing" has the idea of grace, of kindness, of advantage. Every spiritual benefit, every spiritual advantage has been given to us in Christ Jesus. It's not something we take ourselves. It's something He gives to us. It's all

resident in Him. Not one has been left out. This is important.

Many of us spend our time asking God for something that we already have. We pray for love, but the spirit of Christ is already within us. Gal 5:22-note, Ga 5:23-note tells us He is there to produce whatever area of love we need. We pray for peace, but Jesus has already said in Jn14:27,

"Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you"

We pray for joy. In John 15:11 Jesus says,

"These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full."

We pray for strength, but Php 4:13-note says that he is constantly infusing strength within us. " I can do all things through" Christ who consistently and constantly infuses His strength within us."

In fact 2Pet1:3-note tells us God's

"divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence."

Col 2:10-note says,

"in Him you have been made complete" And our text says we have been given "every spiritual blessing... in Christ." Now what else is there? If we could just understand it.

Paul says, in Ephesians 1:18-note,

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened.

It has to come at a point when God just turns on the light. You can memorize the verses and still not know what He's talking about. You can memorize all this truth, but until God gets it to where it needs to be, when it's revealed to our spirit, only then can it take hold in our life. We receive it and obey it, and it becomes a part of our life.

Our resources in Christ are beyond what we can comprehend. Every Christian has what Paul speaks of in Ephesians 1:3. God cannot give us any more that He has already given us in Christ Jesus. Outside of Him there is nothing. I made the statement a few months ago that if you walk away from Jesus you're walking away to nothing because there is nothing outside of Jesus. If you try to add anything to Jesus, you subtract from Him because you can't add anything to Him. Everything is resident in Him. That's why we preach Christ. When you come to know Christ He is your life, and in Him is resident every spiritual blessing that God could ever give you. In fact, our position and our possessions are so secure that Paul says in Eph 2:6-note, "He has already "and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus" Now as far as God's concerned, it's a done deal. We're down here understanding this stuff. We're down here trying to appropriate it in our life. But as far as God is concerned, it is already done. We've already been raised and seated with Christ in the heavenlies.

We're going to look at Ep 1:4, and I want you to see how it fits with verse 3. Verse 3 says, "He has blessed us with every spiritual blessing." Verse 4 says "He has chosen us in Christ." Blessed in Christ, chosen in Christ. Understanding this will do wonders in our Christian walk. The worse fear that any of us have is the fear of being rejected. Now you know that's true. All of us have it. We see in a magazine that a girl has to have a certain figure or she's not acceptable. So people end up doing all kinds of things to try and get that certain figure. That is not from the Word of God. That's a lie out of the pit of Hell. But that's what our society says. If you look a certain way, you can be accepted. With the guys it's different. They have got to be macho. If they are a basketball player they have to jump four feet off the floor and do crazy things in the air or they are not macho and not accepted by others. Where is that in the Word of God? It's not in the Word of God.

And so what happens is we live with this fear of being rejected. Paul is saying, "Listen, we have been accepted. We have been chosen before the foundation of the world in Christ Jesus." Where do you want to find your acceptance? Do you want to find it with your peers in this world? Or do you want to find it with the Lord Jesus Christ and with God, God the Father? God the Father is telling us something in here. Paul is trying to get a message across. We have been chosen. Not only blessed in Christ, but we have been chosen in Him. The greatest thing in a believer's life is to come to understand what it means to be chosen before the foundation of the world in Christ Jesus.

Well, we're going to look at that in Ep 1:4. Let's read it together. He starts off and says, "Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and blameless before Him." Verse 4 starts with an adverb. He has just finished Ep 1:3. It's all tied together. He has blessed us in Christ. Then he says, "just as He chose us in Christ". An adverb is a word that qualifies the meaning of a verb by indicating the time, the place, or the manner in which the action is accomplished. In other words, He chose us now and He blessed us. Our being chosen occurred, just the way our being blessed occurred. There's something in common between the two. That's what we're going to see in a moment. But why did he choose us? Why did he bless us? It's here, but we won't get to it until later. There is a commonality there. He blessed us in Christ just as He chose us in Christ. Paul is saying that there is something common between the two things, and we need to understand what that is.

Before we even look at that let's look at that little phrase "just as He chose us in Him". Look at the term "he chose". "He chose" is the Greek word **eklego [word study]**. Again it comes from two Greek words: **ek** – out of, and **lego**, which means to select or choose for oneself. It implies a relationship between the one choosing and the object chosen. Now whether you like it or not the word "chosen" means you've got a basketball team and there's ten guys on the team. Only five can go on the floor. You choose this one, and you choose this one and you choose this one, but somebody is not chosen. That's what the word by implication means. Now it doesn't necessarily mean rejection, however, that's the way we understand the word. It means to be chosen out from among.

It's an aorist middle verb. Aorist tense means at a specific time. He's going to tell you when that was. Middle voice means He chose for Himself of His own will. No one made Him do it. Remember he's still speaking of the Father. The same Father that blessed us in Christ Jesus is now the same Father that has chosen us in Christ Jesus. Kindness in the grace of the one choosing is implied in the verb **eklego**. In other words, the choosing was all out of God's kindness, all out of God's love. So when you think of your salvation, that's what you think of when you think of **eklego**. You think of being blessed in Christ, but you think of being chosen in Christ Jesus.

The scriptures have much to say about this. Look in Jn 6:44.

No one (absolute negation) can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day

Now that's unless the Father draws him. That little Greek word **helkuo** means it has the idea of being irresistibly drawn. It's used in secular Greek, I understand, of a person who has been hungry for days and days and days and is drawn to food, irresistibly drawn to food. It also carries the idea and is used of demonic forces being drawn to swine when they have no human bodies left to indwell.

I have a friend who works down in Florida. He runs a salvage yard. I call it a junk yard, he calls it a salvage business. He's a

wonderful Christian. He has a cap that says "Junk is Beautiful." They have this huge magnet on a crane, and that thing will come over, drop down, get those cars and pick those cars up as if they were nothing but paper. It will swing them over, demagnetize, drop them down in this big press and pull away. Then they take this car, and smash it down. The idea of that magnet is what I want you to see. When you pull that magnet over something everything is irresistibly pulled right up to it. That's kind of the idea that we have here when it says that "the Father must draw him to me." God chose us, and the way we know we are chosen is by the fact that we are drawn.

One night I was preaching on this at Precept. A fellow came running down the aisle at the end with tears streaming down his face. He said, "Oh, I've struggled with this. I now know I'm chosen." I said, "How do you know you're chosen?" He said, "Because I know I have been strangely drawn unto Him." How do you know you're chosen? You're drawn. That's the key. Jesus said until the Father draws you nobody can come unto me.

Let's look in John 6:37. Jesus said,

All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out

The idea is that there are those who are chosen and will come to Him, that are drawn to Him and He will not cast out. So we see first of all, God chose us. Now please understand something. Paul is trying to show believers the fact that they didn't choose Him. God chose them. And that's the wonderful thing about being accepted is to know that God chose us. We'll see in a moment when that was. But what about the responsibility of man to choose? Does the Bible teach anything about that? Oh, does it ever.

Look in Jn 3:15. Will you look there with me?

so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life. 16 "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

He says that "**whoever**" and that little word "**pas**" that means everyone, anyone. It means whoever comes. Not the ones I've chosen, not the ones I've rejected but "whoever". Every man on this earth has been given a measure of faith, it tells us over in Romans. And that measure of faith when it is confronted with the Gospel, at the moment that man hears God's word, he has the ability to open the door and let God in. Every man that is created has that ability. It says in verse 15 that

"whoever believes will in Him have eternal life."

And you say it with me.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."

If you will look at the Greek it just absolutely opens it up that anybody, at any time, at any place may make the response to receive the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let's look in 2Pet 3:9-note. It's talking about judgment here, and he says in verse 9

The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient (makro = long + thumos = passion or anger thus patient in bearing the offenses & injuries of others, slow to anger, avenge or punish - see noun makrothumia) toward you, not wishing for any to perish (be rendered useless, ruined, loss of purpose), but for all to come to repentance."

Now you look at it yourself. What does your translation say? "not wishing" or desiring "for" what? "any to perish but for all to come to repentance." God has the whole world in His mind, not just certain ones. He has the whole world on His heart.

Look at 1Ti 2:3, 4.

"This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior 4 Who desires all men to be saved (rescued from danger & destruction, made well, healed, restored to "health") and to come to the knowledge (epignosis = precise & correct knowledge) of the truth."

It's very clearly taught there. I don't see how you can get around it. In Scripture is the choice of man and the ability to choose. Now watch in these verses. "This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our savior." Verse 4 speaks of God our savior. "Who desires all men," and that's all men, **anthropos**. Ladies, it doesn't just mean males. "All men," all mankind "to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth," and on and on and on.

