



EPHESIANS



Lesson 1: Intro & Chapter 1:1-5

Background

Ephesus was the capital of Proconsular Asia, second only to Rome. Remember, Asia (Asia Minor) was the term that the Romans used for their far western provinces in and around modern-day Turkey.

- ✓ **Consecrated to Artemis (Diana):** The city's patron goddess; her massive temple was one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.
- ✓ **Founded and colonized mainly by Athenians** around the **11th century B.C.**
- ✓ **Renowned artists:** The celebrated painters **Parrhasius** and **Apelles** were natives of Ephesus.
- ✓ **Pythagoras** is traditionally said to have come from Ephesus.
- ✓ **Philosophical schools:** Ephesus was associated with thinkers from the **schools of Parmenides, Zeno, and Democritus.**
- ✓ **Great harbor city,** though it gradually declined due to silting from the **River Cayster.**
- ✓ **Temple of Artemis (Diana):** Took **220 years** to complete; measured **418 ft × 239 ft** with **127 columns**, each **56 ft high**—about **four times larger than the Parthenon.** It stood until **A.D. 262**, when it was destroyed by the Goths.
- ✓ **Grand theater** on the western slope of **Mount Coresus:** the largest in the Hellenic world, seating approximately **50,000 people.**
- ✓ **Figuratively referenced** in Scripture (e.g., **1 Corinthians 4:9; 9:24–25; 15:32).**
- ✓ **Earliest New Testament allusion:** Pious Jews from Ephesus present at **Pentecost (Acts 2:9).**

Paul stayed in Ephesus longer than in any other place. The gospel may have been more effective in this area than in any other place or time in the history of the world.

Paul's 2nd Missionary Circuit (A.D. 51)

On his way from Greece to Syria, Paul visits Ephesus (Acts 18:18-21), bringing Aquila and Priscilla with him, and leaves them there. Paul is pressed to stay; departs with a promise to return (en route to keep festival in Jerusalem; Pentecost?). During his absence, Apollo visited, received full instruction from Aquila and Priscilla, and continued to Corinth.



Paul's 2nd Visit to Ephesus Lasts 3 Years (A.D. 54-57)


Ephesus emerged as the headquarters church in Proconsular Asia (Acts 19:20-31). There were 14 key churches: the seven of Revelation, plus Troas, Assos, Adramyttium, Miletus, Trogyllium, Hierapolis, and Colossae. 1 Corinthians was written here; the period closed with the tumult raised by Demetrius (Acts 19:19-41).





Paul's Last Voyage to Syria (A.D. 58)


On Paul's final voyage to Syria, he desired to meet once more with the elders of Ephesus. To avoid public attention, he anchored at Miletus, about 30 miles south, and summoned them there, delivering his heartfelt and solemn farewell recorded in Acts 20:16-35:





 *For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia: for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost. And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church.*
Acts 20:16,17

 *And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews: **Acts 20:18,19***

 *And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. **Acts 20:20-23***

 *But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. **Acts 20:23,24***

 *Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all **the counsel of God**. Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. **Acts 20:26-28***

 *For I know this, that after my departing shall **grievous wolves** enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. **Acts 20:29,30***



Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified. I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. Acts 20:30-33



Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive. Acts 20:34,35

"...the counsel of God," also referred to as The Whole Counsel of God. Paul taught them the whole package as a guard against one-verse theology, which is your protection in eschatology and any other doctrinal areas. The whole package should 'fit together'. False teachers, whom Paul warns the Ephesians about, often use verses out of context to sway and deceive followers.

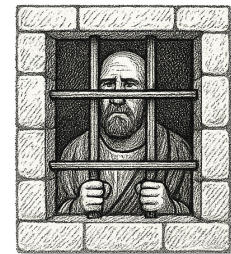


"...grievous wolves" are those within the church. Paul knew the biggest danger did not come from outside the church, mainly because people could identify their aggressors (Romans, hostile jews, etc.), but deceivers from within the Church, like today, pose the greatest threat. "...of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them," has always been a problem, but it has never been more prevalent today!

