

The Pearl of the Epistles – Ephesians

Chosen from the Foundation of the World

Ephesians 1:4-7

Ephesians 1:4-7 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;

INTRODUCTION

The Last Will and Testament is a document that outlines what the deceased wants done with the property that he or she has left behind. There was a funny cartoon that showed a very stuffy office of a lawyer surrounded by several people, all sitting down. Their countenance was sad and some wore black. The caption simply said, “I, John Jones, being of sound mind and body, spent it all.”

As I pondered this text, I was struck by what Jesus Last Will and Testament might look like. He had very few possessions left and the soldiers gambled on the clothes. So what would Jesus have to leave the world? I want us to keep that in mind as we look at this passage today; “What was Jesus’ Last Will and Testament.”

Previously in our study of the Book of Ephesians, we found that the blessings that God gives to His children are “*spiritual in heavenly places.*” (Ephesians 1:3). So Jesus made it possible for His church to share in His spiritual blessings and riches. Unlike John Jones in the story, Jesus paid it all instead of spending it all. I am reminded of the hymn: Jesus Paid It All by Elvina M. Hall, 1865

I hear the Savior say, “Thy strength indeed is small;

Child of weakness, watch and pray, Find in Me thine all in all.”

Refrain:

Jesus paid it all, All to Him I owe;

Sin had left a crimson stain, He washed it white as snow.

Bob Crowder Sermons for 2013

*2 For nothing good have I, Whereby Thy grace to claim;
I'll wash my garments white, In the blood of Calv'ry's Lamb.*

*3 And now complete in Him, My robe, His righteousness,
Close sheltered 'neath His side, I am divinely blest.*

*4 Lord, now indeed I find, Thy pow'r, and Thine alone,
Can change the leper's spots, And melt the heart of stone.*

*5 When from my dying bed, My ransomed soul shall rise,
"Jesus died my soul to save," Shall rend the vaulted skies.*

*6 And when before the throne, I stand in Him complete,
I'll lay my trophies down, All down at Jesus' feet.*

Ms. Hall certainly understood the work of Jesus, especially in those last two verses.

Today we will look at God's view of salvation and His plan for mankind from the "foundation of the world."

The Godhead in the work of "spiritual blessings".

Warren Wiersbe writes:

"You will note that all three persons in the Godhead are involved in our salvation (1 Peter 1:3). As far as God the Father is concerned, you were saved when He chose you in Christ in eternity past. But that alone did not save you. As far as God the Son is concerned, you were saved when He died for you on the cross. As far as God the Holy Spirit is concerned, you were saved when you yielded to His conviction and received Christ as your Savior. What began in eternity past was fulfilled in time present, and will continue for all eternity."¹

¹ The Wiersbe Bible Commentary, Warren W. Wiersbe, David C. Cook, pg 586

Bob Crowder Sermons for 2013

Jesus Last Will and Testament – Point One, God The Father

HE HAS CHOSEN US! –

***Ephesians 1:4** 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 Eternal God, God Almighty, the Most High God, Creator of Heaven and Earth, chose us before the “*foundations of the world!*” Let that sink in just a moment. The Holy One of Israel, the Living God, The Ancient of Days chose us so our salvation is exclusively by His grace and His grace alone and not of any works we have done.

This is the doctrine of Election. While hotly debated by many, the core thought that salvation begins with God and not with man is not argued:

***John 15:16** Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.*

Man, left to his own nature will not seek God:

***Romans 3:10-11** As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: **11** There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.*

But, God’s love seeks sinners:

***Luke 19:10** For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. (see also Matthew 8:19, John 3:17, 10:10, 12:47; 1 Timothy 1:15)*

Election in the Bible is always *unto* something. The Holy Bible speaks of election in several ways:

(1) ***The election of individuals to office*** unto honor and privilege, e.g., Abraham, Jacob, Saul, David, Solomon, were all chosen by God for the positions they held; the apostles were chosen over other disciples to carry on God’s work.

(2) ***The election of nations unto special privileges***, e.g., the Hebrews (Deut. 7:6; Rom. 9:4).

Bob Crowder Sermons for 2013

(3) *The election of individuals unto eternal life* (2 Thessalonians 2:13; Ephesians 1:4; 1 Peter 1:2; John 13:18).