Now you say, "Now I'm confused because I don't understand. You just said that we have been chosen. If we have been chosen that means to be singled out and chosen out from among. That's true. But you also said that whosoever will may come." Now this becomes a dilemma when you try to understand it. There are some things about God and the uniqueness and mystery of salvation we're never going to understand down here. Now the simplest way to say this is like this: God already knew who would reject Him so He went ahead and chose the ones who would accept Him. That's been the simplest answer for many people for many years and years and years. I don't think it's quite that simple, but that's ok if that helps you. But what I'm trying to say is both are taught in God's Word: the responsibility and the ability of man to choose.

Rev 3:20-[note](#) says,

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me"

In other words the moment you hear Him comes the ability to open the door and let Him in. You may hear Him speaking through Wayne or someone else. How can you reconcile "election" and "free will"? Somebody (Ed note: Spurgeon made this statement) said, "Do you have to reconcile two people who are friends?" As a matter of fact, Barnhouse said when we get to heaven there's going to be a big banner, "Whosoever will may come." And all the Baptists will stand up and say, "Yea, we told you." And you're going to walk up underneath that banner and the back of it is going to say, "Chosen before the foundations of the world," because they just go together.

In other words, sometimes when you come to verses like this you have to drop a plumb bob. Do you know what a plumb bob is? That is something that gives balance. On one side of the plumb bob put the doctrine of election. It's taught, very clearly taught in scripture. We are irresistibly drawn. The Father draws us to Him and chooses us. Put that on one side. On the other side put the responsibility of man to choose and the ability to choose the fate that God has already given him. And don't you dare touch it. If you move it either way you're out of balance. You take your shoes off, you walk in on holy ground, you say, "God, you chose. I chose. Somebody chose. I'm just glad it's all over. And I'm glad that I've been chosen. And I'm glad that I've been blessed in the Lord Jesus Christ." God has so devised salvation that once we're in we can never pat ourselves on the back and say we chose because God chose first. It's taught. But if we go to hell we can never say God sent us because we sent ourselves by refusing to choose that which He has given to us. It's incredible how He has designed our salvation.

Just so you might understand, you were chosen long before the foundation of the world. Let's go back and look at that because that is our next point. When did God make His choice? Go back to verse 4 of our text in Ephesians chapter 1. "Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world." Now notice, it's "in Him." If Christ had not come and died there would have been no choosing. That's part of the plan. Not only was it a part that we be chosen, but the lamb was prepared before the foundation of the world. All of that was devised by the counsel of God in heaven. The word "foundation" is the Greek word **katabole [word study]**. It refers to a laying down or a founding of something. The word for "world" refers to the order, the disposition, the arrangement of the world. Now I don't know about you, but if you haven't read ahead of me in Ephesians, this doesn't mean anything to you. But if you've gone ahead and read through the book of Ephesians, it ought to get you a little bit excited. Before there was ever a world, now listen, or before there was ever a system in the world, especially an evil system that Satan himself propagated, long before there was a system, long before there was a world or an arrangement in the world, God made a choice. Long before all of that by His foreknowledge He knew what would take place, and He went ahead and provided and made a choice. And you and I were chosen in Christ way back before the foundation of this world.

As a matter of fact, some people feel like, "Well, I've got to do something to deserve that choice." Do you realize He chose us before we were even thought of as far as the human race is concerned? He chose us before we were ever born, before we were ever able to do something to make us worthy of Him choosing us. He made the choice way back when. I'm telling you, I wish we could take more verses at one time. But if we do I'm afraid we're going to miss something.

He has blessed us in Christ Jesus. With how many blessings? Every spiritual blessing. But not only has He blessed us now, it goes further back than that. He chose us before the foundation of the world. You are very special to God. He chose you before the foundation of the world. When Peter uses this in his letter to the persecuted believers in Asia Minor, he says, "I write to the elect scattered throughout Asia Minor." He was saying the height of rejection is persecution, but the height of acceptance is being chosen. People, realize that you've been chosen. All of us know what it means to be rejected. Everyone of us has been rejected. But who have we been rejected by? Not by God, but by people who are really our peers. That doesn't matter. What matters is that God has accepted us. And God has chosen us in Christ Jesus. I tell you that if that finally sinks in, and my prayer is that it will, it will just literally set you free in your understanding of why you need to live a life filled with praise to God the Father. The world is going to reject us. It's already rejected us. People are going to reject us. But that's not even the point. God has accepted us in the Beloved. He knew all the warts that we had, and He still accepted us. He still chose us before the foundation of the world.

When I was growing up I was skinny and tall. As a matter of fact, they called me all kinds of things. Wayne was one of the nicer things. I had such a self image problem. I couldn't hit the ball when I played baseball. I couldn't walk and chew bubble gum at the same time. And I grew up feeling an inward rejection by the people around me. I'm grateful I had a good family. My heart goes out to people who didn't have a good family. I mean if you add that in to it, can you imagine how miserable some people are? One day I understood that Jesus had come to die for me, and I began to understand that God had chosen me long before I ever drew breath on the face of this earth. And then when Christ came into my life He blessed me with every spiritual blessing there is in the heavenlies. And you know, that does something for your whole understanding of who you are in Christ, your position in the Lord Jesus Christ. Why in the world would you hang your head? You've been blessed in Him with every blessing, and you've been chosen in Him. What else is necessary for you to live a victorious Christian life?

Tony Evans gave an illustration at a conference in 1992 that I want to share with you. He talked about what it means to be in Christ and what it means to be identified with Him. He is the Chaplain of the Dallas Mavericks. He gets free tickets because he's the chaplain. He sits right there on the floor with the team. He said he has some buddies and every time his wife and family do not want to go to the game, he calls up his buddies and he says, "Come on guys. Go to the game with me tonight." He says, "Now listen, don't worry about driving your car. You're with me. You go with me. You don't have to park six blocks away and walk. You get to park in the VIP section because you are with me. Don't worry about having to stop and get supper. Don't worry about carrying it in in a bag. You're with me. We're going to go into the special VIP dining room, and we're going to have our own banquet- style dinner. Don't worry, you are with me. Don't worry about having to go through all those long lines at the ticket booth. You're with me. We'll go over to that little side door and go in. We'll go down the elevator and be right there. Don't worry about having to fight your way in to find your seat. You're with me. We're going to go out the team entrance, and we're going to sit on the floor. Everybody is going watch us walk in and sit down. Don't worry about it. You're with me."

Well, I can't tell you how that blessed me. Boy, I've had more fun with that illustration especially since I got into Ephesians. I'm identified with Him. It's kind of like somebody says, "You want to fight me, buddy. He's my buddy." I'm in Him. I've been chosen in Christ. I'm blessed with every spiritual blessing. What in the world am I doing living such a frustrating,

depressing and discouraging life?

Well, it's one thing to know truth. It's another thing to experience truth. It's one thing to understand it. I've had people come to me and say, "I understand that truth, but it hasn't helped me." You see you might understand it, but you haven't yet learned to receive it and walk in it.

The other day I got on a plane with three other fellows. We went out to Houston, Texas to look at the Urban Alternative there in Houston. We got there and spent three and a half hours in a meeting after we had landed. Then we quickly got on a Southwest Airlines com-muter flight, and flew to Dallas. We got to Dallas, went to the hotel and went down to meet with Tony Evans. And Tony said, "Listen guys, I've got some tickets to the ballgame to-night, and I want you to go with me." And I started thinking, "OOOH, we're going to be with him. We're going to go to the ballgame with him." First of all, I figured we were going to have to drive because there were too many of us to get in his car. He said, "Don't worry about it. I've got a special VIP pass for the van you're going to be riding in. Don't worry about where you're going to park. You're with me. Come on down." We rode down. We got those little, special, official passes. I have still got it. We got our tickets. We walked up to the gate, and everybody said, "How are you doing there, Tony? How are you doing there, Tony?" I said, "How ya'll doing? We're with him." We walked up to the gate. We didn't have to go through the gate. Shoot no, man! He had a pass key. We walked inside this little door, got onto the elevator, went downstairs and walked in.

I sat at the table with the General manager of the Dallas Mavericks who loves Jesus as much as anybody I've ever been around. He started talking about how bad his team was doing and about all the mail he was getting and how they had made conscious decisions to be in the places they're in right now. But he said his greatest burden was not to win in Dallas. His greatest burden was to evangelize that team to the Lord Jesus Christ. Wonderful person. Sat right there next to him in the VIP dining room because I was with him.

We finished eating and had to have a meeting. Where are we going to meet? Tony said, "Don't worry, you're with me." We got on the elevator, went up to about the third floor and went into the Dallas Maverick's office. We walked inside. There was a conference room. We sat down, shut both doors, and we just took it over. We had an official pass on. One guy who was sitting in there looked up, and I said, "How you doing? We're with him." After we finished the meeting, he said, "Ok, guys, you ready to go have some fun.

