

Ephesians 1, 1-5 Wednesday Bible Study

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SUMMARY KEYWORDS

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SPEAKERS

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So Ephesians one one says, 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. Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. So we stay in those two verses for a little bit. We're going to talk about verse three on its own, and then we're going to spend probably more than a little bit, but a lot of time in verses four and five. That seems to be the first part of Ephesians. Both that, and then when you start getting like verse 11 or nine through 11, starts getting sticky a couple places. So we are going to talk about that. We're going to talk about the P word tonight. So that'll be fun for some of you who've been anxious about that, so anyway, but starting out, Paul declares right away that he is an apostle, and this is important in a lot of his letters. But you may think like if this letter isn't really so much a Jewish letter, then why would a Gentile audience primarily care as much? And so this doesn't really become a long defense of his apostleship, like Second Corinthians is. But he does make sure that he lets them know that he is an apostle. His words can be trusted because they're not his words; they're Jesus's. And what apostle means is that he was a messenger or a sent one, by who he's of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and you're going to see a lot in these opening chapters of the will of God. And this is something that I think about in life today. That even working with the youth for the last 10 years, so many people question, like, what is the will of God? Can I know the will of God? Or like, it's this big mystery, and really, a lot of the will of God is revealed through Scripture if you will just study it, and God reveals it, right? And so, I think part of this true is understanding that when you're looking through chapter one, what you're going to see is the different agency of the Godhead. You're going to see a lot of, I guess, prepositional phrases. You're going to see a lot of God the Father, looking as the the overall author of things, and you're going to see words like through and according to and from, and so it's important that you look at the prepositional phrases as you're kind of going through this first chapter here. But what you cannot, I guess, take away from this chapter one is to say that wow, there is no such thing as a triune God, because you see it written all over these pages. So right off the bat, it's Paul. I'm an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and this word apostle, like I said, it means apostle, means messenger, he that is sent, and you can actually even go into First Corinthians chapter nine, verses one and two, or Second Corinthians 12 two. This is a couple of places where you know to try to meet the conditions of an apostle, had to see Jesus and do the signs and wonders. And these were a couple of different places where he described both of those things. So Paul wasn't an apostle because he says, "I'm an apostle, right? I mean, I've been seeing you know just because my phone specifically the algorithm wants me to see things I disagree with. It's just it's not just my algorithm; it's all of our algorithms in there. And so it's interesting some of the videos and things that come across of people that just call themselves a pastor but are not. You know, they just want to like

this. I'll do my best to stay out of. I'll just stay in my lane. But there are people who will say I'm a skeptic and I'm a pastor, and then they have really, basically, really far out viewpoints designed to basically drive a lot of traffic. There is nothing this person is doing or these people are doing that has anything to do with the the office of a pastor, elder, or bishop. It's just I'm creating content out here, and I say that I am, so that I am, right? And and it would be probably really easy for Paul to be accused of that since he wasn't one of the 12. And what he's saying here at the beginning, since this letter is probably going to be read not just in Ephesus but all around these churches in Asia Minor, is the fact that I'm an apostle not because I say so, not because I dreamt it one day, not because I got a vision that I had some weird thing that happened or I ate some weird mushrooms and I decided I'm I'm an apostle. It wasn't a Halloween costume one day, it is the fact that I am an apostle by Jesus Christ, by the will of God, and of course it means to send a messenger sent, right? And so it's important that the next part is going to talk about who he was sent to, but let's think about the 12 for a second, Luke 6:13, and we'll bring this up a little bit later. And when it was day, he called unto him the disciples, and of them he chose 12, whom he also named apostles. So these were the original 12. Paul was not included in this group, was not around with this group, right? And we know what they were sent to do when you read Acts 28:19 and 20, or Acts one eight. These are the so-called Great Commission verses. And then in Mark, at the end of Mark in chapter 16, you know these these areas here where it was they were sent out, right? It was going to be Galilee, Judea, and Samaria, and then the uttermost parts of the earth. So after Israel got saved, then it was going to go to the Gentiles, but their program was put on hold. But those 12 were going to be sent out as well, just like Paul was sent out. Who was he sent out to? Well, we know what he says in Ephesians one, but let's give a little backdrop to this, if we will. In one Corinthians nine one and two, when I mentioned this verse just a little while ago, we're going to read it. It says, "Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? That's a really big indicator. Are not ye my work in the Lord? If I be not an apostle unto others, yea, doubtless I am to you. For the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord. Or in