These words should be taken seriously. Paul was an intellectual and not prone to emotional overreaction; however, his warnings to the Ephesians, written here in Acts, were dead serious and should be taken as a warning for us, especially in the greatest age of deception as identified by Jesus and the Apostles. Jesus' Warnings: Matt 24:4-5, 11, 24; Mk 13:5-6, 22; Lk 21:8; Rev 3:17; 13:14; 19:20; 20:3, 8, 10. Apostolic Warnings: Rom 16:17-18; 1 Cor 6:9-10; 2 Cor 11:3-4, 13-15; Gal 6:7; Eph 5:6; Col 2:8; 2 Th 2:3, 9-11; 1 Ti 4:1-2; 2 Ti 3:13; 2 Pe 2:1-3; 3:3-4; 1 Jn 2:18, 26; 4:1; 2 Jn 1:7; Jude 1:4

Near the End of Paul's Life: Pastoral Epistles (A.D. 63)

Paul exhorts Timothy to stay on at Ephesus (1 Tim 1:3); Ephesus is twice mentioned in 2 Timothy; Paul was possibly seized at Ephesus and carried to death at Rome.



When Did Paul Write the Epistle?

Paul arrived in Rome from Miletus in the spring of A.D. 61, nearly 10 years after the start of his 2nd journey. He spent two full years in "house arrest" chained to a Praetorian sentinel (Acts 28). Can you imagine being chained to Paul!?... they got saved! (Phil 4:21,22). Paul wrote the epistle here.

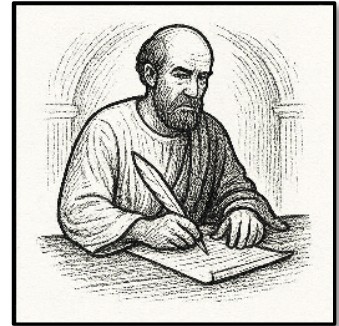


Visitors included friends, envoys, etc.:

- Tychicus from Ephesus (who was the bearer of this epistle).
- Epaphras from Colossae (carried the Epistle to the Colossians; Col 4:12).
- Epaphroditus from Philippi (carried Epistle to the Philippians; Phil 4:18).
- Onesimus, the fugitive Colossian slave (carried the Epistle to Philemon, his master).

The four on the previous page carried Paul's "Prison Epistles" to Asia in the year A.D. 62. Other visitors included: Aristarchus from Thessalonica; John Mark, Demas, Justus; Luke was there very frequently, and the Gospel of Luke + Acts Paul used as his appeal to Rome; Timotheus (Timothy his "spiritual son") visited very frequently.

This epistle was written right after Colossians. There are thematic and structural parallels with the Colossian letter (75 of 155 verses are the same). Ephesus is referred to in Col 4:15f (...from Laodicea); Tychicus is listed as the bearer.



John has Reference to Ephesus in His Epistles

- ✓ Epistle of 1st John: a summary sermon.
- ✓ 2nd John: A letter to Mary at Ephesus?
- ✓ Ephesus: Was where John lived in his last years. It was the probable site where he wrote his epistles and the Gospel of John after Revelation. The Isle of Patmos is within 60 miles of Ephesus. Ephesus was the probable site of John's burial.

Paul addressed and warned the Ephesian elders in A.D. 58. He wrote the Epistle to the Ephesians in A.D. 61. Let's look at Jesus' epistle to Ephesus in Revelation as recorded by John in A.D. 96 over 30 years later:



*Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: **Rev. 2:1,2***



*And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. **Rev. 2:3-5***



*But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. **Rev. 2:3-5***

In Rev. 2:2, Jesus commends the Ephesian believers for heeding Paul's warning from thirty years earlier. They had exposed false teachers and rejected corrupt doctrines within their church. He also praised them for despising the Nicolaitans—those who promoted a hierarchy of clergy over laity. Their diligent labor for God was noted and commended; however, Jesus gently rebuked them for becoming so busy doing the work of God that they had neglected being with God—they had left their first love.



