

THE FATHER PLANS

Tuesday, April 9

Reading: Ephesians 1:1-6

Ephesians 1:3 *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. 4 For He chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight. In love 5 He predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with His pleasure and will— 6 to the praise of His glorious grace, which He has freely given us in the One He loves.*

The Apostle Paul begins this letter with a beautiful description of the blessings of salvation from each member of the Trinity. Because believers belong to Christ, God the Father blesses us with eternal heavenly blessings that help us know Him and grow in our faith.

First, He **CHOSE** us (1:3-6). Salvation stems from the choice of God not the decision of people. This is evident since God's choice was made before the creation of the world! The purpose of His choice was to make us holy and blameless.

Second, He **ADOPTED** us (1:5-6). God has made us part of His family. In Roman culture, the adopted child gained all the rights and privileges of a biological son. Thus if a slave was adopted by his master he became a full member of the family. As members of God's family, we now receive all the riches of Christ.

Third, He has **ACCEPTED** us (1:6). Literally we could read this verse as, "to the praise of His glorious grace which He graced us with." We are accepted through God's grace, because of God's grace, and to bring glory to God's grace.

LESSON ONE: "Saints." The NIV phrase 'God's holy people' is literally 'saints.' Many people are confused about who a saint is. Many think of a saint as a "super Christian." But a saint is simply one who has been set apart for God. This is true of all believers. The word faithful adds another dimension to our identity. We are not only set apart to God, but our lives are also to show it by faithful holy living. Do you look like a saint? How are you living the holy and faithful life God has called you to?

LESSON TWO: "Every Spiritual Blessing." Many Christians begin their prayers by asking God to bless them. Paul makes the point that every spiritual blessing is already ours in Christ. As our loving heavenly Father, He has provided from eternity past everything we need for spiritual living. All we must do is appropriate them by faith. This great grace is the reason Paul begins this passage with the command to praise (literally 'bless') God because He has so greatly blessed us. Spend some time today praising God for the gift of salvation that has made you part of His family. Think of ways you have seen God's blessing in your life. Then think of ways you can bless God by your worship and service.