Let's watch the ballgame." I said, "Am I ready? That's what I thought we were going to do anyway. Not have this dumb meeting." So we got on the elevator and went down down-stairs. We didn't go through all the lines where the people were. Oh no. We walked out the team entrance right on the floor. And when we walked out, everyone just kind of turned their head. I wanted to say, "How ya'll doing? Good to see ya. I'm with him. Hey man! I'm special. I'm with him. I'm identified. I got the pass. See it right here." We walked over. We didn't sit in the bleacher seats. They had chairs set up on the actual floor. I've seen these before but there are usually all

these real dignitaries sitting down there. I sat three rows from the team. These guys are big that play pro ball. I didn't understand how big they were from just watching them play on television. These are huge people. Sitting down there I had more fun looking around at the people in there. They were probably saying, "Who are they?" "Hey, we're with him. We're somebody. We're special. We're identified with him." Now you see, the next time I hear that illustration it's going to be a whole lot more meaningful to me than the first time I heard it. And I know I'll hear it again because Tony is like the rest of us preachers. He uses illustrations to death. Sometime he'll come and speak, and he'll use it again. Oh, the first time it excited me. And I thought, "Isn't it wonderful to be identified with Him." Now I have been there, and I have participated in it. The difference is not just in understanding it but appropriating it in your life. You've been chosen. You've got a little pass on you. It's a mark of the blood of Jesus and the mark of the Spirit of God in your life. If you'll study the covenant you'll see how this fits together. It's like a glove and a hand fitting together. You've been marked wherever you go. When you go in the grocery store people say, "Oh look at that guy. He's overweight." Or "He's too skinny." Whatever else they say, they still look at you like, "Who is that person?" And you can say with tears flowing down your cheeks, "Listen folks, I'm saved by the grace of God. I'm special to my Father. My Father chose me before the foundation of the world." You can go out into life and wherever you go you're marked. And you see, the difference is Tony is not recruiting other people to come to his ballgames. Any time you try to use an illustration it always fall short somewhere. There's no illustration in human life that will ever depict a scriptural truth. It just sort of gives you an idea.

But you see, in the Christian life, that's the beauty. You can find somebody who doesn't have that mark on them and say, "Hey, would you like to have it? It is only by the grace of God that I have it. And I would love to share with you how you could be with Him and be identified in Him." I think the saddest day in a Christian's life is when he's embarrassed to tell others that he's with Him. That's what wrong with us. Because you see when you get involved with sin, immorality, those kinds of things in your life, it takes away all the joy that should have been yours. You took your pass, and you stuck it in your pocket where nobody could see it. You didn't want anybody to know you're identified with Him. And you start looking for things other ways, and you realize you can't find them anywhere until you come back to the one whose identified you with Him.

I've been blessed. You've been blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ Jesus. If I'm not walking in obedience to Him, forget the blessings. If I'm ready to come back to Him, there they are. They haven't gone anywhere. Forgiveness of sin, cleansing by the blood. All of them are there. But not only have we been blessed, we've been what? Chosen before the world ever existed. "Oh Brother Wayne, I need to do something to deserve it." Hey folks, you were chosen before you even knew you would be around. You didn't have a chance to do anything. God went ahead and made the choice. That's the key. So I hope this is going to mean something to you. There's a reason He blessed us. There is a reason He chose us. It's all in the verse. But that'll be the next time.

EPHESIANS 1:4:

HOLY AND BLAMELESS

By Dr. Wayne A. Barber

Eph 1:4 [just](#) as He [chose](#) ([5639](#)) us in Him [before](#) the [foundation](#) of the [world](#), that we would be ([5750](#)) [holy](#) and [blameless before](#) Him. In [love](#)

We're going to be looking at God's eternal design for believers. Let's read all the way down through verse 4 so we can catch the flow of what the apostle Paul is saying here. "Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God to the saints who are at Ephesus and who are faithful in Christ Jesus. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and blameless before Him." Verse 4 is obviously connected to verse 3. In verse 3 He has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in Christ. In verse 4 He has chosen us in Christ.

What a wonderful beginning to this praise time. God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in Christ, and He has chosen us. You can't really appreciate this until you have laid yourself before Him, surrendered your heart and your life to Him. If we have learned to worship Him, when we start reading these things, God opens the heavens to us, and the praise just flows out of our life. We have been blessed with every spiritual blessing. Not only that, we have been chosen in Him. But why did God do this before the foundation of the world?

This book of Ephesians is a wonderful, wonderful book. There are three chapters on who we are in Christ and three chapters on whose we are in Christ, how we're supposed to live. It's a beautiful, beautiful book. And when you get way over to chapter 6 you find out we're in a warfare. But he wants you to know something first. He wants you to know who you are. He wants you to know what your position is in Christ Jesus. It's a beautiful, beautiful picture here that He's drawing for us.

I want us to look at two things regarding God's eternal design. Why was it that He blessed us and chose us in Christ Jesus before

the foundation of the world? Well, it says it in the last part of verse 4, "... that we should be holy and blameless before Him." There are two points that are going to come out of that little phrase. Let's just look at that one phrase now. He has chosen us in order that we should be holy and blameless before Him. First of all His eternal design for all of us that are believers is that our position in Christ will always be secure. God wants us to know what our position in Christ is and that it will always be secure.

Have you ever wondered about your eternal security? Are you worried about losing your salvation? Many people are, and many people have been taught that you are not eternally secure in Christ Jesus. Now what does that lead you into? It leads you into legalism because if you're not secure you had better work for it, and if you're going to work for it you had better do certain things. Not only that, mysticism fits immediately into that because you expect God to do something to show you that you really are in His kingdom. You've got to have some kind of ecstatic utterance. You've got to have something happen to you. So you're always pursuing something outside of Jesus, an experience or even Asceticism. People who are uncertain of their salvation are always trying in some way to prove to themselves that they have it.

But what I want to show you is in the statements that we're reading. God shows you your position in Christ is secure for all of eternity. He uses the term "that we should be" (NAS). It is the Greek word *einaí*. It's the present infinitive of *eimi*. "... that we might be holy and blameless before Him." **Present tense** means ongoing, never to end, not just today but tomorrow, the next day, the next day and the next week and the next week. And the infinitive there always expresses purpose. What is the purpose of God's choosing us and blessing us? The purpose is that we always be holy and blameless before Him. Now it even gets better. Let's look at the word "holy." We are eternally to be holy before Him. What does it mean to be holy before Him? Remember when we looked at verse 1 we went through the book of Ephesians, and I showed you that the word "holy" is the same word for the word "saints"? So when you think of a saint you have to think of the word "holy," **hagios**. It's the same exact word. What does it mean? Here it means morally pure, upright, blameless in heart, right, virtuous. It describes the inward pure state of a believer in Christ. He is inwardly pure. Now we know we are not sinlessly perfect, but somehow we are told here in scripture that in Christ, because of what He's done in our life, that we have been made inwardly pure, eternally. God sees us that way. He sees us in Christ.

Look in 1 Peter 1. Now this is the difference between Jesus and us. He is inherently holy. He's always been that way. Our holiness has got to be imputed to us. It's something that happens when Christ enters into our life. 1Pe 1:17, 18, 19 -note says,

"If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth; knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ."

It speaks of Jesus as being without blemish, without spot. It speaks of Him as being inherently that way. Now we're not inherently that way. But we have somehow been made holy. We've been made inwardly pure as Christ has entered our life, cleansed us of our sin, washed us in the blood. Then, because of Him and His residence in our life, we are eternally holy before God. Now I don't know about you but that kind of excites me. God sees me in His Son and sees the work His Son has done in me, and that will never, ever, ever change.

Positionally, I am secure in Christ Jesus.

The word "**blameless**" has to do with being without spot or blemish. The Greek word is **amomos** [word study]. It means "**a**"-without & **mos** – spot or blemish. No spot or blemish. In secular Greek it was a technical word that referred to the absence of something, or something amiss in a sacrifice which would make it unworthy to be offered. In other words, a sacrifice was rejected because of spot or blemish, something that was in any way amiss about that sacrifice. What it says here is, because of the finished work of Christ, what he did in our hearts and in our lives, we can never, ever be rejected. We've been cleansed of anything that can ever reject us in the sight of God because of what Christ did for us on the cross and what He did for us in our life as He entered in and became the very essence of our being.

God says we are holy and blameless before Him. We are to be eternally holy and blameless before Him. That was His design before the foundations of the world. God knew that His creation would reject Him, and God came up with a plan before the foundation of the world had even happened. Before any system had appeared on this earth, God made provision that you and I as believers be holy and blameless before Him. That phrase has the same impact and understanding as Ro 8:1-note. Romans talks about the constitution of our faith. Ro 8:1 has the same understanding of us being made holy and blameless, blameless meaning nobody can accuse us and nobody can reject us because of what Christ has already done in our lives. Ro 8:1-note says,

"There therefore is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.."

That's the key to Ephesians, and that's the key to our understanding this. When you receive Him He comes into you, and the Holy Spirit of God baptizes us into the body of Christ (1Cor 12:13). And when we are in Him, all of our blessings are found in Him. We are eternally secure. We see that the believer has been blessed and chosen in Christ so that he is eternally, positionally **pure** and cleansed of anything that would ever cause him to be condemned.

Now that phrase "**holy & blameless**" is also found in Eph 5:27-note. It talks about a situation with husbands and wives. There is a great understanding of this phrase in verse 27 when he compares our relationship with our wives to Christ's relationship with the church:

"that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy & blameless." It is the purpose of God with His people.

It is used again in Col 1:22-note, which talks about how He has reconciled us to God, and tells us why.

"yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy & blameless and beyond reproach."