Subsequent History

Ephesus remained a seat of the Christian church for a long time. The Council of Ephesus (A.D. 431) was convened to address the heresy of Nestorius, who taught that Christ's divine and human natures were separate; the council condemned his teaching and affirmed that Mary is rightly called Theotokos or "God-bearer" or "Mother of God". Marian doctrines such as the Immaculate Conception (1854) and Assumption (1950) were defined much later by the Catholic Church. Also, the "Robber Synod" of A.D. 449 was held in Ephesus. It was a violent and unjust council led by Dioscorus of Alexandria that upheld the heresy of Monophysitism (the belief that Christ had only one nature, divine). It was later condemned and overturned by the Council of Chalcedon in A.D. 451. Presently, Ephesus is a small Turkish village called Ayasuluk. Its lampstand no longer exists.



Outline of Ephesians

- ✓ Ephesians 1-3: Doctrine: Our position—what we are in Christ; what He did.
- ✓ Ephesians 4-6: Duty: Our responsibilities—what we should do in response.
 - Paul balances doctrine with duty. We inherit the wealth by faith, and we invest the wealth by works.

Parallel with Joshua

- ✓ Joshua: People of Israel entering into the possession of their promised inheritance.
- ✓ Ephesians: Believers are called upon to enter by faith now into the possession of their promised inheritance.

Chapter 1: Topics

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Blessings: Our riches in Christ• Election• Predestination• Redemption• Adoption• The will of God	This Lesson	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• (12) Mysteries• Dispensations• Forgiveness• Inheritance• Sealing...and this is just in Chapter 1!
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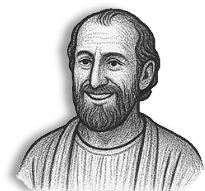
Theme: Our Riches in Christ. [Ephesus was considered the "Bank" of Asia; a depository for wealth. Note Paul's use of financial words: Inheritance (Eph 1:11, 14, 18; 5:5); fullness, or filled (Eph 1:10, 23; 3:19; 4:10, 13; 5:18).]

Ephesians Chapter 1



Eph. 1:1] *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus:*

"Paul...", originally called Saul (Acts 7:58), named after King Saul, also a Benjamite. The Benjamites were known for their warrior temperament of being feisty and tough. Paul was born in Tarsus as a freeborn Roman citizen. He was schooled in Hellenistic culture and had Pharisaical training by Gamaliel himself. The name "Paul" actually means "Small."



“...by the will of God” shows us that Paul did not choose his occupation; neither did the Church! This Epistle will bring us face to face with the sovereignty of God and the mystery of His Will (6X in Eph).

The word “...saints” is used 9X in this letter, as well as in Acts 9:13, 32, 41). Contrary to the Roman Catholic Church, as well as Eastern Orthodox, Coptic, Armenian, and Syriac Orthodox, the Church doesn’t make them; God does. Saints simply mean “set apart”, not a sinless person, but a saved sinner. Christians are also called disciples (Acts 9:1, 10, 19, 25, 26, 36, 38) and people “of the Way” (Acts 9:2). Saints are people who are believers who are saved by trusting Christ.



“...which are at Ephesus”: The Epistle to the Ephesians was a circular letter for the churches in that day. He’s not writing here to the local church as much as he is to the church in general; that is, the invisible body of believers. Additionally, this epistle is encyclical—encompasses all churches; it includes no personal comments; and was written after Colossians and sent by Tychicus (Col 4:15). It completes the circle: 7 letters to 7 churches (Rev 2, 3; Cf. Mt 13; & Paul’s 7 churches).

“...in Christ Jesus” is used 27 times in this letter! Paul always emphasized the name of “Christ” (His title) first. A member of the body of Christ, vitally united with Him by baptism of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12:12-13).



Eph. 1:2] *Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*

“Grace” from the Greek ‘Charis’, it means “hello” and is used 12X in Ephesians. Grace is always mentioned first. Only after grace has dealt with the sin question can peace be known (Rom 5:1). Paul was the only N.T. epistle writer to mention grace. Paul also uses “Peace” (Heb. Shalom) also means “hello.” He adopted a double greeting style “Grace and peace.” This was because the Church was Jewish and Gentile believers united in one body in Christ.

“Our Father” is the One who is intimately near and accessible in a relationship by (new) birth alone. The “Lord Jesus Christ” states his Title, Name, and Mission.

