

**Valley Bible Church**  
**Sermon Notes for May 20, 2018**

**Salvation Planned**  
**Ephesians 1:4-6**

I. Salvation's plan of election

*even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.*

- “Even as”
  - In light of verse 3, Paul begins to explain these spiritual blessings
  - NET and NIV say “For he chose us” instead of “even as”
- “He chose us”
  - What is choosing exactly? What is election?
    - 1 Corinthians 1:26-29 “For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. 27 But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; 28 God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, 29 so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.”
    - John 15:16 “You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide...”
    - John 15:19 “If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.”
  - He chose us for salvation based upon the rest of the verse and the passage
  - He chose us to be the recipient of His blessings

A. Proactive

*even as he chose us **in him** before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.*

- “In him”
  - God chose us for salvation in and through Jesus Christ
  - What does this mean?
    - It means that Jesus was the only way through which we could be chosen to receive the spiritual blessings of the Father

- “God cannot bring sinful humans into his presence forever without Christ having paid for sin.”<sup>1</sup>
- God did not choose us because there is anything good that exists in ourselves
  - Romans 3:12 “All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.”
- God did not choose us because He’s extra nice and knows how to let things slide
  - Matthew 5:48 “You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”
  - He does not compromise His standard of perfection
- God chose us because of the blood of His Son offered in our place
  - 1 Peter 1:18-19 “knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.”
- Clearly, God was the one at work in planning our salvation and choosing us
  - The good news of Jesus Christ reminds us of that fact

#### B. Predetermined

*even as he chose us in him **before the foundation of the world**, that we should be holy and blameless before him.*

- “Before the foundation of the world”
  - God’s choosing of us was not at the moment of creation
  - God’s choosing of us was not when we breathed our first breath
  - God’s choosing of us was “before the foundation of the world”
    - “With the preposition πρό, it has the meaning that an action occurred before the foundation or creation of the world.”<sup>2</sup>
  - “Therefore, God chose the believer before the world was even created, that is, in eternity past.”<sup>3</sup>
    - 2 Timothy 1:8-9 “Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, 9 who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because

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<sup>1</sup> Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 177.

<sup>2</sup> Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 178.

<sup>3</sup> Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 178.

of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began”

- Matthew 25:34 “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”
- Revelation 13:8 “and all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain.”
- Romans 9:10-11 “And not only so, but also when Rebekah had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, 11 though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad—in order that God’s purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls—”
- Upon reading such words, many people get nervous or even angry
  - Am I robot?
  - Don’t I have a choice?
  - Don’t I have rights?
  - God can’t just choose me without my consent, can He?
- One easy answer is, God can do whatever He wants!
  - Romans 9:14-15 “What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God’s part? By no means! 15 For he says to Moses, ‘I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.’”
- Furthermore, we can add that such questions and objections are misplaced
  - Due to man’s sinful depravity, the better question is why does God show us His mercy and grace at all???
  - He would be perfectly righteous to destroy us all and start over if He wanted to do so
  - “Fifth, the one who is chosen has no legal claim on the one who chooses. In fact, it is clear in Scripture that human beings come short of his glory and do not even seek him (Rom 3:10–11). God did not choose anyone because they were holy and thus had a legal claim to be chosen. On the contrary, all people are sinners and deserve rejection. There was no obligation on God’s part to choose anyone but he freely chose some and this is evidence of his great grace. The point is that if God had not taken the initiative, no one would have his everlasting presence and life. The real

problem is not why he had not chosen some, but why he chose any. No wonder God is to be praised.”<sup>4</sup>

- Finally, we must be content with letting Scripture speak things that are too profound for our comprehension
  - On the one hand, Scripture declares that God has sovereignly chosen all those who will come to Him for salvation
  - On the other hand, Scripture gives offer of salvation unto all mankind
- Example:
  - Matthew 11:25-30 “At that time Jesus declared, ‘I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; 26 yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. 27 All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. 28 Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.’”
  - These two truths work together and they must add to our joy and worship of God

### C. Purposeful

*even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, **that we should be holy and blameless before him.***

- “That we should be holy and blameless before him”
  - God chose us that we might stand out and be different from other people on earth
  - He planned for us to be holy, blameless, or without reproach
    - This refers to the Old Testament sacrifices that were made without blemish
  - This statement more than likely refers to the final day when we will stand before God holy and blameless because of the work of Christ
    - Ephesians 5:27 “so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.”

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<sup>4</sup> Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 176.

