



**SUNDAY
SCHOOL**

growing together in Christ

UNDERSTANDING GOD'S ETERNAL PURPOSES

How studying Ephesians reveals
what God had planned before the
universe was created.

Introduction: setting the scene

"And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me. However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace.

"Now I know that none of you among whom I have gone about preaching the kingdom will ever see me again."
(Acts 20:22—25, tNIV)

Introduction, continued

- Paul wrote to the Ephesians from prison
- Though suffering greatly, Paul wrote a letter of victory and triumph through faith in Christ
- The epitome of the whole Christian doctrine is found in the 4th, 5th, and 6th chapters.
- The Ephesian church was facing problems that needed to be dealt with, see 1 Timothy 1:3—10; 19—20; 6:3—11; 2 Timothy 14—26.
- The essential theme of the letter could be **“Live what you believe.”**

Big Point: Election, 1:4

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. **For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.** In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.

- Election is a basis for praise.
- It is part of a believer's spiritual blessings.
- God's choice of you happened in eternity past.
- Jesus taught the same thing: *"You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you."* (John 15:16, tNIV)
- God's election is not arbitrary for it is offered to every single human being, John 3:16; Romans 10:13.

- The “elect” are simply those who have responded to God’s call.
- Being part of the “elect” means we are “to be holy” and “to be blameless.”

Big Point: Adoption, 1:5, 6

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. **In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will**—to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.

- God's choice of us is motivated by love.
- The chosen then become "God's sons."
- Under Roman law, an adopted son has the same rights and privileges as a natural-born son, Romans 8:17, *Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.*
- Election + Predestination=Adoption
- Our adoption was done according to God's will, not due to any merit we may possess. He wanted us.

Big Point: God's Supreme Purpose, 1:6

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.

- Our election and predestination to become sons of God is to bring glory to God.
- Jesus taught the same thing: *“In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”* (Matthew 5:16, tNIV)
- God’s grace (His unmerited favor) is given freely!
- God gives us grace, not based on our needs or merit, but because we are **in Christ**.
- God loves the Son, God would not withhold anything from the Son; if we are in the Son, we receive whatever we need.

- *He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?* (Romans 8:32, tNIV)
- Because all this comes as a result of being **in Christ**, there is no way any human being can know God's redeeming grace outside of Jesus Christ.

SEE YOU NEXT WEEK!