So we see then that God here tells us through the apostle Paul that our position in Christ is eternally secure.

Look with me again in Ro 8:33-39-note.

"Who will bring a charge against God's elect ? God is the one who justifies; 34 who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. 35 Who will separate us from the love of Christ ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword ? 36 Just as it is written, "FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED." 37 But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Who's going to bring a charge against God's elect? Because He has chosen us and blessed us in Christ in order that we are holy and blameless eternally before Him, positionally we are secure in Jesus Christ. You know I've always wondered about people who have a conviction, they say, that you can lose your salvation. And I have some logical questions to ask outside of scripture. If you can lose your salvation, how many sins does it take to lose it? I would love to hear somebody explain that. You would have to say one sin because you know that all sin is evil in God's eyes. Listen, most people who believe you can lose it believe you can get it back later on. How many times can you get it back? There's got to be a secretary in heaven somewhere with an eraser about four miles long, and wherever my name is on that roster there is a hole rubbed in it, because it has been written in and erased out, written in, erased out, written in, erased out so many times that they don't know if I'm in or out. It doesn't make any sense. If you did nothing to get your salvation, what can you do to lose it? If it was His work, and it was His design, and He chose us before the foundation of the world, what in the world can you do to nullify that choice?

I hear people say, "Oh, but Brother Wayne, when you are inside Jesus that's one thing. He holds on to you, but you can choose to walk outside of Him." Hold it. Hold it. Whoever in the world told you that the Holy Spirit inside of you would allow you to make that choice? You know there is someone now who lives in you that didn't live in you before.

And He's in you, Philippians says, to will and to work. He even works in your desires. Many people who don't believe in eternal security and can't understand this truth are people who have been raised and taught that salvation is a gift. Let's just say that you have a handful of change. I stand up in front of you and say, "I got a gift for whoever wants this gift. If you want it you run up here and get it." If you've got it now I can't take it back because it's a gift, and it's always your gift. But if you grow up thinking salvation is nothing more than you receiving a gift from God, then no wonder you believe you can lose your salvation. That's not what salvation is. In the words of our Lord Jesus Himself in John chapter 3, He said salvation is a birth, something takes place. You are a brand new creature. 2 Cor 5:17-note says,

"Therefore if anyone is **in Christ**, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come"

The Spirit of God has entered into his spirit, and they have become mysteriously related together.

Take the ingredients of bread. You put in the flour, and you put in yeast. I don't know what else you might put into it. You put it all together, stir it up and make dough out of it. You put it on the pan. You put into the stove. You cook it, and when you take it out, there's bread. No scientist in this world has ever been able to go back into that bread and take out the ingredients. They can't do it. They are mysteriously blended together. You can never rip them apart. How do you take God's Spirit out of a man's spirit? There's no possible way. It's an entrance of God into a person's life, a cleansing, and that is for all of eternity.

God sees you in His Son. Because He is inherently pure He has come into your life to purify you and by His residence in you automatically declares to the world that no man can bring a charge against God's elect, no man. That was designed before the

foundation of the world.

Can you imagine Paul saying, "Praise the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has chosen you to be holy as long as..." and then puts all the conditions that go down below it? Be careful when you read translations that put that little "if" after some of those statements. Sometimes the translator makes it look like you got to measure up to conditions or you can't have that holiness, when it should be translated "since you do," because the Holy Spirit of God now lives in your life. So the first thing He wants us to praise God for is that our position in Christ is eternally secure.

But the second thing I want you to see is sort of implicit. He begins to lay some groundwork here that he picks up on in chapter 4. Not only is our position in Christ secure, but so is the believer's practice. Our practice is not perfection. Remember that. I'm not preaching sinless perfection. I'm talking about our position in Christ forever. But when you start coming back down to where we live and breathe here on planet earth, a believer's practice before Christ, before Christ, his position in Christ, is secure. His practice before Christ is settled. There is no question about it.

Now I want to show you what I'm talking about here. He says,

"... that we should be holy and blameless before Him."

Now this has already dealt with our position, but I want you to see in verse 4 the implicit practice of the believer. Now listen to what I'm saying and hang with me. Even though we are holy and blameless, declared so by God himself, since we are to be holy and blameless in our daily practice, the unworthy has been declared worthy. But now the unworthy that's been declared worthy is to walk in a manner worthy of that which God has done. Now did you catch all of that? The unworthy has been declared worthy. We didn't do it. That's God's grace. Thank God for that. But those that have been declared worthy now need to walk in a manner worthy.

Look in chapter 4 of Ephesians. You'll see what I'm talking about. He's laid the groundwork. He's not really saying this in chapter 1, but it's implicit in the understanding. If I've been declared holy before God, then I automatically have no recourse but to seek to live holy among others. In Ep 4:1-note it says,

"Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called"

"I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, entreat you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling which you have been called." There's something implicit here. When you find a believer that doesn't want to deal with sin and self, you've got a person that has a little bit of problem with his salvation. When the Spirit comes in, inherent in the believer is the desire to trust and please God and to walk and live worthy before a lost world.

We're declared to be holy and blameless. We should strive to be holy and blameless. Look at Eph 2:10. That which God has done inside has got to have some effect on the outside. It says in Eph 2:10-note,

"For we are His workmanship (poiema ~ gives us English "poem"), created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them."

What were we created for? So that what we are on the inside could be expressed on the outside in our life, the good works.

We think good works are something we come up with and ask God to approve. But what did the verse say? We are created for good works that He came up before the foundation of the world. They were predestined before the foundation of the world that they might be expressed in our life. He has declared us to be holy and blameless. But now He has challenged us to express that through our life.

Look at 2 Timothy, and you'll see how these good works flow out of us. It's nothing we do. It's something God does. 2Ti 3:16, 17-note says,

"All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work"

The word **adequate** (word study of artios) means equipped. It's just another way of saying it. It's the picture of a ship that has been fully loaded to carry out its course.

"You mean those good works are there but yet I've got to be equipped? I've got to be trained? I've got to be taught? I've got to be reproved by the word of God?" Yes. And as I walk with Him that way, dealing with sin, dealing with "self" under the Word, the lordship of Christ, the Word gets into me. It changes my way of living. What comes out of me are those works that were predestined before the foundation of the world. And they are going to be on the outside if the heart has been made pure on the inside. You know we're living in a day that wherever I go, it seems when I talk about dealing with sin and dealing with "self", people just look at me like, "Man, where have you been? That doesn't work in the 20th century." But, folks, it does work. It hasn't changed. God's the same

yesterday, today, and forever (Heb 13:8-note). We've got to deal with it. The person of the Holy Spirit lives in us. And He's in us to guide us and to teach us and to lead us and to convict us and to help us understand the Word so that the good works can come out of our life. That's what Christ does **through** a man. It's not what a man does **for** Christ. Christ is **in** a man having made him pure all of eternity. Christ wants to be expressed in His works **through** a man as a man learns to surrender to Him.

Ro 8:29-note says we're [predestined, foreordained](#), to be [conformed](#) into the image of Christ Jesus. The only problem is we don't get to choose the tools that God decides to use to chip us off and conform us to the image of Christ Jesus, even though positionally, we're already holy and blameless. I never worry about my position in Christ. That's taken care of. However, practically, that is a struggle, and that's the fight Paul says he has fought at the very end of his life (2Ti 4:7-note). I've fought (agonizomai) the good fight. The word fight is agon. It's the fight of the flesh and the spirit. Paul says I have defeated Paul in my life. I've finished the course. I've done what God has called me to do. I'm ready now to go and get the the crown of righteousness (2Ti 4:8-note) which awaits me.

Look 2Co 7:1-note. This gives us another clue of how this holiness is perfected in our life down here. It's already been perfected for all of eternity. But in 2Co7:1-note it says,

"Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

Now wait a minute. I thought we were already **holy**. We are. But since we **are** holy, we are to **live** holy in the fear of God. We've been declared holy and blameless. Our position is secure in Him.

But I want you to notice one more thing in Eph1:4. It says He

"just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him.."

The last two little words there are very, very, very, very important. Who determines if Wayne is walking holy before God? Who determines if Joe is walking holy before God? Man does not set the standard on this. This is where legalism and those kinds of things mess up. God sets the standard. We are walking and living that way before Him. Let me just show you some verses, starting with Ro1:9-note Notice what Paul said. Everything we do is before Him. I might walk out of here, and you may say, "Brother Wayne, that was a wonderful message." I don't determine that by what you say. I have to determine that by what He says. It's all before Him. He's the one who knows the motive and everything that's there about what's done.

Paul says in Ro1:9-note

"For God, whom I serve in my spirit in the preaching of the gospel of His Son, is my witness as to how unceasingly I make mention of you."

In other words, you may not believe me but I don't have to convince you. I do it before Him. He's the one who keeps the books. Isn't that wonderful. Man, that makes me want to shout. A lot of men may nail you and me while we're here on this earth by what they think and what they perceive. It's God who keeps the books. God knows. He's our witness.

Look in 2Cor 4:1, 2. That's why we're not to be other people's judge. We're to judge ourselves. Paul is talking about his apostolic ministry. He says in verse 1:

"Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we received mercy we do not lose heart, 2 but we have renounced the things hidden because of shame, not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God, but by the manifestation of truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."

