

Eph. 1:1-6 “The First Blessing”

For the Children: People sometimes speak about a gift that “keeps on giving” – something that continues to give us benefits for a long time. Some gifts do not last long – they break or run down or wear out. Some are only made to last for a short time e.g., a box of chocolates. We know that the Lord Jesus keeps on blessing us with everlasting life. He definitely “keeps on giving.” But even before the world was made, God chose us to belong to Him. His choice of us is also the “gift that keeps on giving.” **Questions:** What are “predestination” and “election”? What have we been chosen to receive? What effect does that have on your life?

Introduction:

First Point: The Blessings We Receive

- 1) The Blessing of Election: The first blessing God gives us is that He chose us for salvation before the world began i.e., election (v. 4). This is an aspect of His predestination (v. 5), His pre-determining of all things.
- 2) To Adoption and Holiness: Specifically, we are said to be chosen for adoption as sons (v. 5); and to be holy and blameless before the Lord (v. 4). We have been chosen to receive Christ’s imputed righteousness. We also have His righteousness imparted by the work of the Holy Spirit. On the Day of Judgement, we will be openly declared to be holy and blameless for Christ’s sake.
- 3) Predestined in Christ: Vss. 3,4,5 and 6 all stress that both our election and its results are “in” or “through” Christ. In fact, we are elect because we are in Christ, who is also The Elect One in His human nature.
- 4) Predestined by Grace: This is all by grace. God does not choose us because He foresaw good deeds we would do apart from Him. God only foresees what He has pre-determined. This predestination was in love (v. 5) and “grace freely bestowed” (v. 6), not earned or deserved.

Second Point: Who Receives These Blessings

- 1) The Saints: All God’s people are His “saints/holy ones” – made holy by the Lord Jesus – not some special extra-holy group within the body of believers. All believers are the recipients of these predestined blessings. These “saints at Ephesus” (v. 1) include the covenant-children addressed in 6:1-3.
- 2) The Faithful: Those who are members of the church, but are actually unbelieving and completely unfaithful, may not claim that they are God’s elect, entitled to all the ensuing blessings.
- 3) In Christ Jesus: Election is in Christ; all the blessings are in Him. Those who receive these blessings must therefore also be “in Him” i.e., in union with Him by faith. However, the main way we know we are “in Christ” is not by our own consistency in the Christian life. The Holy Spirit gives us assurance by enabling us to receive the promises found in Christ as sons by adoption.

Third Point: The Effect These Blessings Have on Us

- 1) Every Spiritual Blessing: Since we receive “every spiritual blessing” from the Lord Jesus, beginning with God’s eternal decree, moving on to our earthly life and ending with everlasting life, we must conclude that the effect of predestination is all-encompassing.
- 2) The Life of Sons and Daughters: We are predestined to adoption as sons. The effect of this is to create within us a sense of sonship, trust and assurance, closeness to our Father; the privileges of sonship: God’s loving care and provision; and an inheritance.
- 3) The Life of the Redeemed: Since we are predestined to be holy and blameless, the effect of this is knowledge of forgiveness and a sanctified life in this world, then on to the perfections of the next life.
- 4) Blessing God’s Name: The truth of predestination leads us to praise God for His character – sovereign, loving and gracious – and for His plan of salvation with all its parts. For we are richly blessed and comforted by all that God has predestined for us. Predestination is not a harsh, cold doctrine!

Conclusion:

