

In Him

Opener: Describe a time you were chosen for something you thought you didn't deserve.

Scripture: 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. ⁴For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love ⁵he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— ⁶to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. ⁷In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace ⁸that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, ⁹he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, ¹⁰to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ. Ephesians 1:3-10

“You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you.” John 15:16

For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, ¹⁴in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. Colossians 1:13-14

Discussion Questions

1. Ephesians 1:3-14 is the foundation passage for the doctrine of election. This week we'll focus on His overall plan and next week we'll take a closer look at election. Verse 3 says that God has “blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.” What would spiritual blessings in the heavenly realms include? Ephesians 1:3
2. In vs. 4 we're told that “He chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.” What role did our behavior, accomplishments or decisions play in our being chosen? Who is “us” – the Jews, the church, or individual believers? Who is “him”? Why is “blameless” rather than “sinless” a better description of our status? Ephesians 1:4; John 15:16
3. Vs. 5 says, “In love He predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ in accordance with His pleasure and will.” “Predestined” means determined in advance by divine will. How does this explain how and why God adopted us? How is it counter-intuitive to the way things are usually determined? Ephesians 1:5
4. Vs. 7 says “In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins in accordance with the riches of God's grace.” What is redemption? What did it cost and who paid it? Col. 1:13-14
5. Vs. 8-9 say, “With all wisdom and understanding, he made known to us the mystery of his will.” Is Paul referring to God's will in general or to something in particular? Why did God keep His redemptive plan a mystery to be revealed only after it was fully accomplished? Ephesians 1:8-10
6. Paul concludes by stressing a future fulfillment that will “bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.” How does this conclusion to history reverse the events of the Fall in Genesis? Eph. 1:10

Wrap Up: Jesus finishes what He starts. The kingdom of Christ had humble beginnings and is presently hidden beneath sacrifice and service, but one day the renewing power of Jesus will stretch to the ends of the earth. We won't need teachers or things like baptism and the Lord's Supper. God Himself will be with us. That's what Paul is describing in Ephesians 1. Adapted from *Seek First: How the Kingdom of God Changes Everything*, Jeremy Treat.