Oh man, if we could all live this way and know that what man thinks is one thing, but what God thinks is everything. He knows. And so therefore I don't have to please you, and you don't have to please me. We all are seeking to please Him who has seen fit to make us holy and blameless in Christ forever. Isn't that wonderful? We serve to please Him (2Cor 5:9-note, Eph 5:10-note).

Then look at Gal 1:20. He wants them to know that he's not lying. You know Paul has just got this real consciousness about the fact that they know that he's telling the truth, and he says in verse 20,

"Now in what I am writing to you, I assure you before God that I am not lying."

In other words if you can't trust just what I'm saying you can believe something. What I do, I do in the presence of Him. It's before Him.

Turn to 1Th 3:11, 12, 13-note.

"Now may our God and Father Himself and Jesus our Lord direct our way to you and may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another, and for all people, just as we also do for you; so that He may establish your hearts without blame

in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints."

There's going to come a day that He will ultimately let everybody know what He knows that man down here does not know.

So therefore, our position in Christ is secure but our practice in Him is settled. No preacher needs to get up and motivate people to obey Christ if they are His servants, because at some point they're going to have to deal with the person that lives within them. And that person within them is going to bring them to conviction somehow or another. Now He uses people to do that, but they're really not that necessary, because it's God's business with His people. He oversees His flock.

Let me ask you a question. Are you excited that your position in Christ is secure? Have you even grasped that yet? I don't fight with somebody who still says, "I'm still not convinced." That's alright. I can't convince you anyway. Somehow through the Word, God is going to have to convict you. I can't do that. But let me ask you this. If you truly say that you have Christ in your life, is it settled with you that you have no recourse but to live holy & blameless before this world because God accepts no other standard in your life? You say, "Now Brother Wayne, what does that mean?" As I have said before, if you go out to a restaurant, and you order beans, but they bring you peas, and they're cold, as a believer, holy and blameless before God in Christ, you have no recourse but to turn to Him, ask Him to give you the grace that that which is within you may reach outside of you and touch the one who made the mistake.

The lifestyle of a believer who's positionally secure in Christ is settled. It must be expressed in his practical outworking in his life.

We have no recourse, folks. It's settled. Thank God for His grace that enables us to be able to live the way He wants us to live and to conform down here to the image of Christ Jesus. One deals with or salvation which is eternal. The other deals with our sanctification which is a process. We won't make it down here. But one day He'll come and make it for us. But in the meantime we're to be conformed in the image. What's on the inside has got to be expressed on the outside. Praise the God and Father who has chosen us, blessed us, that we might be holy and blameless before Him.

EPHESIANS 1:5:

THE LOVE OF GOD

By Dr. Wayne A. Barber

Eph 1:5 He [predestined \(5660\)](#) us to [adoption as sons through Jesus Christ](#) to [Himself](#), [according](#) to the [kind intention](#) of His will,

Would you turn with me to Ephesians 1:5? I want to focus on the subject entitled "The Love of God." Obviously that's a subject that could be preached on from now until the Lord Jesus comes back. Love is all He is. But I want us to focus this understanding of His love to the passage that we're looking at for it tells us in another way how God has loved us. There was a song when I was growing up that I remember. We don't sing it a lot anymore, but it still rings in my heart.

The love of God is greater far than tongue or pen can ever tell.

It goes beyond the highest star and reaches to the lowest hell.

The guilty pair bogged down with care.

God sent His son to win. His erring child

He reconciled and pardoned from their sin.

Even from a child that song has meant so much to me. Jn 3:16 has also. You know we talk about that verse sometimes like it's an old truth. May it never grow old. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." God so loved the world.

If you'll read verse 5 with me, we will find something that I think is very precious. Start with those last two words of verse 4,

"He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will"

As I was studying this verse this week the thing that overwhelmed me was that, before the foundation of the world, God loved me. Now sometimes I feel unloved, and you feel unloved. We always know we're unworthy to be loved, especially by a Holy God. But the Scripture teaches us that God loved us before the foundation of the world, before He ever created it or anything else. In His foreknowledge He knew what would take place once He created mankind, and yet still He loved you and me. He loved us so much that He came up with a plan that would bring us into His family for all of eternity.

Have you noticed that, in Scripture, a man's position by grace is sealed and taken care of, but a man's practice does not automatically line up with that position? Abraham was counted as righteous before God, but was Abraham perfect? No. As a matter of fact, he turned right around and lied and said his wife was his sister. Job was a righteous man, it says, but we know Job had some very deep problems, especially with those three "friends" who came to give their advice. Job could not stand somebody to say he was in any way unrighteous in his character. God only freed him when he turned to pray for his three friends. And so we see all through Scripture the position that's unchangeable. It is perfect, and it's by grace. But we see a man's practice seeking to line up with his position. We call that process sanctification. My position is sealed and assured and taken care of with the Lord Jesus by grace, but now I'm seeking to line my practice up with my position. Sometimes I do better than at other times, and I'll never see it happen exactly on this earth. One day when I'm glorified, it will all be taken care of.

If "in love" is read in verse 4, it appears to say that's the motive that a believer would pursue in making his practice and his position line up. I don't have any trouble with that. We should be committed to God. We should be absolutely devoted to all that He's done for us. And we should strive to love Him and to serve Him and to obey Him. But I want to remind you that verses 3 through 14 are not talking about man's responsibility. Verses 3 through 14 are talking about what God has done for man. And so "in love" has to fit verse 5 as the New American Standard version has it.

Let me just give you a quick review of verses 3 through 14 and what we've already looked at. In verse 3 through 6a, God the Father looks back to the past, before the foundation of the world and speaks of our being chosen, elected. God does that, not man. Verses 6b through 11 speak of how God the Father bestowed His grace upon us in Jesus, and it looks at the present and our redemption through the blood of Jesus Christ. Then verses 12 through 14 speak of how God the Father sealed us in Christ by the Holy Spirit, and looks at our future and the inheritance that is to come. No where in there do we find man responsible for anything. But we find a gorgeous statement of our redemption, all the way back before the foundation of the world, having been predetermined, and the outworking of it, and the future and our inheritance which is to come.

I believe it fits verse 5 when it says "In love He predestined us to adoption as sons..." We have been blessed in Christ. We have been chosen in Christ. And now we find that in love we have been predestined to the adoption as sons. To me, by simple implication, it brings in the blessing and the choosing because that's the loving nature of God the Father. God loves you. Nobody in this world may love you, but God loves you, and He's the only one that really counts. Before the foundation of the world He loved us, and He made a choice based on what He knew as God in order that we might be blessed in Christ with every spiritual blessing chosen in Christ and then predestined to be sons of God Himself. Well, I want us to look at verse 5, and I'm going to go very slow. I'm going to try my best to slow down and inch by inch go through this verse. Someone once asked, "How do you eat an elephant?" And the answer is, "One bite at a time." We're going to eat this elephant one bite at a time. I think the slower we go, the more impact it may have on our lives. We're going to move through it phrase by phrase.

First of all, in verse 5, out of His love for us, He predestined us. Well, what does it mean to be predestined? Let's make sure we understand it from God's point of view. It comes from two Greek words. The word [prohorizo](#). Pro means before, beforehand. So we see something happening beforehand. Then the second part of the word is [horizo](#), from which we get the word "horizon," and it means to determine. Something was determined beforehand.

Well, in looking up the word and wanting to understand it, I found that the word horizo is the most important part of the word **prohorizo**. I discovered **horizo** is used about eight times in the New Testament. Luke uses it six of those eight times. We can look at **horizo** to get an understanding of what he's saying. Something has happened beforehand. What was it?

In Luke 22:22, Jesus, speaking to His disciples just before His betrayal at the last supper said,

"For indeed, the Son of Man is going as it has been [determined](#) ; but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed."

Now you must understand that it was predetermined that Jesus would go to the cross. Jesus was not crucified by accident. It was not something that happened that God was not aware of. It was predetermined that He would come to this earth and would die upon the cross. That was something that was already sealed. It was what God had planned.

In Acts 2:23 Peter uses the word in his great sermon as Luke records. He says,

"this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death:"

Jesus went to the cross as a predetermined plan.

In Acts 10:42, again Peter is preaching and Luke records,

"And He ordered us to preach to the people, and solemnly to testify that this is the One who has been appointed by God as Judge of the living and the dead."

Why is He appointed by God? Because God predetermined it that way.

In Acts 11:29, it is used of the believers at Antioch, and to me this really draws a picture for us. It says this,

"And in the proportion that any of the disciples had means, each of them determined to send a contribution for the relief of the brethren living in Judea

They knew something about a need, therefore they determined to do something about it. That's the word, **horizo** a determination based on what you know.

In Acts 17:26, 27-note Paul is speaking on Mars Hill. He had been so distressed by all the idolatry there in Athens. He says this,

and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed , times and the boundaries of their habitation, that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find (5630) Him, though He is not far from each one of us

There is an appointed time. That word "predestined time" or "destined time," is **horizo**.