- Jude 24 “Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy”
- Our salvation has been gloriously planned in the past to include its finality and completion in the future
- This is further evidence that God choosing us meant a once for all choice of us unto Himself for salvation
- God did not plan the potential for us to be saved
- God planned the finality of us standing before Him as holy and blameless
- How should such a certainty impact our living in the here and now?
  - Simple, let’s strive to be holy because that’s what He has chosen us to be
  - 1 Peter 1:14-16 “As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, 15 but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, 16 since it is written, ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy.’”
- Application: What level of priority have you given to your own personal holiness?
  - If it was God’s plan from eternity past for you to be holy and if it is God’s destination for you to be completely holy, then how should you be exhibiting holiness now?

## II. Salvation’s plan of adoption

*In love 5 he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.*

- “In love”
  - Deuteronomy 7:6-7 “For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. 7 It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the LORD set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples,”
- “He predestined us”
  - Just like God’s election or choosing of us, so too has He predestined us
  - Clearly a temporal focus in these verses
    - *Pro* = Beforehand

- “It is interesting to notice that both the choosing and predetermining are governed by *πρό*, ‘before.’ God did these things before the creation of the earth.”<sup>5</sup>
  - “For adoption to himself as sons”
    - “The word for ‘adoption’ (*hyiothesia*) means ‘sonship,’ and it refers to the process in the Roman world by which a child was brought into a new family, receiving all the rights of a natural child and taking the name of the new family.”<sup>6</sup>
    - “The saints chosen by God are predestined as adopted sons (and daughters) of God. This means that believers, formerly labeled as “sons of disobedience” and “children of wrath” (Eph 2:2–3), have absolutely no responsibility and/or obligation to their old father the devil (cf. John 8:38, 44), the ruler of the realm of the air (Eph 2:2). Rather, they are now God’s sons and daughters and he controls their lives and property.”<sup>7</sup>
  - Application: What a beautiful picture and blessing for believers to have
    - Once we were enemies of God
      - Ephesians 2:1-3
      - Titus 3:3 “For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another.”
    - Now, we have been brought near into His family

#### A. The Possibility

*In love 5 he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons **through Jesus Christ**, according to the purpose of his will, 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.*

- “Through Jesus Christ”
  - “It is through or by means of the work of Christ discussed in the following verses that makes it possible for the sinner to be adopted into the family of God.”<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 193.

<sup>6</sup> Grant R. Osborne, *Ephesians: Verse by Verse*, *Osborne New Testament Commentaries* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2017), 20.

<sup>7</sup> Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 196–197.

<sup>8</sup> Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 197.

- John 1:12-13 “But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.”
- Galatians 3:26 “for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.”
  - As the basis of God’s choosing us was in Christ, so also the basis of God’s adopting us is through Jesus Christ
- Application: God’s plan to adopt us involved the plan of His Son’s work to make it even a possibility
  - Without the work of Christ, we would be unacceptable and unable to ever join the family of God

### B. The Pleasure

*In love 5 he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.*

- “According to the purpose of his will”
  - “The choice to adopt the believer takes place ‘in accordance with his pleasure and will,’ which further points to the depth of his love. It is not a cold, dispassionate choice but a joyous one. The term for ‘pleasure’ (eudokia) connotes the delight and joy that attend an action and here pictures the intense satisfaction of God as he elects a former sinner to become his adopted child. God’s will is uppermost as he chooses the individual and calls them to be his own, and this brings him great pleasure.”<sup>9</sup>
- Application: God finds pleasure and delight in bringing enemies into His family
  - This needs to become our perspective toward the lost

### C. The Praise

*In love 5 he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.*

- “To the praise of his glorious grace”
  - This is in regard to the character and nature of God’s being
  - His glorious character includes this grace at work in salvation
  - “‘The praise of his glory’ is possibly the central theme of this prologue, occurring also in verses 12 and 14. Our only viable response to all the blessings God is

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<sup>9</sup> Grant R. Osborne, *Ephesians: Verse by Verse*, Osborne New Testament Commentaries (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2017), 20–21.

bestowing on us is praise, and in all we do we seek to glorify him as he has glorified us.”<sup>10</sup>

- “With which he has blessed us in the Beloved.”
  - “Beloved” is a reference to Jesus
    - Capital “B” in most English versions to show this
    - Reminds us of God’s title for Jesus at the baptism and the transfiguration
  - “Since believers are in Christ, they are also the object of God’s love.”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Grant R. Osborne, *Ephesians: Verse by Verse*, Osborne New Testament Commentaries (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2017), 23–24.

<sup>11</sup> Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 204.