

Chosen and Predestined

By David Feddes

Anybody who takes the Bible seriously must believe in the doctrines of election and predestination. Those may be hard to understand. There may be different ideas of what they mean, but it is very clear from the Bible that election and predestination are realities. People are chosen and predestined by God. Already in the Old Testament, Abraham and then Isaac and Jacob and the people who came from them were God's chosen people.

The New Testament also talks about those who are chosen, or who are the elect. When the Bible speaks of the elect, depending on what your translation is, it means the chosen. We need to understand that election is not about people choosing a leader. Nowadays, of course, in a political sense when we talk about an election, we are talking about the people of a nation choosing who their leader is going to be. Whatever the biblical doctrine of election might mean, it does not mean that God is running for political office. God is God, and nobody gets to vote on whether God gets to stay God. In political elections, people choose a leader, but in biblical election, the leader chooses people. He chooses who his people are going to be.

We read in the Bible of the elect or the chosen again and again. Jesus says that he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect, his chosen (Matthew 24:31). Scripture asks, "Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen?" (Romans 8:33). "The elect obtained salvation, but the rest were hardened" (Romans 11:7). The apostle Paul said, "I endure everything for the sake of the elect" (2 Timothy 2:10). I could multiply many, many more instances where the Bible speaks of the elect or the chosen.

Sometimes Scripture uses somewhat different language but with much the same meaning. "As many as were appointed for eternal life believed" (Acts 13:48). This was in the city of Antioch in Pisidia during Paul's missionary journeys. It does not say that as many as believed were then appointed to eternal life. It says those who had been appointed to eternal life believed. They were appointed ahead of time, and then when the gospel came to them, they believed. "God chose you from the beginning to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth" (2 Thessalonians 2:13). Even before they believed and were sanctified, they were first chosen by God from the very beginning.

Negatively, "the dwellers on earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world will marvel to see the beast" (Revelation 13:8). Their names are not in the book of life that was written before the foundation of the world. Those who are the elect will not marvel at the beast, the antichrist, and even for their sake God will shorten the days of the antichrist so that the elect would not be taken in or fooled (Matthew 24:22). The non-elect, those whose names are not in the book of life, will follow after the antichrist rather than following after Christ. You have these different words, appointed, chosen, names recorded in the book of life. It amounts to much the same thing.

Covenant of Redemption

Sometimes theologians speak of the covenant of redemption. That phrase does not appear in the Bible, but the reality of it does. In eternity, before creation, each person of the Trinity committed to do his part to save and bless certain humans. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, in the council of redemption made from eternity before the world was ever formed, each agreed to do a part to save and bless particular human beings.

The Father's part was to choose who those persons would be. It was his part to plan it, to devise what would be done, to think it out. He would then give those chosen persons, for whom he planned salvation, to his Son. The Father would also send the Son as their representative in order that they could be saved by his actions. The Father would give the Son all authority over those persons. That was the Father's role, to which he agreed and which he initiated in the council of redemption.

The Son agreed to become a man, to obey the Father perfectly, to suffer and die to gather the people whom the Father had chosen. That was the Son's role in this covenant of redemption.

The Spirit's role was to empower Jesus' ministry and then to apply Christ's benefits to the chosen people.

In this covenant of redemption, the Father made a plan, the Son was going to implement the plan, and the Spirit was going to apply that plan to those whom God had chosen. Keep in mind that this was all done before the world was even created.

Let us look at some of the biblical indications of the covenant of redemption. Jesus said, "All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. For I have come down from heaven not to do my own will, but to do the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him" (John 6:37–39, 44). "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh counts for nothing" (John 6:63). You see Jesus speaking of the Father sending him, of the Father giving a people to him, of the Spirit being the one who gives those people life, and of their own flesh being unable to generate any life whatsoever.

Jesus told some who rejected him, "You do not believe because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. I and the Father are one" (John 10:26–30). Notice that these people do not believe because they are not part of God's chosen flock. The sheep who are drawn by the Father recognize Jesus' voice and follow him. The life they receive is eternal. It cannot be taken away. They cannot perish. Their salvation is eternally secure because nobody can snatch them out of the hand of Jesus or out of the hand of the Father. Once again, in the background of this is that great eternal covenant of redemption, where the Father gives to Jesus a people, a flock, and the Son inevitably saves that flock and makes them secure.

Jesus said, “All that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you... I chose you out of the world. That is why the world hates you” (John 15:15–16, 19). The initiative in choosing was the initiative of Jesus toward people, not of his disciples toward him. He did the choosing. There is a song that says, “It is not that I did choose you, for Lord, that could not be; this heart would still refuse you, had you not chosen me.” That song is based on these words of Jesus, “You did not choose me, but I chose you” (John 15:16).

“Father, glorify your Son,” said Jesus in the prayer the night before he died, “that your Son may glorify you. For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them” (John 17:1–10). The Father gives these people to Jesus, and Jesus is going to the cross for these people. He is going to keep them, and he prays for them because the Father has given them to him, and all who are the Father’s belong to Jesus Christ.

Again, in this covenant of redemption, in eternity before creation, each person of the Trinity committed to do his part to save and bless certain humans. That is the backdrop for the ideas of election and predestination: this covenant of redemption among Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Think of it in terms of a manufacturing concern--not a perfect analogy--but think of it that way. The Father is the planner, the director, the designer, the one who comes up with the master plan. The Son, Jesus, is the actual producer, the worker, the purchaser, the one who is doing the work that the Father, the strategist, has planned for him to do. Once the Son has produced, worked, and purchased for his people the things that they need, and bought them at the price of his own blood, the Spirit’s work is to be the distributor, to make sure it gets out there to those to whom the Father and the Son planned this work to be applied. The Spirit carries the life Christ has provided. He transports it. He persuades. The Spirit is the one who gets the gospel spread out to the nations, and he is the one who calls individual hearts of the chosen to accept what Christ has done, what he has purchased on their behalf. Father, Son, and Spirit had this plan from all eternity and are carrying out this plan during the process of time.

Super sentence

With that background, let us look at one of the great passages of the Bible about God choosing and predestining his people. Ephesians 1:3–14 is actually one sentence in the original Greek. It is a sentence of 202 words. It goes on and on describing what God has done in accordance with his eternal plan:

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished

upon us, in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory. (Ephesians 3:1-14)

That is quite a sentence, is it not? Two hundred two words in the original Greek, twelve verses in our English translations, and it speaks not only of election and predestination, but in connection with the work of Jesus Christ, the wisdom of the Father, the seal of the Spirit, the blessings of forgiveness, and the riches of God's grace. That is how we need to think of the doctrines of election and predestination, keeping them connected with Jesus, with his work, with the love of God, and with the riches of the Holy Spirit sealed upon us.

Let us look at this a little more closely.

Chosen

“He chose us in him.” God the Father chose us. He is the source of salvation. His election, his decision, is the starting point of salvation. It all depends on the decision and the initiative of God the Father. Praise his name! Blessed be he! He chose. That means he picked. He selected based on his good pleasure, not on our choices. God did not simply look ahead in time and see what we might choose or not choose. If he did that, nobody would be saved, because we all choose wrongly. We all choose our own way. All of us, on our own, would choose to reject Jesus Christ.

Think again of who wrote this phrase, the human author, the apostle Paul. When Paul came to know the gospel of Jesus and the movement of the Christians, what was his choice? He chose to hunt and kill them. Yet God chose Paul anyway and saved him anyway. God does not simply look ahead and see how we are going to respond. God chooses based on his good pleasure, entirely on his grace, and not on our choices.

Think about that word "us." If you are a Christian, if you have put your faith in Jesus Christ, the knowledge that he chose you should be very humbling and should also cause you great joy. He chose us who are unimportant, who are unholy, who are undeserving, who apart from his grace are dead in sin and give him no reason whatsoever to choose us. Yet he did choose us.

On what basis did he choose us? He chose us "in him," in Christ. God chose to see us in light of Jesus' merit and to pour out on us the love that he has for his Son. At one point in Jesus' earthly ministry, God the Father said, “This is my Son, my Chosen One; listen to him” (Luke 9:35). Jesus is the Chosen One, and the rest of us chosen ones are chosen in him, in Christ. We should never take the doctrine of election as some abstract, distant decision. It is a decision made in Christ.

Muslims also have a doctrine of election and predestination in which God makes choices that are largely arbitrary. The Christian doctrine, however, is that God's election occurs in Christ. The Father sees us in light of Christ's merit and pours out the love that he has for Jesus on many, many other people whom he has chosen in Christ.

Predestined in Love

This choice was made "before the foundation of the world." "God saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, **which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began**, and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2 Tim 1:9-10). The decision, the plan, the gift, in a sense, was already made before Jesus ever came into the world. Then it was displayed, revealed, and brought to us in the appearing of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Ephesians chapter 1 says, "In love he predestined us" (Ephesians 1:5), and later it speaks of having been "predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will" (Ephesians 1:11). In love. It all depends on God's love and God's grace, not on our qualities or our actions.

In the Old Testament, when God explained why he chose the people of Israel, he said, "The Lord did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. But it was because the Lord loved you" (Deuteronomy 7:7-8). It was not because they were impressive in size or importance. It was not because they were especially good; rather, they were stiff-necked and hard-hearted. Why did God choose them? Because he loved them. That is all God can say to explain it.

In love. It all depends on God's love and not on anything about our own loveliness.

He predestined. What does that word mean? It means that he decided and planned in advance our destination, our destiny. The Greek word is *prohorizō*. We get our word horizon from that word. He set our horizon in advance. He directed where we were headed.

In this case, he predestined us to be sons of God, quite a destiny for him to decide on. Predestination means that he decides what he is going to make of us in the end. Because he works all things according to the counsel of his will, he plans every step that is going to get us to that final destination. On that basis, we can say that all things work together for good to those who love God and are called according to his purpose (Romans 8:28), because God works all things according to his purpose, according to the counsel of his will (Ephesians 1:11).

Predestination is an outflow of God's wisdom. It is an expression of God's love, of God's power, and of God's sovereignty over all things. Being loving and being powerful, God is going to use every detail to bring about the salvation, the adoption, and the glorification of his sons and daughters in Jesus Christ. God chose out of love. That was the basis, God's own love and his good pleasure, not our deserving.

Threefold purpose for choosing

Why did he choose to glorify people and make them like his Son? We can see at least three purposes from Ephesians 1 for choosing. One is a very high purpose, to make us holy and blameless as a result of redemption through Jesus' blood, forgiveness, wisdom, and insight. God is going to forgive us, make us wise, make us holy, and transform who we are. What a tremendous reason for choosing us.

There is a higher purpose still. He chose us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, with the inheritance of every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places (Ephesians 1:3–5). He did not simply save us to get us off the hook for our sins. He did not simply save us to make us better people, or even perfect people. He chose us to be his sons. He chose us to inherit every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. It would be high if he had simply chosen us not to go to hell and chosen us to be made good, but he chose to make us members of the royal family.

Then there is the highest purpose of all: "to the praise of his grace... to the praise of his glory... to the praise of his glory" (Ephesians 1:6, 12, 14). Everything that God does ultimately fulfills the purpose of displaying God's glory, shining God's glory, and helping us to enjoy God's splendor and glory, to delight in him and to worship him for it.

Blessed in the Beloved

We are blessed in the Beloved because of this election and predestination. Ephesians speaks of "his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved" (Ephesians 1:6). Remember, he chose us in Christ. He blessed us in Christ. It is always in the Beloved, in Christ, the Son of his love, that God extends all of his blessings to others. This was part of the eternal covenant of redemption. God was not going to save anybody apart from Christ. He was going to save everybody whom he saved through Christ so that Christ would receive the glory. There is no way to the Father except through the Son (John 14:6).