Romans 11:13 he says, I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify thine office. Or in Galatians two seven through nine, as this distinction is being laid out, and it is contrariwise when they saw that the gospel, who was they? This was James and the 12, right? This this church really goes back to Acts 15. It says, "When they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter, for he that was brought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me towards the Gentiles. And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me. They gave me to they gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship that we should go to the heathen and they go to the circumcision. There's also a verse in First Timothy chapter two, verse seven that says, "Whereunto I am ordained a preacher and an apostle, I speak the truth in Christ and lie not. A teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity, or Second Timothy 1:11, whereunto I am appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher of the Gentiles, and I put a little note in here that if Paul's apostleship is by the will of God, then what is it that people are questioning when they question Paul's apostleship? God Himself, right? So in a way, Paul's apostleship by the will of God is a defense of God and Christ. So here at the beginning, he's saying, "I'm an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God. So this holds this holds some weight. What he is about to say, right? And now, who's he sent to, and who's he writing to? He says to the saints, which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus. Now, these aren't two different groups of people. This is one group of people. It's just two descriptors of this group of people, and we talked a little bit about this one. I think probably in our Philippians study, but the word saint really is gives the idea of blameless, religious, ceremonially consecrated, most holy one thing saint. We think about the word sanctification, and that is the process of becoming holy, right? So we understand what it means, and there are different groups of people that are called saints in the Bible. Colossians one two to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ, which are at Colossae, grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. First Corinthians one two unto the church of God which is at Corinth to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus called to be saints. Now that's a pretty critical one

there, that the Corinthians would be called to be saints when this letter is littered with carnal, fleshly appetites, desires, and failures, but yet they're called saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours. Philippians one one, Paul and Timothy, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus, which are at Philippi with the bishops and deacons. There's even a verse that's used in a lot of funerals in Psalms. It talks about precious in is precious in the sight of the eyes of the Lord is when the saints go home to be with Him, right? And that was before it even had the body of Christ. So I think we understand, in essence, here that who he is clearly writing this to are believers. In fact, Paul doesn't address any of his epistles to unbelievers. This is good news for us in this room who claim to be in Christ, because this is. Especially when you look at the time frame when he's writing, this being at the end of his ministry, this is like more advanced than Romans, and this is most ideal for the body of Christ today. This is really strong doctrine that applies to everybody in this room. I think it's a very important book. It's a very important, I guess distinction that happens right at the beginning of this is who the letter is to, right? And so this actually, we're going to start reading through some things. You're going to be like, "Yeah, I mean that all sounds lofty. That sounds great. And I'm like, "No, it's not. It just sounds great. It's describing you. It's describing your identity in Christ, your position in Christ, what Christ has given you both now and what is waiting for you, what you already have positionally, and what you will have one day at glorification. This is extremely beneficial because right now all you can see is a terrible world, and it's depressing, and it looks like there is no hope. It looks like there is no path forward. And let me just say, we're not the only generation that has felt that way. Imagine this generation. Know that everything that happened, especially around 70 A.D. how discouraging it was that not only was there pressure from the Judaizers, but then there was pressures for anybody who was claiming Christ, especially in these Roman colonized areas. Right there, it was persecution that was happening. There was people who were being put to death for following Jesus. There was to the point where Paul is telling those in Corinthians that yeah, maybe you remain. Maybe you remain like me. Maybe you don't get married because the days are short. I mean, Paul. It's clear from his writings that he believed in his lifetime that he was going to see the rapture. So, looking at this, at least that's my perception of what you read. But when you look at this, I'm thinking, all right, he was giving hope to the body of Christ about their doctrine and who they are, so that they could go out and live in accordance to who they are. I'm thinking that's very relevant for us today, right? And so as he's moving through here, just know when he says saints, that's us, right? I mean, that may you may not feel like it when you look in the mirror, right? When when the credit bar credit card bill comes, you may not feel like it when you look back at how poor you spent your money and your resources last week, and and you're dealing with a lot of regret, right? It's it's those moments where you got to remember who am I in Christ, not what have I done today, not what have I done this week, not what is Satan whispering in my ear bringing back up, but who am I in Christ? So I think it's important we take