

Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians
Knowing Your Privilege in Christ
"The Origin of the Church"
(Ephesians 1:1-14)

1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: **2** Grace *be* to you, and peace, from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ. **3** Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ: **4** According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: **5** Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, **6** To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. **7** In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; **8** Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; **9** Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: **10** That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; *even* in him: **11** In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: **12** That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: **13** in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, **14** Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

OUTLINE

- (1) Chosen by the Father - A Privileged People "Called Out" From Sin Unto Holiness**
- (2) Purchased by the Son - A Purchased People In Intimate Fellowship with God**
- (3) Sealed by the Holy Spirit - A Protected People Destined for Heaven**

INTRODUCTION

What is the church? What is the purpose for its existence? ***A church needs to understand from the very beginning what it is*** so that it can know what direction it should be going.¹ The truth is that God is at work in this world, through His church. God's purpose is fulfilled through His church.

It is precisely at this point that the Epistle to the Ephesians is so valuable. Ephesians is about the church. But the place it begins is God. It is the work of the divine Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—that brings the church into being. This is what the first chapter is about.² In verse 22 of chapter 1, the word "church" is used for the first time in this epistle and verses 22 and 23 tells us the church consists of true believers called the body of Christ.

Ephesians 1:22-23 *And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.*

¹ John MacArthur, *The Master's Plan for the Church*, Moody, 2008, 134.

² Boice, J. M. (1988). *Ephesians: An expository commentary* (ix). Grand Rapids, MI: Ministry Resources Library.

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Simply speaking, the Church is God's people. The word "church" is from the Greek word "ecclesia" which means "**called out ones**". The term is derived from the root verb "kaleo" which means - "to call". The church is therefore a people called out by God.

A people (1) Chosen by the Father (v1-4), (2) Purchased by the Son (v5-9) and (3) Sealed by the Holy Spirit (v10-14). This is the big picture, the big idea that gives to us the origin of the church that I hope you will remember.

But precisely what does it mean when we say - Chosen by the Father - Purchased by the Son - Sealed by the Holy Spirit?

Our text elaborates for us and may I submit to you that the church is firstly, **a privileged people separated from sin unto holiness** (v1-4) - this is what it means to be "Chosen by the Father".

Secondly, the church is **a purchased people in intimate fellowship with the living and true God** (v5-9) - this is what we mean when we say "Purchased by the Son".

And thirdly, the church is **a protected people destined for heaven** (v10-14) - this is what we mean when we say "Sealed by the Holy Spirit".

(1) The Church is a People Chosen by the Father - A Privileged People Separated from Sin unto Holiness (v1-4)

The church is a people "Chosen by the Father" - this is the prominent thought taught in verses 3-4:

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: 4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

The "He" in verse 4 finds its subject in verse 3 referring to God the Father. This gives to us the first thought. The church is a people chosen by the Father. The primary action is that of God the Father who chose unto Himself a people out of the whole of mankind before the foundation of the world.³

There are three important words that describe this chosen people of God. These are the word "saints" in verse 1 and the words "holy" and "without blame" in verse 4.

*1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the **saints** which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus:*

Verse 1 tells us this epistle was addressed to "*the saints which are at Ephesus*". Who are the saints? This word "saints" means "a holy people". To be holy is to separate from evil and be dedicated to God. It has the fundamental idea of separation - separation from sin, from that which defiles.

More precisely, a saint is more than just one who separates from sin but one who is consecrated to God, devoted in sharing God's purity and abstaining from the defilement

³ D.M. Lloyd-Jones, God's Ultimate Purpose 1:1-23 - Ephesians Series, The Banner of Truth Trust, 1978, 94.

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from sin. Verse 4 further emphasize the description of these chosen ones of God that we have been chosen before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.

Holiness denotes a state of inward or internal purity. And “without blame”, one word in the original, means an outward or external condition of purity. Holiness is the greater and stronger term, because it is concerned with the inward condition, but the outward condition is also important. These two terms put together means an essential purity or a state of spiritual health. They mean a true and real life in the Lord. It means that we are in God’s presence⁴ and having true fellowship for we serve a holy God. We come before Him with clean hands and pure hearts.

But what does Paul mean practically speaking when he says “we should be holy and without blame before Him in love?” How do we apply this in our daily living?