Following this brief salutation, the apostle lifts his voice in a magnificent hymn of praise, soaring into some of the greatest heights of New Testament worship.

Verses 3-14 trace God’s activity in salvation from eternity past, through time, through eternity future; including Paul revealing mysteries of God’s will, never previously disclosed!



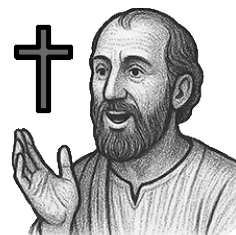
Eph. 1:3] *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:*

The phrase “in heavenly places” should read “...in the heavenlies” (“places” has been added by the translators). “The heavenlies” are in both contradiction and distinction to that which is earthly. He is not talking about earthly blessings (food, clothing, housing, etc.), but instead spiritual heavenly blessings.



Blessings

- ✓ Their quantity: with all blessings.
- ✓ Their quality: with all spiritual blessings.
- ✓ Their locality: in the heavenlies: ↘
 - 1) The sphere of our spiritual blessings (Eph 1:3).
 - 2) The scene of Christ's present enthronement (Eph 1:20).
 - 3) The scene of our present enthronement in Him (Eph 2:6).
 - 4) The locale from which angels witness God's wisdom: exhibited in the church (Eph 3:10).
 - 5) The region which is the source of our present conflict with evil spirits (Eph 6:12).

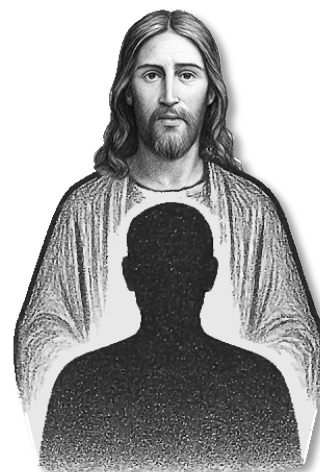


The phrase "*in Christ*" (in Christ Jesus) is used 27 times in this letter! Who is "*in Christ*"? A member of the body of Christ, vitally united with Him by baptism of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12:12-13).

Everything God provides for believers comes **through Christ** and His finished work on the cross. The phrase "*in Christ*" is central to this epistle—it means that all spiritual blessings are found in Him alone. Spiritually, every person stands in one of two positions: either "**in Adam**," still under sin and death, or "**in Christ**," forgiven and made righteous before God. Our standing with God depends entirely on which of these positions we are in (our basis).

Our Identity in Christ

- ✓ In nature ~ 2 Pet 1:4
- ✓ Life ~ Col 3:4
- ✓ Relationships ~ Jn 20:17; Heb 2:11
- ✓ Service ~ Mt 28:20; Jn 17:18
- ✓ Suffering ~ Phil 1:29; 3:10; Col 1:24
- ✓ Inheritance ~ Rom 8:16,17
- ✓ Future glory in the Kingdom ~ Rom 8:18-21; 1 Pet 2:9; Rev 1:6; 5:10
- ✓ A stranger and pilgrim on the earth ~ Heb 3:1; 1 Pet 2:11



Believer's Position	Believer's Practice
...are perfect (Heb 10:4)	... should be perfect (Mt 5:48)
...are dead to sin (Rom 6:2)	...should reckon themselves dead to sin (Rom 6:11)
...are a holy nation (1 Pet 2:9)	...should <i>be</i> holy (1 Pet 1:15)

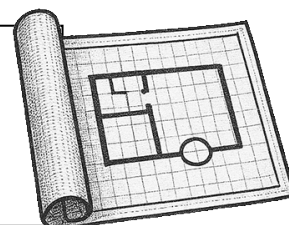
Last Testament

Jesus wrote His last will and testament for His Church, making it possible for us to share His spiritual riches. He wrote us into His will, then died so that they would be in force. Then He rose again that He might become our heavenly advocate to make sure the terms of the will were correctly followed! He is our Executor!

God's Blueprint

- 1) He chose us in Christ.
- 2) He predestinated us to the place of sonship.
- 3) He made us accepted in the Beloved.

Some scholars regard these early verses (3,4, &5) in Ephesians as the most difficult in Scripture...