that with us as we go through here, and I think the natural thing to think about is all of this, and even he says to the faithful has to do with them being in Christ, and this is going to be a theme throughout Ephesians. And we think about this: How do we get in Christ? Right? Is it by keeping the 10 Commandments? Was it because we were born to a specific tribe? How is it that we are in Christ, or that this audience was in Christ. Well, a person here-you're one of two. You're either in Christ or you are in Adam. That's it. You're one of two. So it's very important that you understand that if you are in Christ, you were previously in Adam. That means you are no longer in Adam. Now you may do some things that represent people that are in Adam, but that doesn't mean you're in Adam. You are in Christ. So how did you get in Christ? What did that look like? Did you have to sign up for a subscription? I mean, how did you get in Christ? Because there seems to be a lot of different ideas of how that takes place today. In First Corinthians four one and two, it says, "Let a man so account of us as the ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful. So it's interesting that he says, "You are saints. Positionally, you are saints, and you should live that out practically, and you live that out practically by being faithful to the will of God. And in order to understand that, you need to study the Word of God rightly divided, so

that you know how to live faithful in this dispensation of grace. So he's talking to people that he not only identifies them with who they are in Christ, but how they should live when he says faithful in there. So a person is in Christ. How do they get there? First Corinthians 15:21 through 22. Since by man came death, by man. Came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. So this is this distinction. First Corinthians 15 is the great resurrection chapter of the Bible. In fact, this chapter will actually say that if Christ did not rise from the grave, you are dead and still in your sin. So, the resurrection plays a role in us being in Christ. It's faith alone in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Romans 5:12 says, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered unto the world, this was Adam, death by sin, so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. All of us start out in Adam. The Bible says all have sinned and come short of the glory of God in Romans chapter three. There is none righteous, no, not one. So no matter how much you try, you can't will yourself into being in Christ. You can't work yourself into being in Christ. You cannot pay yourself into being in Christ. Second Corinthians 5:21 kind of talks about this transition when it says, "He hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God? Here's our phrase, in Him. There's only one way we can be in Him. It is faith alone, and the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The moment that we believe that our sin has separated us from a holy God, and that we can do nothing to fix that, for the wages of sin is death, and sin cannot enter God's presence. So there's a real conundrum here because we all can't be in God's presence as sinners. So clearly, the law couldn't do it. So God came down in flesh, in the form of Jesus Christ, and he lived 33 years, didn't commit a sin, and went to die on an old rugged cross. That death was to pay the payment for sin, so that we wouldn't have to in a real place called hell for all eternity. And so Jesus stretched his arms out, and his blood poured, and this blood was precious, sinless blood. What this blood was doing was it was writing a check for your sins. Christ died, and then three days later rose again, proving he wasn't just a man, but that he was God. And the Father said, "Payment now has been made. This is how people can be accepted to me. This is how people can be reconciled. It is because of the shed blood of Jesus Christ. Period. That's what he's going to talk about in Ephesians chapter two, verses eight and nine. For by grace are you saved through faith, that not of yourselves is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast. Or Titus three five that says not through works of righteousness which we have done but according to his mercy he hath saved us or even Ephesians 1:13 which we'll get to in a couple of weeks that talks about this process of hearing trusting and believing and then being sealed with that Holy Spirit but the Bible describes the moment that we are saved there is a spirit baptism that takes place. We are taken out of Adam and we are placed into Christ by the very Spirit of God, which we receive the moment that we believe. So, who he's talking about here when he says in Christ are people that have placed their faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ are now sealed with that Holy Spirit until the day of redemption, and as a result of that, of being in Him, you would think, like in all of His letters, this audience who knows that they are in Him, not because of anything they could bring to the table, but because of what God did in Jesus Christ, right? That they have now grace and Peace. Paul uses this phrase in every letter, whether it's Romans, First Corinthians, Second Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians, Second Thessalonians, Philemon. He continually writes this to every one of his epistles, minus like the pastoral epistles. And I've got a couple notes here. The nature of our riches in Christ is purely by grace. That's why grace always precedes peace. It is completely unmerited. Not one of you in here gets an extra dose of grace or a gold star from Jesus because you are good. The moment you contribute anything, it is no longer of grace. So as he's writing to people who would understand that they are who they are only by the grace of God, that these letters would start with grace, clearly from God. As we're going to see in this letter, this was. Part of a plan that was kept hidden before the world began, that people like this would receive grace apart from the law and have a right relationship with God without going through Israel. So it starts with grace. It's a reminder in every one of these references that we are not under the law but grace, and then the result of that of what has been afforded to us is a peace that passes all understanding. It's that that Greek word *arene*, and it gives the idea that a conflict is ended and that we are now at