Then in Acts 17:31-note, the same sermon, he says,

"because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead."

Paul uses it again in Ro 1:4-note, and it's translated this way,

"..who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord."

You see that word "predestined", "destined", the word **horizo**, used many times.

The author of Hebrews uses it in Heb 4:7-note and notice how it's translated.

He again fixes a certain day, "Today," saying through David after so long a time just as has been said before , "TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS.""

He speaks of the believer's rest.

Now I wanted to labor through that because I want you to see something. **Horizo**, part of the word that we're looking at, means to determine and simply means to be based on knowledge that one has. I think the clearest example of that was the believers in Antioch when they found out about the needs that others had. They determined to send their money. So **horizo** means **to determine based on something that you know**.

Well, **prohorizo**, which is our word, means to determine something beforehand based on something that you know. Now that word is found five times. Look in Acts 4:27, 28. This is a prayer of the believers after the release of Peter and John. Look what they say:

"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 Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur."

In other words, a decision was made by the counsel of the Trinity before the foundations of the world, based on what they already knew, that Jesus would come into this world and be placed into the hands of sinners and be allowed to be crucified on a cross. It was predetermined based on the knowledge, the foreknowledge of the Godhead.

In Ro 8:28-30, we find it again.

Romans 8:28 (note): "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For those whom He foreknew He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren & these whom He predestined, He also called & these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified"

God predetermined before the foundation of the world that His family, the church, the body of Christ, would be formed into the likeness of Christ. How? By calling them, by justifying them and by one day glorifying them. We are to be conformed into the image of Christ Jesus. This is predetermined based on knowledge that God had before the foundation of the world.

Well, in 1Cor 2:7, Paul says,

but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God predestined before the ages to our glory."

What Paul is saying is I have the wonderful, wonderful privilege of being able to reveal to you something that has been a mystery throughout all the ages even before the foundation of the world. God made a decision based upon what He knew before the foundation of the world.

Ephesians 1:11 is the last time it's used other than our text and reads,

"also we have obtained an inheritance, having been [predestined](#) according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will"

Not only did God make a decision that somehow brings us into His family, a decision to send Jesus to this earth to die for us, but He also made a decision to give to each of us who are believers an inheritance one day. Some people say, "I'm waiting for my ship to come in." But you know, we ought not be looking down here because before the foundation of the world God predetermined an inheritance that is waiting for us in heaven. We don't belong to this world. We're a part of a heavenly family. We're looking for a city (Heb 11:10-note), not built by human hands and a place that Jesus has been preparing for us for 2000 years. All of this was by the predetermined decision of God based on what He knew before the foundation of the world. So it is my understanding that for God to predestine something means God made a determination before the foundation of the world based on all that He, as God, knew. Now I don't know if that does anything to you at all, but it does a lot for me to realize I have nothing to worry about. It's already finished as far as He is concerned. I'm just a recipient of what He's already planned and predetermined long before I ever came on the scene. Out of love God predestined us.

The second thing that I want us to see is

He predestined us to adoption as sons.

I had the privilege recently of doing a Bible Conference with Dr. John Phillips. He's written a lot of commentaries on the Bible. As I was talking to him. I said, "Dr. Phillips, when you study, what is something neat that you do that perhaps you would like to share with me?" And he said to me, "Well, Wayne, I spend 4 to 5 hours a day simply meditating on what God's Word has to say."

The Word Adoption

And I got to thinking about this as I was studying this particular phrase "*to adoption as sons*." You can take the word "[adoption](#)" and spend weeks on what you can see in that word. Automatically it tells you that it must be by grace. Adoption is not by right. Adoption is by grace. We're beginning to see unfolding before us that our plan of redemption is something God knew about before He ever spoke the world into existence. The phrase "adopted as sons" is really one Greek word, **huiothesia**. It comes from two Greek words. The first part is [huios](#) which means son. The word "son" doesn't just mean son in the sense of a male child. It's more than that. As a matter of fact, Jesus is never called the [teknon](#) of God, which means little child. He's always called the [huios](#) of God. It's a mature son, one who has identified himself with the will of his father. And it tells you something immediately. We're adopted not just to be in the family, but to grow up and mature as sons of the family so that we might be shining examples of what God wants us to be. Just the word "son" is enough to look at. But it also comes from the word [tithemi](#), which means to place, to place a son. In other words, to adopt.

Now Paul is writing to the church of Ephesus, which is on the western coast there of Asia Minor, and he appeals to their Greek understanding and their Roman understanding. He uses a legal term that is found in Roman culture when he says adopted as sons. In Roman law an adopted son, even though brought into the family by grace, had every privilege of a true son in that family. [Ed note: [ISBE article](#)]

Now when I read that I thought, "Oh my goodness." See, I'm the first born child in my family. My mother and father are in heaven now, but I'm their first born. Let's just say my parents, before they died, decided to bring another child into the family. And they went through the courts, and through the adoption process, and brought another child in. He would legally have every privilege as any true son of my family.

Now that ought to mean something to you. He is an heir just like a regular son would be an heir. When you come in as a son you become an heir. Look in [Ro 8:17](#). He's talking about children of God. Look what he says here.

"and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him."

In other words, you don't just say you're possessed, you live as if you're possessed. And if it shows in your life, then truly you are a child of God. You are a joint heir with the Lord Jesus Christ. God predetermined, based on knowledge that He had beforehand, that we might be brought into the adoption as sons through the Lord Jesus. Now why would God have to adopt His own creation? I

mean, I thought if you created something it was yours. Well, we all know the story, don't we? Isn't it amazing how you can't go through Ephesians without going back and reexamining what God did for us to begin with? If that truth is beginning to get stale in your life, if it no longer thrills you to hear about the crucifixion of Jesus and what God did for you, do you realize how callous you have grown? This truth ought to continue to overwhelm us until Jesus comes back. The fact is, He was willing to bring us back into His family. Not just back into His family, but also eternally to allow us to be His children. Why did God have to adopt His own creation? Well, man was created for fellowship with God. But in Genesis 3 man chose to disengage himself from God. By choosing to do what he wanted and not what God wanted, he had to reap the consequence of being separated from God. In Genesis 2 it says, "In the day that you eat from it [the tree of the knowledge of good and evil] you shall surely die." Now a lot of skeptics say, "Well, in the day that he ate of the tree he didn't die." Oh yes he did. He died spiritually. You didn't see that right off. He began to die mentally, and you see immediately a murder committed. They became a people who had been disengaged from fellowship and oneness with God. And then we see him later dying physically. **Ro 5:12**-note says in that one man sinned, this sin of rebellion against God, the depraved nature, has festered, and every person born of the human race is born with this nature within him to sin against God, to rebel against God.

Well, this is what Paul is referring to in Eph 2:1-2-note. He says,

"And you were dead in your trespasses and sins,"

Did you ever try to explain that to somebody? "How can I be dead, and I'm alive?" The only way you can explain it is you're dead spiritually, and one day you will die twice. You not only die physically, you'll be dead spiritually forever. And so we begin to help them understand the state that they're in because of Adam. Verse 2 says,

"... in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience."

That's the way we used to be. He said you were formally that way. But now something has happened to you. You've been brought back into the family, the family that was disengaged by Adam's sin. Now God goes through a process of adopting them back into His family. Only this time what He does is a better covenant. It is for all of eternity. You know, some people doubt the **total depravity of man**. (cp Ro 5:12-note) [Ed: See [Spurgeon on depravity](#)]. They have the feeling that Adam was a type of man. Have you heard that? "Well, Adam had his chance, and Adam failed. Every man born is like a type of Adam." That's not true, folks. If you believe that you would have to cut half the Bible out. Man is depraved.

I wish we could have taken you on the team to Krakow, Poland. We visited the Auschwitz death camp while we were there. I had read about that. My son did a report on it while he was in school. If you want to see the depravity of man, go there. I've never seen anything like it. We were having a great time on the bus because it was a free afternoon during the conference we were attending. But when we got to the camp they asked us to be solemn in what we did. They didn't have to ask us. The moment we walked in those buildings everybody got very quiet and very sober. We saw the effects of the depravity of man.

Folks, listen, a person apart from God cares not about life. It is God who cares about life. That's why He sent His Son to die for this world. But a man apart from God does not care about life. He only cares about himself.

You see, when World War II ended they couldn't blow it all up, they had to leave it there. It stands as a reminder of the depravity of man, of what man can do apart from God. There were rooms that were filled with little eyeglasses, little wire rimmed things, and there were thousands upon thousands of them. Folks, these were people like you and me. They had families. They had love for one another. They had little children. They had toys for the children. They were just like us. They were told at the death camps that they had come there to work in order to make a better nation. But when they got there, they were put into gas chambers, and they were killed. They didn't know that it was a death camp. This is what the depravity of man does in people's lives. In one room there was nothing but suitcases. They didn't have very much when they came to the camp. The names on them were what really grabbed me. They were names like ours. And I stood there thinking, "I was born in America, and I've never even stopped to thank God that I wasn't born in that time, in that world, as one of those people." Only by the grace of God I wasn't a part of it. And on those little suitcases were names like ours. Sarah, I remember was on one of them. And Rebecca was on one of them. They had written their name so when they left, they could reclaim their belongings, not knowing they would never leave that camp.