Jesus says to the Father, "The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me... that the love with which you have loved me be in them, and I in them" (John 17:22-26). That is a staggering thought. When we speak of God's grace and all of his blessings, this is the ultimate. He sent Jesus, and he loves his chosen with the very same love with which he loves his own beloved Son, and he sends his Son to live in them. That is the staggering love of God for those whom he has elected and predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son (Romans 8:29).

Riches of Grace

God does this according to the riches of his grace. God does not merely give out of his riches, though of course everything comes from his storehouse of riches. But God does not simply give a small amount from that vast storehouse. He gives *according to* his riches. The size of the gift matches the size of the giver's wealth. If a billionaire gives a hundred dollars, that gift comes *out of* his riches, but it is not *according to* his riches. In God's case, he gives *according to* his riches.

He gives us the very love that he has for his own Son. He predestines us for the very authority that he gives to his own Son, so that we reign with Christ and are exalted even above the angels (1 Corinthians 6:3; Ephesians 2:6).

He blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing. The word "spiritual" refers to the Spirit. God gave us every Spirit-blessing in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 1:3).

“In him we have obtained an **inheritance**, having been predestined” (Ephesians 1:11). What is that inheritance? The Bible says that in Christ "all things are yours" (1 Corinthians 3:21–23). "Will he not also, along with Jesus, graciously give us **all things**?" (Romans 8:32). If God would give up his own beloved Son in his plan of redemption for us, nothing else compares to that gift. If God gave Christ to be crucified in that great plan, that great predestination for our salvation, there is nothing else that he would hold back.

This is the logic of giving *according to* the riches of his grace, not merely *out of* his riches. The size of the gift matches the size of the wealth of the giver.

Eternal secret revealed

This is an eternal secret that has now come to light. The New Testament delights in speaking of God "making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth" (Ephesians 1:9–10). God always had this plan. The plan came into the open when Jesus came to earth, when the Holy Spirit was poured out, and when people began coming to Jesus. God made known the mystery of what he had been planning all along.

It is exciting to know that there was a mystery that God planned long ago and that now he is revealing it, and we are part of it. “We speak of a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory... these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit” (1 Corinthians 2:7, 10). In understanding the doctrines of election and predestination, part of the thrill is knowing that God made this decree long ago and that what we experience in time is not merely the result of something that happened recently.

If you are a new believer in Jesus, it is a thrill to say, “I know when and how I first came to the Lord, but I have discovered that the Lord always had his eye on me. Before I ever had any plan that included God, God had a plan that included me.” That is the only reason any of us ever came to know him in the first place. He had this secret and hidden wisdom, he had this decree, and he revealed it to us through his Spirit.

Sealed with the Spirit

We are sealed with the Spirit. “In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory” (Ephesians 1:13-14).

Now what is it talking about here when it speaks of being sealed with the Spirit? When you are sealed, a seal does at least three things. One is that it shows authenticity. It proves you are the real deal. For example, on a birth certificate or a passport or some official government document, a seal is stamped there to show its authenticity, that it is real and not a forgery or a fake.

Another way that a seal has been used in the past, and still is, is to show ownership. A stamp is put on something. For example, some people have a stamp that they use for their book collection, and every time they buy a new book, they stamp it. Their seal is on that book to show that they own it. Likewise, when God seals us with his Holy Spirit, he is saying, "You are mine. You belong to me forever."

A third thing that a seal would do is to show protection. When the seal of a great emperor was given to somebody, and they could show that seal to others, it meant, "You had better not mess with me or you are messing with my emperor." When we are sealed with the Holy Spirit of God, God is saying to Satan and to all hostile powers, "If you mess with that person, you are messing with me. I am their protection." As he once put it to Abraham, "I am your *shield*, your very great reward" (Genesis 15:1).

A seal means that the Holy Spirit stamps us as authentic and real in Christ, that we are owned by the Lord, and that God promises his protection.