rest. This is only possible because of what Jesus Christ has done on our behalf. It would be a great way for each and every one of you to start your day to be reminded of grace and peace that has been afforded to you by the shed blood of Jesus Christ. So it would make sense that he starts letters this way, as this common not just salutation, but there's something more to this that the recipient would understand, and something we should be reminded of today as well, and you can read a little bit more about this in Romans five one and two as well. Now that we are just justified by the blood of Jesus Christ, we now have peace. Right, those things are extremely important. So he gets to verse three, and I know this sometimes can be a little controversial as well, but this is going to start a string of spiritual blessings that are going to be described, and what he says is, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. So we're going back to chasing these prepositional phrases here, but the subject is God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. This is a little bit more of the architect of God the Father, the agency of God the Father, and His role of blessing us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. So, if that box isn't checked, then nothing that's going to be said after this is going to be applicable if you're not in Christ. People trying to claim what's about to be said makes no sense at all unless you are in Christ, and so that is the emphasis over and over again through here. Now, what he's talking about here are spiritual blessings in heavenly places, and one thing we know is that the previous program, or under the old covenant with Israel, that there was very much a material blessings covenant made possible by obedience or cursings from disobedience, and a lot of people live their lives as though they are under this covenant today. We're found in Deuteronomy 28 one and two. It says, "It shall come to pass if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God to observe and to do all His commandments, which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all the nations. And then he says, "It's going to be all the nations of the earth, and all these blessings, these were physical blessings being talked about, shall come on thee and overtake thee if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God. There was a condition tied to the earthly blessings with Israel, and it was obedience. And this still gets taught a lot from pulpits today, but when recipients out here don't receive the earthly blessings, but they're in church every Sunday, they're giving their money, they're helping in food pantry, yet their mortgage payment still isn't getting paid, their debts didn't magically go away, and they still have the health diagnosis. Imagine what that does if, from the pulpit, they're being told you're being cursed because you're disobedient, but that is a stark reality. There's not a person in here I would venture to say who can say, "Yep, I have everything I could even physically desire on the earth right now, and somebody say, "Well, I've learned contentment. Okay, I'm not talking about that. I don't think there's anybody in here here could say, "You know what? There is. I can't even chop down my money trees fast enough. I got money raining all over the place in my backyard, and it's because I go to church every Sunday. I mean, that's not realistic. It's very American, anyway, and I say this a lot because it is true. I mean, I'm getting ready to go to Africa to speak at a conference in December. Do you really think these devoted believers experience the same physical blessings that Americans do? Yet they are obedient, maybe even more so. Are they just not obedient enough? Why don't they have the nice houses and the nice cars? Why isn't there more food on the table when they are being persecuted daily and they are living their lives for the Lord? Does God hate them, or are we trying to take something that was for a very specific purpose to a group of people that were set aside for these blessings? And currently, God is doing something much different. Now, it does not mean that God hasn't laid something on somebody's heart and somebody hasn't physically blessed you. I know there's times where somebody is, you know, come to me and said, "Hey, been praying about this. You own my heart, and here I want to give you this money. And I'm like, "Hey, thank you, God, that you put that on their heart. I'm not, I'm not saying that. What I am saying is that with Israel, it was like everything. Their crops coming in, everything today that we would say, "Oh, okay. Well, this is either just good luck or I had good soil, right? It was all tied directly to God blessing them because of their obedience as a nation, and if they didn't do that, where'd they find themselves? Captivity, being taken over, enslaved. Deuteronomy 11:26 through 28 says, "Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse, a