The people were killed in such a brutal way. They were told they were going to take a shower. We went into those stalls where they had gassed the people. They would turn the gas on instead of water, and they would die in those stalls. Then we saw the incinerators, not regular ovens. They were made about six or seven feet long so they could put a dead body in there and incinerate it. We saw that. People did this to one another. Oh friend, apart from Jesus that's exactly what your life, and that's exactly what my life is like. We may have somehow morally trained our senses to act a certain way in certain cultures, but man without Jesus Christ has every bit of that depraved nature in him. That was the nature that caused Cain to kill his brother, Abel. And it has been in man ever since. That's why man is no longer, even though he's God's creation, automatically part of God's family. He has to be adopted

again, reborn, re-bought into the family of God before

he can stand as God's own child.

Every man on this universe is not God's child. In a sense he is, in the fact that he's God's creation, but he's separated from God. This idea of universal salvation is ridiculous because, as the verse says, "we are adopted to sons through the Lord Jesus Christ." There is no other way through which we might be adopted back into the family of God.

You see a person without Christ has no desire or care about life that's around him. We only saw Auschwitz. We didn't get a chance to go over to another camp which is about a half hour from Auschwitz. It was thirty times the size of Auschwitz. The gas chambers were thirty times the size. Ten thousand pounds of gold was taken from the mouths of those precious people and taken to Germany and sold on the street for street value. That was the concern man, without Christ, had for other human beings. Folks, we wonder why we fight abortion today? Every time I bring that up I hear a voice speak to me. "Wayne, there may be somebody who has made that awful choice." Listen, God's grace is sufficient for you, my dear friend. But don't ever hold me hostage that I cannot teach the absolute, inerrant truth of God about that. You know God hates that. As a matter of fact, if you've been through it, you know better than anybody else how God hates it because, in reaping the consequences, you have had to consistently plead for God's mercy. And aren't you glad it's there? He didn't kick you out of the kingdom if you made that choice. But my friend, the reason people do that is because people's nature apart from God cares about nothing but themselves.

The word "adoption" is a word of grace

Folks, "adoption" is not being a part of a family by right. There's no man depraved by the nature of Adam that has a right to be a part of God's family. The word "adoption" is a word of grace. And it's grace found in the Lord Jesus Christ. Can you imagine an eternal God—omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent—who looks down the road and sees when He creates creation—and it's going to be from the dust of the ground— and He realizes that creation is going to rebel against Him, and He makes a predetermined choice based on His nature of unconditional love, and He says, "I love life. I love my creation." And in the predetermined counsel of the Trinity they decide that Jesus would be the lamb slain before the foundation of the world. He would come into this world and man, with that cruel nature, will put Him on a cross. He would die for our sins so that God might adopt us once again into His family. "Predestined to the adoption of sons through Jesus Christ." When you wake up in the morning, nobody may love you, as far as you know, but if you'll trust what God says, even though you may not feel like it, He says He loved you before the foundations of this world. And if you'll come to Him He offers something to you that is life, and it's eternal, and it's secure, blessed assurance of what He wants us to know about.

EPHESIANS 1:5:

THE LOVE OF GOD, PT 2

By Dr. Wayne A. Barber

Ep 1:5 He [predestined \(5660\)](#) us to [adoption as sons through Jesus Christ](#) to [Himself](#), [according](#) to the [kind intention](#) of His will,

Would you turn with me to Ephesians 1:5? We'll try to finish up the verse this time. The subject again is the love of God. We could just go on and on because His love is unsearchable. How do we ever understand it? Let's read the verse together beginning with the last two words in verse 4: "In love, He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself according to the kind intention of His will."

I want you to do something with me as we begin. I want you to say John 3:16 with me. Then we're going to do it a different way. Alright? Let's just say it together. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Now I want you to say it again out loud, and I want you to put your first name in there instead of "world" and instead of "whosoever." This is a wonderful truth, but it's an individual truth. God loves us all, but also God loves me, and you need to see that. I'm just praying God is going to turn that light on inside many of us and let us comprehend the love He has for us. Let's try it again. Put your first name instead of "world" and "whosoever."

For God so loved _____, that He gave His only begot-ten Son, that if _____ believes in Him he should not perish but have everlasting life.

God loves you. You may not feel loved, but that's what His Word says: "In love, He predestined us to adoption as sons." The word "**predestine**" comes from two words, one meaning before and one meaning to determine, to determine something beforehand. It is also based on knowledge that one already has. Before the foundations of the world, God knew something. He knew that His creation would be made of dust and would rebel against Him. Now can you fathom this? And in the counsel of the Trinity they came up with a predetermined plan so that God's creation could once again be brought back into His family.

The term "adoption as sons" (see **huiothesia**) should not be pushed too far. Sometimes if you take an illustration from the secular world it falls short of understanding what God is saying. However, Paul does use a Roman word. When he uses the word "adoption," he refers to an act of grace, not of right. In other words, man lost his right to be a part of God's family when Adam sinned. That curse was passed on to every man born of woman. Every individual ever born is born with the nature of Adam and, therefore, cannot be a part of God's family unless by God's grace and mercy He brings him to Himself through the process of adoption through Jesus His Son. It's a beautiful picture. God knew that man would sin. He knew the consequences, and God made a plan so that we could be brought back into His family.

Now we've talked about the **total depravity** of man (cp Ro 5:12). Many people debate that as if it is an issue. It is not an issue. It's God's Word. We talked about the Auschwitz death camp outside of Krakow which we had the opportunity to visit. I want to make sure you understand how depraved man really is. In that death camp were gas chambers where 330 people per day were put to death. They were told they were going to be taking a bath. They were led into an area, a shower area, and the gas was turned on. There were incinerators where they took the dead bodies and burned them to ashes and just blew them to the wind somewhere. There were also these small cells, about four feet square, made of brick. There was a little hole in the bottom. And they would take four men, make them strip and then crawl up through that hole and stand inside that four by four cell. Then they would close off the bottom. It was known as the suffocation chamber.

Now I am telling you this was for a reason. Man did not just put other men to death. They brutally tortured them to death. You see, this is the depraved nature of man. It's not enough just to kill someone. You have to go even further and torture them brutally. They had a place where they would take them out with a pistol and kill them there in the yard. Blood from those precious people still stains the walls.

In one room at least 30 feet long and about 30 feet deep there was over 2 tons of human hair that was still there, shaved off the heads of the bodies there. They would take the hair and make rugs and sell them on the street in Germany. This is the total depravity of man.

You may know somebody that doesn't know Jesus Christ, and you may say, "Well, Brother Wayne, they're fine people. They're moral people. They're good people." Let me tell you something. Their morals may have been trained, but inside their nature is as depraved as the nature of those who put people in those torture chambers in the Auschwitz death camp. It's no different. A man's nature has got to be changed by the cleansing blood and power of God through Jesus Christ. That is something God predetermined to do before the foundation of the world.

You can't push the phrase "adoption" too far because when I adopt a child into my family he is a child by adoption, but not by nature, not by birth. We are reborn into the kingdom of God. I believe Paul uses the term "adoption" to stress the fact that it's not an act of right. It's an act of grace. It's only by grace. When you adopt someone you don't have to do that. You choose to do that. Love is your motive, and it's an action and a work of grace.

So we see in the verse that He has predestined us to adoption as sons. Now we come to the next part of that: "He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ" This is the phrase that helps us put everything into perspective. How could a holy God bring sinful man back into His family? He created man innocent, but man sinned. How could He bring him back into His family?

Well, before the foundation of the world in the counsel of the Trinity there was a plan predetermined. I love this. This is not something that came up on the spot. It wasn't as if God was caught off guard. This was the eternal plan of the ages. There had to be a sacrifice. There had to be someone to pay the penalty for man's sin. It could not just be an innocent sacrifice. An innocent sacrifice whose blood was shed didn't do anything to re-move sin. It had to be a perfect sacrifice, and it had to be a representation of the creation God had put on this earth. And so Jesus said, "I'll go down. I'll become a man, and I'll be the perfect man that lives on this earth." And when Satan put his magnet of temptation over Jesus, something happened inside of Him, I'm sure, that caused Him to say, "Uh Oh, there's something wrong here." When he held the magnet of temptation over other men, something responded in that man just like you and I today respond to temptation. Why? Because we still live in bodies of flesh. But when Satan put that magnet over the Lord Jesus Christ, nothing responded, and Satan said, "Uh Oh," because God had become a man. Why? So that He could be the perfect sacrifice for you and I.

The name "Jesus Christ" tells us everything. "Christ" is His resurrected name, and "Jesus" is His earthly name. You know there is no other way of salvation. There was only one man sent from heaven to this earth, the God-man. And only through Him can we be adopted, which is an act of grace, back into the family of God. Many people misunderstood why Jesus came, especially the Jews. But John the Baptist understood. In John 1:29 he looked up and saw the Lord Jesus coming, and he said, "Behold, the Lamb of God." You see there had to be a sacrifice. The Hebrew mind understood sacrifices. The Hebrews knew a lamb without blemish was always sacrificed. But when he saw Jesus, he saw the perfect sacrifice, and he said, "The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."