Well, the essence of holiness is love. Paul says in the Epistle to the Romans “that love is the fulfilling of the law” (Rom 13:10). Love is the opposite of enmity, the opposite of hatred, the opposite of strife. When we become child of God, God’s love indwells us. Because of God’s choice of us, and the work of Christ and the Spirit in us, what happens is that sin is removed, the obstacle between us and God is removed, and so we can appear before Him, we appear before the presence of God “in love.” We no longer appear before Him as Judge but we appear before God “in love.”⁵

We love to obey the commandments of God as Jesus Himself said to the question by the lawyer - **Matthew 22:36** *Master, which is the great commandment in the law?* **37** *Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.*

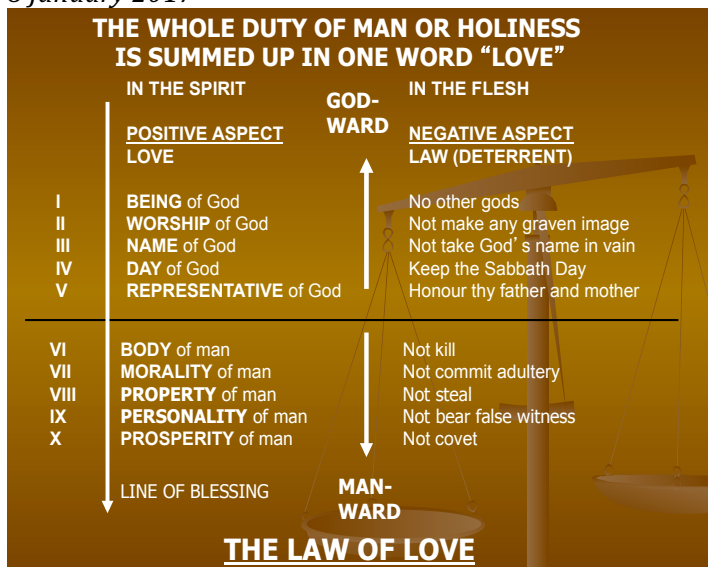
Jesus summarized all the law of God by two great statements: (1) Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all they soul, and with all thy mind (2) Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

To love the commandments in keeping and obeying them is true holiness.

We are to love God first and then to love our neighbours as/even as/like we love ourselves. By the way we love ourselves, we are to use that same measure to love our neighbours. God’s law is very fair. We are not commanded to love our neighbours more than ourselves but to love our neighbours just as we love ourselves.

⁴ Ibid., 96-97.

⁵ Ibid., 98-99.



The key to this first point is that the true church consists of men and women who live in holiness and devotion before God. **Holiness is defined as loving to fulfill the law of God.** That is the test of being chosen by the Father. There is that God-given power to say “no” to sin, to overcome sin in our lives. And there is that hunger and thirst after righteousness - To be truthful, to be honest, to be just, to be pure, to think on things lovely, of virtue, of praise (Philippians 4:8).

Is this your life? This is the first question I have for you this in this first lesson. Are you living in holiness and consecration before God? Can you in all honesty of conscience say, “I am chosen by the Father?” Are you a part of the privilege people of God separated from sin unto holiness?

The true church consists of true believers who live in holiness and consecration before God. Their lives are characterized by faithfulness (v1b) – Faithful to Christ, the Head and faithful in our relationship to one another in the body - And God’s grace and peace abides with them (v2).

1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: 2 Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Testimony

There was a man whom God saved and called to the ministry as a pastor in America who recounted how God saved him. He had that emptiness in his heart yearning for God to fill his life. He was scheduled to go for a Europe tour with his wife. He was a former police officer before going into the ministry. He testified that one Lord’s Day before he left for the tour, he accepted an invitation to a local church in Canada. As he sat through the service, he observed the sanctity of the sanctuary, there was a sense of holiness in that place, the ushers were behaving in a very orderly and dignified and godly manner, which he could sense, that he was in the presence of God in worship. Then he went for his tour. He visited so many great cathedrals and churches in Europe during that tour and he could not see or feel the presence of God as he did in that local church.

Later he testified how he realized that there is that sense of holiness in the sanctuary of God in that local church. There was that fear of God in the hearts of the people that he

could sense that he was in the presence of God. Many of the cathedrals and churches have been turned into theatres and places of entertainment.

Jesus went into the Temple twice in His ministry, once at the beginning of His ministry in John 2 and once at the Monday leading to His crucifixion on Friday where He overthrew the tables of the money-changers who were merchandizing in God's House. He did not mince His words to tell them that the House of God has become a den of thieves.