blessing if you obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you this day, and a curse if you will not obey the commandments of the Lord your God and turn aside out of the way which I command you this day to go after other gods which you have not known. Now, if we were in danger of being cursed today, and Paul had 13 letters to tell you how not to be cursed. Then Paul just committed spiritual malpractice because he didn't describe in these letters how to avoid the cursed life from disobeying God. And you have to explain that. You have to wonder why am I just seeing this in certain places of Scripture? But here Paul is saying, "Here's what he has have given you, all you saints, through Ephesus and through Asia Minor, is that you've been given all spiritual blessings. And you know what? You in this room, if you are in Christ, have been given all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. What an unbelievable thing! Because any earthly blessing here, guess what? When you're gone, it's gone. But in Christ, in heavenly places, these are blessings that cannot fade away, that are not temporary, and these are things that are going to last all throughout eternity. I think it makes more sense which one should be desired, and this isn't a full list. But what he's going to begin in these next few verses is to give you an idea. He's going to give you a general synopsis of some of these things, right? So this is. Let's see if we get if we can do this in 15 minutes. All right, in verses four and five, 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, having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself according to the good pleasure of His will, so right away we get out of these this introduction to the spiritual blessings and we go right into this and we hear a couple words that you know really from tied to the 1500s. There are a couple buzzwords that immediately think about a religious system. It might even make us think of flowers. It might even make us think about one flower in particular, called a tulip. So John Calvin comes up with a system, and it was rooted really in a lot of Augustine's teachings as well. And this acronym, which is total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace, and perseverance of the saints. This system of tulip began to define a couple of words, and so now, anytime people see these words, they can only see them through this system. And the system is one that God predestines some to heaven and predestines some to hell, and I will stand on the fact that I think that is preposterous, in my opinion. If you disagree, though, I will say that we're going to be in heaven together, and that's okay, right? I'm going to share with you why I think that is the case. First of all, these verses here are not even talking about salvation. If you just read this, if you had never heard of elect, predestination, and John Calvin, and you're just reading this plainly, I don't know how you can even make the leaps that a Calvinist makes. But let's just work through it. First of all, rather. The beginning, he says, according. Well, this word is used in verses 4579, 11, and then later in Ephesians one as well, and it's always referencing really this bigger idea of the purpose of God's will. And accordance to God's will is really what all this is being described here as. And here's this word chosen that we get hung up on, He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation world. See, He's chosen some to believe. He's chosen some not to believe. That's just not what it says here. When you read through that, first of all, let's think about the word chosen. When you read through Scripture, it's never used in accordance to salvation, but a purpose or service. If you don't believe me, let's look at a couple verses here. John 15:16. You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you and ordained you that you should go and bring forth fruit, purpose service, and that your fruit should remain. That whosoever whatsoever you ask me ask of the Father in my name; He may give it to you. We talked earlier about Luke 6:13. When it was day, he called unto him the disciples, and of them he chose 12, whom he also named apostles. Verse 16, and Judas was one of the 12. So was Judas saved? If chosen has to do with salvation, Judas was one of the 12 here. What about this in First Peter two four? To whom coming as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious Christ was chosen of God. Did he need to be saved? No, of course not. And a word closely associated and even translated as chosen in places is the word elect, which is the Greek word electos, and it means picked out and chosen. This is when it gets really interesting. Isaiah 42:1, behold, my servant. That's service. That's per. Whom I uphold, mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth, I have put my spirit upon him. He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. This is talking about Christ as the elect, the chosen, and here he's called a servant. Matthew

quotes this verse. Listen to how Matthew puts it: that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken by Esaias or Isaiah the prophet, Isaiah 42 one. Behold, my servant, just like it said, whom I have chosen. It was elect in Isaiah 42, coming out of the Hebrew. It's translated into Matthew, which was Aramaic into the Greek at this point. It says, "Chosen, my beloved, and whom my soul is well pleased, I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall show judgment to the Gentiles, so you really can't say, "Well, Isaiah wasn't talking about Jesus. Well, I don't know. Matthew says, "Yep, it was Jesus according to the Scriptures. So my question always is, "What saith the Scriptures? That's where I'm going to lean. But Israel also is called the elect. Isaiah 45 four, for Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name. I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me. Colossians 3:12. Put on therefore now he's talking about the body of Christ as the elect of God or chosen of God, holy and beloved, dealing with service, bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long suffering. So it's all dealing with practical purpose. There, Titus one one, Paul, a servant of God, an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect. This is dealing with the body of Christ and the acknowledging of the truth, which is after godliness, so the body of Christ is the elect in these verses, and then people will say, "But what about Second Timothy? I'm sorry, Second Thessalonians 2:13. This is the gotcha, because it says, 'But we are bound to give thanks always 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. Ha