Perhaps the attitude in the Trinity can best be explained by Php2:5, 6, 7, 8, 9. You see there's one God: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. And in the counsel of the Trinity, there was an attitude of oneness as the plan was predetermined. In the context of treating others and loving others and esteeming them as higher than yourself, he says, "Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped." He was equal to His father. It was not something He had to make happen. It was already done. Jesus is God. And then it says in verse 7, "... but emptied Himself [or "laid aside His privileges"], taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name."

You see, in the counsel of the Trinity, God the Father sent Jesus, but Jesus came of His own accord. There was no problem. There was no friction. It was the divine plan of God that Jesus would come to this earth to be the means through which a man might be adopted by grace back into the eternal family of God. You know, I was thinking about this. Do you ever think sometimes the Father didn't love His son? Why would God the Father send His only Son into this world to die on a cross? I came across a phrase in Jn17:22-24. This is the prayer of the Lord Jesus Christ to His Father. It's a beautiful prayer, and I want you to see what He said to show you this was the divine plan. Everyone in the Trinity, the three persons of the Trinity, fully agreed as to what needed to take place before the foundation of the world. It says in verse 22,

"And the glory which Thou hast given Me I have given to them; that they may be one, just as We are one; I in them, and Thou in me, that they may be perfected in unity, that the world may know that Thou didst send Me and didst love them even as Thou didst love Me. Father, I desire that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am, in order that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me; for Thou didst love Me before the foundation of the world."

You see, way back there when the plan was made, it was out of love. In love, God the Father predestined us unto adoption as sons. No wonder Paul says, "Praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." One of the things over the years that's bored me was when people talked about the gospel because I thought I was already saved. I thought I needed to grow. You know that's a callused way of living whenever you get a little hardened to what God has done for you, whenever you get a little hardened to the fact that we're nobody and deserve nothing. God predetermined before the foundation of the world that He would have a plan for us. Folks, that's when you grow hard, and you lose your joy in your Christian walk. But get up in the morning and say, "God, I don't deserve anything. I am nothing. I came from dust. But God, somehow in your mercy and your love, you planned before the foundation of the world that I could be a part of your family." Folks, that will begin a day that you haven't experienced in quite a while. Thank your Father. Love Him for what He's done for you. The word "**through**" (see study of **through Him = through Christ**) there in our text in Ephesians 1:5, "He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ...," is the word **dia**. It can be translated "by the means of." There is no other way to salvation. There is no other way to be back into the family of God. Man had lost his right to be a part of God's family when Adam sinned.

Now by an act of grace and a predetermined plan, we have a way to be adopted back into His family. We sing a chorus sometimes, "I'm so glad I'm a part of the family of God." We lose a little bit of the significance of it if we don't listen to what we're singing. Do you realize you can be an orphan, or you may not be married, but you're a part of the family of God because you've been adopted by the grace shown to you through the Lord Jesus Christ? Maybe somebody's rejected you to the point that you've been hurting for years, but you've received the Lord Jesus Christ because of His predetermined plan. Now you're a part of His heavenly family.

In the trips that I've taken overseas there is no north or south, east or west of God's family. When you find a person that is a believer, you see it immediately. I remember in Chernovtsky, Russia, when we finally got there. We had two and a half days on a Russian permit to be in the country. We were looking for some believers. We found a lady selling soap in the parking lot of the hotel we were in. She told us where some believers, they called them "**repenters**", were meeting. We went out to that little farm house, and we came up to the door, and a man opened the door. We looked at his face, and every one of us in the van, tired and weary from traveling, rejoiced because you could see: he's a part of the family of God. And something inside of him leaped up, and something inside of us leaped up, and we immediately identified the fact that we've been adopted into the family of God. It's like that all over the world.

In Poland we would see those precious believers that had come to know Christ. They're our brothers in Jesus. The people in Africa, in Zimbabwe, wherever you go, we're the family of God, the spiritual eternal family of God, by a process of adoption, an act of grace, through and by the means of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, folks, if you don't have anything to praise God for in the morning just go back to Ephesians and read chapter 1, and it might just make a difference before the day is over. We're part of a divine family.

One Sunday while I was looking around at the crowd, I saw that some, before the service started, were talking to each other, laughing, slapping each other on the back, hugging one another. And I thought, you know, what goes on inside these walls, the

pagan world out there would give anything they had if they could just understand and sense it. Let's don't take this for granted. We're a part of a family.

Well, there is another phrase we need to look at:

"He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself,"

"To Himself" is the Greek phrase **eis auton**. The word **eis** there has the primary meaning of motion into or toward a place or a thing. What I picture in this is a Father yearning for His creation. He puts His arms out, and He says, "I want to draw you to myself." And the way He does that is by sending His Son to die on a cross to open the door and give the opportunity of adopting people back into His family. And the Father says, "Bring them to me. Bring them to me." We hear people in the world say, "Men are looking for their God." Oh no, man's not looking for his God. But I guarantee you one thing, man's God is looking for His men. He's out looking, trying to find one. As I was thinking about this, I was thinking about the heart of the Father. The thought came to me that He's there in glory looking down at all of His children that have not yet heard that He's provided a way that they might once again be brought into His family. You see He's the eternal Father of all creation. He's our heavenly Father because of Jesus Christ. And He is Father to every person created on this earth, even though one day He has to judge them. He's still, in a sense, their Father, and He wants His children to come back to Him. I see Him with His arms open, saying, "Bring them. Bring them to me. Go find them. Tell them of the good news." The word "gospel" means the good news of salvation. Oh folks, how many people do you work with all week long that are lost children of the family? They haven't heard that they can be adopted once again into the eternal family of God, even though separated now by sin in their life. You have not yet shared that. I'm wondering where the burden has gone. Where has the compulsion gone to think of a lost world that doesn't know the Lord Jesus Christ? This is why we have missions. This is why we have evangelism. We become ambassadors for Christ Who came to provide a way. We need to get the word out to people that they have a way through which they can once again be a part of the eternal family of God.

"He has predestined us to adoptions as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself." I just see a beautiful picture of the Father saying, "I want my children back in the fold." No wonder the Lord Jesus wept when He looked down at Jerusalem. He didn't weep when Lazarus died except to shed a single tear. But when He looked over Jerusalem He realized they had rejected Him. And to think that before the foundation of the world they were a part of the whole plan. Israel was the nation through which the seed would come. He knew that. And when He saw Israel reject Him, the weeping came in our Lord Jesus Christ. Have you spent any time lately weeping for one who is lost, people of the flock who have not yet been adopted and brought back into the spiritual, eternal family of God? Has it ever broken your heart to see things like that?

Well, finally

"He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself according to the kind intention of His will."

The word for the kind intention is **eudokia**. It's a word that could be translated "His good pleasure." You see, the very essence of the character of God comes out in this word. And what it's saying is God, with every fiber of His loving being, before the foundation of the world, predetermined that there might be an opportunity for all men to come into the kingdom of God and to the family of God for all of eternity. It was His good pleasure to do what He did. Why would a holy, righteous God ever have anything to do with fallen man?

You know, there's a verse in Scripture that says, "What is man that thou are mindful of him?" (Ps 8:4) Why? Because He's a loving God. If I can say that a hundred times, if I can bore you with it, I want to bore you with it, so you can realize God is not some kind of tyrant out to get people. Friend, He's a loving God that's done everything in His power to give man

an opportunity to be reborn, to be adopted back by grace through Christ into His family.

Look back with me in Rev 15:5-8. A loving God does not want to see anyone perish. Peter said the reason He's so slow, not as humans count slowness, is because He has a heart not to see anybody perish (2Pe3:9). The Father wants the whole creation to be brought in. But the sad thing is Jesus said, "few there be that find it." (Mt7:14) Now comes the day where God, as a righteous judge, must do what He must do.

"After these things I looked, and the temple of the tabernacle of testimony in heaven was opened, and the seven angels who had the seven plagues, came out of the temple clothed in linen, clean and bright, and girded about their breasts with golden girdles. And one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God, who lives for ever and ever." ([Rev 15:5-7](#))

Full, it says, of the wrath of God. Whereas wrath had fallen before, there was mercy mixed with wrath. But now it's just wrath with no mercy. And verse 8 says,

"And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power; and no one was able to enter the temple until the

seven plagues of the seven angels were finished."

Now what's going on inside that place? We don't know, but I would like to suggest a thought to you. Could it be that God is doing what He has to do? He is God. He is also judge. But in His doing what He has to do, could it be that it's breaking His heart to have to judge people when He's done everything for them to have the opportunity to be brought back into His family for all of eternity?

We're all about the business of our Father, and the business of our Father is seeking to save the lost and to get all of His creation back into His kingdom by the means of Jesus Christ forever and ever. God took great delight before the foundation of the world in predetermining a plan based on what He knew about His intended creation in order that we, once fallen, could be adopted back into His eternal family. And folks, as we go out, let's help find those who haven't heard yet that there's a way to be a part of God's eternal family. God loves them and He loves us.

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