God's house is called a house of prayer because it is a place for worship, for seeking God. Its sanctity and quietness has been disturbed. By the behaviour of the worshippers, it determines it is a place for the worship of the living and true God. It is a place where worshippers can speak to God intimately in the quiet of the environment and our hearts thus quiet to seek God. The word "sanctuary" is derived from the Latin word "sanctus" meaning sacred, holy, a sacred and holy place. There ought to be that reverence and understanding of the presence of God when we come into His house, a reverence for God's House. And nothing seemed more appropriate to the worship of God than a sense of awe and silence in God's House. The only sounds are the voices of prayer and praise and thanksgiving to God. We learn to be quiet when we come to God's House. There ought not to be any other motive in coming to God's House except to worship Him. It is a good practice when we come to God's House and to leave to bow our heads in silent prayer.

So, the first thought for us the church is ***a privileged people separated from sin unto holiness*** (v1-4) - this is what it means to be "Chosen by the Father".

Secondly, the church is ***a purchased people in intimate fellowship with the living and true God*** (v5-9) - this is what we mean when we say "Purchased by the Son".

(2) The Church is a People Purchased by the Son - A Purchased People in Intimate Fellowship with the living and true God (v5-9)

In our first thought, Paul has said, "*According as he hath chosen us*" but now he writes, "*having predestinated us*" in verse 5. There is a difference here. To "predestinate" means to determine beforehand, to declare beforehand. This is God's ultimate plan. It refers to the plan itself. The thing pre-determined, thought out and purposed in the mind of God was that certain members of the race of Adam - who had fallen right away from Him, and become aliens in their minds and who were under the wrath and deserved nothing but judgment - should become His sons.⁶

Verse 5 says "*Having predestinate us unto the adoption of children*". Paul is saying that by virtue of God's choice, we become sons and daughters of the living and true God. We are able to experience and enjoy that intimate fellowship with God as a result of God's loving choice to adopt us as His sons and daughters.

The word "adoption" is a term the Jews knew nothing about. It was borrowed from Roman law. Paul is a Roman citizen and lived under the Roman system. Under the Roman law adoption secured for the adopted child a right to the name and property of the person by whom he had been adopted. The moment a child was legally adopted by a person, that child had the legal right, an absolute right to make such claims. On the other

⁶ Ibid., 108.

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hand, Roman law granted to the person who adopted the child all the rights and privileges of a father. It works both ways.⁷

So, adoption is the spiritual act whereby God brings a regenerated believer into His own family.⁸

How is that possible? Our text tells us that it is “*By Jesus Christ.*” Verse 3 says “*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.*” It is in Jesus Christ that this blessing of adoption becomes a reality – **5b** *according to the good pleasure of his will,* **6** *To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.*

How do we become accepted as children of God, accepted as beloved children of God? What did Jesus do? Verse 7 is the key - **7** *In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.*

This is the work of God’s Son Jesus Christ who in the fullness of time entered human history to be our Redeemer. Our Gregorian calendar records for us this pivotal event as we move from 1 B.C. to 1 A.D. B.C. means “Before Christ”, and A.D. in the year of the Lord. When God came to earth in the person of Jesus Christ and not only brought salvation to mankind but also changed the way the world operates. The birth of Christ and His work on the cross affected the world not only spiritually, but also politically, technologically, and socially.

History is truly His story as we look at history through a single lens, the development of the church. Jesus’ grand purpose in coming to earth, to bring about salvation for mankind, was to bring together people from every tribe and every nation to become part of His Body, the Church. The formation and advancement of this church, even in the face of all who sought to do away with it, are truly a remarkable miracle of God. The Bible is a record of what God did to bring His church into being and then what He did to bless it and advance it in the world.⁹ This second thought tells us how the church has its being.

It is in Jesus Christ that we have redemption. The word “redemption” means to “buy back” or “ransom”. It refers to Christ’s death on the cross that paid the price required to purchase the chosen of the Father from the slavery of sin to the freedom of being adopted as the children of God. So, **redemption means that Christ paid the price to free us from the penalty and power of sin.**

7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

Paul uses the word “redemption” in a spiritual sense to refer to Christ paying the price of our sin by His sacrificial death on the cross on our behalf. We were helplessly, hopelessly enslaved to sin and under God’s condemnation. But with His own blood Christ paid the penalty to release us from bondage. We now belong to Him.

⁷ Ibid., 109-110.

⁸ John MacArthur, Ephesians – Our Immeasurable blessings in Christ, 2000, 7.

⁹ Stephen Leston, The Bible in World History, Barbour, 2011, 234.