ha! See, it clearly says chosen. It says chosen you to salvation. Well, all right. So let's just ignore verses one through 12 in Second Thessalonians chapter two, since verse one is clearly talking about the rapture. Verses two and three is talking about the day of Christ. Verses four through nine are talking about the Antichrist, a delusion to believe a lie, talking about a group of people who would not be saved. In verses 10 through 12. He's not talking about salvation as far as an eternal thing. He's saying you've been saved from these events. That's another misconception. Is every time we see the word salvation, we think we're talking about somebody's eternal destiny and their souls being involved. Sometimes you could be driving outside. We understand this principle, right? That that I could get inside before a tornado happens, and I get down in my basement, I was saved from the destruction of the tornado. Had nothing to do with my soul being saved for all eternity. And you don't see anything in that verse that even talks about eternity, but it is saved from those things that are going to happen because you're going to be raptured up, and that's really what's talking about in verse one. Now, as far as the chosen and elect, here's the other part of this. If this is true, then where has God chosen someone for the purpose of hell in Scripture? Instead, we see in Ezekiel 33:11, say unto them, as I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn ye and turn ye from your evil ways, for why will ye die, O house of Israel? See also, I mean, I put in here Ezekiel 18:23 is almost verbatim the same thing. Second Peter 3:9 says the Lord is not slack concerning his promise as some men count slackness, but is long suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Peter understood that, and then Paul says the ultimate when he's revealing God's will, his ultimate will. It's on the walls here. It says, "Who will have all men to be saved and to come into the knowledge of the truth? What is all men to be saved who are part of this limited atonement, who Christ died for? I mean, that's just such a leap at this point. Now, moving on to this, just so we can just not stay stuck on the chosen part, he says, "Before the foundation of the world. Now, this is interesting too, because this idea is very Pauline, if you will, because when you think about the 12, and you think about even in Acts 3:21, Matthew 25, and Luke 17:10, they're talking about things since the world began. Paul's revealing a secret that was not revealed—a secret before the world began. So it's not like other authors in Scripture are really going to be able to speak into this mystery that was kept secret before the world began. This is what he's going to talk about in the in most of Ephesians chapter three when we get there, or Colossians 1:25 through 26, or First Corinthians 2:7 through 8. So this is very body of Christ. Now let's put this together just before we go on to this next part. He's telling these who are in Christ, who are saints, that they have all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, and it says, according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, and then it's going to tell you what for—that

we should be holy and without blame. This is sanctification, right? You have justification the moment that you're saved. You're in a just position with God. You've got sanctification, and that is this part right now where we're still living in this life right here, and the Holy Spirit's helping us to be holy and live in accordance to who we are in Christ. And one day we're going to have a glorified body, and that's glorification, right? So He's saying while we're still here, even though God sees us already over here, he says that what was ordained before the foundation of the world is that those who would be in Christ need to live in accordance to that identity. They need to be holy and without blame before Him in love. It says that you were chosen for a purpose. Everyone who would be in Christ, the purpose is for them to live holy and without blame in this life. That's what it says it doesn't say that we were chosen in salvation before the world began. In this verse, it just doesn't. But it does clearly say that before the world began, which is only Paul that's really revealing what was going on before the world began, that those that would be in Christ are chosen to be holy and without blame before Him in love, and then we're going to get into the predestinated word, and then the very next word says, having predestinated us unto the adoption of children. By Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, so predestinated to the adoption of children. So here's the word, and predestinated just means literally that it was a destination that was set up beforehand. And in this case, clearly, what's being described is the adoption of children to those in Christ, and here's why this is important: is that we think of adoption one way in our culture today, right? It might be where we choose to grab a little baby who's in distress over here, or maybe a friend of ours didn't want to keep a baby, or we, or some lady who'd made it through crisis pregnancy center, but wanted to give the child up for any reason, right? And we think we adopt that child, and sometimes that's from birth, right? And so the association is always adoption dealing with pretty much at birth or very young or very small, but that's really not the case scripturally. Now, before we get quite to that point, to get us towards the end here, we do see that other places where this word's used, which it's not a lot. Predestinate is not used a lot. Romans 8:28 through 30, which again tells you predestinated in that sense for what to be conformed to the image of His Son, right? That's dealing with this idea of sanctification, right? Ephesians 1:11. We're going to get to here in a couple of weeks, and that's talking again about obtaining an inheritance. That's really what's being dealt with as far as inheritance in that verse. And people may