The Spirit is not only the seal but also the guarantee. Another way that word is sometimes translated is earnest payment. If you have ever dealt in real estate or bought a house, you are sometimes asked to make an earnest payment, even when you first make an offer on the house, to show that you are serious. The earnest payment might be a few thousand dollars. Once you move toward buying it, you have to make a much bigger down payment, which is a very substantial payment toward the full cost of the house. When God gives us his Holy Spirit, he is giving us a big down payment on what is coming.

We begin to experience the presence of Christ and the love of God poured out into our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5). We begin to receive at least some of the riches of the inheritance that God has given us, though not all of it. Much more awaits us when Christ returns, when heaven comes to earth. We have the firstfruits of the Spirit as a guarantee of all that is still to come (Romans 8:23), as the first big installment on what is coming.

Evident election

Election is sometimes treated as a mysterious choice that nobody has any idea what God is up to. There is a lot of mystery about it. We cannot always say who might still be elect, because many of the elect have not yet come to Christ, but they will. One thing you can be sure of is that the Father's electing choice of someone is made clear and evident when that person responds in faith to the gospel of Jesus Christ, as moved by the Holy Spirit. Election is not merely some decree that remains hidden in eternity. It comes to light when the Holy Spirit awakens your heart, you hear the gospel of Jesus, and you believe it.

The apostle Paul said, “We know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you” (1 Thessalonians 1:4). How did Paul know that God had chosen them? “Because our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction” (1 Thessalonians 1:5). You might share the gospel with many people, but when someone is suddenly seized by that gospel, when it hits them right between the eyes and pierces them through the heart, when the Holy Spirit gets hold of them and they believe it, are convicted of their sins, and are convinced of the reality of Jesus Christ as their Savior, then you know they have been chosen by God. The gospel did not come merely as a word that bounced off their ears, but it was received by them. Their receiving of it is evidence that they are among God’s elect.

Acts 13:48 says, “As many as were appointed for eternal life believed.” If you are appointed to eternal life, you do not go on in unbelief forever and indefinitely. At some point, God brings you to living faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. That is the evidence in time of having been elect from eternity.

Praise God

For all of this, we praise God, because all these blessings flow from him. That is the ultimate meaning of the doctrine of election and predestination. God started it all. It all comes from God. It all pours forth from him. It does not start with us, but with him. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us [and] predestined us ... to the praise of his glorious grace... to the praise of his glory... to the praise of his glory.”

How vast the benefits divine which we in Christ possess.
We are redeemed from sin and shame and called to holiness.
'Tis not for works that we have done; these all to Him we owe.
But He of His electing love salvation doth bestow.

To Thee, O Lord, alone is due all glory and renown.
Aught to ourselves we dare not take nor rob Thee of Thy crown.
Thou was Thyself our surety in God’s redemption plan.
In Thee His grace was given us before the world began.

Safe in the arms of sovereign love we ever shall remain.
Nor shall the rage of earth or hell make Thy sure counsel vain.
Each one of all the chosen race shall surely heaven attain.
Here they will share abounding grace and there with Jesus reign.

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"the elect" = "the chosen"

- **Political election:** people choose leader
- **Biblical election:** Leader chooses people

And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his **elect**. (Matt 24:31)

Who shall bring any charge against God's **elect**? (Rom 8:33) The **elect** obtained it, but the rest were hardened. (Rom 11:7)

I endure everything for the sake of the **elect**. (2 Timothy 2:10)

Appointed, chosen, book of life

As many as were appointed to eternal life believed. (Acts 13:48)

God chose you from the beginning to be saved through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. (2 Thess 2:13)

The dwellers on earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world will marvel to see the beast. (Revelation 17:8)

Covenant of Redemption

In eternity before creation, each Person of the Trinity committed to do His part to save and bless certain humans.