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Jesus shed His blood to wash away our sins. Paul says in Romans 6:23, "*The wages of sin is death...*" And justice demands appropriate payment for the crimes committed. Hebrews 9:22 says, "*without shedding of blood is no remission*" of sins. God explains:

Leviticus 17:11 *For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.*

So, Paul here uses the word "*blood*" to point us back to the Old Testament sacrificial system, all of which Jesus fulfilled when He offered Himself on the cross. Those animal sacrifices pointed ahead to Jesus, the Lamb of God, who by His death redeemed all whom His Father gave Him. Thus, "*he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.*" (Rom. 3:26).¹⁰

As the hymn say it so well, "Jesus paid it all, all to Him I owe, sin had left a crimson stain, He washed it white as snow." This is also the meaning of the word "forgiveness". It means "*the debt is released*", the slate is wiped clean, there is remission. Forgiveness means "*loosing or letting someone go from what binds him*".

When Adam and Eve disobeyed God, and sinned by partaking the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they had a guilty conscience. The Bible says:

Genesis 3:7 *And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. 8 And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.*

Fear and the guilt of sin plagued their conscience.

Genesis 3:21 *Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.*

This was how God covered their nakedness and guilt by the coats of skin pre-figuring the Christ's atoning work on the cross. The measure of forgiveness is according to the riches of His grace (v7b) not so much how much we mourn over sin although we should mourn for our sins. Every sin of every believer is forgiven forever in Christ is the thought.

8 *Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; 9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:*

This is the mystery of redemption that God sent forth His Son to be born as a man to save sinful man.

The broken relationship between God and man was restored by Jesus Christ on the cross, the guilt of sin removed, we can draw close to God for blessing without reproach.

¹⁰ Steven J. Cole, Your Greatest Need, 2007, 5-6.

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This is the second thought - the church is ***a purchased people in intimate fellowship with the living and true God*** (v5-9) – this is what we mean when we say “Purchased by the Son”. This is the Gospel!

We have that new life in Christ to want to pray and seek Him wisdom by the study of His Word. This is the test!

And thirdly, the church is ***a protected people destined for heaven*** (v10-14) – this is what we mean when we say “Sealed by the Holy Spirit”.

(3) Sealed by the Holy Spirit - A Protected People Destined for Heaven (v10-14)

The key verse is 13.

13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: ***in whom*** also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,

The gospel of salvation comes to us. But how can we be saved? By believing in the gospel that that Christ died for our sins and rose victorious from the dead the third day. The thing that brings a person to Christ is their repentance for their sins and their turning in genuine faith to the One Who died for their sins. The Scripture taught in truth will lead people to open their hearts and receive the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour.

The Holy Spirit works with His Word of Truth. That’s why we stand, in our church, using the King James Bible, the most accurate English translation from its Hebrew and Greek manuscripts.

When they heard the Word of Truth, these Ephesians Christians opened their hearts and received Christ. The Holy Spirit must work, but He works through His Word.¹¹

When we receive the gospel by faith, the Holy Spirit comes and indwells us. The word “sealed” means “guaranteed”. It speaks of security and permanence. We are protected by the Holy Spirit of God so that we will finally reached heaven.

10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:

When we are saved, the Holy Spirit indwells us. We are on that journey to heaven which cannot be thwarted.

14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

The “which” goes back to the Holy Spirit mentioned in verse 13. The term “Earnest” or “Earnest money” is money that you put up like down payment before you pay full the price of a house. The Holy Spirit is the down payment.

Whilst on earth, the Holy Spirit protects us so that no evil spirit can possess us.

¹¹ D.A. Waite, Ephesians – Preaching Verse by Verse, The Bible for Today Press, 2002, 24.

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1 John 4:4 *Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.*

When we sin willfully, the Bible says we grieve the Holy Spirit that indwells us.

Ephesians 4:30 *And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.*

There is a time coming when the saints will be glorified at the coming of Christ. Rewarded, given a new body and to rule with Christ on earth and enjoy Him through eternity.

1 John 3:2 *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*

11 *In whom* also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: **12** *That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.*

CONCLUSION

What is the church? What is the purpose for its existence?

A people (1) Chosen by the Father (v1-4), (2) Purchased by the Son (v5-9) and (3) Sealed by the Holy Spirit (v10-14). This is the big picture, the big idea that gives to us the origin of the church.

I submit to you that the church is firstly, ***a privileged people separated from sin unto holiness*** (v1-4) - this is what it means to be "Chosen by the Father".

Secondly, the church is ***a purchased people in intimate fellowship with the living and true God*** (v5-9) - this is what we mean when we say "Purchased by the Son".

And thirdly, the church is ***a protected people destined for heaven*** (v10-14) - this is what we mean when we say "Sealed by the Holy Spirit". Amen.

**His Very Own
Rev. Dr. Raymond Saxe**

**His very own.
His very own.
Wonderful grace in His Word Is Made Known
Chosen by the Father,
Purchased By the Son,
Sealed by the Spirit,
I'm His very own.**