

1. Learning When God Chose Us to Be His Children

Today, we are beginning a new series of topics that will discuss how we can help our physical and spiritual children learn to function effectively in the body of Christ, the church. This series of topics will also focus on how to help them learn to understand and apply the book of Ephesians to their own lives. In this topic, we will be focusing on the topic of learning when God chose us to be His children.

Ephesians 1:1-2 says, “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” Here, we see that Paul is called an apostle of Jesus Christ. In Luke 6:13, we read, “And when it was day, He called His disciples to *Himself*; and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles.” Here, we see that Christ personally chose the original twelve apostles. In Acts 1:21-22, we see that the apostles were to be official witnesses of the resurrection of Christ. Those verses say, “Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection.” These men were called to be official witnesses of the resurrection.

However, Acts 9:15-16 also tells us that the Lord chose Paul to be a witness of the resurrection right after Paul saw the Lord on the road to Damascus. In those verses, Ananias was told to go and speak to Saul (later changed to Paul), “But the Lord said to him, ‘Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake.’” Here, we see that Paul is called a chosen vessel. We see that God verified the fact that Paul was an apostle in the same way that He verified the ministry of the other apostles. 2 Corinthians 12:12 says, “Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you with all perseverance, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds.” As a result, we see here that Paul was called by the will of God to be an apostle.

We also have a description of the people to whom the book of Ephesians was originally written. It was originally written to the saints who were in Ephesus. We want to help our children understand that at the moment we repent and place our faith in Christ, we are also called saints. A saint is a person who has been set apart from sin and made holy in the sight of God. This happens to each one of us at the moment that we repent and place our faith in Christ. Peter told the people in Acts 3:19, “Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.” The word “repent” means *to turn from our past or to turn from our sin*. The word “converted” means *to turn back to God*. At the moment that we repent of our sin of unbelief, all of our sins, past, present and future, are blotted out and we are made holy in the sight of God. As a result, we have received the grace of God and are now able to experience the peace that comes from both the Father and from Christ.

That is why Ephesians 1:3-4 goes on to say, “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 without blame

before Him in love.” Here, we see that we want to bless God and express our praise to Him because of the fact that He has already blessed us with every spiritual blessing. James 1:17 says, “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.” Here, we see that God has worked in our lives so that at the moment of salvation we received every spiritual blessing. The blessings in these verses and other verses came to our lives from the heavenly places where God has His throne.

The first blessing that we received was the fact that God chose us before the foundation of the world. Here, we see that God chose us for Himself before He ever created the world. As a part of that choice, God included the complete process including our presence with Him in heaven. Romans 8:28-30 says, “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to be* conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.” God determined before the foundation of the world that we would become like Christ and be with God forever.

The second blessing that we received is that God chose us to be holy and without blame before Him. In order to make us holy and without blame before Him, God determined how our sin would be removed and we would be made righteous. 2 Corinthians 5:21 says, “For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” Christ is the One who is righteous and without sin. As a result, the Father determined that our sin would be placed on Christ and that He would become sin for us as He hung on the cross. As a result of the fact that Christ became sin for us, at the very moment we repented and placed our faith in Christ, the Father chose to place the righteousness of Christ on us. That is why we are now holy and without blame in the sight of God. We are able to stand before God because we stand in the righteousness of Christ and not in our own righteousness.

We go on to see some additional blessings that we received in Ephesians 1:5-6 where we read, “Having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved.” The third blessing that we received is that God predestinated us to adoption as sons or children. The word translated “predestinated” means *to determine in advance*. Here, we see that God determined before He ever created the world to adopt us as His children. John 1:12-13 says, “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” Here, we see that at the moment of salvation, we became the children of God and God adopted us into His family.

The fourth blessing that we received is that God adopted us to Himself by Christ Jesus. This blessing is really wonderful when we understand it. 2 Peter 1:3-4 says, “As His divine power has given to us all things that *pertain* to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption *that is*

in the world through lust.” In addition to adopting us into His family by Christ, we also see that God determined before the foundation of the world to give us the divine nature as a part of that adoption. As a result, at the moment of salvation, every Christian receives a new nature or divine nature that gives us a desire to do those things that are pleasing to God. That is why every new Christian immediately has a desire to do the things that please God.

The fifth blessing that we received is that God did this according to the good pleasure of His will. Here, we see that God adopted us into His family because that was His will. In Ephesians 1:11, it says, “In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will.” We are reminded that God does all that He does because that is His will.

The sixth blessing that we received is the fact that God chose us to the praise of the glory of His grace. Philippians 2:13 says, “For it is God who works in you both to will and to do for *His* good pleasure.” Here, we see that we were chosen to bring glory to God because He chose to demonstrate His grace in our lives. “Grace” means that *we did nothing to deserve salvation*. Instead, God chose to show His great kindness to each of us by choosing us to share in eternal life.

The seventh blessing that we received is the fact that God made us accepted in the Beloved. In Matthew 3:17, the Father spoke from heaven, “And suddenly a voice *came* from heaven, saying, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’” In this verse, we see that the Father called Christ His Beloved Son. We are accepted by God because of the fact that we are in Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, “Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.” Christ is the Beloved. Because we are in Christ, the Father has made us a new creation and the Father sees us just as He sees His Beloved.

This acceptance is explained in Ephesians 1:7 where we read, “In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.” The word “redemption” means *to be bought back from sin, to be removed from further sale and to be set free from sin*. The Father accepted the payment of the blood of Christ as the payment for our sin. At that moment, the Father also forgave our sins. To “forgive” means *to let go*. The Father let go of our sins, removed them as far as the east is from the west, buried them in the depths of the sea, blotted them out and remembers them no more. God did that for each one of us who have repented of our sin and placed our faith in Christ because of the riches of His grace. We want to help both our physical and spiritual children understand when God chose us to be His children. We also want to help them understand the greatness of the riches of God. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children understand when God chose us to be His children.