Eph. 1:4] *According as he hath chosen us in him **before the foundation of the world**, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:*

He has chosen us... When? "...before the foundation of the world!" Spurgeon: "I'm glad He did it then; if he saw me now, he might have changed his mind."

Election

"*Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you*" (Jn 15:16): The lost sinner, left to his own ways, does not seek God (Rom 3:10-11). God, in His love, seeks the sinner (Lk 19:10). The fact that you (we, us) are part of this Bible Study means that God has moved you (us) to be part of this study. You don't get credit for it. Offer is bona fide to everyone (Jn 3:16; 3:36; 5:24; Rom 10:9, 13). The lost choose to be lost. Both elements:

- ✓ All that are given, come (Jn 6:37)
- ✓ All that come are received.

- ① God does choose men to salvation (2 Thess 2:13).
- ② Believers are elect according to foreknowledge of God (1 Pet 1:2).
- ③ People can know whether they are elected by their response to the Gospel: **they who hear and believe are the elect** (1 Thess 1:4-7).



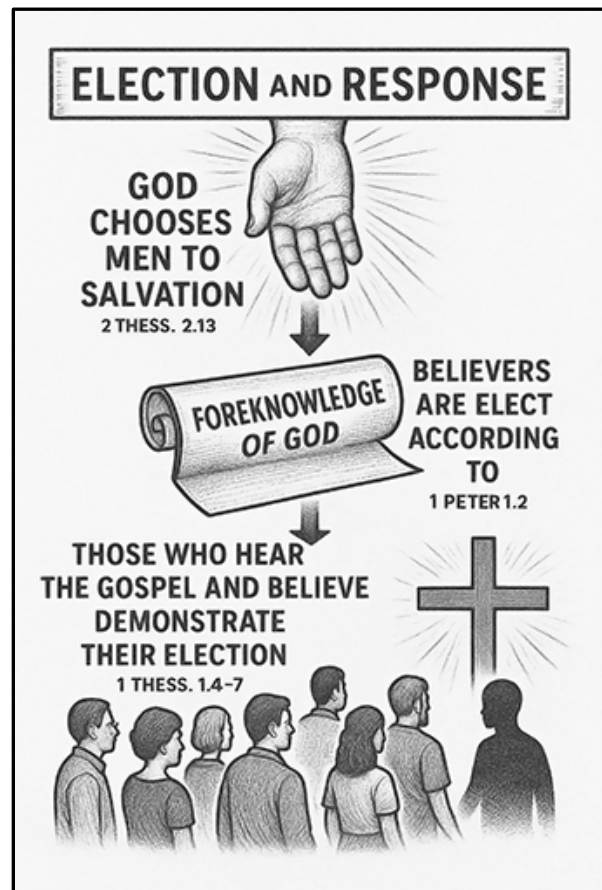
His purpose will not be completely realized until we are with Him in heaven (1 Jn 3:2). Israel was chosen (Isa 42:1; Isa 43:20; Deut 7:6-8) through Abraham (Rom 8:28-30) and not for any merit (Ezek 36:20-22). God can't let Israel fail to the dustbin of history, but not because they deserve.

It is because God's name is on the deal. His reputation is at stake. That same reputation hangs on your security in Him. If somebody is saved and loses their salvation, God loses more than they do.

In Luke 4, when Jesus is declaring His ministry, He says a few things that get people so angry they want to throw Him off a cliff:



*But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land; But unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. **Luke 4:25,26***





And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian. And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong. Luke 4:27-29

Why did the Pharisaical crowd get angry at Jesus? Each example was that of a Gentile, not a Jew! This dealt with the volition of God regarding the issue of election. When Christ preached about it, they tried to throw Him off a cliff!

Election (Divine Choosing)

In both the Old Testament and the New (Hebrew & Greek) the words commonly used: “elect”; “election”; “choose”; and “chosen” all mean “to choose”—of both divine and human choices. Basically, it means that God has the opportunity to choose. However, it represents what some scholars consider the most challenging theological concept in Scripture – predestination.

01 Foreknowledge determines Election.

- God can choose because He is outside of time and knows about the outcome in advance.