bring up, well, yeah, but Lydia was predestined to be saved. Well, Acts 16:14 does not say that. You've probably been told that, but it does not say that, right? We look at this verse. It says that God opened her heart, but then right after it says she attended unto the things of Paul. You just don't see in this dispensation of grace of God choosing some to heaven and then choosing some to hell. Him leaving that for the opportunity for those who choose to believe is what you do see in there. Now let's talk about this adoption of children. We talked about this quite a bit in our Galatian study, but in I've got to wrap this up. So in Galatians 3:26, it says, "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. Now, what was interesting is this passage. When you back up a couple verses, is talking about how the Jews required a schoolmaster, right? And this would have been the law of a child following the law until they got to a point where they no longer needed the schoolmaster, where they no longer needed the governors or the tutors, right? So then they were like at that adult age to where they could be trusted to make decisions and didn't need somebody right next to them, but it goes on. If you're reading those pronouns, to say that we were children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. What he was telling the Galatians is, you never needed a schoolmaster. You received adoption. You already received this part of not needing to be under the law. When you read Romans 8:15 through 17, he says, "Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, 'Abba, Father. So the body of Christ, receiving a spirit of adoption, the spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. If so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together. This idea of adoption, where once somebody, when you look at the Greek Greek culture, you look at Roman culture, and even Jewish culture, there comes this point in age where somebody has graduated from a child to sonship, and then they will be allowed to participate in the inheritance. In fact, you could choose in some of those

cultures to disown your child at that point and then not be part of the inheritance. So what this is saying that one of these spiritual blessings of being in Christ is that those who are in Christ have been adopted into the family of God and be treated as joint heirs and now get to participate in the inheritance. He says that was predestinated that those who would be in Christ would receive this adoption as sons. Does this make sense? So, the way to wrap this up for me, I'm gonna try to do this in a minute because we prayed for Donna at the beginning. So maybe maybe we'll be pretty close. My question is this. How can someone be predestined to be with God for all eternity, but yet in Ephesians 2:12, at some point in their life, have no hope and be without God in this world? How is that possible? Did they somehow start out in Christ, but then they got born in? They were out of Christ, but then they go back in Christ because there's really no doctrine in Scripture that teaches that. But yet Paul's very clear. The same group he's talking to here in Ephesians one, he literally tells them that there was a point in their time in their life where they had no hope and they were without God in this world. How does a predestinated saint say that? How could that be the claim for any predestinated saint if predestination had to do with salvation? How is that even possible? And then, lastly, if it were possible, and if Paul believed this, since it's primarily Paul that a lot of his verses get used as support for this position, then why share the gospel, Paul? Why go through what Paul went through? Why be all things to all men that you might save some, if that's already been predetermined, was Paul given some special glasses or contact lenses that allowed him to see if somebody had an E on their forehead? Paul certainly lived his life as though everyone needed to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth, and taught others to do the same. That the most important thing was to see people saved. Now, I don't know if that's the advice I would give if we know that God's already got it all sorted out. Why wouldn't we just sit on cruise control? I mean, at some point, doesn't it seem fruitless? And then we're going to stand before him at the judgment seat of Christ and give an account for something he's already preordained. Just help that make sense logically. There seems to be a real dichotomy between how Paul lived and how these verses were being taken. But if you just read them plainly and you had never heard that ever in your life. I don't know how you jump to that conclusion because the verses clearly tell you what was being predestined, what purpose was being revealed. We're just reading into it things that have been shoved into our head about these words. So my challenge is study this for yourself and see where you land on it. I truly have shown you my heart in it tonight. But I do think that I do have close friends who believe differently than me, and I do believe these people are going to be in heaven with me for all eternity. So we're going to pray, Heavenly Father. We thank you for this day, Lord. We thank you for the opportunity to open up your Word. We pray that it would bring forth just a growth in each and every one of our hearts, Lord. That would bring forth an edification of the body of Christ, Lord. That just the fact that your that your children are coming together and wanting to read and study your word and see what it says, Lord. I know that that's a valuable thing, Lord, and I know that there's a lot of other things we could be doing with our time, but I would think that what we're doing right now is a pretty awesome way to redeem the time. So, Lord, I pray that each one would go home, study these things out, Lord, and we'd come back together, and we continue to grow next week. And Lord, we pray you be with Donna, and Lord, just please be with us now as we move forward in Jesus' name. Amen.