- **Father:** choose persons, devise plan, give a people to the Son, send Son as their representative, give Son all authority
- **Son:** become a man, obey the Father perfectly, suffer and die, gather a people
- **Spirit:** empower Jesus' ministry, apply Christ's benefits to his people

All that the Father gives me

“All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. And

this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day... No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him... It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all.” (John 6:37-39, 44, 63)

My Father’s Hand

You do not believe because you are not part of my flock. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one.” (John 10:26-30)

I chose you

“All that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you... I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. (John 15:15-16,19)

You gave them to me

Father, glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to **all whom you have given him**... I have manifested your name to **the people whom you gave me out of the world**. Yours they were, and **you gave them to me**, and they have kept your word... I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for **those whom you have given me**, for they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. (John 17:1-10)

Covenant of Redemption

In eternity before creation, each Person of the Trinity committed to doing His part to save and bless certain humans.

- **Father:** planner, director, designer
- **Son:** producer, worker, purchaser
- **Spirit:** distributor, transporter, persuader

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴ even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love ⁵ he predestined us for adoption 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. ⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, ⁸ which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight ⁹ making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ ¹⁰ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite

all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. ¹¹ In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, ¹² so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. ¹³ In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory. (Ephesians 1:3-14)

"He chose us in him"

- **He:** God the Father is the source, and it all depends on Him. Blessed be He!
- **chose:** picked, selected based on His good pleasure, not our choices
- **us:** unimportant, unholy, undeserving, dead in sin apart from His grace
- **in him:** in **Christ**; God chose to see us in light of Christ's merit and to pour out on us the love He has for His Son.

Before the foundation of the world

God saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, **which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began**, and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. (2 Tim 1:9-10)

"In love he predestined us... having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will"

- **In love:** All depends on God's love and grace, not our qualities or actions.
- **predestined:** decided and planned in advance our destination/destiny
- **all things according to the counsel of his will:** every detail serves his purpose

Threefold purpose for choosing

- **High:** "holy and blameless" as result of "redemption through his blood... forgiveness... wisdom and insight"
- **Higher:** "adoption as sons through Jesus Christ" with "inheritance" of "every spiritual blessing in heavenly places"
- **Highest:** "to the praise of his glorious grace... to the praise of his glory... to the praise of his glory."

Blessed in the Beloved

... his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. (Ephesians 1:6)

The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that **you sent me and loved them even as you loved me...** that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them. (John 17:22-26)

"according to the riches of his grace"

- God gives not just “out of” His riches, but “according to” his riches. The size of the gift matches the size of God’s riches.
- “blessed us in Christ with **every spiritual [Spirit-] blessing** in the heavenly places”
- “In him we have obtained an **inheritance**, having been predestined”
- “Will he not also with him graciously give us **all things?**” (Romans 8:32)

Eternal secret revealed

... **making known to us the mystery** of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. (Eph 1:9-10)

... a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory... these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. (1 Cor 2:7,10)

Sealed with the Spirit

In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory. (Ephesians 1:13-14)

- **Seal:** authenticity, ownership, protection
- **Guarantee:** earnest payment

Father’s choice is evident in Spirit-driven response to the gospel of Jesus

For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. (1 Thessalonians 1:4-5)

As many as were appointed to eternal life believed. (Acts 13:48)

Bless and praise God, from whom all blessings flow!

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us [and] predestined us ... to the praise of his glorious grace... to the praise of his glory... to the praise of his glory.

How vast the benefits divine which we in Christ possess.
We are redeemed from sin and shame and called to holiness.
'Tis not for works that we have done; these all to Him we owe.
But He of His electing love salvation doth bestow.

To Thee, O Lord, alone is due all glory and renown.
Aught to ourselves we dare not take nor rob Thee of Thy crown.
Thou was Thyself our surety in God's redemption plan.
In Thee His grace was given us before the world began.

Safe in the arms of sovereign love we ever shall remain.
Nor shall the rage of earth or hell make Thy sure counsel vain.
Each one of all the chosen race shall surely heaven attain.
Here they will share abounding grace and there with Jesus reign.