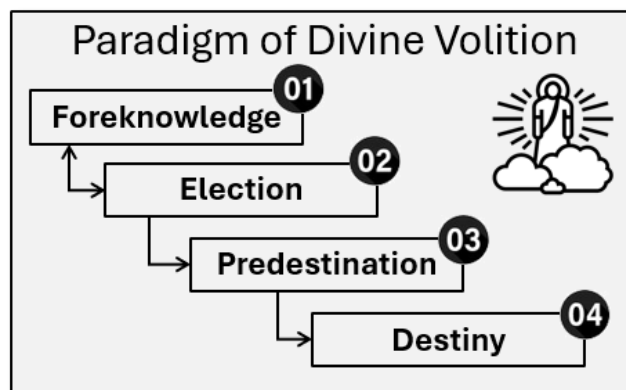
02 Predestination brings to pass the Election.

- Knowing what is going to happen allows God to select accordingly.

03 Election looks back to Foreknowledge.

- Those selected can look back and credit God’s foreknowledge.

04 Predestination looks forward to Destiny.



God cannot change His own nature; therefore, He cannot Learn, Lie, Change, or Violate Promises.

Divine Election

✓ Corporate:

- Israel (Isa 45)
- The Church (Eph 1:4)

✓ Individual:

- According to the foreknowledge of God (1 Pet 1:2)
- Wholly of grace, **not human merit** (Rom 9:11; 11:5,6)
- Whereby certain are chosen for Himself (Jn 15:19)
- Or for distinctive service (Lk 6:13; Acts 9:15; 1 Cor 1:27,28).



Eph. 1:5] Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,:

“...predestinated” (proorisos) in the Greek means to define, to make out, to set apart; “to horizon” (Cf. Eph 1:11). *“Having predestinated”* in the Greek aorist tense is a definite past act; it is done. This term is only used referring to God’s purposes for His people. Predestination has to do with God’s purpose with His people; it refers only to those who are saved. Another way to look at it:

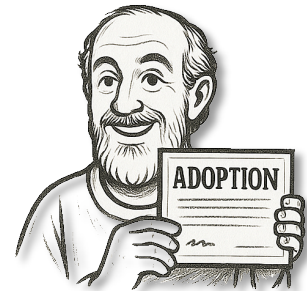
Election = people of God
Predestination = purposes of God

The term “...adoption” (huiiothesia) is not used in our culture like it was used two thousand years ago. The term means placing as a son (Gal 4:4-7; Rom 8:15). Predestination is God’s guarantee (Jn 10:27-28). We need to know that we’ve been chosen in Him in order to stand for God today.

Adoption

Adoption was a Roman, not a Jewish, practice; not all offspring were heirs. You do not get into God’s family by adoption: you get into His family by regeneration: the new birth (Jn 3:1-18; 1 Pet 1:22-25).

Adoption is the act of God by which He gives His “born ones” an adult standing in the family, so that we can immediately begin to claim our inheritance and enjoy our spiritual wealth! An infant cannot legally use this inheritance (Gal 4:1-7), but an adult son can—and should. The future aspect of adoption is in Romans 8:22-23.



In regeneration, a Christian receives the nature of a child of God; in adoption, he receives the position of a son of God (Jn 1:11).

The moment he believes (Gal 3:25-26; 4:6; 1 Jn 3:1,2), the full manifestation of this sonship awaits the resurrection, change, and translation of saints (Rapture), called the redemption of the body (Rom 8:23; Eph 1:14; 1 Thess 4:14-17; 1 Jn 3:2). There is no procedure to become “unadopted.”

Conclusions on what we have studied so far....

- 1) The Christian rests completely on His completed work
- 2) The greatest mistake any Christian (you) can make?
 - a. Substitute your own will for the will of God!



Why did He do it? For His good pleasure. He would not be satisfied until He had surrounded Himself with sons, conformed to the image of His only begotten Son, with Him and like Him forever.

Next Session

Read over Chapter 1, carefully looking at verses 5-14. We will review/overlap a few of the ‘tough’ aspects of this lesson and then go over verses 6-14. Ephesians covers deep subjects that take a Christian a while to absorb.