1. Salvation through grace is the good pleasure of God and God claims the right to do so (Eph. 1:5, 11; Matt. 11:25, 26; John 15:16, 19, Rom. 9:16, 21).
2. Salvation through faith is in Jesus Christ. (2 Timothy 3:15; 1 Peter 1:5,9)
3. Therefore, according to the Doctrine of Election, salvation is not conditioned on faith or repentance, but is of sovereign grace of God (Rom. 11:4–6; Eph. 1:3–6).
4. Mankind receives salvation only by the Grace of God

***Ephesians 2:8-9** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: **9** Not of works, lest any man should boast.*

***2 Thessalonians 2:13-14** But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: **14** Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

5. Mankind receives salvation only by the Will of God

***Ephesians 2:5-10** Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) **6** And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: **7** That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. **8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: **9** Not of works, lest any man should boast. **10** For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

God makes the first move, only then can faith and repentance come from the regenerated soul; and regeneration is God's work, a "new creature."

God chose us in Christ for a purpose and that purpose is to "be holy and without blame!"

So the first of the "spiritual blessings in heavenly places is to be holy and blameless. Oh that today we would hang onto this point. If you have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ today, you

Bob Crowder Sermons for 2013

stand holy (consecrated or set apart for the work of God) and blameless (free from sin) before a Holy and Righteous God.

Without being Holy and Blameless, we could not be in the presence of the Father! Our sin, brings shame, sorrow, pain, death and hell. But that is not God's desire. God has chosen us to live with Him!

HE HAS ADOPTED US! –

Ephesians 1:5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

Therefore, those that are in Jesus Christ, God has predestinated that they would be adopted children of God because of what Jesus did.

“Predestinated” – means to limit in advance, to predetermine, or ordain. So this predestination concerning the *“adoption of children”* by God was predetermined by God before the earth was formed. This term is often misunderstood. Predestination refers primarily to what God does for saved people.

Note: nowhere in the Bible do we find that people are predestinated for hell. And yet there are those that teach that predestination indicates that God decided who would go to heaven and who would go to hell before time began. There are plenty of verses that could mean the former, but Zero verses concerning the latter.

The key word in this verse is a two letter word: *“us”*. The Apostle Paul was saying that it is the believer that has been predetermined to become the adopted of God. And this brings great pleasure to Him.

Adoption is an interesting way of showing the relationship of the believer with God. Adoption happens after regeneration. Adoption gives the child an adult standing in the family. This ensures that from the second of our regeneration, we are adopted into the family of God with full rights which are the *“spiritual blessings in heavenly places.”* A baby cannot gain his portion of the family inheritance until he reaches the proper age, but a Christian, because of adoption, no matter what the age, is fully vested. What an awesome plan from God!

“according to the good pleasure of his will” – No matter what your belief system is; whether you lean towards the Calvinist, Armenian or other point of view, you cannot simply cut this verse out

Bob Crowder Sermons for 2013

of the scripture. It was only by God's good pleasure of His will that men could become adopted into the family of God. It is not works in any way; therefore it can only be grace of God.

HE HAS ACCEPTED US! –

Ephesians 1:6-7 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;

It is through Jesus Christ that God takes such pleasure in the believers that adoption takes place and this is the “glory of his grace.” It is God's grace on the believer and not the actions and prayers that show the glory of God. It is His grace that brings makes “*us accepted in the beloved*” (Jesus Christ). This is an eternal position with God. It is happening now and in the future.

It is only through the grace of God that we receive redemption through the blood of Jesus. It is only through the sacrifice of God's only Son that we have forgiveness of sins.

We have “*spiritual blessings in heavenly places*” through the “*riches of his grace.*”

CONCLUSION

There are several things I want you to take with you this morning. I want you to chew on these this week. I want to see you dig deep in your Bible, asking the Holy Spirit to lead you into understanding.

God is the initiator of Salvation, God chooses

God's plan of Salvation was before the worlds were formed

Jesus was the implement God used to bring salvation

Through the work of Jesus, we are adopted into the family of God by God's pleasure

Grace is the Glory of the Father

Robert C. Crowder